

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**TUESDAY, 26 NOVEMBER 1985**

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Mr SPEAKER (Hon. J. H. Warner, Toowoomba South) read prayers and took the chair at 11 a.m.

**PRIVILEGE****Criticism of Mr Speaker; Referral to Select Committee of Privileges**

Mr WARBURTON (Sandgate—Leader of the Opposition) (11.1 a.m.): I rise on a matter of privilege. In doing so, I refer you, Mr Speaker, to Standing Order No. 46, which states—

“An urgent Motion, directly concerning the privileges of the House, shall take precedence of other Motions as well as of Orders of the Day.”

Because of the public criticism of the Speaker of the Parliament by a member of the Government as a result of last Thursday's events in this House, it seems to me that a question of privilege arises. For a Government member to say publicly that the Speaker is unable to manage the job, and for that member to be publicly critical of the Speaker's performance is a matter of grave concern. As a result of those comments, the Speaker has been quoted as saying that he was aware that two Ministers were running round the House lobbying to have him replaced.

Mr Speaker, the public attack on your position, together with your response, which implies that certain National Party Ministers are undermining your position, necessitates discussion and relevant responsible action by members in this place. I hope that it is not necessary to remind the Premier and Treasurer and all other members that the Speaker holds the position because of the Parliament and not because of the National Party Government.

It is unheard of that a leader of the Queensland Government should publicly criticise the performance of the Speaker, just as it is unheard of that a Speaker should publicly accuse Ministers of undermining his authority.

Referring to the matter of privilege—the public comment of recent days has undoubtedly concerned the public and many members of Parliament, and it would be wrong if a blind eye were turned to what has occurred. For my part, the public comment that has been made is damaging and destabilising.

I therefore move—

“That the public criticism of the Speaker's performance by the Premier, together with the Speaker's allegations that certain Ministers were undermining his position, be referred to the Select Committee of Privileges for consideration and report.”

Question—That the motion (Mr Warburton) be agreed to—put; and the House divided—

AYES, 30		NOES, 50	
Braddy	Warner, A. M.	Ahern	Lane
Burns	Yewdale	Alison	Lee
Campbell		Austin	Lester
Casey		Bailey	Lickiss
Comben		Bjelke-Petersen	Lingard
D'Arcy		Booth	Littleproud
De Lacy		Borbidge	McKechnie
Eaton		Cahill	McPhie
Fouras		Chapman	Menzel
Gibbs, R. J.		Clauson	Miller
Goss		Cooper	Muntz
Hamill		Elliott	Newton
Kruger		FitzGerald	Powell
Mackenroth		Gibbs, I. J.	Randell
McElligott		Glasson	Row
McLean		Gunn	Simpson
Milliner		Gygar	Stephan
Palaszczuk		Harper	Stoneman
Price		Hartwig	Tenni
Scott		Harvey	Turner
Shaw		Henderson	Wharton
Smith		Hinze	White
Underwood		Innes	
Vaughan	<i>Tellers:</i>	Jennings	<i>Tellers:</i>
Veivers	Davis	Katter	Kaus
Warburton	Prest	Knox	Neal

Resolved in the negative.

### CIRCULATION AND COST OF *HANSARD*

Mr SPEAKER announced the receipt from the Chief Reporter, Parliamentary Reporting Staff, of his report on the circulation and cost of *Hansard* for the session of 1984-85.

### PETITIONS

The Clerk announced the receipt of the following petitions—

#### Coronary Care Unit, Cairns Base Hospital

From Mr De Lacy (303 signatories) praying that the Parliament of Queensland will take action to overcome shortage of staff at the Coronary Care Unit at the Cairns Base Hospital.

#### Judges' Pensions Acts

From Mr Burns (28 signatories) praying that the Parliament of Queensland will amend section 17 of Judges Pensions Acts 1957-1967.

#### Griffith University Course in Family Relationships

From Mr Wharton (24 signatories) praying that the Parliament of Queensland will establish an inquiry into the Griffith University course in family relationships.

[Similar petitions were received from Mr Casey (22 signatories), Mr I. J. Gibbs (19 signatories), Mr De Lacy (18 signatories), Mr Burns (30 signatories), Mr Tenni (34 signatories), Mr Stephan (14 signatories), Mr Cooper (23 signatories) and Mr Neal (4 signatories).]

#### Third-party Insurance Premiums

From Mr Warburton (488 signatories) praying that the Parliament of Queensland will revoke recent increases in third-party insurance and ensure future increases are determined after public hearing.

Petitions received.

**PAPERS**

The following papers were laid on the table, and ordered to be printed—

**Reports—**

Queensland Radium Institute for the year ended 30 June 1985

Department of Aboriginal and Islanders Advancement for the year ended 30 June 1985

Department of Harbours and Marine for the year ended 30 June 1985

Mackay Harbour Board for the year ended 30 June 1985

Townsville Harbour Board for the year ended 30 June 1985

Registrar of Co-operative and Other Societies for the year ended 30 June 1985

Registrar of Co-operative Housing Societies for the year ended 30 June 1985.

The following papers were laid on the table—

Proclamation under the Liquor Act and Other Acts Amendment Act 1985

**Orders in Council under—**

Land Act 1962-1985

Harbours Act 1955-1982 and the Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Act 1982-1984

Canals Act 1958-1984

Liquor Act 1912-1985

**Regulations under—**

Land Act 1962-1985

River Improvement Trust Act 1940-1983

Irrigation Act 1922-1983

Auctioneers and Agents Act 1971-1985.

**MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS****Greyhound Racing Control Board; Mr M. Mason**

**Hon. R. J. HINZE** (South Coast—Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing) (11.15 a.m.), by leave: In recent days, statements have been made both in and outside the House that the greyhound industry is in turmoil because of the alleged actions or inactions of the Greyhound Racing Control Board of Queensland and, more specifically, the board secretary, Mr Max Mason.

As is entirely proper in these matters, I referred those allegations to the board for a report. A number of documents have been furnished to me by the board, which has exhaustively and comprehensively investigated not only the allegations but also the backgrounds of some of the principal players in this orchestrated attack on the board's good name, reputation and integrity.

I make the general observation that all too often there is a tendency to accept at face value allegations from people who are plausible enough to masquerade as either impartial witnesses to events, experts on those events, or both. Although it is often convenient, for political reasons, not to look too carefully at those making sensational accusations, it hardly reflects any credit on the media which finds it easier to accept sensation than question the pedlars of that sensation about their motives.

I have reviewed the documents from the board and I am satisfied by the replies that the board has provided.

One of the more outrageous allegations brought against Mr Mason was that of sexual harassment of some of the board's female employees. The documents provided to me by the board include statements by former female secretaries, which, in themselves, provide fascinating reading. For example, one former employee reports how she was tracked down in Melbourne by one of the chief players in this campaign, Dr John Murray, and asked to provide a statutory declaration alleging improper conduct against Mr Mason. That former employee refused and, in fact, has provided a letter clearly stating the exact reverse. That letter, I believe, is powerful evidence against Dr Murray and gives a clear indication of the depths to which this campaign against Mr Mason and the board is prepared to sink.

The documents show that there has been a deliberate and concerted attempt by a determined minority that is hell-bent on getting its own way to serve its own ends, whatever the broader consequences. I, as Minister for Racing, have full confidence in the ability of the board to discharge its functions, as far as both the Government and the industry are concerned.

I seek leave to table documents and, in doing so, I draw to the attention of honourable members some of those documents. I refer to—

- (a) the report of the Greyhound Racing Control Board of Queensland, signed by every member thereof, into statements made in and outside this House;
- (b) a statement and statutory declarations by former and present female secretaries employed by the board whilst Mr Mason was secretary, clearly refuting the allegations of sexual harassment on Mr Mason's part;
- (c) the board's 1985 annual report incorporating an audit certificate signed by the Auditor-General of Queensland himself certifying to the correctness of the board's accounts and expenditure;
- (d) an analysis of computerised box draws conducted between 2 April 1985 and 13 November 1985;
- (e) full board reports on the alleged ring-ins which show the honourable member for Wolston's allegations in this respect to be incorrect;
- (f) quotation and other documents from the company Wang Computer Pty Ltd, together with a report from Innes Blinco and Associates concerning the board's computer and the computerised box draws;
- (g) a summary of fines imposed of \$500 or more for 1983-84 (12), 1984-85 (16) and 1985-86 to date (6);
- (h) the board's findings that the box draws for the heats and finals of the 1984 and 1985 Mount Isa Cups were carried out in accordance with properly established board procedures; and
- (i) the board's report that Mr Mason has been employed for an uninterrupted term by six successive greyhound boards.

Leave granted.

*Whereupon the honourable gentleman laid the documents on the table.*

In conclusion, it occurs to me that the board has allowed its secretary far too much authority, and I have advised the board accordingly.

From now on, it must be clearly understood that the chairman of the board, Dr Danalis, will be held entirely responsible for all board decisions. I make that statement in the hope that the industry will understand that all board members drawn from various parts of the State with a more than average knowledge of the greyhound industry are appointed by the Governor in Council for the benefit of the industry and the Government has no intention of intruding while the board discharges its functions and responsibilities in accordance with the Racing and Betting Act and to the satisfaction of the Government. However, in the spirit of reconciliation, I am prepared to consider recommending to the board in three months' time a request that it reconsider the penalties imposed on

Dr Murray and Mr Roy. I am advised that Dr Murray and Mr Roy can pursue these matters immediately in the Supreme Court of Queensland should they so desire. That is a matter for their own determination.

### Commonwealth Funds for Rural Reconstruction

**Hon. W. A. M. GUNN** (Somerset—Deputy Premier and Minister Assisting the Treasurer) (11.21 a.m.), by leave: In the Parliament last Tuesday evening, during the course of debate on the Financial Administration and Audit Act Amendment Bill, the honourable member for Bundaberg accused the Government of misappropriation of Commonwealth funds for rural reconstruction purposes, to the point at which illegal activities are alleged to have occurred. The claims made by the honourable member are unfounded and untrue. Quite frankly, I am sick and tired of the Opposition's making baseless allegations and innuendoes, which are, no doubt, fuelled by the honourable member's cronies in Canberra.

There is not a grain of truth in any of the claims and allegations being made. It simply means that the valuable time of this Parliament is being taken up in repeatedly providing the House with the facts. With the honourable member, unfortunately, they seem to go in one ear and out the other. I do not think they meet much on the way through.

I ask particularly that the honourable member for Bundaberg listen to what I am about to say, and if he cannot listen, he should at least research *Hansard* so that, once and for all, these baseless accusations are put to rest.

The Rural Reconstruction Board administers the Rural Reconstruction and Rural Adjustment Schemes. The administration of these schemes is governed by the Farmers Assistance Act, the Rural Adjustment Agreement Act and various Commonwealth/State agreements dealing with the two schemes.

In the 15 years that the two schemes have been in operation, the State Government has at all times complied fully with the terms of the agreements it has entered into, as well as with its own legislation.

All funds provided for primary producers, from either the Commonwealth or the State, have been advanced to primary producers, in accordance with agreed arrangements. The total amount advanced in the past 15 years has been well in excess of \$100m.

No question has ever been raised about the State's administration of the schemes. The Commonwealth Government has never questioned the State's administration of the schemes. There has been no official correspondence or contact to suggest, in any way, that the State has misapplied or misappropriated Commonwealth funds.

What has happened is that the Federal members of Parliament—and the present Commonwealth Minister is not entirely blameless in this matter—have sought to make accusations against the State for their own selfish political motives. If there was a grain of truth in the accusations, I am sure that the Commonwealth would have acted long before now. The Government in Canberra is so strapped for funds and so anti-Queensland that, if it thought it could make these charges stick and recover some funds, it would do so. The plain, simple, indisputable and undeniable fact is that the State has not acted improperly at all.

It is factual that the State has recovered to the Consolidated Revenue Fund \$10m previously held in the Rural Reconstruction Fund. The Government has never denied that. All the Government has done is to transfer to consolidated revenue all risks of loss associated with the two schemes—and make no mistake, the risks involved are real, with every prospect of being substantial in later years. This action is not illegal. It is not contrary to agreement or legislation.

The fact that losses have not been unduly significant in the past can in no way be taken as a guide to the level of losses in the future. The State has been very fortunate that favourable seasonal conditions, market prices and sound debt-management practices have kept losses to a minimum. However, in recent times, the position has worsened

considerably with current arrears of repayment exceeding \$12m. The sugar industry alone is likely to be responsible for major losses, which the Consolidated Revenue Fund will have to bear.

The nature of the schemes is such that there must be a large grant element for the State if the State has to bear all the losses. This fact has been recognised by successive Commonwealth Governments with a grant element of 15 per cent of advances.

Let honourable members be under no misconception of the position. The repayments to the Commonwealth are guaranteed by the State. There is no risk to the Commonwealth. It is the State that bears all the risks and only time will tell the full extent of the risks that the State has accepted.

Let me say again, for the benefit of all honourable members, that the State has, at all times, fully complied with all Commonwealth requirements under the Rural Reconstruction and Rural Adjustment Schemes. The State has, at no time, acted illegally or improperly, as suggested by the honourable member for Bundaberg (Mr Campbell). The State has never misapplied or misappropriated funds from the Rural Reconstruction Fund.

To this time, I have refrained from saying that the Auditor-General, in successive reports, has, at all times, confirmed the appropriateness of the State's activities in the Rural Reconstruction Fund. In fact, successive Auditors-General, fully aware of and with complete access to all the facts and circumstances, have found no fault with the Government's actions.

It was, therefore, a matter of considerable concern to me that the honourable member for Bundaberg saw fit to level accusations of negligence and incompetence at both the present Auditor-General and his predecessors in regard to reports on the Rural Reconstruction Fund. Such derogatory remarks for obviously cheap political gain are disgusting, to say the least. The fact that they are untrue and are so proven makes the actions of the honourable member all the more reprehensible.

Let honourable members not forget that the Auditor-General is an officer of Parliament. The office has been held by men of independence and high repute over a long period. They are not, as the honourable member for Lytton (Mr Burns) suggested in the same debate, servants of the Government. They have served Parliament well.

Honourable members should also be reminded that, as an officer of Parliament, the Auditor-General should be, and is, available to all members.

The very least that the honourable member for Bundaberg should have done before he made his baseless and offensive accusations, particularly against the Auditor-General, was to check his facts first—but I suppose that is too much to ask of him.

Mr Speaker, I must apologise for having to take the time of the House to explain to those on the Opposition benches once again the facts in regard to the Rural Reconstruction Fund. I hope that the matter is now laid to rest once and for all.

Finally, it would also be appropriate to say that, if the honourable member for Bundaberg was a man of character and substance, he would have the common decency to apologise to the Auditor-General for the untrue and offensive remarks that he has made.

#### **Criticism by Commonwealth Minister for Education of Education in Queensland**

**Hon. L. W. POWELL** (Isis—Minister for Education) (11.28 a.m.), by leave: I wish to draw to the attention of the House an unprovoked, scathing attack on Queensland by the Federal Minister for Education, Senator Susan Ryan.

In a syndicated article, which appeared in the *Bundaberg News-Mail* on Friday, Senator Ryan accused Queensland of being behind the rest of Australia in education. Her remarks were, at best, wild generalisations and, at worst, downright blatant lies.

The Minister says that she is concerned that Queensland children are not being educated to the standard of children in other States. Well, she is certainly right there.

Our children are far better educated than children in other States. Our curriculum is not cluttered up with trendy socialist activities, which consume valuable time.

In Queensland, emphasis is placed on literacy and numeracy as well as on practical subjects, such as computer literacy, which prepare students for a worthwhile role in the community. The most recent national study of literacy and numeracy, conducted in 1980 by the Australian Council for Educational Research, showed that the performance of Queensland pupils was generally better than that of pupils from other Australian States.

Specifically, at least 74 per cent of Queensland pupils in each age group achieved the mastery levels determined by ACER for each of the 25 skill areas tested. The director of ACER (Dr John Keeves) told the Parliamentary Select Committee on Education—

“The findings from the studies conducted by ACER indicate a high level of achievement in Queensland relative to that in other States.”

Senator Ryan is critical of the fact that the Queensland Government is opposed to special measures to help women. She says that her Government has set up a Women's Information Network and is trying to make more information available to girls at schools, but she says that it is impossible to make up for the lack of effort by this State. What a lot of nonsense! How degrading it is to girls at school to have the Federal Government saying they need special information networks.

The Minister is right in saying that the Queensland Government is not supporting her efforts in this regard. The reason is obvious. This Government does not, and will not, support divisive policies that put one section of society above another simply on the grounds of sex, religion, colour, or for any other frivolous reason. The Queensland Government will offer special support and assistance to those who have a genuine need, but not just because students happen to be female. Why waste money—our money which the Federal Government has ripped off us in the form of taxes—to set up a special information network just for women? Why not do it equitably and offer the service to the whole community?

Senator Ryan has claimed that the Queensland Government has to do more to increase the participation rate, that is, the number of Year 10 students who continue into Years 11 and 12 with a view to pursuing a tertiary education. That is unnecessary. Obviously Senator Ryan does not know that the figures for last year reveal that Queensland has the highest retention rate of any State for students remaining in school until the completion of Year 12.

The figures prepared by the Australian Council for Educational Research show that, in 1984, the retention rates were: Queensland, 46 per cent; New South Wales, 36 per cent; Victoria, 34 per cent; South Australia, 43 per cent; Western Australia, 40 per cent and Tasmania, 25 per cent. I will let honourable members draw their own conclusions about Senator Ryan's careless use of the truth.

Honourable members should be aware that the Queensland Government provides almost \$15 to every \$1 provided by the Commonwealth for Queensland State schools. In this field, where the State Government provides the overwhelming majority of funds, Queensland leads the other States in student participation rates.

Let us examine the Commonwealth's efforts in the area of education for which it has total financial responsibility. Honourable members will recall that, in 1974, the Federal Labor Government, against the wishes of the States, assumed full responsibility for funding tertiary education.

Prior to that—in 1971 Queensland had the highest participation rate in Australia. Of all the university students in Australia between 15 and 29 years of age, 4.2 per cent were in Queensland, compared to 4.1 in New South Wales, 3.6 in Tasmania and South Australia, 3.3 in Victoria and 3.1 in Western Australia.

By 1983, Queensland's participation rate had dropped to the lowest in Australia and this was maintained last year and again this year. We recorded 3.7 per cent compared

to 4.9 in New South Wales, 4.8 in Tasmania, 4.4 in Victoria, 4.0 in South Australia and 3.7 in Western Australia. The blame for this shameful situation can be laid fairly and squarely at the feet of the Federal Government, yet Senator Ryan has the audacity to say that Queensland should be doing something about it.

Senator Ryan further claims—

“We are positively discriminating funding in favour of Queensland to overcome the problem. Within three years I hope to have put Queensland close to the other States.”

If the Federal Government is discriminating funding in favour of Queensland, I should hate to see what we would otherwise receive, because the Federal Government contributes a paltry 7 per cent of our annual education budget. And if that is not bad enough, most of that money is tied to the type of divisive schemes to which I have already referred, such as the Participation and Equity Program, which is heavily biased towards Aborigines and females simply because of the colour of their skin or their sex, not because they are necessarily any needier than other students.

Even further evidence of Senator Ryan's lack of understanding of her portfolio came to the fore with this statement that she made—

“It is wrong for Cabinet Ministers to say what should go into courses or what courses should not be used—that should be left to professionals.”

In this State, I am the person—no-one else—responsible to the Parliament for the administration of Education. I was elected by the people of my electorate to represent them in this Assembly, and I was subsequently given the task of administering education in line with the elected Government's policies.

I have the responsibility to act on behalf of the parents of Queensland who expect a democratically elected Government to act in their best interests and, therefore, I have the ultimate say in what courses will or will not be used. That is clearly the proper function of a Minister of the Crown and, if people do not like a Minister's decisions, they can record their displeasure at the ballot-box. To date, I have had overwhelming support from parents and teachers for my actions in preventing the contamination of our curriculum with unnecessary and often politically motivated material.

Senator Ryan may like to take the easy way out by abrogating her responsibilities, but I certainly will not.

As for her view that it is improper for a Government to insist on children singing *God Save the Queen*—that is the attitude one would expect from a socialist, but Her Majesty the Queen is the Queen of Queensland. Most Queenslanders are rightly proud of that fact and our children will continue to sing *God Save the Queen* on all appropriate occasions.

Finally, this woman, who claims to have such great concern for the children of Queensland, referred to them throughout the article as “kids”. Apart from its disrespectful slang usage, the word “kids” means young goats. Is that what Senator Ryan considers our children to be? Or perhaps she was using the word in its other context—to deceive or hoax—because kidding is precisely what she has done throughout this article, and she must stand condemned for it.

#### **Delegation of Members from European Parliament to Study Kangaroo Industry**

**Hon. P. R. McKECHNIE** (Carnarvon—Minister for Tourism, National Parks, Sport and The Arts) (11.35 a.m.), by leave: As members will be aware, last Thursday I travelled to Roma to meet a delegation of members from the European Parliament. The Federal Government had informed us that the members were particularly interested in studying the kangaroo situation in Queensland, so officers of the Queensland National Parks and Wildlife Service co-operated with Mr Jock Douglas of the National Farmers Federation in organising an itinerary centred on the kangaroo issue.

At a luncheon that I hosted for the delegation, the leader, Mrs Bloch von Blottnitz, who is a member of the Rainbow/Green Group, said it appeared that there had been a misunderstanding about the purpose of their visit to Queensland. She said that they had met with the Prime Minister for one hour and did not raise the subject of kangaroos at all. Consequently, we rearranged the itinerary to give members a wider appreciation and understanding of rural life in Queensland.

However, we did inspect two properties in relation to the kangaroo issue. Despite the fact that the properties had received substantial rainfall, which encourages kangaroos to disperse, we saw large numbers of kangaroos on one property; I would estimate between 300 and 400 in one paddock.

The next morning, the European parliamentarians gave a press conference. Although I was not present, my officers informed me that the parliamentarians made it quite clear that, from their point of view, the four major species of kangaroos—those commercially harvested—were not endangered.

This followed a question that the leader of the delegation had put to me the previous day. She asked: If commercial harvesting continues, is it reasonable to assume that fewer numbers of rare and endangered species will be shot? Naturally, I said that the best way to protect rare and endangered species was to have necessary culling of kangaroos carried out by professional shooters who can sell products of only the four common species.

It seemed that the Europeans summed up the situation rather quickly. However, they made it clear that they were not the committee that would be reporting to the European Parliament, and would contact those who were.

They acknowledged at the press conference that Europe does have the power to cut off imports of kangaroo products, but stressed that, although kangaroos were important, there were other more pressing issues regarding their visit to Australia.

They also said that the European Parliament would not consider the question of import bans on kangaroo products until after the report of the Senate Select Committee on Animal Welfare was published. I understand that this is still some time away. Given this information, there is no reason why the Federal Government cannot increase Queensland's kangaroo quota now.

I will be writing to the Federal Minister suggesting that, when the Senate select committee's report is published, it should be considered by the Federal Government before it is forwarded to Europe. It is the duty and the responsibility of the Federal Government to make recommendations to foreign countries, rather than delegate such important matters to a Senate select committee.

I assure all rural land-holders and the people involved in the kangaroo industry in Queensland that I will arrange for Queensland's views to be put forward forcefully in Europe if the Federal Government does not make a recommendation consistent with the sensible kangaroo management program advocated by my department.

#### LEAVE TO MOVE MOTION WITHOUT NOTICE

**Hon. Sir WILLIAM KNOX (Nundah):** Mr Speaker, as this matter requires a substantive motion—and in view of the fundamental importance to the traditional and proper functioning of Parliament of the office of Mr Speaker—in accordance with Standing Orders Nos 49 and 52, I seek leave of the House to move a motion without notice, to wit, that Mr Speaker enjoys the confidence of this House.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Is leave granted?

**Opposition Members:** Aye!

**Government Members:** No!

**Sir WILLIAM KNOX:** Mr Speaker, in speaking to this——

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr R. J. Gibbs:** What about the “Noes”? You didn’t call the “Noes”.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! “No” is called.

**Honourable Members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Is leave granted?

**Opposition Members:** Aye!

**Government Members:** No!

**Mr SPEAKER:** The “Noes” have it.

**Sir William Knox:** Divide!

**Mr SPEAKER:** Ring the bells.

**Question—That leave be granted—put; and the House divided—**

AYES, 38		NOES, 42	
Braddy	Miller	Ahern	Lane
Burns	Milliner	Alison	Lester
Campbell	Palaszczuk	Austin	Lingard
Casey	Price	Bailey	Littleproud
Comben	Scott	Bjelke-Petersen	McKechnie
D’Arcy	Shaw	Booth	McPhie
De Lacy	Smith	Borbidge	Menzel
Eaton	Underwood	Cahill	Muntz
Fouras	Vaughan	Chapman	Newton
Gibbs, R. J.	Veivers	Clauson	Powell
Goss	Warburton	Cooper	Randell
Gygar	Warner, A. M.	Elliott	Row
Hamill	White	FitzGerald	Simpson
Hartwig	Yewdale	Gibbs, I. J.	Stephan
Innes		Glasson	Stoneman
Knox		Gunn	Tenni
Kruger		Harper	Turner
Lee		Harvey	Wharton
Lickiss		Henderson	
Mackenroth	<i>Tellers:</i>	Hinze	<i>Tellers:</i>
McElligott	Davis	Jennings	Kaus
McLean	Prest	Katter	Neal

Resolved in the negative.

**Sir WILLIAM KNOX** having given notice of a motion—

**Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN:** Mr Speaker—

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order!

**Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN:** Mr Speaker—

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Nundah was on his feet.

**Sir WILLIAM KNOX:** Mr Speaker, I have given notice of a motion.

**Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN:** Mr Speaker—

**Sir WILLIAM KNOX:** I gave notice that tomorrow I will move—

**Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN:** I have a point of order.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order!

**Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN:** I rise to a point of order.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The Premier is rising on a point of order.

**Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN:** On a point of order, I seek leave of the House to make a ministerial statement.

**Honourable Members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Just let us take our time on this.

**Honourable Members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The honourable member for Nundah has given notice of a motion. He has only to hand it in.

**Sir WILLIAM KNOX:** I have that motion. I give notice that tomorrow I will move—

“That Mr Speaker enjoys the confidence of this House.”

**Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN:** Mr Speaker, I rose on a point of order, seeking leave to make a ministerial statement. I take it that I have been granted that leave.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Yes.

**Opposition Members** interjected.

**Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN:** All I want to say——

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I will put it to the House. Is leave granted?

**Honourable Members:** Aye!

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Confidence in Mr Speaker

**Hon. Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN** (Barambah—Premier and Treasurer) (11.50 a.m.), by leave: Mr Speaker, both the Liberal Party and the Labor Party are trying to capitalise on the situation that was created last week in a very disgraceful way by honourable members opposite. Mr Speaker, they defied you repeatedly and disagreed with your rulings repeatedly. Today they have the hide and the hypocrisy to support you after ridiculing you last week. I repeat that they defied you and disagreed with your rulings.

**Mr WARBURTON:** I rise to a point of order. It was my understanding that the honourable member for Nundah sought leave to move a motion without notice.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! That is not correct.

**Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order!

**Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN:** All I want to say briefly is that we on this side of the House are the Government, and we are not going to allow honourable members on the opposite side of the House, whatever party they might be in, to run the House. That is absolutely logical and correct and what they would expect us to do. Last week, I said to the media——

**Opposition Members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I warn honourable members on both sides of the House that, under Standing Order No. 108A, ministerial statements will be heard in silence. I am going to say it only once this time, because there has been so much upset about it. Anybody who takes it into his head to go against that particular warning will be warned under Standing Order No. 123A.

**Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN:** I repeat that there is no way in the world that this Government will allow honourable members opposite, whether they are in the Liberal Party or in the Labor Party, to run the House. Last week, Government members

indicated clearly to the media and to the public that they have confidence in you, Mr Speaker. I told the media that, too. That statement was reported and ridiculed.

**Mr Prest** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** I warn the honourable member for Port Curtis under Standing Order No. 123A.

**Mr Burns** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** I must also warn the honourable member for Lytton.

**Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN:** That is all honourable members opposite are doing. They are trying to capitalise on your position and what happened last week. Government members are not going to allow that, because we already have confidence in you, Mr Speaker. We have indicated that publicly everywhere. There is absolutely no purpose in allowing honourable members to come forward——

**Mr Smith** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** I warn the honourable member for Townsville West under Standing Order No. 123A.

**Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN:** There is absolutely no purpose in allowing honourable members to come forward with a motion of that nature, particularly, as hypocrites, they disagreed repeatedly with your rulings and defied you repeatedly, Mr Speaker. To come forward with a motion of confidence in you, Mr Speaker, is absolutely ridiculous. You know that you have the full support of the Government; that is all that matters.

**Opposition Members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order!

**Sir WILLIAM KNOX:** I rise to a point of order. I bring to the attention of the House that members of the Liberal Party have never defied Mr Speaker in any circumstances; we have always supported Mr Speaker. At any time, any question arising of disagreement with Mr Speaker's ruling is not disrespect of Mr Speaker; it is the right of any member of the House. Seeking leave of the House to move a motion is the right of any member of the House, regardless of his rank and regardless of the side of the House on which he sits.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The honourable member has taken his point of order.

**Mr Hinze** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order!

**Opposition Members:** Warn him.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr BURNS:** I rise to a point of order. Mr Speaker, earlier you ruled that anyone who interjected while these matters were on would be warned. Why is the Minister not dealt with like the rest of us?

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order!

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**Mr GYGAR** (Stafford) (11.54 a.m.), by leave: I was misrepresented in an article that appeared in the *Gold Coast Bulletin* of 15 November. The article showed a photograph of myself and reported accusations made against me by the manager of the Gold Coast Hospital. He stated that concerns I had expressed about psychiatric care at the hospital were politically motivated, baseless, created unnecessary community concern and anxiety and had disadvantaged the psychiatric community.

These extraordinary statements by a public servant are quite false and, regrettably, Mr Miles probably knew that when he made them. That is demonstrated by the fact that one month earlier, on 16 October, the chairman of the Gold Coast Hospitals Board received a report from the Senior Staff Psychologist on deficiencies in the Department of Psychology.

That report, which I now table for the information of honourable members, outlines shortages of acute in-patient beds, staff vacancies and inadequacies in nursing care because of administrative incompetence.

The report clearly shows that my concerns were and still are justified and that the manager must have been well aware of the situation when he issued that misleading statement which so grossly misrepresented my position.

*Whereupon the honourable member laid on the table the document referred to.*

### QUESTIONS UPON NOTICE

Questions submitted on notice were answered as follows—

#### 1. Pay-roll Tax

Sir WILLIAM KNOX asked the Deputy Premier and Minister Assisting the Treasurer—

Will he provide information as to the amount of pay-roll tax paid by each (a) Government department, (b) statutory authority and (c) local authority, giving the individual names of the organisations and the amount of pay-roll tax paid for 1984-85?

*Answer—*

As my answer is four pages in length, I table three statements setting out the amount of pay-roll tax paid by each—

- (a) Government department,
- (b) statutory authority, and
- (c) local authority,

for 1984-85 and seek leave to have them incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

*Whereupon the honourable member laid on the table the following document—*

#### Government Departments

Name	Tax Paid
	\$
Commissioner for Railways	26,041,535.80
Department of Mines	55,704.70
Main Roads Department	501,499.21
Premier's Department	296,478.16
Public Curator of Queensland	444,679.55
Queensland Housing Commission	584,020.65
Queensland Government Treasury Pay-roll	75,486,880.81
State Electricity Commission of Queensland	236,799.64

#### Statutory Authorities

Name	Tax paid
	\$
Atherton Tableland Maize Marketing Board	16,517.05
Australian Dairy Corp.	3,581.00
Australian Industry Development Corp.	15,791.15
Australian Meat & Livestock Corp.	62,312.40
Australian Wheat Board	44,872.20

## Statutory Authorities—continued

Name	Tax paid
	\$
The Barley Marketing Board	18,647.20
Board of Secondary School Studies	61,233.70
Board of Advanced Education	19,933.30
Board of Teacher Education	19,357.05
Builders Registration Board of Queensland	51,835.25
Bundaberg Fire Brigade Board	30,490.85
Bundaberg Harbour Board	20,457.55
Bundaberg Public Abattoir Board	26,743.30
Burdekin Fire Brigade Board	6,947.40
The Butter Marketing Board	76,149.95
Caboolture Fire Brigade Board	16,148.59
Cairns Fire Brigade Board	64,708.80
Caloundra Fire Brigade Board	12,642.15
The Central Queensland Egg Marketing Board	2,400.50
Central Sugar Cane Prices Board	66,739.90
The Central Queensland Grain Sorghum Marketing Board	4,734.55
The Cotton Marketing Board	169,601.03
Darling Downs Moreton Rabbit Board	1,636.45
Emerald Rural Training School Board	45,107.97
The Far North Queensland Electricity Board	628,772.00
Gladstone Fire Brigade Board	29,443.90
Gladstone Harbour Board	344,380.07
Greyhound Racing Control Board of Queensland	10,813.10
Gympie Fire Brigade Board	4,107.65
Innisfail Fire Brigade Board	20,405.70
Ipswich Fire Brigade Board	114,614.00
Inland Industries Board	83,611.70
Livestock and Meat Authority of Queensland	25,804.65
Mackay Fire Brigade Board	57,986.10
Mackay Regional Electricity Board	311,733.80
Mackay Harbour Board	53,674.20
Maroochy Fire Brigade Board	40,502.95
Maryborough Fire Brigade Board	27,059.95
Metropolitan Fire Brigade Board	938,640.25
Metropolitan Transit Authority	64,346.86
Mount Isa Fire Brigade Board	36,572.45
Noosa Fire Brigade Board	4,380.40
Peanut Marketing Board	153,052.91
Pine Rivers Fire Brigade Board	41,296.85
The Queensland Coal Board	21,352.35
The Queensland Fish Board	92,593.85
The Queensland Harness Racing Board	22,670.05
The Queensland Electricity Generating Board	6,648,543.64
Redcliffe Fire Brigade Board	26,361.30
Rockhampton Fire Brigade Board	106,738.00
Rural Reconstruction Board	23,899.49
The South Coast Fire Brigade Board	275,455.70
The Southern Electric Authority of Queensland	4,569,562.95
The South West Queensland Electricity Board	625,360.50
South Queensland Rural Training School Board	40,385.05
The Sugar Board	246,546.05
The Sugar Experiment Stations Board	189,920.50
Tableland Fire Brigade Board	9,041.40
Tobacco Leaf Marketing Board	531.00
Toowoomba Fire Brigade Board	74,937.85
Toowoomba Public Abattoir Board	137,948.15
Totalisator Administration Board of Queensland	420,678.68
Townsville Fire Brigade Board	102,985.11
Townsville Harbour Board	84,045.50
Townsville Public Abattoir Board	41,573.75
Warwick Fire Brigade Board	14,275.10
Wide Bay Burnett Regional Electricity Board	460,730.00
Queensland Performing Arts	100,329.70

**Local Authorities**

Name	Tax Paid
	\$
Albert Shire Council	94,719.65
Atherton Shire Council	4,950.80
Belyando Shire Council	23,550.15
Bowen Shire Council	12,207.84
Brisbane City Council	3,413,432.69
Bundaberg City Council	60,736.90
Caboolture Shire Council	29,665.40
Cairns City Council	50,636.70
Ayr Shire Council	17,644.45
Cardwell Shire Council	5,102.85
Council of City of Hervey Bay	29,201.61
Dalby City Council	13,050.35
Gladstone City Council	48,945.39
Gold Coast City Council	212,819.83
Gympie City Council	11,008.14
Hinchinbrook Shire Council	17,769.15
Ipswich Shire Council	75,012.05
Johnstone Shire Council	15,417.25
Landsborough Shire Council	32,263.45
Livingstone Shire Council	6,142.98
Logan City Council	61,717.45
Mackay City Council	54,903.45
Maroochy Shire Council	84,092.81
Maryborough Shire Council	23,181.75
Moreton Shire Council	6,340.85
Mulgrave Shire Council	75,856.85
Mount Isa Shire Council	44,650.79
Noosa Shire Council	27,496.43
Pine Rivers Shire Council	68,330.19
Proserpine Shire Council	7,801.65
Redcliffe City Council	40,094.85
Redland Shire Council	34,821.50
Rockhampton City Council	170,525.30
Thuringowa Shire Council	13,186.95
Toowoomba Shire Council	102,929.53
Townsville City Council	220,905.10
Warwick City Council	5,534.55
Widgee Shire Council	15,989.65

**2. Phosphate Bounty**

Mr NEAL asked the Minister for Primary Industries—

With reference to the Industries Assistance Commission recommendation that existing bounties on phosphatic fertilisers cease after June 1986 and to the rapid escalation in fertiliser costs and other farm input costs of recent times—

(1) What effect will such a move have on primary industry, small business and rural communities in general?

(2) Is he aware of the intentions of the Federal Government in relation to this recommendation?

*Answer—*

(1) I share the concern of the honourable member for Balonne at the IAC recommendation that assistance should not be provided for the consumption and production of fertiliser in Australia and that the subsidy arrangements for the consumption of phosphatic and nitrogenous fertilisers cease on 30 June 1986.

At present, Queensland primary producers spend about \$8m on phosphatic fertilisers and nearly \$30m on nitrogenous fertilisers. The total subsidy received by Queensland farmers is in excess of \$3.5m per annum. The majority of that subsidy—about 77 per cent—benefits the more lightly assisted export-oriented industries. Further, 60 per cent

of that assistance is currently going to Queensland cane-farmers who, as honourable members know, are presently experiencing extreme hardship owing to low world prices and declining farm profitability.

I know that a particular concern of the honourable member is the situation facing grain-growers who are currently suffering from low prices for their grain and rising costs of inputs.

The removal of the subsidy would therefore inflict a degree of social and economic hardship on the agricultural communities in Queensland, especially those areas dependent on the depressed sugar and grain industries.

(2) As yet, the Federal Government has not made known its intentions in this regard. However, I assure honourable members that the Queensland Government will make every effort to ensure the retention of the existing subsidy arrangements in line with my department's recommendation to the IAC enquiry.

It might interest honourable members to know a little about the history of the fertiliser subsidies. Those subsidies were first introduced in 1963 under a non-Labor Government. They were removed by Mr Whitlam when he came to office in 1974 and reintroduced by Mr Fraser when his party was returned to power. Now Mr Hawke, the Leader of the ALP Federal Government, could be contemplating doing another Whitlam on primary industries.

### 3. Rail Electrification, Caboolture-Gladstone

Mr ALISON asked the Minister for Transport—

With reference to the feasibility study of stage 4 of the main-line electrification scheme from Caboolture to Gladstone, which will join up with the sections for which decisions have already been made to electrify, namely, Rockhampton to Gladstone and Brisbane to Caboolture—

(1) Who is carrying out this study?

(2) When is it expected that the study and recommendations will be completed?

(3) What benefits would accrue to the people of Queensland should this proposal be proceeded with?

*Answer—*

(1) This study is being carried out by Queensland Railways, which has engaged a number of consulting engineers to assist in some specific detailed investigations. Those specific investigations include detailed surveys of four proposed deviations—between Eumundi and Cooroy; a bypass route in Gympie; between Oakhurst and Aldershot near Maryborough; and between Benaraby and Parana near Gladstone.

(2) I expect to receive information from the study early next year.

(3) The Eumundi, Gympie and Benaraby to Parana deviations involve easing of grades and removal of sharp radius curves to provide for a substantial increase from 790 tonnes to 1 170 tonnes in the load hauled by a single locomotive.

The Oakhurst deviation will provide significant time-savings for fast freight and general freight traffic on the North Coast line.

The major benefits accruing to the people in Queensland would be a reduction in the railway operating costs and an improvement in its operating efficiency resulting from—

- (a) a reduction in journey time between Brisbane and Rockhampton for passenger and fast freight trains;
- (b) a saving of an estimated 5 000 000 litres of diesel fuel by the use of electricity generated from locally produced coal;
- (c) a reduction in train operating costs through the use of electric power;
- (d) considerable savings in maintenance and servicing costs of locomotives. These savings are achieved in two ways: first, because they are more powerful, fewer electric locomotives are needed, and, second, maintenance and servicing

costs for an electric locomotive are much less than those for a diesel locomotive; and

(e) the ability to increase the permissible load of freight trains.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Would honourable members refrain from engaging in conversation, so that the replies of Ministers may be heard?

**Mr LANE:** The information is quite significant.

**Opposition Members interjected.**

**Mr LANE:** It is good for the State. It is not the petty politics that members opposite usually engage in. It is just good news. They would not be interested in that, would they?

**Mr R. J. Gibbs interjected.**

**Mr LANE:** They are not interested in learning that, if the program is adopted, 9 000 000 litres of fuel will be saved each year. Is that something to be dismissed lightly?

**Mr R. J. Gibbs interjected.**

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I call the Minister.

**Mr LANE:** I am being harassed by honourable members opposite, and continually harassed by the honourable member for Wolston.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I have noted that. I ask the Minister to continue with his answer.

**Mr R. J. Gibbs interjected.**

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Wolston.

**Mr R. J. Gibbs interjected.**

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I warn the honourable member for Wolston under Standing Order No. 123A.

**Mr LANE:** I thank you for your protection, Mr Speaker. I enjoy your support and protection.

**Mr Fouras interjected.**

**Mr LANE:** There is another member now picking on me.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The member for South Brisbane is in his incorrect seat. He will be ordered from the House if he is not careful.

**Mr LANE:** I thank you for your protection, Mr Speaker.

*Answer (continued)—*

It is expected that a modern, electric, multiple-unit passenger train providing a daylight service between Brisbane and Rockhampton will be introduced. These proposals will improve the productivity of the Queensland Railway Department, enabling it to become more competitive in the market-place and enhancing its revenue-earning opportunities.

#### 4. National Safety Council of Australia Depot, Maryborough

Mr ALISON asked the Minister for Health—

With reference to the offer by the National Safety Council of Australia to set up a depot at Maryborough to serve the east coast of Australia from Rockhampton to Ballina

and, in particular, to the offer to install a recompression chamber at the Maryborough Base Hospital—

- (1) When did Cabinet decide to appoint a committee to investigate this proposal?
- (2) Who are the members of this committee?
- (3) When is it expected that this committee will have finished its deliberations and report to Cabinet?

*Answer—*

(1) Cabinet, at its meeting on 30 September 1985, recommended the establishment of an interdepartmental committee to investigate the proposal.

(2) Membership of this committee comprises representatives of the departments of Police, Treasury, Mapping and Surveying, and Health. The State Emergency Service was also invited to nominate a representative.

(3) The committee finished its deliberations on 21 November 1985 and will report to Cabinet shortly.

#### **5. Building Society Loan Limits**

Sir WILLIAM KNOX asked the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General—

- (1) Have representations been made by building societies to raise the individual maximum loan above the present maximum of \$37,500?
- (2) Is he aware that considerable funds have been virtually frozen because the maximum loan level is believed to be too low?
- (3) Is he reviewing the matters raised by building societies, with the intention of lifting the loan limit as requested?

*Answer—*

(1) There is no limit upon the amount of an advance that a building society may make. The honourable member would appear to be referring to co-operative housing societies, with regard to which a maximum advance of \$37,500 may be made. Representations have been made by co-operative housing societies regarding such amount.

(2) No.

(3) The matters raised by co-operative housing societies are under review.

#### **6. Government Stationery Supplies**

Sir WILLIAM KNOX asked the Minister for Environment, Valuation and Administrative Services—

What are the details of supplies of office stationery to the Queensland Government which are purchased outside the State, namely: (a) description, (b) quantity ordered and (c) country or State of origin?

*Answer—*

There are 320 items of stationery on State Stores Board contracts or held in State Stores stocks. In answer to (a) and (b), I table annexure "A" and annexure "B" for the information of all members.

*Whereupon the honourable gentlemen laid the documents on the table.*

Where it is indicated that a contract is available, departments, hospitals, institutions and schools have the option of ordering through State Stores or directly from the manufacturer.

With regard to question (c)—the honourable member will realise that, because of the number of transactions, it would entail a large amount of work to identify the country or State of origin for each individual contract. However, I can inform the House

that the majority of overseas contracts to obtain supplies of office stationery for the Queensland Government are placed in the United Kingdom, Japan and Taiwan.

The stationery lines purchased outside Queensland have been so purchased either because no Queensland manufacturer offers the product required or because prices have still been too high after applying the State preference policy. The majority would fall into the first category. The preference followed is for supplies to be purchased firstly in Queensland, then interstate, followed by New Zealand and then other overseas countries.

#### 7. Funding for Vacation Care Programs

Mr DAVIS asked the Minister for Welfare Services, Youth and Ethnic Affairs—

(1) Is he aware that Federal funds for vacation care programs in Queensland were increased by \$500,000 for the 1985 calendar year?

(2) Is he also aware that the Federal Minister for Community Services (Senator Grimes) asked the State that, with the extra funds, it give priority to increasing the level of funding to existing services, with the long-term aim of consolidating financial viability and service quality?

(3) Is he also aware that all the other States complied with Senator Grimes's request but that Queensland ignored it, choosing instead to increase the number of funded vacation care programs from 51 to 70?

(4) Is he aware that Queensland and Western Australia are the only States not providing State funding to vacation care programs?

(5) Will he provide funds for the forthcoming Christmas vacation care programs in order to make the 70 programs a financial viability, so that the programs whose funding has decreased in real terms, in spite of a 54 per cent increase of Federal funding, can function effectively and provide quality programs?

(6) Does he believe that extra funding for vacation care programs would help in arresting Queensland's sky-rocketing juvenile crime rate?

*Answer—*

(1) Commonwealth funds for the vacation care program were not increased by \$500,000 in the 1985 calendar year. I therefore advise the member for Brisbane Central to check figures handed to him by the member for South Brisbane (Mr Fouras) before he uses them. They are quite incorrect. Funding was in fact increased by \$175,000—not the \$500,000, as claimed—which increased the allocation for the 1985 calendar year from \$325,000 to a total of \$500,000.

(2) The Commonwealth Minister for Community Services (Mr Grimes) requested that a number of matters be taken into consideration in allocating funds under the Vacation Care Program. Priority to existing services was one of the matters that he mentioned. Other suggested priorities were for areas of high need and to sponsors operating before and after School-Care Programs.

(3) I am not aware of the position of the other States in relation to the allocation of funds for the Vacation Care Program. In Queensland, there is an increasing demand for such funds. In fact, the number of organisations requesting funding under this program has increased from 176 in 1983 to 249 this year and the amount of money requested has almost doubled from \$453,000 in 1983 to \$880,000 in 1985. In view of this high demand for funding and the fact that many applications are from high-need areas, I have authorised funding for as many worthwhile services as possible, while still ensuring that adequate funds are provided to allow services to operate.

(4) I am advised that the honourable member's information is not correct. South Australia, Tasmania, Northern Territory and Queensland do not contribute State or Federal funds to the Vacation Care Program.

**Mr Davis:** That is wrong.

**Mr MUNTZ:** Again the information given by the honourable member for Brisbane Central is incorrect.

*Answer (continued)—*

(5) For the honourable member's information, I point out that applications totalling \$446,504 were received from 85 organisations wishing to operate programs during the 1985 Christmas holiday period. In view of the low level of Commonwealth funds available, only 71 organisations were able to be approved.

I wrote to the Commonwealth Minister for Community Services in May this year, pointing out the escalating demand for vacation care funds in Queensland and requesting that the Commonwealth provide additional funds for this State's Vacation Care Program. As the abovementioned figures show, the Commonwealth allocation falls far short of the demand for such services in this State.

(6) Whatever impact additional funding for Vacation Care Programs might have on juveniles who commit offences, the fact of the matter is that the Commonwealth allocations for this purpose are not nearly enough to satisfy the applications lodged by community organisations.

## QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

### National Party Policy on Industrial Relations

**Mr WARBURTON:** In directing a question to the Premier and Treasurer, I refer to public statements made by the president of the National Party (Sir Robert Sparkes) that advise the Queensland Government not to proceed with legislation that will deregulate the labour market.

**Mr Hinze** interjected.

**Mr WARBURTON:** You can throw him out, Mr Speaker. He has offended under Standing Order No. 123A.

In view of the comments made by Sir Robert Sparkes, which directly contradict statements made by the Premier and Treasurer in favour of such legislation, I ask: Who is running the Queensland Government—the Premier and Treasurer or Sir Robert Sparkes? Who are honourable members to believe—the Premier and Treasurer or Sir Robert Sparkes?

**Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN:** The Leader of the Opposition ought to know the answer to that question. Because he has been a member of this House long enough, it is simple for him to work it out, and he ought to know. There is no real need for me to answer this question.

All I say is that this Government believes very strongly in the right to work. We do not believe that the Leader of the Opposition, or the Australian Labor Party or its supporters, should have the right to tell people that they cannot work. The Queensland Government is determined to ensure that people are able to work, irrespective of what anyone else says. It is as simple as that.

### Absence of Minister from Chamber

**Mr WARBURTON:** In directing a second question to the Premier and Treasurer, I refer to last Thursday's attempt by him to explain to the House why the Minister for Welfare Services, Youth and Ethnic Affairs (Mr Muntz) was not in the Chamber during question-time. The Premier and Treasurer said—

“Ultimately, honourable members opposite will accept the cold, hard facts that we are the Government. We run the Government fairly and squarely, and today is Executive Council——”.

Am I to understand from those remarks made in this Chamber that, as far as the Premier and Treasurer is concerned, Parliament will continue to take second place to Executive Council?

**Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN:** The Leader of the Opposition has been very kind. I have a statement prepared on this matter, and he will have to wait whilst I read it. I was ready for him.

The Leader of the Opposition must know that, when the Australian Labor Party formed the Government in Queensland and members of the National Party occupied the Opposition benches, the same system operated.

**Mr Warburton:** I am not that old.

**Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN:** The Leader of the Opposition is not that old; which is why he is not that wise. He lacks experience because he is not old enough. However, I point out that, for 10 years, I was a member of the Opposition while members of the Australian Labor Party formed the Government. Executive Council meetings were held in exactly the same way on only a few days a year. On some days, question-time finishes at 12 o'clock. It is only on odd days that Executive Council causes any inconvenience. Since Queensland's formation as a State, it has been traditional for His Excellency the Governor to arrive at 12 o'clock on the dot.

Letters patent constituting the office of the Governor prescribe that there should be an Executive Council for the State and lay down who shall be members of the Executive Council. The Executive Council, summoned by authority of the Governor, meets once a week on a Thursday, and the Governor presides. For as long as I can remember, meetings of the Executive Council have been held on a Thursday.

**Mr Warburton:** From what are you reading?

**Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN:** I am quoting facts in answer to the question asked by the Leader of the Opposition. I know that he needs educating. He said that he was young and inexperienced. That is why I have to tell him these things.

As I said, meetings of the Executive Council have been held on Thursdays from the start of Queensland as a State. It must be remembered that minutes for Executive Council are approved first at the Cabinet meeting held earlier in the week. To enable these minutes to be processed, some time must elapse between a Cabinet meeting and an Executive Council meeting. If ever a frivolous claim was made, the honourable member's claim that Parliament is being interrupted because of the Executive Council meeting is frivolous. Usually two and, at the most, three Ministers leave the Assembly to attend an Executive Council meeting. They leave about five minutes before noon and return about ten minutes after noon. That means an absence for 15 minutes and only on occasional days, not every day, of three Ministers out of a Ministry of 18.

**Mr Warburton:** Why don't you change it?

**Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN:** Change it for the Leader of the Opposition? Who is he?

**Opposition Members interjected.**

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order!

**Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN:** The Leader of the Opposition is inexperienced. I will let him off on that ground.

When I was in the Opposition, the Labor Government of the day had a Cabinet of 11 Ministers. The Opposition recognised the need for Ministers to be absent for a short time to attend the Executive Council meeting. Not at any time did the Opposition object to the absence of two or three Ministers out of a Ministry of 11.

Furthermore, question-time must finish at 12 noon when the Address in Reply and departmental Estimates are being debated. In fact, the number of Thursdays when

Ministers are absent for about 15 minutes is minimal. The Leader of the Opposition knows that. I do not propose recommending to His Excellency that the time at which Executive Council meets be altered. It is as simple as that.

### **Canberra Protest by Hospitality and Catering Industries**

**Mr NEAL:** I ask the Minister for Tourism, National Parks, Sport and The Arts: Is he aware that Queensland members of the hospitality and catering industries are in Canberra today to protest against the Federal Government's tax on entertainment?

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I am sorry, but I cannot allow that question. It is not an appropriate question to be directed to the Minister.

**Mr NEAL:** I asked the Minister whether he is aware of it.

**Mr McKECHNIE:** I heard the question.

I am well aware of the protest in Canberra today. Quite frankly, I would like to be there with those people because what the Federal Government is doing to the tourist industry has to be seen to be believed. I would like the House to know that I have offered every assistance to the people who have gone down there but, naturally, my first priority is to be in this House.

The tourist and hospitality industries have legitimate cause for concern about the Federal Government's taxation policies. Not only are there huge job losses but the return to the economy is negative. As a result of the changes to the entertainment tax provisions, the Federal Government will lose more money than it gains.

A survey carried out by Queensland accountants Horwath and Horwath has revealed that, already, 1 500 jobs have been lost in Queensland alone. A survey carried out by another company has estimated that up to 40 000 jobs could be lost throughout Australia. Those jobs will be lost because of taxation policies of envy rather than taxation policies of common sense.

The Federal Government will receive only \$79m from this measure, that is, from the non-deductibility of entertainment expenses, and that is \$310m short of Mr Keating's estimate. As I said, the Federal Government will receive about \$79m from this tax, but the Gross Domestic Product will be reduced by about \$434m. To get \$79m, the Federal Government has thrown away \$434m.

It is economic madness. Shades of the Whitlam era are coming back into politics in Australia. That is the sort of economic madness over which the Whitlam Government presided, and that is the sort of economic madness that the Hawke Government is getting into now, just to please the Left. Honourable members are aware of the way in which the system works. In order to introduce a few popular measures for business, the Federal Government has to do deals with the Left. How stupid could the Federal Government be to throw \$300m of income for Australia down the drain, as well as possibly 40 000 jobs!

**Mr Davis:** How stupid are you?

**Mr McKECHNIE:** The honourable member for Brisbane Central talks about stupidity. I look across at members on the Opposition benches and realise that they support the Hawke Labor Government that will destroy up to 40 000 jobs in the tourist and hospitality industries. I do not think that one could get anything more stupid than that.

### **Gold Lotto Prizes**

**Mr BURNS:** I ask the Deputy Premier and Minister Assisting the Treasurer: Is he aware of the anger and frustration of many hundreds of Queenslanders who have been defrauded into believing that they would win 2nd, 3rd and 4th division prizes after reading the conditions on the back of the Gold Lotto entry form, when in fact the forms are wrong and investors who ring the Golden Casket Art Union Office are told that they

are not entitled to the prizes in the divisions indicated on the form? As that has been happening for several weeks, and as Golden Casket officials continue to ignore the protests of angry investors, will he take urgent steps to have the Golden Casket Art Union Office replace all Gold Lotto forms distributed to newsagents in Queensland with up-to-date ones?

**Mr GUNN:** I can appreciate that when people have made a mistake——

**Mr Burns:** But they don't know.

**Mr GUNN:** I say that they have made a mistake. If the honourable member has any specific cases, I hope that he will let me have them. On all occasions on which I have investigated this matter, I have found that the ticket-holders have made a mistake. I can appreciate their feelings of frustration on occasions when they consider that they have had an excellent win. If the honourable member has any specific cases, I would certainly like to have them. Over a period, I have had several cases investigated by the Golden Casket Art Union Office, and I have found that general satisfaction has been reached with the ticket-holders.

#### **Gold Lotto Prizes**

**Mr BURNS:** I have a further question for the Deputy Premier and Minister Assisting the Treasurer. Before I ask the question, I will just explain that the Gold Lotto system was changed from 36 to 45 numbers, and new forms were printed. Those new forms stated that if people picked five numbers they would get a 2nd division prize, which is generally worth \$10,000 or \$11,000. There was a substantial drop in the number of people investing. As a result, the rules were changed.

**Mr Alison** interjected.

**Mr BURNS:** Yes, it is a question. The honourable member for Maryborough always has to help Mr Speaker. He will not let the House run as it should run.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I ask the honourable member to put his question.

**Mr BURNS:** Yes. What has happened is that dozens and dozens of people who have invested their money and read the conditions on the back of the form, which state that having five numbers entitles people to a 2nd division prize, have been refused the money. The authorities will not change the forms. They are still using the old forms with the old conditions and, every day, more and more people are being frustrated and robbed. I now ask: Will the Minister take action to have new forms introduced?

**Mr GUNN:** I think that I answered the honourable member's question earlier. This matter has been given a great airing in the newspapers, and I have been to the Golden Casket office myself to have it investigated. I suggest to the honourable member once more that if he brings specific cases to my attention, I will have them investigated for him.

#### **Parliamentary Liberal Party Support for State Government**

**Mr HENDERSON:** In directing a question to the Premier and Treasurer, I refer to the fact that, prior to the Redlands by-election, the State president of the Young Liberals movement in Queensland was quoted widely in the press claiming that, over the past two years, the parliamentary Liberal Party voted with the Queensland National Party Government on 3 500 occasions in this place. I now ask: Can the Premier advise the House how that figure was arrived at?

**Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN:** When I read that figure, I thought that somebody must have had a lot of time to research *Hansard* and other records to come up with it. What is evident is that the number of times that the House has adjourned for lunch and for the evening has been worked out on a general basis, and that has been added as indicating support by the Liberal Party for the Government.

### Federal Government Support for Conservation Groups

**Mr BORBIDGE:** I ask the Minister for Tourism, National Parks, Sport and The Arts: Has his attention been drawn to reports indicating that the Commonwealth Government has allocated almost \$1m to various conservation groups throughout Australia? If the Minister is aware of those reports, can he advise the House of the Queensland Government's response?

**Mr McKECHNIE:** I have seen the report, and I am sure that all honourable members have seen it, too. Malcolm Fraser tried to do the same thing. He thought that by giving these conservation groups money, he would buy their loyalty. However, all that happens when a person feeds a little puppy a few biscuits is that it grows into a dog and bites him. That is exactly what the Federal Minister for Environment (Mr Cohen) will find out when he hands out all that money to the conservation groups.

Literally hundreds of dedicated people who work for me in the National Parks and Wildlife Service have great concern for the environment. If Mr Cohen gave that department money, it could buy more habitats for endangered species, and something worth while could be done to protect the environment. But, no, Mr Cohen insists on giving that money to the unelected, non-accountable bodies.

I point out that although not all of them are radical groups, some of them are. Mr Cohen is finding out now that those groups are turning round and biting him in the same way as they bit Mr Fraser. I urge Mr Cohen to wake up to himself and display a little more common sense and give more money to the State Governments, which have worthwhile departments and staff who can advise Governments on the best ways to assist in bringing about the protection of endangered species in this country.

### Christmas Confectionery

**Mr COMBEN:** I have a question for the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General concerning certain biscuits and cakes, which I have with me today and which are available for his perusal. I ask: Will he advise the House why he approved an agreement between Community Chest Marketing Pty Ltd and Queensland Meals on Wheels Services Association under which that charity is to receive 10 per cent of the gross sale price of certain Christmas confectionery articles when the sale of those items will bring the Meals on Wheels Association into disrepute, as the sales are a cool confidence trick on Meals on Wheels and the public because—(a) the prices are approximately twice that of similar, ordinary commercial products; (b) the advertising literature promoting the products is false and misleading; (c) the quantity of the product delivered is substantially different from that advertised in the promotional literature; (d) the prices quoted on different pieces of advertising literature and order forms vary to such an extent that no proper idea of the price can be obtained until an invoice is received; and (e) the lack of a weight on certain packaged items probably breaches regulation 9.3 (b) of the Weights and Measures Act?

**Mr Littleproud:** How many questions are you going to ask?

**Mr COMBEN:** The Minister will know the answer.

In view of this confidence trick by Community Chest Marketing Pty Ltd, will the Minister undertake to increase the \$65,000 subsidy paid to Meals on Wheels and investigate this matter to determine whether a prosecution should take place?

**Mr HARPER:** In answer to the honourable member's short question without notice, I must say that I am aware of the problems he related. I have indicated, if not to the honourable member, then to others, that the question of the association of Meals on Wheels with the company whose goods are being promoted is a domestic matter for Meals on Wheels. However, I will further investigate the matters that the honourable member raised.

### **Relocation of Navy's Facilities to Cairns**

**Mr JENNINGS:** I ask the Premier and Treasurer: Is he aware of the presence in Queensland of the dream-time snake, Stundoola, which is impeding the proposed \$1 billion transfer of the Royal Australian Navy's facilities from Sydney to Jervis Bay in New South Wales? If no such impediment exists in Queensland, will he invite the navy to relocate in Cairns, north Queensland, to strengthen the nation's northern defences and show that this sort of airy-fairy flapdoodle should not be allowed to hold back the development of Australia's defences and the creation of jobs?

**Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN:** I can assure the House that no such snake exists in Queensland. It never has been in this State and never will be. In addition, Queensland does not have the type of snake that is currently stopping the progress of one of the big companies in Perth.

I want to emphasise that the creation of jobs and progress is being hindered and in some cases prevented by the support for, and recognition of, sacred sites and all the hoo-ha that goes with that. Day after day, one sees in the papers that the Commonwealth Government in Canberra is recognising and supporting those who want the declaration of sacred sites. I assure the honourable member that the Queensland Government is quite happy to have the navy establish facilities at Cairns in north Queensland. That would provide an excellent opportunity to improve the defence of the north and create employment. I will give a written guarantee that there are no snakes of that sort in Queensland.

### **Cut-backs in Funding, Gold Coast College of Technical and Further Education**

**Mr JENNINGS:** In asking a question of the Minister for Education, I refer to reports circulating on the Gold Coast that certain courses at the Gold Coast College of Technical and Further Education are to be discontinued as a result of cut-backs in State Government funding. I now ask: Are such reports true, and how much State Government funding has been made available to the Gold Coast College of TAFE this financial year and the previous financial year?

**Mr POWELL:** It is not true to say that State Government funding to TAFE colleges has been cut. Those rumours have been circulating for a number of weeks. They seem to stem from the fact that the Federal Government has cut funding for the Participation and Equity Program (PEP) and the Living and Work Skills (LAWS) Program. The funding for those sorts of programs has been cut by 50 per cent. As a result of that, some part-time teachers who had an expectation of continuing work in the 1986 school year will not have that work. The funds just are not there. The other form of part-time teachers are used in what is called the Stream 1000 courses, which are courses that could be best described as recreation courses.

The department is currently examining the funding of TAFE colleges. Because of expectations that were not realised, five TAFE colleges in the State overran their budgets to a serious extent. Those in the rest of the State have been operating according to budget. Each of the colleges must maintain its budget, but in some cases that is difficult. I do not have with me at the moment the exact figures for the appropriations to the Gold Coast college, but I will give that information to the honourable member as soon as I can obtain it.

I can give all honourable members a watertight guarantee that there is no lessening in State funding of TAFE colleges. If honourable members read their Budget papers, they will find that, as well as an increase in funding, there has been an increase in the number of teachers employed at TAFE colleges. However, the matters referred to by the honourable member have occurred because of the matters to which I referred earlier.

### **Listing in Telephone Directory of Queensland Government Representative Office, Tokyo**

**Mr PALASZCZUK:** In directing a question to the Premier and Treasurer, I refer to the fact that, whilst every other Federal and State Government with an office in Tokyo has such a listing, the Queensland Government Representative Office, Tokyo, is

not listed in the Tokyo English-speaking language telephone directory. I have been told that businessmen in Tokyo cannot obtain the telephone number from the Tokyo telephone company and that they have had to resort to telephoning the Australian Embassy to obtain it. I now ask: What is the value of having an office in Tokyo, costing Queenslanders \$664,000 a year, when it is not even listed in the English language telephone directory that I have in my hand?

**Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN:** The honourable member should realise that the logical thing in a Japanese society is to adopt the Japanese method of recording such telephone numbers. If the honourable member goes to Tokyo and does not know where to find the number, that is his bad luck. I take it that he would stay in a hotel and not out in the open. He would need only to ask the hotel proprietor or the receptionist, "Please get Queensland House for me," and the number would be obtained for him in an instant. Surely the honourable member could work that out. Was he not a schoolteacher at one time?

#### ***Semper Floreat* Article on Participation and Equity Program**

**Mr FITZGERALD:** I ask the Minister for Education: Did he read an article in the Queensland University magazine *Semper Floreat*, No. 10, on 6 November, concerning alleged siphoning off of funds earmarked for the Participation and Equity Program? If so, would he inform the House whether those allegations and other serious claims made in the article by the honourable members for Ipswich and Ipswich West have any substance?

**Mr POWELL:** The statements made in the magazine referred to by the honourable member are as reputable as the magazine. There is no substance in them at all. Why the magazine would go only to Opposition members for comment, I leave to the conjecture of all other honourable members. The claim that PEP funds are ineptly administered is absolute nonsense. The funds are used in accordance with the guidelines that are given to the State Government by the Federal Government.

The whole problem with PEP is that it is so top-heavy with bureaucracy that funds are siphoned off too much before they reach the target schools. I will give honourable members an idea of what happens. All the budgets are forwarded to the Commonwealth. The profiles of every PEP project undertaken are sent every six months to the Commonwealth Schools Commission. They contain the location, the contact person, the personnel involved, the description of the project, the objective and the Budget expenditure to the last cent, including salaries, modifications, equipment, etc.

**Mr Davis** interjected.

**Mr POWELL:** I know that it must be hard for the honourable member to listen to this. It must be very disappointing for him to hear that members of Parliament are being discredited all the time.

The claim that the subjects are not recognised and do not count towards the school certificate is also nonsense. Some applied studies are board-registered school subjects, that is, they are registered by the Board of Secondary Studies. Others are school subjects that appear on school certificates and sometimes, if they are board-registered subjects, on the Senior certificate. They do not count towards the tertiary entrance score and they are not designed to count towards the TE score. The whole idea of the PEP program is that it was not designed for students who were aimed towards tertiary education; it was designed only for students who were not headed towards tertiary education.

The honourable member for Ipswich criticised the selection of target schools. Seventy-five schools have been selected. No changes will be made to that.

Approximately 220 schools and secondary departments in this State do not receive PEP funding. Bremer is one of those schools only because it does not qualify. It is not because it is in a Labor electorate; it is simply because it does not fit into the guidelines. In fact, Bundamba, which is in the electorate of Wolston, is a targeted school. So

the criticism by the honourable member that the Government is selecting only schools that are not in Labor electorates is equally nonsense.

The whole article is a load of nonsense. It is a shame that people take notice of such rubbish. If honourable members want to know more about PEP and the way in which it operates in Queensland, I suggest that they read the annual report of my department.

### **The Business Operating Success Systems**

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** In directing a question to the Minister for Industry, Small Business and Technology, I refer to a portable filing and management scheme called "The BOSS" that has just been released by the Small Business Development Corporation. Would the Minister please explain its functions and its likely advantages to small business?

**Mr AHERN:** The Small Business Development Corporation was pleased to have the Premier and Treasurer (Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen) open its new premises in Queen Adelaide Place at 545 Queen Street, Brisbane. I invite all honourable members to attend at those premises and look at what is on display. I also invite honourable members to refer their constituents there from time to time for help in regard to small business. A range of programs is now in operation.

The BOSS, which is mentioned in this morning's press, is a very useful program and one which would be handy in electorate offices. I invite honourable members to participate in that program and utilise fully the facilities offered by the Small Business Development Corporation.

### **Survey Conducted by Australian Teachers Federation on Australian Class-rooms**

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** I ask the Minister for Education: Does the recent Australian Teachers Federation survey on the condition of Australian class-rooms, which found that Queensland class-rooms were in better condition than those in other States, endorse the attitude of this Government to building and maintenance of its class-rooms?

**Mr POWELL:** If honourable members opposite had read the *Daily Sun* of Thursday, 24 October, they might have been enlightened. It is rather interesting to note that Opposition members gleefully criticise school buildings and education in this State. I invite them to read the ministerial statement that I made this morning.

I draw to the attention of honourable members some interesting facts that are contained in the article to which I have referred. The Australian Teachers Federation, which conducted the survey, is hardly a friend of this Government. However, the article states—

"It found 33 per cent of Australian classrooms to be overdue for maintenance, compared with 25 per cent in Queensland."

The ATF survey found that 76 per cent of Queensland secondary schools included class-rooms of a high standard, compared with only a 69 per cent national average.

The Queensland Teachers Union president, who also had great difficulty in stomaching the ATF report, said that Queensland figures were unrealistically flattering because of a poor showing by Victoria, which, I point out for the benefit of honourable members, has a Labor Government.

In answer to the honourable member's question—the survey gives the lie to the continual carping from Opposition members about Queensland schools and class-rooms. I would dearly love to have honourable members opposite occasionally accompany me on a visit to some of the class-rooms in this State so that they could see the great things that are happening.

### Queensland Ambulance Transport Brigade Subscriptions

**Mr HAMILL:** In directing a question to the Premier and Treasurer, I draw his attention to the 18th annual report of the State Council of the Queensland Ambulance Transport Brigade, wherein the heavy reliance of the brigade upon subscriptions and private endowments is revealed. The report indicates that the subscriptions and private endowments comprised \$19.5m of last year's receipts of \$45m.

I ask the Premier in his capacity as Minister responsible for the administration of the public service: Did the QATB seek permission to canvass State Government departments for subscriptions this year, and was permission refused? If so, is it deliberate Government policy to restrict the ability of the QATB to raise revenue from subscriptions in order to fund its services?

**Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN:** The Government, of course, provides a dollar-for-dollar subsidy for ambulance services throughout the State. Ambulance centres provide a tremendous service and do good work. Naturally, the Government supports them strongly and freely. I would have to check on whether they ought to be given permission to go into the public service and other sectors of Government activity to solicit funds. On certain occasions, the Government has given permission to organisations—perhaps I should not go into the ones that are given—

**Mr Casey:** National Party membership.

**Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN:** It would not be for the ALP, that is for sure. The last thing the Government would think of is something like the honourable member for Mackay thinks about. He is the only one who can suggest such things. He is the one who was involved in the poker machine racket and received about \$30,000. That is why he thinks in that way.

**Mr Casey:** What about the Bjelke-Petersen Foundation?

**Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN:** It is about time that a man who talks about going to church paid his debts to the Government. He has stolen funds from the Government. He is a thief who has stolen funds from the Government. It makes my blood boil—

**Mr HAMILL:** I rise to a point of order.

A Government Member interjected.

**Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN:** Casey is a thief, Mr Speaker, as the honourable member said.

**Mr CASEY:** I rise to a point of order. I find the remarks of the Premier and Treasurer most offensive and untrue. I ask that they be withdrawn.

**Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN:** Mr Speaker, if you rule that they should be withdrawn, I withdraw them. The cold, hard facts are—

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I have to rule accordingly.

**Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN:** Yes, Mr Speaker. That is OK.

I have a letter from the Auditor-General saying that the member for Mackay owes the Government money, that he has taken the money and will not repay it. That is quite clear.

**Mr CASEY:** I rise to a point of order. The rules of the House, in accordance with your ruling the other day, Mr Speaker, clearly indicate that the Premier and Treasurer should withdraw in an unqualified way. I ask for that withdrawal.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I advise the honourable member that the Premier did withdraw, and I rule accordingly.

**Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN:** I know that the honourable member for Mackay is touchy on this subject, so I will lay off him for the time being, but I will never let up on it.

**Mr Casey:** Not as touchy as you are on the money——

**Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN:** The honourable member for Mackay has a record, and a hide as thick as a rhinoceros, but I will lay off him today. He is the one man who has a lot of money——

**Mr HAMILL:** I rise to a point of order. My question relates to whether the Government gave permission to the QATB to canvass subscriptions from Government departments. I fail to see the relevance of the matters canvassed by the Premier.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! There is no point of order.

**Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN:** I was rudely interrupted and side-tracked by the honourable member for Mackay.

In reply to the question—individuals are free to give to the ambulance whenever and wherever they like. Many of us give donations to the ambulance. That, of course, is what the Government would support and expect. As to giving a general right to go into all Government departments in an organised way—I doubt that the Government could go along with that. I will check it out.

**Mr HAMILL:** Mr Speaker, I hope to get a more direct answer to my second question.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order!

#### **Implication for State's Rural Exports of J-curve Effect**

**Mr HAMILL:** In directing a question to the Deputy Premier and Minister Assisting the Treasurer, I refer to his recent comments in the House about floating currency exchange rates and the recent devaluation of the Australian dollar. In the light of his apparent expertise in international economics, I ask: In consideration of the well-documented J-curve effect on the balance of payments caused by devaluation, what are the short and long-term implications for the State's rural export sector?

**Mr GUNN:** It is quite easy to answer that question. One has only to travel through rural areas to discover what people living there think of the present position. If I am not an expert in economics affairs, I would hate to think what the Canberra Labor Government is. It has made one hell of a mess of our country. I draw attention to the Prime Minister's statement, prior to the last election, that interest rates would not rise in the near future. Since that statement was made, they have risen by 6 per cent.

**Mr HAMILL:** I rise to a point of order.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The honourable member for Ipswich has put a question to the Deputy Premier and Minister Assisting the Treasurer, and it is being answered. I will listen to the point of order when the Deputy Premier and Minister Assisting the Treasurer has finished.

**Mr GUNN:** No honourable member—particularly a member who represents the Australian Labor Party—should refer to devaluation of the Australian dollar, because that is one of the greatest tragedies that have occurred in the history of this country. That tragedy is due, in no small way, to the floating of the Australian dollar by the Federal socialist Government, and that was done in the hope that its value would rise above the value of the US dollar. Instead, the value of the Australian dollar has dropped to a record low, and no light can be seen at the end of the tunnel. Moreover, interest rates have increased to 20 per cent. I do not think that that is anything to be proud of.

I realise that the honourable member for Ipswich is but an amateur in politics. I suggest to him that, in future, he not ask questions of that nature, because the Federal

Labor Government has nothing to be proud of in terms of the value of the Australian dollar.

**Mr HAMILL:** I rise to a point of order. I simply wish to state that the Deputy Premier and Minister Assisting the Treasurer is canvassing other matters that are unrelated to the question I asked, as was the Premier and Treasurer. The question I asked referred to the J-curve effect of devaluation, and the Deputy Premier and Minister Assisting the Treasurer did not answer that question as he was obliged to under the Standing Orders of this House.

#### **Land Sales Act Amendment Act**

**Mr INNES:** I ask the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General: Is he aware of the widespread difficulties that the land development industry has encountered with the land sales legislation that was introduced last year and passed by this House this year? Have representations been received from all parts of the State from development bodies, such as the Urban Development Institute of Australia, real estate agents and conveyancing solicitors, complaining that the legislation is largely unworkable in main areas of intended benefit? Does the Minister now accept the validity of those complaints? Will he act quickly and consultatively to introduce workable amendments that will allow land sales to take place before registration?

**Mr HARPER:** I am aware of concerns expressed by various interest groups about the provisions of the Land Sales Act Amendment Act, which have been in force since 1 July. I expect the introduction within the next day or two of a Bill to amend the legislation.

#### **Use of Q-Net by Local Authorities**

**Mr COOPER:** I ask the Minister for Industry, Small Business and Technology: Will he outline to the House the Government's plans to allow local authorities to share the Q-Net telecommunications network for the benefit of people who live in provincial areas?

**Mr AHERN:** It is the intention of the Government, wherever appropriate, to enable local authorities to share Q-Net receival facilities for the purpose of gathering the signal from Aussat and relaying it to remote communities. Enabling legislation will be presented to the Parliament to allow local authorities to participate in such a program. It is possible for the Government to make available the facility to remote communities, and the Government is very pleased to do so. It is hoped that local authorities generally will take the opportunity.

Discussions are being held with local authority representatives from various areas throughout the State to make sure that the investment made by the Government in the Q-Net facility, which is primarily a private communications network, is utilised in such a way that maximum benefit will be obtained by people who live in remote communities. The Government believes that through the utilisation of those facilities, people will gain maximum benefit, particularly those who live in areas in which television is not presently available. The Government is co-operating with all local authorities that are involved.

#### **Business Ownership Assistance for Aborigines**

**Mr COOPER:** I ask the Minister for Northern Development and Aboriginal and Island Affairs: Is he able to say whether calls made by Mr Mick Miller for financial support to be given to Aborigines to start their own businesses constitute a genuine effort to help Aborigines, or are they part of another scheme that is designed to obtain money from the Government?

**Mr KATTER:** I am pleased to see the change in approach that has occurred on the part of leaders of Aboriginal communities who, these days, seem to be constantly requesting assistance so that they can get their own operations to work for their own benefit. That is in sharp contrast to what I observed during my recent trip to the

Northern Territory, where I found that the Aboriginal communities are more concerned about cultural purity. It is quite ridiculous. That form of cultural purity is based on hand-outs that are obtained by extending the begging bowl. While that continues, Aborigines in the Northern Territory will never be able to walk with any sense of pride. Presumably, their future will be the same as that of most other Aborigines whose efforts have failed. It will be in the wine flagons and various other things that have broken these people who should be useful citizens. I am very appreciative that some Aborigines are acknowledging that one of their great problems is securing capital to enable them to get businesses going. In the 18 months since we started private ownership in Queensland, 17 privately run businesses have started in Queensland communities. Two years ago, only one such business was under way. I ask members to note one simple statistic. Three years ago, about \$75,000 was earned from crayfishing and other fishing in the Torres Strait. I am told that, this year, the value of the catch will be more than \$1.6m.

The reference by the member for Southport to the dream-time snake, Stundoola, the references to sacred sites, and so on, are really efforts by the socialists to tell these people that they do not have to work, that all they have to do is take money from the rich people and sit under a tree all day doing nothing.

That is the essence of the point made by the Premier in the Northern Territory. All thinking people at that conference could not but acknowledge the wisdom of what was said. I strongly applaud the approach for financial support to get businesses going. I hope that that attitude predominates in the future, and that this is not just another effort to get money.

#### **Home Loan Interest Rates**

**Mr NEWTON:** I ask the Premier and Treasurer: What effect is the increase in home loan interest rates likely to have on the Queensland economy? Has the State Government any financial plans to help overcome any adverse effects?

**Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN:** Interest rates today are having a disastrous effect across the board in every area of activity, be it on the land or in the building industry. Because the building industry is being affected harshly, home-building and home-ownership are also affected. The Queensland Government will continue to do what the Minister for Works and Housing has been doing in an outstanding way, that is, supply enormous sums of money. The Government will play its part, as it has done in the past. In spite of the high interest rates created by the Labor Government, the Government will continue to attack the problem with the same impetus and determination.

#### **Paint Industry Dispute**

**Mr NEWTON:** I ask the Minister for Employment and Industrial Affairs: Is he able to take any action to protect Queensland Ford motor company employees who may be affected by the paint industry dispute in the south?

**Mr LESTER:** I am absolutely astounded at what I read in the press each day about the dispute that started in the south, which could affect people in Queensland. The union seems to be hell-bent on continuing a flow on in unemployment. Goodness me! We are having enough troubles in Australia in trying to maintain our position. It is no longer economic to build a Holden engine in Australia. Engines have to be built overseas and imported.

Queensland could be in a good position through the Ford motor company doing its own thing and employing people, but the strike will put 20 000 people out of work. That will make difficulties for the Queensland Government. The union started its activities in Victoria, but Queensland will be affected by stand-downs. Because work is not being done in Victoria, parts or commodities will not be available for work to be carried out here. I believe that these people in the south are in defiance of every normal convention. Again, the Hawke Government seems to be powerless to do anything about the matter.

**Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen:** He was playing golf the other day.

**Mr LESTER:** When such an important issue is at stake—the employment of 20 000 people—I do not think that it is wise for the Prime Minister to be playing golf. In fact, I think that it is downright disastrous. It is showing contempt for those people who are likely to become unemployed.

It is about time that the Federal Government showed some backbone.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The time allotted for questions has now expired.

*Sitting suspended from 12.56 to 2.15 p.m.*

## AUCTIONEERS AND AGENTS ACT AMENDMENT BILL

### Second Reading—Resumption of Debate

Debate resumed from 21 November (see p. 2693) on Mr Harper's motion—

“That the Bill be now read a second time.”

**Mr MACKENROTH (Chatsworth) (2.15 p.m.):** The first point that I raise concerns the fees that are paid to real estate agents, and I have raised this matter in the Parliament before. I note that, only last week, the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General increased the amount that is payable to agents. The first thing that the president of the Real Estate Institute of Queensland said was that he would seek an immediate meeting with the Minister to discuss another increase. It is appalling that agents carry on in that way. Because of the increases every day in inflation, an agent's commission is automatically increased, so it is ridiculous for them to claim that they are entitled to more money through a higher percentage.

Eight years ago, when I moved into my electorate office, which is in a strip shopping centre, one agent and four salesmen operated there. In other words, five people made their living from selling real estate on the rates that were current at the time, namely, 5 per cent of the first \$10,000 and 2½ per cent thereafter. Now, six agents and 32 salesmen operate from the same strip of shops and have the same number of houses to sell; yet they claim that they need a rise in commission. If, as is claimed, they need a rise, how have the additional five agents and 28 salesmen managed to survive?

One of the agents, who was the sixth agent into the shopping centre, complained about this matter to me. Indeed, he wrote me a letter only a week after he moved in, complaining about the fact that agents were not paid enough and that I should support the REIQ submission to the Minister. I wrote back to him and told him that the reason that he was facing difficulties was that too many agents and salesmen were operating and that if the real estate business was unprofitable, I was amazed that he had started up his own business in that shopping centre.

The increase awarded by the Minister is too much. The rate of commission will now be 5 per cent of the first \$18,000, which is effectively an increase of \$200 on every single sale that is made, because nothing is sold under \$18,000. It must be remembered that an agent's commission is taken care of through inflation, which forces house prices to rise.

In the journal of the REIQ that was published last week, the main complaint was the Federal Government's capital gains tax. An analysis of the argument shows that, despite the fact that the Federal Government has said that inflation will be taken into account and that only gains after allowing for inflation will be taxable, the REIQ claims that people will not want to invest in real estate. However, that contrasts with the argument put forward to the Minister that inflation does not affect the amount of money that agents earn. I wonder how the REIQ can rationalise its argument, because it cannot have it both ways. On the one hand, it cannot say to the Federal Government that if it imposes a capital gains tax people will not invest in real estate because they will pay tax on any gain that is made after inflation is discounted—that is, that people make

gains from real estate that exceed inflation—yet, on the other hand, claim that real estate does not keep pace with inflation.

Real estate agents have complained that this Bill will regulate their industry. For example, the signs that agents can put up will be regulated. However, when the Minister suggested that vendors should barter for the commission or fee that they pay to the agent on selling their house, the agents protested, claiming that their commission must be regulated. These bastions of free enterprise want to operate in a system that is regulated to their benefit, such as the amount of commission that they are to be paid. They want all agents to charge the same fee so that there is no competition. However, they do not want the Government to regulate any other part of their industry.

For many years, I have suggested to those in the real estate industry that they cannot have it both ways; that, if they want to be in a regulated industry, it has to be regulated all the way; and that, if they do not want to be in a regulated industry, they should change the system and stop the Government from setting the fees so that the public can barter with real estate agents on the scale of fees to apply. They could then see who will survive.

Frankly, far too many real estate agents are operating in Queensland. Far too many real estate agents have been allowed to keep their licences when they themselves are not working in the business. They sell their licences to others to operate a business. They allow others to use their licence number. The next time the Real Estate Institute of Queensland comes to the Government and asks for a fee increase, it should say that it is about time that the issuing of licences to real estate agents ceased temporarily so that the State could have fewer real estate agents. Salesmen should be licensed so that any person with a car but no job would not be able to become a real estate salesman and try to make a few bucks. Those sorts of people leave the industry after two or three months. They are not professionals in any way. In saying that, I am not casting a slur on the whole real estate industry, which has many good agents and many good salesmen. However, fringe elements in the industry give it a very bad name. The reason why the commission fees are so high is that there are too many agents in the business.

Another matter that I wish to raise relating to agents deals with a motor car agent by the name of Kevin Howe Motors of Mount Gravatt. Recently, I had come to see me a young couple who had purchased a car from Kevin Howe Motors for approximately \$3,000. When they took possession of the car, they received the roadworthiness certificate and were told by Kevin Howe Motors that they needed someone to act as guarantor on the loan. After the documents had been signed and they took possession of the car, the young couple received the documents and discovered that Kevin Howe Motors had added to the bill of sale a charge of \$250 for a predelivery service. That charge is only ever added to the cost of a new car. Certainly I have never heard of it happening with the purchase of a used car.

The roadworthiness certificate that was issued was not worth the paper it was written on. It was issued by a dealer in Woodridge. One would always have to question why a used car dealer at Mount Gravatt needs to send a car to Woodridge for a roadworthiness certificate. Dealers sending cars to their mates for roadworthiness certificates happens all the time. I question whether any car costing \$3,000 would get a clean bill of health, with not one single fault, when it was sent for a roadworthiness certificate. That is an impossibility, but it certainly happened in this case.

One of the worst aspects of this transaction is the fact that the couple who purchased the car were only 17 years of age. As such, it was illegal for them to sign any bill of sale. They were not told that by Kevin Howe Motors. The sister and brother-in-law of one of the purchasers of the vehicle acted as guarantor. Kevin Howe Motors put the bill of sale into their name and got them to sign the documents. When the documents were delivered in the mail, they found that they were not guarantors for the loan but in fact had taken out the loan. The young couple did not appear on the bill of sale and their name did not appear on the registration papers, the insurance papers or any other documents.

I have spoken to Kevin Howe Motors, which in no way accepts any responsibility. The company makes the claim that this matter was explained to the young couple, who have given me a statutory declaration to say that this is not the case. This is yet another case of a used car salesman taking advantage of young people and ripping them off. I would ask the Minister to have his officers responsible for licensing these people study the practices of Kevin Howe Motors.

Mr BURNS (Lytton) (2.24 p.m.): When I was listening to the honourable member for Chatsworth, I remembered the old story that I saw on television, "Come in, you galah. Have a cigar. I'll sell you a car with a free bumper bar." That is not much different from what has happened on Russell Island.

As honourable members would know, over many years I have taken an interest in Russell Island and in the land sales that have occurred on that island. I was very annoyed when the crooks who, years ago, defrauded many thousands of people by selling land that was under water on Russell Island were able to go scot-free because of a long, drawn-out trial. Barristers used the law to get their crooked customers off the charges.

Today I want to refer to advertisements for property on the bay islands in general. I will read some of them. One advertisement states—

**"LAZY DAYS IN THE SUN ISLAND RETREAT \$9750**

Just on the market today! Nestled on the beautiful EMERALD ISLAND off Brisbanes very own sun glistening Moreton Bay a complete weekend island retreat—a banquet of fishing, swimming, boating or lazing around in the sun. A HUGE 3200 square metres (2/3 of an acre) ABSOLUTE WATERFRONT freehold section of land fully set up with a large 4 berth modern Viscount caravan and annexe, a fibreglass 16ft boat and motor a 4 cylinder beach buggy and a reliable registered British Leyland hard top four wheel drive car. If you know anything about the large number of Moreton Bay Island Sales don't hesitate to inspect this weekend at only \$9750 Full Price.

. . .

**QUEENSLAND ISLAND SALES & CONSTRUCTIONS."**

I will read the advertisements and then refer to what the agents are doing. Another advertisement states—

**"COOLANGATTA GOLD  
BAY ISLANDS  
PIONEERS CABIN  
\$9990**

First time offered for sale. Seeing is definitely believing. This would have to be the best holiday dwelling we have had offered for sale this year."

If one reads these advertisements, one will note references to "in the last eight months", "in the last two years", and the properties are always "the best".

The advertisement goes on to say—

"Being thousands of dollars below what it can actually sell for, situated on the most sought after and desired Islands in S.E. Queensland's beautiful Moreton Bay. This property stands proudly, boasting refreshing bay island and Brisbane coastline views (never to be built out)

This two bedroom larger than average holiday cabin is fully furnished with curtains, complete with stove, fridge, separate kitchen lounge area with kitch. sink, cupboards, laminated bench tops, built-in wardrobes, carpeted throughout, tiled kitchen floor. Fully wired and plumbed with toilets. Washing machine and dryer etc. Beautifully finished interior and exterior including rainwater tank, downpipes and gutters. Colorbond cyclone proof roof and a host more. Resting in the popular Coolangatta Estate. This property is not only an ideal weekender but could quite

easily be used for holiday rentals with substantial returns. Unbelievably included is a 1973 HQ Holden sedan (no rust), 14 foot aluminium family fishing boat, motor and trailer. All in good running order. NO MISPRINT \$9990 FULL PRICE."

That is "Coolangatta Gold". The advertisement appeared for a considerable period in the press. One can go from "Coolangatta Gold" to a "Seaside Investment Cottage" for \$12,750.

Another advertisement states—

"A GENUINE BARGAIN—this holiday cottage is in exceptional condition—2 of the blocks are good and the other 2 are only average quality—"

I would like to walk over the other two blocks—

"BUT don't forget this is a tastefully finished off, less than 3yr old weather and cyclone proof cottage on 4 blocks—this is outstanding value for the current booming Brisbane Island market as investors are frantically chasing properties on STRADBROKE and neighbouring bay islands because of the government approved multi-million dollar bridge link to these islands . . ."

Recently I asked the Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing about the bridge. He said that the Government had not yet made up its mind. However, real estate agents are advertising that a bridge will be built.

The same advertisement appears regularly. The company that placed the advertisement in the newspaper is Bounty Real Estate. Other advertisements have been placed by East Coast Island Sales and Qld Island Sales and Constructions.

The cottage for \$12,750 was an expensive property. However, there were four blocks of land, a house and a caravan. It was a case of, "Come in, you galah; I'll give you a cigar and a free bumper bar." There is a better advertisement that appears under the heading "Abandoned—but certainly not forgotten".

**Mr FitzGerald:** Who are the solicitors acting for them?

**Mr BURNS:** The real problem that occurred on Russell Island years ago is that agents had a solicitor acting for them. They would say to purchasers, "Our solicitor will act for you as the buyer." Of course, he would also act for the vendor. The solicitor carried out an investigation and found that the lots under water were above water.

**Mr FitzGerald:** Did he disclose that he was acting for both parties?

**Mr BURNS:** Of course not. But when the agent said to those people, "Our solicitor will act for you," he in fact declared that he was working for both parties. The people said, "It is free legals." That was the way in which the agents advertised, and they still advertise in that fashion. The person thinks, "The lawyer will check it out." Today, I am not worried about that. What I am worried about is bait and switch advertising. It is straight out bait and switch advertising.

One advertisement headed "Abandoned" includes a 7-metre caravan for approximately \$9,000 and \$950 deposit. During the last few weeks, I have been trying to buy a boat. The way that houses, cars, caravans and four-wheel-drives are being thrown in with a boat for \$9,000, I am convinced that many blokes selling boats round the place are trying to rip me off. That advertisement states—

"ABANDONED

BUT CERTAINLY NOT FORGOTTEN, very overgrown but very valuable family weekender located on one of the most popular bay islands near north Stradbroke Island, commonly referred to by locals and visitors as the EVERGREEN ISLAND—inspection is a must of this FULLY AIR CONDITIONED tandem huge 7 mtr late model aluminium caravan positioned on 3 adjoining good size wide frontage tree studded allotments (all freehold titled and on separate deeds.) The blocks need a good clear, slash and mow—"

I think that the agent does too—

“because this abandoned w’ender has not been used for some time.”

When people visit that island—and dozens of people do—they find two or three things. The first is that the abandoned weekender is an old dive, a bomb, a dump. They find that it is filthy dirty and that the caravan would not move. People are then told, “If you don’t like this block because it’s a low block with problems, the caravan is not much good, the boat has got a hole in it and the motor does not work, we’ve got a better one up on the hill or on the other side of the island.” The people are on the island. The difficult part of selling island land is getting customers onto the island itself in order to try to sell them the goods, so the agents have used that bait and switch method.

Another bait and switch method is used. I have been told by real estate agents that in some cases no land is involved. Some of the advertisements talk about a caravan, boat and everything else as a package but do not mention land. I am told also that many of those old caravans are on wheels and that they are dragged from one block to another. I know of a person who went over to an island, saw the shabby block, the bad caravan and all of the problems and said, “I’ll buy it.” He was told, “It’s sold.” The agents did not want to sell that block and that bad caravan because that was the bait. When the person concerned said that he wanted to buy it, they refused to sell it to him; yet, a couple of days later, that block was advertised again.

I turn to an advertisement for an A-frame cottage on three-quarters of an acre, waterfront, for \$11,900. The price of a reasonable block of waterfront land on Russell Island today is \$20,000. Recently a waterfront block on Russell Island sold for \$50,000. That advertisement offers an A-frame cottage on three-quarters of an acre on the waterfront for \$11,900. A few other things are also thrown in.

Another advertisement offers an island beach house for \$9,750. It is said to be a completely set-up weekender. Again, that advertisement was placed by Bounty Real Estate. I am told by people in the know that those houses are really transportable, or movable, because they are dragged from one place to the other.

Yet another advertisement is headed “Heaven Can Wait—Family Seaside Holiday House”. Such advertisements appear day in and day out, week in and week out, on the islands themselves.

I believe that it is time that something was done about the misleading advertisements, before Russell Island again gets the name that it had some years ago. A firm called Tropical Island Sales is advertising in Melbourne and Adelaide today in the same way. The same bait and switch proposals are now being used down there that were used many years ago.

Russell Island has many good blocks of land; it also has many problems because the council has never met its responsibility to the 14 000 residential blocks to build roads and provide the necessary facilities. In fact, the council has just imposed a levy on those residents of a minimum of approximately \$80. I could be wrong, but a certain amount will be levied this year to pay for roads. Many of the roads on the island are in very poor condition. If a bridge to Russell Island is constructed, many of the people buying blocks of land on the island will find themselves paying a great deal in rates in order to provide the facilities that are not currently available and that they are being told they will receive.

I call for an investigation into the advertising of land and property on Russell, Macleay, Karragarra, Lamb and all the other Moreton Bay islands. Generally, the island is not named in the advertisement. It is called, “The Evergreen Island”, “The Avocado Island”, or “The Tropical Island”. Massive advertising has taken place in southern newspapers. Bait and switch advertising is being used, which I understand is illegal. It can be seen daily in the Brisbane newspapers *Daily Sun* and *The Courier-Mail*.

Advertisements appear offering a house, car, caravan, boat, swimming gear, snorkelling gear and 5 kVA generator, all with a block of land for about the \$10,000 mark. People

are being sold the dream of living on an island—of travelling to an island for weekends, living in caravans. When the people arrive, the dream does not materialise, and the agent has a good chance of switching them to another proposal on the island. Bait and switch has been outlawed in most areas of civilised selling. It should be outlawed on Russell Island. I want something done about Bounty Real Estate, Island Sales, Moreton Bay Project Marketing, Queensland Island Sales and Construction, and East Coast Island Sales. My submission to the Minister is that it is time that action was taken against them. He should take action quickly.

**Mr FITZGERALD (Lockyer) (2.36 p.m.):** It is with pleasure that I join the debate on the Bill, which is a fairly long one, containing 85 clauses. Debate will thus be wide-ranging, it being impossible for any member to cover the contents of all clauses. The Bill embodies the Government's intention of imposing some regulation on the industry while at the same time allowing it to set its own rules.

Mention has been made of the poorer type of salesman that the industry has tended to attract from time to time. I agree with those honourable members who have expressed concern about the number of salesmen who are signed on. Firms that employ people with minimal training really have only themselves to blame. Those firms deserve the stigma that is cast upon them. Many salesmen are employed on the basis of commission only. It has often been said, "All you need is a car and to be out of work, and you can get a job as a real estate salesman." Firms have a responsibility to the good standing of the industry and of their own names.

The Bill provides that people dealing with a franchisee should know the name of the franchisee. I think it was the member for Redcliffe (Mr White) who said that he did not altogether agree with the provision. He said that, when a person sees Fourex or Fosters signs outside hotels, he knows quite well that it is not a Mr Fourex or a Mr Carlton who owns the hotel; that as the person passes under the lintel he notices the name of the licensee printed. I do not agree with the validity of that argument. Many people who have bought from franchisees have not realised that they were not dealing with the major firm whose name the office bore. There can be no dispute about that. A purchaser ought to be aware that he is dealing with a franchisee and not with the franchiser. In most instances, the franchisee does not have the backing of the major company, but is merely using the name, taking advantage of a network of agents that is able to increase the list of those interested in disposing of a property.

Clauses 14 to 23 of the Bill deal with classes of licences, application for licence, grant of licence, restoration of licence, variation of licence, fees for licences, cancellation of licence by the committee, suspension of licence by the committee, cancellation of licences generally and disqualification of former licensees, etc. A number of clauses cover who shall have licences and how the licences shall be applied.

One thing ought to be stated at this stage. An honourable member who spoke earlier in the debate said that the Government has allowed an increase in commission payments. The statement that inflationary effects are automatically compensated for is erroneous. Commission at the moment is based on 5 per cent on the first \$10,000. The proposal is that, from 1 January 1986, the 5 per cent rate ought to apply to the first \$18,000. If inflation is to be taken into consideration, surely it is reasonable to argue that the percentage remain constant but that the threshold mirror inflationary effects.

The honourable member for Chatsworth (Mr Mackenroth) said that, at present, inflation is taken into consideration, but I think that that is incorrect. It should be pointed out to him that, when a threshold obtains, it should be increased.

For the benefit of the general public, I point out that the commission specified is the maximum that can be charged by an agent and that it is quite in order for an agent to charge less. For transactions that involve a large sum of money, I believe it is common for the commission to be negotiable. Although I am sure that agents are asked what the commission fee on a particular property will be, they never say that the rate is the maximum rate or that the rate to be applied is determined by a particular agent's office.

It is therefore wrong to blame the Government for increasing the commission. The Government is merely taking action in line with the threshold that was originally set.

The Government has every right to legislate and control the kind of information that should be disclosed to a prospective purchaser, particularly in cases in which a salesperson or a firm has an interest in the goods in question. The Bill sets out the information to be disclosed to a potential buyer, and other honourable members have referred to bait and switch advertising that is used to promote sales.

It behoves any person who wishes to purchase land to be sure of what he will receive and to take all precautions necessary—in fact, to be a prudent buyer. The old saying, “let the buyer beware” is never more apt than when it is applied to land dealings.

A few years ago, I was amazed to read in the *Sunday Sun* that Alderman Tully, of the Ipswich City Council, was critical of land that was offered for sale in the Ballard area of my electorate. Alderman Tully claimed that an agent had misled him but, when it all boiled down, he had not even inspected the land. Alderman Tully would be known to the honourable member for Wolston (Mr R. J. Gibbs) because he intended to contest the seat of Wolston at the last State election but backed out at the last minute.

The point that must be made is that, if anyone intends to buy land, it is essential to first inspect it. It is the same principle that applies to purchasing a horse. It is ridiculous to commission someone to buy a horse when the agent knows nothing about horses. The agent can hardly be blamed if the horse has a gait similar to that of a trotter, which makes it unsuitable for work on a property. Surely that basic principle must be borne in mind when spending one's savings. Purchasers ought to be prudent and make sure that they know what they are getting, and they should obtain the advice of a solicitor if they feel that they need extra protection.

Many people have been to my office and complained that they have purchased land fronting a limited access highway despite the fact that the plan of the subdivision shows that the limited access highway will divide certain properties and despite the fact that the property owners have decided to sell one of the parcels of land. Prospective purchasers buy the land under the misapprehension that access can be obtained from the highway. When they find that they will be in strife with the Main Roads Department and that their only access to the property is by means of an unnamed unsealed road, they attempt to sell the land, thereby perpetuating the problem. In due course, new constituents in the electorate will be welcomed by me with an offer of assistance, should the need arise. Within six months, they turn up and ask for help to obtain access to their property. Because I have already done so twice I am able to tell them that I can handle the problem. Because a great deal is at stake, people should obtain the advice of a solicitor when purchasing land.

The provisions of the Act have been welcomed by the real estate industry as a whole, particularly in view of the limited regulations that are applied by the Government. The community accepts that free competition in the market-place is the only effective way to reduce commission rates and protect purchasers by keeping commission at reasonable rates. That is important if Queensland is to continue to prosper. Over recent years, a great deal of land has been bought and sold in Queensland, probably because of the number of people who continue to migrate from the southern States.

I am mainly concerned that interest rates will kill off the industry. The blame for the increased interest rates can be fairly and squarely placed on the person whom the Prime Minister has quite falsely called the greatest Treasurer in the world. The blame for most of the increase in interest rates can be fairly sheeted home to him. The increased rates pose one of the greatest threats to the industry.

Mr VAUGHAN (Nudgee) (2.46 p.m.): We know the Government's attitude to encouraging southern people to come to Queensland. A friend of mine from Victoria, who formerly lived in Queensland, was here recently and was considering returning to Queensland. He expressed to me his grave concern about the false and misleading advertising by real estate agents, particularly Stewart's Real Estate in the Springwood

area. He told me that, on Saturday, 10 August, he had seen advertised for sale at \$45,950, a three-bedroom, high-set, architect-owned house, with a huge, sparkling pool on a 32-perch ranch site. He rang up about the house and went to see it on Monday, 12 August. On doing so, he was told that the price had increased by \$2,000 to \$47,950.

On page 38 in the *Daily Sun* of Monday, 12 August 1985, a house was advertised in this way—

“GENUINE BARGAIN

\$47,950!!!

3 bedroom highset. Family disagreement forces sale of this superb architects own home. Many features incl. ‘HUGE SPARKLING POOL’ security fenced!!! . . .”

One of the phone numbers given in the advertisement was 290 1311, and the advertisement was submitted under the name “Stewarts”.

When my friend contacted Stewarts he was told, “Sorry, the house that was advertised has been sold.” He was told that, if he came to the office, the firm would be only too happy to show him other houses in its large listing.

My friend pointed out to me that, in the same newspaper, another advertisement was in these terms—

“BROKEN MARRIAGE

4BRM HI-SET \$44,950

NO DEPOSIT

Large home situated in quiet cul-de-sac . . .”

Another home was advertised for sale for \$41,600. It was described as brick and tile, absolutely immaculate. That advertisement carried the same telephone number.

My friend pointed out to me that, every day in the next two weeks, those three houses were advertised. When he rang up subsequently, he was told that they had all been sold.

It is one thing to have an Auctioneers and Agents Act with rules and regulations, but it is another thing to police the rules and regulations. My friend from Victoria asked, “Why are these practices allowed to continue? Why are unscrupulous real estate agents, such as Stewarts, of Springwood, allowed to get away with their advertising with monotonous regularity?” The honourable member for Lytton also pointed out what is happening but no matter how often we raise the matters, obviously nothing is done.

In an effort to get something done about the matters raised by my friend from Victoria, I wrote to the Real Estate Institute of Queensland on 11 September 1985, enclosing copies of the advertisements. I also detailed the information given to me by my Victorian friend. On 18 September, I received a reply from the REIQ, dated 12 September, informing me that Stewart’s Real Estate was not a member of the REIQ and was therefore outside that body’s control and direction. It was suggested to me that the matter be referred to the Auctioneers and Agents Committee.

On 20 September, I wrote to Mr P. Neylan, the registrar of the Auctioneers and Agents Committee, and advised him that I had written to the REIQ. I referred to the false, misleading and unethical advertising and requested that action be taken. I have received no reply to or acknowledgment of that correspondence. I do not know what is going on. After today, I might get some advice about what is happening.

On 23 September 1985, I wrote to the Minister for Employment and Industrial Affairs (Mr Lester) requesting that something be done under the consumer affairs legislation. The Minister replied that he had obtained an opinion from the Solicitor-General’s Office and that the provisions of the Consumer Affairs Act do not apply to real estate. He did inform me that section 65 of the Auctioneers and Agents Act deals with false and misleading representations concerning property for sale, and maybe that would be relevant.

I take the opportunity to ask the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General: As the legislation contains those provisions, why is nothing being done to deal with those people who are perpetrating this false and misleading advertising on the community? As I say, it is going on and on. As the member for Lytton pointed out, it has been going on since Adam was a boy. Obviously very little is being done to stop those people. The little people in the community are being affected, and it is about time that something was done about the matter.

**Hon. N. J. HARPER** (Auburn—Minister for Justice and Attorney-General) (2.51 p.m.), in reply: I thank honourable members for their contributions to the debate. I shall deal as briefly as possible with their comments.

The Opposition spokesman on Justice, the honourable member for Salisbury (Mr Goss), questioned the prosecution action being taken against motor vehicle dealers. We are taking prosecution action, as appropriate, against motor vehicle dealers. I noted the honourable member's comments. Although I personally have not received significant comments along the lines of those that he outlined in speaking to the House, the Matilda Car Company has certainly been brought to my notice. The Trade Practices Commission fined Matilda, but that matter is presently under appeal to the Federal Court. The court has heard the appeal but has reserved its decision. Until the decision of the court is known, the Auctioneers and Agents Committee is not really capable of taking appropriate action.

Last week, when the House was sitting, the honourable member brought that matter to my notice. At that time, officers of the Auctioneers and Agents Committee were liaising with officers of the Solicitor-General's Office and of the Trade Practices Commission regarding that company. In fact, the activities of the three motor vehicle dealers to whom the honourable member referred—the Matilda Car Company, the Brisbane Discount Motor Market and Used Car World—are under active investigation and have been the subject of discussions between officers from my department, including the Solicitor-General's Office and the Trade Practices Commission.

The honourable member for Salisbury specifically asked what action was being taken against the Matilda Car Company. Firstly, seven charges were brought against that motor vehicle dealer for employing unregistered salesmen. More importantly, the Auctioneers and Agents Committee has sought the advice of the Solicitor-General about what further action may be taken against that firm and also the two other firms to which I have referred.

The honourable member for Salisbury, and also the honourable member for Townsville West (Mr Smith), referred to prosecutions and country inspections. Criticism has been levelled at the lack of prosecution action being taken against unscrupulous motor vehicle dealers by officers of the Auctioneers and Agents Committee.

Registry offices are investigating complaints concerning not only motor dealers but real estate agents, auctioneers and commercial agents as well. Completed prosecution actions taken so far this year comprise seven real estate actions, eight actions against motor dealers and three actions against commercial agents. In addition, prosecution action has been initiated but has not yet come before the court in regard to eight real estate matters, two motor dealers and two auctioneers. Those actions include unlicensed trading, improper trust account operations and beneficial interest purchases of realty, and they were brought against persons trading in Caloundra, Toowoomba, Cairns, Ipswich, Southport, Rockhampton, Maroochydore and the Greater Brisbane area. I also point out that 31 successful prosecutions were launched by the registry in 1984, of which nine were against motor dealers.

With regard to motor dealers—in the last financial year, 52 claims totalling \$240,260 were made against the fund and they were admitted by the Auctioneers and Agents Committee after investigation by the department. A vast number of them were against companies that have since gone into liquidation.

The honourable member for Salisbury mentioned advertising carried out by the Motor Trades Association of Queensland. I point out that the MTA has every right to advertise as it sees fit. However, I do suggest that the executive of the association could have reciprocated some of the courtesy that I previously extended to that association, by at least consulting with me—as it apparently did with the Minister for Employment and Industrial Affairs—before advertising, so that its advertisement could have given accurate information to the public.

With regard to disciplinary proceedings, which were mentioned by the Opposition Justice spokesman—as a counter to the type of person who runs a motor-dealing firm from behind the scenes, as mentioned by the honourable member, an amendment is contained in new Part VA, which is concerned with disciplinary proceedings. New section 81C provides the means by which action can be taken against a corporation that is effectively controlled by a person who is not fit and proper, no matter whether he is not licensed or even a director of the corporation. The new term “executive officer”, as mentioned in that section, includes a person who is concerned or takes part in the management of the corporation, whether or not he is a director of the corporation.

For the benefit of honourable members, I will profile one case to illustrate the work that is carried out by registry inspectors. A real estate agent was investigated and found to have a deficiency of \$15,000 in his trust account. A total of 69 charges were brought against the agent in the Maroochydore Magistrates Court and he was convicted and fined a total of \$5,425. The matter was referred to the Auctioneers and Agents Committee, which placed the trust account in receivership, both to protect the remaining trust funds and to prevent the agent from dealing further with the public. The committee has also resolved to hold a show cause action against that particular agent for the purpose of considering his permanent disqualification and a prohibition against his practising in real estate again.

The honourable member for Southport (Mr Jennings) made his usual meaningful contribution to the debate. The honourable member for Redcliffe (Mr White) raised the question of the Government's involvement, particularly in relation to franchise signs. The member for Southport commented on the need to inform the public of the person with whom a home-seller or purchaser is really dealing, particularly as real estate agents are trustees of public moneys. The member for Redcliffe overlooked that.

Educational qualifications were referred to by the member for Redcliffe. I place on record again that the Government believes that a person with natural ability should not be prohibited from demonstrating his or her talents without the need to achieve an unnecessarily high standard of education. However, under the Bill, all licensees shall be required to complete a written examination. That is an obvious lift in standards. Additionally, salesmen shall also be required to take this examination before they obtain a certificate.

I turn again to the comments of the honourable member for Townsville West (Mr Smith). I appreciate his comments and assure him that I understand his concern just as, on the other hand, I am sure that he appreciates my budgetary difficulties. The policy has been that a two-inspector team visit major country centres at least twice each year. Obviously, I should like to increase that. With additional budgetary provisions, it would be possible.

In regard to back yard dealers—one might well ask where these unlicensed people—back yard dealers are unlicensed traders—obtain their stock. It has been suggested to me that, in at least some cases, the trade itself is actually supplying them. The honourable member referred to one Don Ramsay, Snr, who made an application. He appeared, with counsel, before the Auctioneers and Agents Committee to determine whether he was a fit and proper person to be licensed. Witnesses were called. I think that Mr Ramsay spent a couple of days in Brisbane, and the committee spent a considerable amount of time on this matter. The registrar called witnesses from the Main Roads Department, the Police Department, those responsible for machinery inspections, an officer from the Consumer Affairs Bureau and one from the Auctioneers and Agents Committee itself.

The committee refused the application on the basis that Mr Ramsay, Snr, was not a fit and proper person to hold a licence. Since then, certain other matters have been under investigation by the registrar. However, I do agree that this particular application should receive further consideration to ensure that Mr Don Ramsay, Snr, is not being unfairly treated.

The honourable member for Chatsworth (Mr Mackenroth) brought to the attention of the House the subject of increased commission rates. A decision was taken after quite lengthy deliberations and discussions with the Real Estate Institute of Queensland and with a number of independent non-REIQ members on the question of commission rates, and it was decided, on what were justifiable grounds, that the threshold level of \$10,000 should be indexed to the 1983-84 level. However, I do agree with the sentiments expressed by the member for Chatsworth that the response from the REIQ is indeed disappointing. Quite frankly—as I have said publicly and at meetings with the REIQ and perhaps it has taken exception to this—I believe that the State should be moving towards deregulation. Of course, the honourable member for Chatsworth has put forward his point of view and that of the Opposition in this regard. Deregulation will certainly never be possible until the industry itself demonstrates a degree of responsibility acceptable to the community generally. Overall, the honourable member's comments were quite interesting.

For the benefit of the honourable member for Townsville West (Mr Smith), I shall refer to one Frank Percival, to whom he made reference. Peter Frank Percival appeared before the committee on 15 September 1983 and, as a consequence, his real estate agent's licence was cancelled from that date. No complaint was lodged with the registry that he continued to carry on his business after that date. Of course, if the matter had come to the attention of registry at that time, the appropriate action would have been taken.

The honourable member for Lytton (Mr Burns) drew attention to advertising of allotments in Moreton Bay. Of course, all honourable members are well aware of his involvement and his monitoring of the situation on Russell Island. The late John Goleby brought these advertisements to my attention some time before his untimely death. As a result of that, the matter was taken up a few months ago with the Trade Practices Commission. It causes me concern. Similar advertisements have appeared round the country. Some companies are advertising in the Adelaide press in South Australia. That is also of concern to me. It is a subject that, to a large degree at least, is covered by the Trade Practices Commission. As yet, the Queensland Government—

**Mr Burns:** That is a Federal matter. We should have laws of our own to stop bait and switch advertising.

**Mr HARPER:** I agree with the honourable member on that matter. However, at present, Federal legislation covers the subject. I have asked the Federal department responsible to take action that is appropriate. I have referred all the material to that department. If the honourable member has not referred his material to his Federal colleagues, I would be happy to refer further details to them.

Of course, it is possible that some of the misleading advertising is being carried on by developers who are advertising and selling their own land. I assure the honourable member that I will have further inquiries made into the matter to which he referred, particularly Bounty Real Estate and the other agents that he mentioned.

For the benefit of the honourable member for Nudgee (Mr Vaughan), I would include Stewarts of Springwood in that undertaking.

The honourable member for Lockyer (Mr FitzGerald) referred to an important matter, namely, the coverage in the press, but not in the big headlines, that some of the inaccurate promotion by agents gains. It would be beneficial if that could be kept before the minds of everyone, particularly persons purchasing land and homes for the first time.

As the honourable member for Lockyer indicated, the commission rates are a maximum. For some reason or other, people seem to think that when the Government

gazettes a maximum rate of commission, all agents must charge it. That is nonsense. The sentiments I have expressed to the executive of the REIQ are that I would like to see a greater degree of competition brought about in the real estate industry. One way in which that can be done is by acknowledging that the commission rates laid down are maximum rates and that agents can offer competitive rates that are below that maximum.

It is a pity that the honourable member for Nudgee did not write to me rather than to the other people to whom he referred in his speech. As he well knows, I would be very sympathetic to his complaints. He is a good representative of his constituents, and I would be only too happy—

**Mr Burns:** When they start to say, “You’re good”, boy, you’ve had it!

**Mr HARPER:** Like the honourable member for Lytton, the honourable member for Nudgee puts the point of view of his constituents.

I thank honourable members for their contribution to the debate.

Motion (Mr Harper) agreed to.

### Committee

Mr Booth (Warwick) in the chair; Hon. N. J. Harper (Auburn—Minister for Justice and Attorney-General) in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 44, as read, agreed to.

Clause 45—Amendment of s. 54; Motor dealers’ licences—

**Mr GOSS** (3.10 p.m.): Clause 45 relates to licences and various activities of the committee. I want to reaffirm statements that I made last week after talking to people in the industry. Yesterday, I spoke further with people involved in the industry, and it is quite clear that there is widespread dissatisfaction with the Office of the Registrar of Auctioneers and Agents because of the non-performance by its officers in carrying out their duties. That results in a failure to protect the public from shonky motor vehicle dealers and a failure to protect legitimate and reputable dealers from the practices of some unscrupulous companies such as Wholesale Cars and Finance, located at Pacific Highway, Underwood, and the other companies that I referred to.

I take particular exception to the activities of Wholesale Cars and Finance, previously known as Ron Dennis Car Sales, previously known as Matilda Car Company, because Mr McKerrow, who runs those companies at arm’s length, seems to be getting away with murder. I note that some action is to be taken. It is high time that it was.

The fines imposed by the Trade Practices Commission are all very well—it has acted promptly—however, licences must be taken right away from unscrupulous dealers. That is the only solution. It would allow Mr McKerrow, who has been chased out of South Australia, New South Wales and Victoria, to be chased out of Queensland as well.

Since I made reference to those companies, a document that names another company that warrants the severest of action has come into my possession. I refer to Mayne Motors Pty Ltd. I have a letter from the Trade Practices Commission dated 13 September 1985 addressed to the Registrar of Auctioneers and Agents. As I said during the second-reading debate last week, as I understand it, the Trade Practices Commission is regularly sending material, evidence and complaints to the Office of the Registrar of Auctioneers and Agents but little or no action is forthcoming. It appears that the public are being let down badly. I repeat the charge that I made last Thursday.

In the letter to which I refer the Regional Director of the Trade Practices Commission, a Mr Schulz, states—

“This office has received a complaint against Mayne Motors Pty. Ltd . . .”

The letter details that complaint.

I am also greatly concerned at the suggestion that has been made in proceedings in the Federal Court, as I understand it, that certain dealers have a leak within the Office

of the Registrar of Auctioneers and Agents and that that person tips off certain dealers when a raid, inspection or investigation is to take place, so that things can be fixed up. I ask the Minister to investigate that also.

Yesterday I received a document regarding that particular allegation which disturbed me. I had heard about this before. I will table the document so that the Minister can follow it up, because I believe that it is an allegation of the most serious kind. It would tend to suggest that Mr McKerrow and his various companies—Matilda Car Company, changing to Ron Dennis Car Sales, changing to Wholesale Cars and Finance—can trade on and engage in unscrupulous practices with impunity because of the special protection that they are receiving. I refer to such practices as bait and switch advertising and winding back odometers. The document that has come into my possession appears to be an internal file memorandum signed by Mr Schulz, the Regional Director of the Trade Practices Commission. It is not on Trade Practices Commission letterhead. However, it is signed by Mr Schulz. It is a note for file in relation to the Matilda Car Company. It says—

“On 2.12.83 the Commission considered the issue of allegations of impropriety against an officer(s) of the Queensland Auctioneers and Agents Office in relation to dealings with Matilda . . . The Commission decided that I should mention the allegations informally to the relevant person responsible for that officer.

2. After discussing the matter with Sam Malouf, it was decided that I would speak with the Registrar of Auctioneers and Agents (Mr Neyland) after our Matilda investigation was completed.”

As we have heard, Matilda was fined \$20,000 for its actions. The fine is subject to appeal.

The note for file, dated 22 March 1984, continues—

“3. Accordingly, after proceedings were instituted (on 16 March 1984), I arranged to meet with Mr Neylan on 20 March. I informed Mr Neylan that the Commission had instituted proceedings against Matilda. I also said that there was another matter about which we had no evidence, but nevertheless . . . we should bring it to his attention.

4. I said that when staff had interviewing Brooks (who was then in charge of Matilda Car Co.) he had said in part words to the following effect:—

‘I’ve got a leak . . .

I know the complaints are from dealers.’

5. Commenting upon that statement I said that at the time we had put it down to bravado on the part of Brooks. However, AADA had in fact complained to Auctioneers and Agents (and the TPC) about Matilda. In addition, when Commission staff had discussed the investigation with Inspector Harman he had mentioned that Shane Jones (Matilda’s solicitor) had a convivial association with a Senior Inspector.

6. Mr Neylan responded by saying that he appreciated me bringing the matter to his attention, but doubted very much that there was a leak in his office. Nevertheless, he said that he would keep the information I had passed on to him in mind.”

I would like to know what happened to the investigation. The activities of McKerrow, his various companies and Brooks seemed to indicate that they operated with impunity and a great measure of arrogance towards the laws of Queensland. One reason for acting with arrogance in spite of the Office of the Registrar of Auctioneers and Agents and the relevant legislation would be that they knew they were to be hit and could cover up any defect in their operations under the legislation.

I understand that the complaint against Mayne Motors Pty Ltd concerns what is known as jacking up. I understand that Mayne Motors trades as Firestone Motors at

Abbotsford Road, Mayne. According to the letter, there are a number of elements to the complaint. The letter says—

“. . . however there is one aspect of the transaction which appears to be in breach of the Hire Purchase Act 1959. In brief, the conduct complained of by Ms Kelly and Mr Marshall of Reeve Street, Clayfield is . . . known as ‘jacking up’.”

The events are described as follows—

“On 8 August 1985 the complainants saw a 1979 Commodore sedan at Firestone Motors and enquired as to its price. They were told . . . \$7000. When asked what they wished to trade-in they indicated their current vehicle, a 1978 Datsun Sunny, station wagon. The offer for the trade-in was \$1000 and this amount was added to the purchase price of \$7000 to bring the price of the Commodore to \$8000. This achieved the required 10% equity. The \$1000 was disguised as Roadworthy Costs and Delivery Fee. The complainants were then allowed to purchase back their trade-in for \$1 on condition the vehicle was deregistered. Accordingly, the complainants’ equity in reality amounted to \$1 not \$1000.

Copies of the Contract of Sale and Schedule attached to the Hire Purchase Agreement with Custom Credit are attached—”

for the information of the Registrar, Mr Neylan.

It continues—

“Your investigation of this practice may be assisted by officers of this Commission . . .”

I do not know what happened to it, but I would be interested to know what Mr Neylan and his officers did about it. I will table the letter dated 13 September 1985 from Mr Schulz and also the internal memorandum of the Trade Practices Commission in relation to the leak in the department.

I reiterate that the only way to deal with these shonks is to take their licences from them. I want positive action in relation to these instances that I have given and also an assurance of some sort that, in the future, the toughest action will be taken against such crooks and cheats who prey on the unwary, particularly young people who are subjected to pressures in the purchase of a motor vehicle, and take quite unfair advantage of them.

As I have said before, there is little point in having tough legislation for an auctioneers and agents committee or the relevant committee for licensed motor dealers providing for a code of conduct if, on the bottom line, the legislation is not enforced and those people are able to deal with impunity. As I said the other night, McKerrow is reported to have said that he left other States and came to Queensland because it was so easy to operate under the Queensland law, that he could get away with anything. Certainly, he seems to be doing so, to the loss and detriment of many young people, particularly on the south side of Brisbane.

I earnestly seek that the Minister should investigate these matters, although it may be that he is unable to respond to my request now. I appreciate that, because I received the documents only yesterday. However, it is something that should be investigated, and a statement should be made either publicly or to the House. The allegations are serious and, when combined with the fairly poor performance of the Office of the Registrar of Auctioneers and Agents, constitute factors that warrant a detailed and serious response from the Minister.

*Whereupon the honourable member laid on the table the documents referred to.*

**Mr HARPER:** I am relieved that, as he concluded his remarks, the honourable member for Salisbury mentioned that he had obtained the documents within the last day or two. I would have been very disappointed had he sought to make political mileage by not having brought them to my attention earlier, because I have always thought that an understanding exists between us that I will act on any information of that type that is provided to me.

Allegations of a person involved in the Matilda company having access to an officer in the registry of the auctioneers and agents section of the Justice Department or a member of the Auctioneers and Agents Committee have formed the substance of claims made by an official of the company. That matter has been canvassed previously.

**Mr Goss:** Has that been investigated in relation to officers of your department?

**Mr HARPER:** I was not aware of the matter until the honourable member mentioned it. I am advised, however, that a transcript of an interview between an officer of the Trade Practices Commission and an official of that company contains claims made by the official that the Matilda company has the ear of an official in the Trade Practices Commission who can tip the company off.

I will not tolerate such a thing, and I believe that members of the Opposition realise that.

**Mr Goss:** I take it that your advisers are not aware of the allegations?

**Mr HARPER:** The advisers who are in attendance at Parliament House today are not aware of the allegation, and it has never before been brought to my attention.

Now that I am aware of the allegation, I assure the honourable member and all other honourable members that an investigation will be carried out. The honourable member knows as well as I do that persons of the type to which he refers are to be found in all sections of Government activity and that it is very difficult to flush them out. However, for my part, I will do whatever I can to flush them out, and I give the honourable member that assurance.

Anyone who engages in malpractice to the detriment of the community will not be tolerated by the Queensland Government or by me in particular. Because I will not tolerate that type of activity, such a person, whether or not he is arrogant, will not be able to act with impunity. I give the honourable member the assurance that that will not make any difference.

Clause 45, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 46 to 54, as read, agreed to.

Clause 55—Amendment of s. 66; Representations as to availability of finance—

**Mr HARPER (3.23 p.m.):** It is my intention to move three amendments to the Bill during the Committee stage. The amendments have been brought about following receipt of a late submission made by the Queensland Law Society Incorporated and discussions that have been held subsequently between members of the Queensland Law Society Incorporated and myself about the contents of the submission.

The first amendment will be to clause 55, which amends section 66 (4) of the Act. Section 66 deals with representations as to availability of finance. It is considered that when representations as to the availability of finance have been made, the promiser should be given the time up till the moment of settlement in which to provide finance. Accordingly, it must follow that the purchaser, that is, the person to whom the representation as to finance has been made, should be able to avoid the contract at any time before the date upon which the purchase money is liable to be paid, or forthwith after that date, if finance is not at that time available. The clause has been amended to ensure that the purchaser has that ability.

Clause 58 has been amended to clarify that no limitation is imposed on section 41—

**The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr Booth):** Order! I suggest to the honourable gentleman that the first amendment be dealt with before proceeding to the next one.

**Mr HARPER:** In relation to clause 55, I move the following amendment—

“At page 35, omit all words comprising lines 14 to 33 and substitute the words—

‘then, if the purchaser has been thereby materially affected, he may at his option avoid the contract made by him in respect of the sale by notice in writing given either to the seller or to the auctioneer or real estate agent concerned at any time before the time at which the purchaser is required by the contract to pay all of the outstanding purchase price or forthwith after that time.’ ”

**Mr GOSS:** I do not have a copy of the amendment, but following the Minister’s explanation of it the Opposition gives it support. It is fair to the purchaser and will mean a just result for a purchaser who has been the victim of such misrepresentation. In the brief time available to consider it, I have come to the conclusion that the Opposition should support it. I now have the amendment, but I do not think I need add anything. The Opposition supports it.

Amendment (Mr Harper) agreed to.

Clause 55, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 56 and 57, as read, agreed to.

Clause 58—New s. 70A—

**Mr HARPER (3.27 p.m.):** Clause 58 is being amended to clarify that it does not impose any limitation on section 41 of the Supreme Court Act of 1867 or section 39 of the Queensland Law Society Act 1952-1980. Accordingly, I move—

“At page 36, line 11, omit the word—

‘An’

and substitute the words—

‘Without derogating from the provisions of section 41 of the *Supreme Court Act of 1867* or section 39 of the *Queensland Law Society Act 1952-1980*, an’.”

Amendment (Mr Harper) agreed to.

Clause 58, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 59 to 65, as read, agreed to.

Clause 66—Amendment of s. 83; Application of trust moneys—

**Mr HARPER (3.30 p.m.):** This clause is being amended to remove any ambiguity as to whether the trust moneys may be invested only for one party to the transaction or for both parties. The amendment clarifies that such investments may be made for either one or more parties. Accordingly, I move—

“At page 45, lines 27 and 28, omit the words—

‘for the exclusive benefit of a specified person’ ”;

“At page 45, lines 42 and 43, omit the words—

‘exclusive benefit of the person specified in the direction’

and substitute the words—

‘purpose of complying with the direction to invest the moneys’ ”;

“At page 46, lines 38 and 39, omit the words—

‘benefit of a specified person’

and substitute the words—

‘purpose of complying with a direction to invest the money’.”

Amendments (Mr Harper) agreed to.

Clause 66, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 67 to 83, as read, agreed to.

Clause 84—Amendment of s. 131; Regulations—

**Mr VEIVERS (3.33 p.m.):** No reference has been made to the training of real estate salesmen. As the Minister would be aware, the REIQ, through its agents, conducts classes for registered salesmen, and that is highly commendable. Why has no reference been made to that? No doubt the appropriate place for such a reference would be in the regulations. I am not sure what the salesmen are charged for that course, but I honestly believe that it is highly desirable.

Without doubt, the purchase of a home is the largest financial transaction of any married couple. In many cases it involves difficult and complex decisions. If the conveyance is handled by a man who really does not know what it is all about, it can cause a lot of concern and trouble.

Under clause 25 the Minister is allowing virtually anyone to operate as a real estate salesman. As has been said in this place from time to time and, indeed, during the course of the debate on this Bill, a con man or a shyster, who could quite easily have failed as a used car salesman—we have many of them in Queensland—can walk into a real estate office and, if he is smart enough to convince the proprietor that he can sell real estate, be provided with a desk and a telephone. All he has to do is provide a motor vehicle. A base retainer is not paid, so the salesman is on commission. In many cases, these people have absolutely no knowledge of the industry at all; yet they are handling transactions that are critical for many young people in society.

I know that the Real Estate Institute of Queensland is concerned about this problem. However, by way of regulation, the Government should consider providing the REIQ with some assistance or support. Before a person is permitted to sell real estate, it should be a requirement that he or she undertake a professional course.

Another critical factor is that, if a salesman knows what he is doing, some of the problems that can develop concerning conveyancing may be overcome. Some solicitors may drag things out a little longer than is necessary but, if the sale is handled correctly in the first place by a well-trained, professional salesman, the industry would be much healthier and it would be given more respect and credit. That would put it on another footing. I am not sure whether this matter could be dealt with under other provisions of the legislation, but certainly some thought should be given to the regulations in this respect.

**Mr HARPER:** I do not want to be unkind to the honourable member—perhaps the cricket has reached an interesting stage—but it is a great pity that he has only just come into the Chamber to take part in the debate. I am sure that the Opposition Justice spokesman would be appalled at the suggestion that conveyancing is in the hands of real estate salesmen. Of course, conveyancing is not in their hands.

**Mr Veivers:** I didn't say that. I was making the point that a knowledge of conveyancing would be beneficial. I am not saying that they have to do it.

**Mr HARPER:** What I indicated earlier, in the honourable member's absence, was that just not any person can be registered. Provisions of the legislation require that people will have to complete a questionnaire prior to being granted a licence. It is not desirable that a training course be under the control of any particular interest group. I, too, commend the REIQ and the course that it conducts. It is available to anyone who is interested, not only to members of the REIQ. The Government also provides a training course through the TAFE colleges, and the curriculum of that course has been developed through consultation between agents, including those associated with the REIQ, and officers of the Education Department. Adequate training is available to people who wish to succeed, and I stress the word "succeed".

What the Government and I, as Minister, have said quite clearly—and I said this earlier in the debate—is that it will not be mandatory for real estate salesmen to gain any particular qualifications. Contrary to what the honourable member said, they are required to have a knowledge of the industry and, before registration, they are required to complete a questionnaire that is conducted under the guidance of the registrar or a clerk of the court. They are required to have a knowledge of the industry.

Those salesmen who will be most successful will be the ones who undertake the courses that are available, whether they be by correspondence or one of the courses offered by a TAFE college or the REIQ.

**Mr White:** Why not make them compulsory and raise the standard?

**Mr HARPER:** To restrict people with natural ability so that they cannot use that ability would be quite detrimental to them. The honourable member for Redcliffe is a person with qualifications; but the Government does not want the stage reached at which, before a person can sell perfume in a corner store or at Myers, he has to possess some form of certificate.

Certainly in real estate, because agents deal with public moneys, they have to be licensed. They need a licence to become registered. By requiring them to complete a questionnaire, the Government has encouraged them to have a knowledge of the industry. The Government has said that the principal must have a much greater detailed knowledge of the total industry, and has a responsibility, which should not be abrogated by expecting someone else to take up the training of his sales people. He has a responsibility to select trained sales people with ability and credibility. Of course, it is in his own best interest to do that. In discussions I have had with many real estate agents, I have found that they are very jealous of the training that they give to their sales people. They believe that that training gives them a competitive edge over those who could not care less or have not the same interest in providing training for their sales people.

I understand the concern expressed by the honourable member for Ashgrove and I understand that he is putting forward a point of view that has obviously been brought to his attention by some members of the REIQ, but I repeat that, although this Government will do all in its power to help people improve their educational qualifications in this field, it will not make it mandatory that they have some form of two-year or three-year training and go through cadetships before they take that first step. That is what the REIQ wants. The Government will not require that, certainly not at this stage. The Government will not impose that sort of a requirement on a person who has a bit of natural ability and nous, who can read a book, who can understand and therefore improve his qualifications, and who wants to take the first step to earn a living in a real estate agency.

**Mr VEIVERS:** I wish to correct one impression that the Minister may have. I was not implying that the legal profession should not have the responsibility for conveyancing. My point was that real estate salesmen would benefit if they understood more about the industry and the conveyancing procedures.

I was interested in the Minister's comments. I feel quite strongly about this. As the Minister detected, many people in the real estate industry feel quite strongly about the issue of some in-service training. I am sure the Minister has been approached on that basis. They have that feeling because they want to lift the standards of their profession. I have already made the point that the purchase of a house and property is very, very much a major financial undertaking by young people in our society. People who are involved in that process should be well trained.

The Minister mentioned a training program of two or three years. That was certainly not in my mind. The way the REIQ operates at the moment is with a very simple course. That is all that is necessary. Because of the nature of the business, the large sums of money involved and the importance of the steps that are being taken, such training ought to be mandatory.

**Mr HARPER:** I thank the honourable member for putting forward his point of view. There is a requirement for a salesman, even at that first-step level, to be registered—to be licensed. As I have indicated, the legislation in that area is being tightened up to ensure that the salesman has a knowledge of the industry that he is going into. Nothing will convince me that the principal does not have a responsibility to see the ongoing training of that person, be it man or woman, is carried out. The Government is not prepared to make a mandatory provision in that area. Surely we do not want to reach the stage at which a person with some ability cannot display his or her competence by taking a place in this particular field of the industry.

The honourable member's comrade the honourable member for Chatsworth (Mr Mackenroth) made some very pertinent points in his remarks. He was very critical of real estate agents employing additional sales people willy-nilly without thought for their welfare, their income and their future. He said that principals who employ inexperienced people who do not have a chance of really making a living have a responsibility not to do so. I suggest that the honourable member read in *Hansard* the contribution made by the honourable member for Chatsworth. He will find it enlightening.

Clause 84, as read, agreed to.

Clause 85, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, with amendments.

### Third Reading

Bill, on motion of Mr Harper, by leave, read a third time.

## FACTORIES AND SHOPS ACT AMENDMENT BILL

### Second Reading—Resumption of Debate

Debate resumed from 6 November (see p. 2390) on Mr Lester's motion—

“That the Bill be now read a second time.”

**Mr McLEAN (Bulimba)** (3.48 p.m.): In his second-reading speech, the Minister said—

“Recently, I invited from interested parties submissions to amend the Factories and Shops Act 1960-1983.”

I feel that I should tell the House the facts about his recent invitation. In fact, the Minister announced a review of the Factories and Shops Act in August 1984, one year and four months previously, with an original closing date for submissions of 21 September 1984. That closing date was then extended to 31 January 1985. The Minister also stated that he would be preparing a Green Paper based on all submissions after that closing date and that it would allow for discussion by all parties before a Bill to change the Act would go before the House in the August 1985 session.

The Minister said that the Green Paper would allow further debate on the final legislation and would generate general support for any changes that may occur. To go a little further, in a letter on 9 August 1984, the Minister also stated that it was over 20 years since a complete review of the Act was undertaken, although a number of legislative amendments had been made during that period.

The Minister also stated—

“In view of the importance in the finalisation of the review it would be appreciated if your submissions could be forwarded by 21st September 1984.”

It is now November 1985, and honourable members have not seen the Green Paper. We have not had a debate and we have not seen any legislation. However, once again honourable members have seen a very minor amendment to this very complex Act.

The Factories and Shops Act is a monstrous piece of legislation that covers a wide and varied area of responsibility within industry in this State. It contains outmoded, unworkable and inadequate provisions that should have been dealt with many years ago. Bringing this small Bill before the House makes a joke, to say the least, of the Minister's position and his credibility.

One amendment deals with the definition of "small shop". It is a one-page adjustment to an Act that contains approximately 70 pages of provisions. Approximately 15 months ago, the Government promised to not only review the legislation but also update it following submissions from all parties concerned.

The Act covers almost every facet of industry. It covers approximately 15 000 factories that employ about 150 000 people, and approximately 30 000 shops that employ more than 120 000 people. That total of approximately 45 000 factories and shops employs a total of approximately 270 000 people. The Act covers the working conditions, health and welfare of employees, the trading hours of shops, the inspection of shops and factories, and construction work. The Act defines shops and factories. It covers registration of shops and factories, time and wages book inspection, safety, health and welfare. Recently, the Minister has been quite vocal on the importance of health and welfare in the running of industry in this State. This Bill gave the Minister an opportunity to delve in an honest way into the problems that industry in this State certainly faces in that regard. The Act also covers employment of children and sets hours of business, exemptions and closing times. It covers hawking and accommodation. In fact, it covers in one way or another just about everything to do with industry in this State.

I repeat that the introduction of this Factories and Shops Act Amendment Bill, which contains only one clause mainly to amend the definition "small shop", when so much more should have been done, highlights the fact that this Government is out of touch with reality. The Minister has stated publicly that he would produce a Green Paper in early 1985 dealing with submissions on the Factories and Shops Act for which he had asked. In November 1985, the Act comes before the House to make one minor amendment.

Would the Minister please explain to the people of Queensland why, in 1984, he felt it was necessary to say that a complete review of this Act was needed after 20 years without a major review when, after a period of approximately 15 months, only this minor amendment to this major Act is brought before the House?

What has happened to all the submissions that the Minister has received? What has happened to the promised Green Paper? What has happened to the promised debate and the legislation that it was promised would follow?

The minor amendment is typical of the efforts of the Minister as the person responsible for the portfolio of Employment and Industrial Affairs. He has continually spent tax-payers' money on publicity and gimmicks of one sort or another. He has instituted inquiry after inquiry, study after study and investigation after investigation. In fact, I pointed out in the debate on the Estimates of the Department of Employment and Industrial Affairs for 1984-85 that the Minister had promised, in *The State Capital Works Programs* document, three reviews, one study, one investigation, one inquiry and two promotions. That is not a bad effort considering that, at the time, Queensland had by far the highest unemployment in Australia, a trend that all experts predicted would continue.

The Minister has instituted three reviews, one inquiry, one study, one investigation and two promotions. After waiting 15 months for a review and alterations to the very important Factories and Shops Act, only one minor amendment is sought.

In his second-reading speech, the Minister said that this Bill is designed to cater for the small grocery store, to allow that type of store to employ additional employees and to allow for the removal of restrictions on the number of days on which employees can work during the week. The Bill provides that employees may be employed at any

time during the hours that small shops are permitted to trade—in other words, seven days instead of five and a half days.

I concede that there could be advantages to the husband and wife who own a grocery store, by allowing them more free time away from their store. I sound a note of warning to the owners of small businesses. This type of legislation could lead to the opening of a Pandora's box. Most certainly, the legislation will lead to pressure from the big stores to alter trading hours. Although the legislation appears to be quite helpful to the owners of small shops, ultimately it will drive the nail even further into their coffin. In the long term, it will provide the opening that the big stores have sought. Small business has never been in a worse position than it is at present. The legislation most certainly will not help to solve its major problems.

In his second-reading speech, the Minister said that the legislation would provide an opportunity for additional employees to be hired and should create employment opportunities. In my opinion, the amendments will not create one additional job. I know that; the owners of small shops know that. If he were completely honest, the Minister, too, would know it. I find it difficult to understand why he continues to make such statements. They do nothing for his credibility. If Queensland were to have the number of additional jobs the Minister said he would create since entering Cabinet, Queensland would have the greatest shortage of labour in the history of the country. In every statement he makes, he talks about the enormous number of jobs being created. Queensland has not seen those claims come to fruition to any marked extent.

The small-business sector has never been in such bad shape. If the legislation were viewed in the perspective of the problem areas of small business, the alteration in the definition of "Small shop" would probably rank at No. 50 out of 51 problems. Queensland shop-owners are being blatantly ripped off with exorbitant rents and charges. Multinationals and other giant companies provide unfair competition. New shopping complexes and developments are built regardless of their effects on established centres. Small-business people must pay more for their stock than the selling price of big stores. In Queensland, small business is in desperate straits.

If the Minister wanted to succeed in his endeavour to assist the small-business sector, he would stop listening to the right-wing fanatics with whom he is presently in league and listen instead to the overall industry. He should stop blaming the worker for all of the ills of the small-business sector and look instead at the real and obvious problems that need to be addressed by the Government. The problems to which I have referred are causing more bankruptcies and heartbreak in Queensland than in any other State.

The Bill is only window-dressing. It is in line, of course, with other statements that the Minister has made and legislation that has been introduced to please the union-bashers and the extreme right-wingers that the Government seems to cater for so adequately. It does not begin to address the real problems of the small-business sector. If the Government does not soon address the problems of small business, even more small operators will be forced out of business. No Government could be proud of what is presently happening to small business. Day after day, more and more small-business people find themselves with their backs to the wall.

The Minister said that he received many submissions on the definition "Small shop", most suggesting that the definition should be broadened to allow for the employment of additional employees and to remove the restriction on the number of days that could be worked during the week. I would be very interested to hear the Minister elaborate on the type of shop that he considers would provide the opportunity for additional employment. In his second-reading speech, he referred to the small suburban grocery store. I suggest that it would be quite a large suburban grocery store that employed four people. I can say that none of the small grocery stores that operate in my electorate could afford to employ four people. In fact, I do not know of any that would fit into the category outlined by the Minister in his second-reading speech. I would be interested

to hear the Minister explain how a small suburban grocery store could employ four people.

It never fails to amaze me that legislation brought forward by the Queensland Government either provides no protection for employees or provides very limited, if not extremely limited, protection, whilst at the same time providing a good deal of protection for the employer. The Bill reflects that pattern adopted by the Government. I read recently in the newspapers that more legislation of that type will be presented in the near future.

I draw to the Minister's attention that the presentation of this Bill provided him with a golden opportunity to review the Act in a fair and practical manner. However, the Minister has failed to do so. Instead, he has made only minor adjustments to legislation that has an important role in the operations of industry in this State. It bears repeating that the amendments contained in the Bill will lead ultimately to a result opposite to that sought by the legitimate small-business owner. Instead, the provisions of the Bill will lead to more pressure being applied by the powerful, giant stores in respect of matters such as trading hours and any other issues that have the potential to destroy the survival of the small-business operator.

The Opposition offers no major objection to the legislation except to say that it attacks in only a minor way the problems that beset this area of the Minister's responsibilities. Members of the Opposition feel that despite the fact that the presentation of this Bill provided the Minister with a golden opportunity to do something positive about the operations of the Act, the Minister has not taken that opportunity. I will be interested to hear the comments made by the Minister in his reply.

**Mr ALISON (Maryborough) (4.2 p.m.):** It is with pleasure that I rise to support the amendments brought forward by the Minister for Employment and Industrial Affairs (Mr Lester) that will affect the operation of the Factories and Shops Act.

As the Minister has pointed out, the amendments will allow a small shop that is owned by one proprietor to engage three employees at a maximum, which provides for an additional employee. In the case of the small shop owned by two proprietors, that establishment will now be able to employ up to two employees.

The previous speaker, the honourable member for Bulimba (Mr McLean), should have recognised that this legislation will provide great assistance to the owners of small stores. Although I realise that it is very difficult for members of the Opposition to give credit to the Government, I would have thought that in this instance the honourable member for Bulimba could have acknowledged that the legislation will make it easier for small-business proprietors to employ people to operate the business in their absence, for example, when the proprietors take holidays.

**Mr McLean:** I said that. The honourable member for Maryborough did not listen to me.

**Mr ALISON:** I was listening. If the honourable member for Bulimba said that, I now acknowledge it, although I did not hear it at the time. That would have been the only constructive comment made by the honourable member.

The Minister pointed out that the amending legislation will permit either one or both proprietors to be replaced during absences for a period not exceeding two months. There are no limits on the number of absences during any one year, and that provision will allow business proprietors to take holidays.

The Minister pointed out also in his introductory speech that the legislation will allow for employees to be engaged at any time during which small-business shops are permitted to trade, that is, for seven days of the week instead of five and a half.

Small shops are under threat, and that has been the case for some years, although members of the Australian Labor Party do not realise it. Small shops in particular, rather than the bigger traders—for example, the supermarkets and departmental stores—are

threatened by the effects of rising prices and increased taxation. The Queensland Government is aware of that, and has presented this legislation in an attempt to assist small-business owners.

Small shops need special consideration and, despite what the honourable member for Bulimba has said, the Minister should be commended for the way in which he consulted members of the industry before presenting this legislation. The Minister consulted with members of the industry not once but several times. I have been present, in company with the Minister and other committees members, when consultation has taken place in an attempt to gauge whether the Government was proceeding in the right direction and in accordance with views held by those involved in the industry. Moves were afoot, not so much by the organisation as by the individual small-business people to widen it further to allow perhaps an additional employee, to make it two additional employees rather than one that is being allowed.

The Government has done the right thing. If the provision was too wide, stores that might be termed bigger stores would be able to compete with the mum and dad stores or the small stores, which are the ones that the Government is trying to assist by this legislation.

The small shops play a very important role in the private sector. The Government is trying to do what it can by this legislation, and in many other ways, to assist the private sector, particularly the small stores.

These days, to be viable, small shops need higher turnovers than they had some years ago. The higher turnover is necessary because of rising costs and keener competition from the larger stores. To achieve the greater turnover, even allowing for the increase in prices and in the money value of turnover, obviously they must be able to employ more staff. By allowing one additional staff member to be employed, the Government will bring that situation about. The store-keeper will be able to handle the greater turnover and, provided his homework is done properly, will make a bigger operating net profit.

Opposition members do not understand the private sector, let alone the small-business area. When that is accepted, one can understand the negative comments made by the member for Bulimba. At present, small business and the private sector across the board are copping a thorough belting. Taxes have never been higher, costs have never been higher, wages have never been higher, and interest rates are at an all-time high.

**Mr Vaughan:** Prices have never been higher, either.

**Mr ALISON:** What makes up prices?

**Mr Vaughan:** Most prices.

**Mr ALISON:** As I say, what makes up prices?

It is probable that interest rates will be the big killer. If Mr Keating, the world's greatest Treasurer, is not able to do something——

**Mr White:** They are dynamite at the present.

**Mr ALISON:** They are absolute dynamite.

If interest rates do not come down fairly rapidly, many businesses—and not just small businesses—will go to the wall, and development will dry up.

I guess that the world's greatest Treasurer will sort the problem out. We will see how good he is and whether he is still labelled the world's greatest Treasurer in 1986.

**Mr White:** Is it true that the accolade “the world's greatest Treasurer” came from the Keating foundation?

**Mr ALISON:** That could be so, but I really do not know.

The previous speaker, the honourable member for Bulimba, said that this legislation is only window-dressing.

**Mr McLean:** It is.

**Mr ALISON:** That statement proves what I was saying, namely, that the honourable member does not understand what the private sector, least of all small business, is all about. If he understood small business, he would understand how important this legislation is to allow a business to be slightly bigger and still get the benefit of this legislation by being termed a small shop. The honourable member's statement that the legislation is only window-dressing is so much rubbish. He does not understand the legislation, he does not understand small business, and he does not understand the private sector.

**Mr McLean:** Do you say that this legislation will cure all the ills of small business?

**Mr ALISON:** No, not at all. That statement is equally stupid. I have not said that.

The honourable member for Bulimba said the Minister was union-bashing. I have not read the speech that the Minister made today, but I do not think he referred to unions when he was making his speech. I do not know what this union-bashing is all about. I think it is a symptom of the Opposition's paranoia that when anybody on this side of the House makes a speech, the Opposition claims the Government is indulging in union-bashing.

**Mr McLean:** Say that when the garbage legislation is introduced.

**Mr ALISON:** I will be very happy to take part in that debate.

This legislation is a step in the right direction. I certainly concede that it is not the answer to all the problems confronting small business, but it is a big step in the right direction. I am certainly very happy to support it.

**Hon. Sir WILLIAM KNOX (Nundah) (4.10 p.m.):** I support the legislation. The area that the Minister is tackling in this legislation is one in which change is occurring constantly. Pressures will always be there to change not only the definitions, which this legislation does, but also the range of goods that can be sold at exempt shops and other shops.

The trading hours question also is relevant. Some shops have greater flexibility in their trading hours than others. Because there is constant change in this area, right across the nation moves are being made to introduce greater flexibility in trading hours for small shops. Some of the larger emporiums also have been able to have changes made in their trading hours, particularly for late-night shopping. In Tasmania, substantial retailing enterprises are allowed to remain open during flexible trading hours.

The amendment to the definition of "small shop" is fairly consistent with the arrangements made for hardware shops. Here again, a problem arose in providing service to the public at unusual hours. I am glad that that matter has settled down and that hardware shops provide a service to the public at reasonable hours of the day. In spite of initial difficulties, that change in trading hours has worked fairly smoothly.

I know that the small shop-keepers association and its associates have had difficulty in accommodating a change in the definition of "small shop". In fact, the definition that is now to be applied will enable some small shops to become bigger. The shop that is covered by the definition of "small shop" in this legislation will be a fairly large shop engaging in supermarket-style merchandising. In a supermarket-style presentation, four people can manage a fairly substantial turnover. Such a shop could have a fairly large turnover. It might look small when compared with a Coles or Woolworths store, but its turnover is quite substantial.

I know one such shop that has a turnover of about \$6m a year. That shop probably is regarded as a small retail outlet. The definition in this legislation will allow for a bigger retail establishment. I know that the shop-keepers association is worried about

how big is "small". Of course, a multitude of small retailers, corner shops and so on will not be affected one way or the other by this legislation.

Generally speaking, the legislation concerns the supermarket-type presentation of small shops that sell exempt goods. In the suburbs, an efficient and very good service is provided by a number of comparatively small retail operators. They are mainly husband and wife operations, with casual or permanent employees to assist, particularly in the marking and storage of goods.

One of the interesting developments that allow small shops to become bigger shops—this amendment will assist them—is that individual items on racks do not have to be marked. Quite a few of the small grocery shops in Queensland have introduced scanners. I am pleased to see that that has happened without a great deal of hassle in this State. That gives small retailers the opportunity to expand their facilities considerably. It gives them tighter stock control. Because of better controls, unnecessary wastage is reduced.

Small shop-keepers will be able to give better service to the consumer by giving an itemised and detailed list of the items purchased. That will remove from them the burden of having to price every article in the shop individually.

As was pointed out in today's paper, if signs showing the prices are displayed prominently and people have an itemised account, which is available with the scanning system, they are in a position to compare the prices on the docket with those on the shelf, and the prices at shop A with those in shop B and shop C. This system has been a boon to the small shop-keeper and, with this amendment, the economy of effort of running a small shop will be considerably improved.

However, some concern is felt about the highly competitive nature of small grocery shops. Quite a few of them go to the wall simply because of competition, not just from the big retailers but also because of the more favourable siting of other small shops. Difficulties are appearing in the smaller shopping centres, and that has been alluded to already in the debate. Although a number of small shops are located in relatively large shopping centres, they are having difficulty getting their turnovers up to meet their overheads. On the north side of Brisbane, a number of shopping centres have gone into liquidation with the consequent tendency by landlords in other centres to apply even greater pressure on the small shop-keeper.

Nevertheless, these amendments will give the small shop-keeper a great competitive edge on their principal competitors, which are the big operators in the retail field. I am sure that this will be of benefit to the community at large.

Mr VAUGHAN (Nudgee) (4.17 p.m.): Clause 2 (a) inserts the new definition—

“‘Authorised replacement’, in relation to a small shop, means a person who is engaged in the conduct of a business in the stead of a person who—

. . .

(b) in any other case, is absent from business for a period not exceeding two months;”.

Clause 2 (b) amends the definition of “Small shop” so that it will read—

“‘Small shop’ means a shop . . . in which, in respect of the business carried on therein—

. . .

(e) a person so engaged, other than an employee, is not also engaged in any way in any other retail business;”.

That could create problems where a person who owns a small business is restricted to an absence of not more than two months and must not be engaged in any other business.

I must confess that, when I compared the existing definition with the definition in the Bill, I overlooked the fact that this particular point is covered. I am sorry; I was on the wrong tram for a while. I note now that the original definition has been expanded, and I can see where the correction has been made.

The Bill refers to goods that can be sold by small shops. Reference is made to "boot and shoe laces, bias binding", etc. I note that the new definition has excluded, among other things, tin-openers and fertilisers in packets not exceeding 4 kg. If small shops are to be defined, it is about time that the list of goods that they are entitled to sell in accordance with the regulations was upgraded. In my opinion, this would have been an opportune time to do so. My first impression from reading the list of goods in the Bill is that it is hopelessly out of date. I presume that the Minister's departmental officers, who go round small shops, would know what is actually being sold in small shops.

Any honourable member who goes to small shops will find that the range of goods detailed in the legislation is nowhere near the range of goods actually for sale. For instance, the legislation refers to paint in tins not exceeding 150 mL. Somebody has told me that 150 mL is equivalent to 30 teaspoonfuls.

As I understand it, the ultimate thrust of this legislation is aimed at doing something for consumers so that they have access to small shops, which in turn can improve the service they offer and increase the number of their employees. One would have thought that in this day and age, the legislation could spell out one litre of paint rather than 30 teaspoonfuls. A litre tin is a reasonable size. If somebody runs out of paint, he certainly does not go down to the shop to buy a tin containing 150 mL or 30 teaspoonfuls. He should be able to buy a litre of paint. Maybe that would cut across sales of hardware stores, which can open seven days a week. If the legislation is to allow the sale of a tin of paint, it should be a sensible amount. The purchase of a very small tin of paint from a small shop will cost almost as much as the purchase of a litre of paint elsewhere. Something should be done in that regard to help consumers.

In his second-reading speech, the Minister spoke of—

"... small shops, which are basically small suburban grocery stores, to employ additional employees, and to remove the restriction on the number of days on which employees could be employed during the week."

I am a little concerned about the employment of people on the number of days that the shop is open during the week. The Minister went on to say—

"The Bill also allows employees to be employed at any time during the hours small shops are permitted to trade, that is, on seven days of the week instead of the 5½ days at present."

As the legislation increases the number of people that small shops can employ, I am a little concerned that many of them do not comply with the provisions of the award.

I realise that the legislation contains the proviso that, even though small shops are entitled to open seven days a week, persons who are employed must be employed in accordance with the provisions of the award. Perhaps with this amendment to the Act, the Minister is laying the foundations in anticipation of future changes in the terms of engagement of people employed as shop assistants or as employees in small shops.

I am extremely concerned that, under this legislation, the employees of small shops can be engaged for seven days a week. Admittedly, at the present time that employment has to be in accordance with the provisions of the award. However, I am concerned that if that is changed subsequently, the conditions under which those employees will be employed will also be changed, particularly as I am aware that the Minister is talking about the deregulation of labour and about employers entering into contracts with employees for whatever wages the employer is prepared to offer and for whatever hours the employer wants his employees to work.

Unfortunately, the wages books are not policed to the extent that they should be. The Government has nowhere near enough inspectors. As I understand it, they certainly are not going out on a regular basis and checking wages books. As a matter of fact, I would say that very few of these owners of small businesses have the correct wages books. If they do, very few would have them filled in correctly. Most employees are not

being paid their correct entitlements, yet this legislation contains a provision that allows employees to be engaged for seven days a week.

If the Minister goes ahead with his proposed deregulation, he will open up a can of worms. He should do some investigating to see what happens when there is regulation. The Minister is going to deregulate the labour market. Many employers in small business do not belong to employer organisations and would not be supplied with correct information on provisions of awards relating to wages and conditions. If the Minister is going to talk about deregulation, he should find out first the extent to which employers in the community, particularly small-businessmen, are not complying with the awards at present.

Recently, a person said to me, "At present, deregulation exists on an unofficial basis because the provisions of the awards and the Factories and Shops Act are not being complied with." Another person said to me, "The Minister is talking about deregulating the terms of engagement of employees or deregulation of the labour market. Maybe he should look at deregulating the provisions of the Factories and Shops Act."

Let us talk about deregulating the terms and conditions under which small businesses must operate. It is a parallel. I am sure that the Minister will find that industry and business do not want that. They want regulation so that they all operate on the same basis and compete on the same level. However, if the Minister is going to talk about deregulating the labour market so that employees will have to compete against each other and be played off by employers and by industry, let us talk about deregulation of the whole industry so that it is a free-for-all. There would then be chaos. If the Minister proceeds with his proposed deregulation of the labour market, he will have a free-for-all. I do not believe that the Minister knows all the ramifications of deregulation. It is all right to talk about deregulation when times are bad; but when times are good, the spoils go to the strong and to the victor. The effect is the reverse of what one thinks will happen.

At this stage, they are the only comments I wish to make on the legislation.

**Mr WHITE (Redcliffe) (4.27 p.m.):** I take the opportunity to commend the Minister and to indicate Liberal Party support for the legislation. It is heartening to see some progress being made in this area. The reforms introduced by the Minister will be welcomed by the various small-business organisations that have indicated to me their satisfaction in the consultation they have had with the Minister and the department.

In many ways, the widening of the provisions is probably legitimising what has already been happening. I know that many people are concerned that they could be prosecuted. Those people are happy that the department has not come down with a very heavy hand.

The other major provision is the employment of people during a period of seven days rather than the period of five and a-half days now specified. The honourable member for Nudgee (Mr Vaughan) seemed to be concerned about that. I do not see it as a matter of great concern. The sooner greater flexibility is given in awards and the sooner greater opportunities are provided for people to obtain jobs, the better. One does not have to opt out of the award system.

**Mr Vaughan:** On what terms and conditions, though?

**Mr WHITE:** If the honourable member listens, I will tell him. One does not have to opt out of the present system. One can make an arrangement and have it registered in the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Commission. I can remember being involved in this problem when all-day trading on Saturdays began on the Redcliffe Peninsula many years ago. One of the major problems was the difficulty of employees having to be paid double time to work on Saturday afternoon. A compromise was reached and an economic rate was settled so that people could open their businesses on Saturday afternoon. History has shown us over the last 20 years that that has led to a tremendous increase in the number of jobs, particularly in Redcliffe. If there was greater

flexibility, there would be far greater opportunities for employment. The people who are running the mum and dad stores, the 7-to-11 stores, or whatever, all believe that if there was greater flexibility in the employment awards, they would be in a position to employ more staff.

**Mr Vaughan** interjected.

**Mr WHITE:** Opposition members can laugh.

**Mr Vaughan** interjected.

**Mr WHITE:** It is a simple fact of life that much business is to be gained. People will be encouraged to open their stores for longer periods and employ additional staff if the end line shows that a profit can be made. I do not see anything wrong with that, and I do not see why the Government should put its head in the sand and say, "Because we have been working under the present arrangements for the last 50 or so years, we should not look for alteration or change."

The matter of deregulation will require very careful consideration. I would be very cautious about it. I know that many employer organisations as well as unions have a great deal of concern about it. There need not be complete deregulation. There is no reason why special arrangements cannot be entered into between employer and employee, which could be registered with the Industrial Commission. There is no reason why Queensland cannot do the sorts of things that have been done overseas in industries that have prospered.

Honourable members will recall that Sir William Knox made a number of progressive moves in order to enable furniture-retailers and proprietors of hardware stores to operate outside normal trading hours. People jumped up and down and said that that would be a terrible thing. However, it has led to prosperity, new jobs and new businesses. So why should not the Government look outside the present arrangements? The legislation is too restrictive.

Today, people who conduct businesses have to be ever conscious of costs, and one of the highest costs is the cost of labor. Many people simply cannot afford to employ staff after normal trading hours, because of double time and, on occasions, treble time. I know of many businesses that could open after normal trading hours but do not do so, simply because they cannot afford the over-award payments. I am aware that the Government is reviewing the matter. I know that it has been discussed heatedly among employer organisations as well as among unions and small-business organisations.

Today, small businesses face major problems with costs, not the least of which concerns interest rates. That problem has been canvassed by the honourable member for Murrumba (Mr Kruger). I have mentioned that it is pleasing to see some of the more progressive things that have been done by the Small Business Development Corporation. I hope that the corporation moves more into the area of service and education rather than act as a lobby group. At the moment, concern is felt that it is becoming rather politicised.

The legislation is welcomed by members of the Liberal Party, and we take this opportunity to express our appreciation to the Minister.

**Hon. V. P. LESTER** (Peak Downs—Minister for Employment and Industrial Affairs) (4.33 p.m.), in reply: I thank all honourable members who took part in the debate on this Bill. All appear to have entered into it in the right spirit. The Opposition spokesman, the honourable member for Bulimba (Mr McLean), made several comments, some of which were not entirely correct. He was not quite as nice as he sometimes is, but I suppose he can be forgiven.

**Mr McLean:** You're pretty provocative in the paper lately.

**Mr LESTER:** Is that it?

**Mr McLean:** Yes, you've been very provocative.

**Mr LESTER:** I see.

The legislation is very simple. Employment opportunities are being provided, because if small shops are allowed to employ additional people and the system is made more flexible, obviously more people will be employed. Previously, the absolutely stupid situation prevailed in which if a person was not married, that person could employ only one other person, yet if he was married, obviously his wife could be counted as an employee and he would have the advantage of—

**Mr McLean:** Would you accept de factos?

**Mr LESTER:** I think I will just get on with the job. One stays away from a debate on de factos, weirdos and all sorts of other things.

Getting on with the job—I refer to the comment of the honourable member for Bulimba that the Government has done nothing about creating employment opportunities. He is a little misguided in making such a comment. The manpower planning unit is working very well. Queensland led the rest of Australia in traineeships. The Hawke Government has followed our lead, although Mr Hawke is having a little trouble with the unions, which do not agree with the implementation of such innovations. I have travelled all round the State promoting the self-employment venture scheme and have met a variety of groups on my 17 trips. Labor members of Parliament were present at some of the public meetings and offered constructive comments. However, the member for Bulimba was not one of them; so he is in no position to throw stones.

**Mr McLean:** It was a bogus exercise from start to finish, and you know it.

**Mr LESTER:** No, it was not. No other Minister responsible for employment has travelled throughout the State and held public meetings, encouraging an input that has resulted in the suggestions that have so far been put forward. There was nothing bogus about it at all. Members from all political parties who attended would find the honourable member's remarks a little insulting and unbecoming.

In the past eight months, Queensland has led the employment recovery. In the last couple of months, Queensland has been the only State to create jobs. The other States—New South Wales and Victoria in particular—have lost jobs. In the area of employment, the argument of the honourable member for Bulimba falls down.

The honourable member referred to the Bill's hurting the owners of small shops. It must not be forgotten that they were the very people who requested the amendment. To some extent, although larger groups did not go all out in opposing it, they were not keen on what we were doing. They saw that the move would give an advantage to the small-businessman. The Government told the big operators that the amendment would be brought in and that they would have to get used to it. It ought not to be claimed that the Government has pandered to big business in this legislation. All parties were called in and gave their views. All were extremely responsible in the exercise, even those who did not agree. The Government did the right thing. Everybody was given a go. That is why there has been no flak about it in the media. Generally speaking, the comments about it have been complimentary. Often, legislation that changes the criteria of employment and makes a system more flexible attracts flak. Because the Government went to a fair amount of trouble before framing the legislation, that has not happened in this instance.

The honourable member for Bulimba said that this would be about the fiftieth most important problem of small business. I thought that it was very important within my portfolio, which is why it has been dealt with so speedily. If he has problems in areas of small business outside my portfolio, I suggest that he direct his comments to the appropriate Minister.

The honourable member made comments about the Act as a whole. This is not the only change being made to the legislation. Many amendments must be made to the Act, which is extremely complex legislation. Much that has to be done must be considered by many different groups, with different ideas.

**Mr McLean:** When is your Green Paper coming out?

**Mr LESTER:** The main reason the Green Paper has not been released is that many people have different and varied ideas. An attempt is being made to arrive at a common basis. Unfortunately, self-interest prevails in some areas. That has not yet been overcome. However, the amendments in the Bill could be moved on quickly, which is the reason for its introduction. I assure the honourable member for Bulimba that the other proposed changes will be made.

I thank the honourable member for Maryborough (Mr Alison) for his support. I need not say a great deal about his speech. He, too, is a member of my committee and has been involved in all of the discussions. That is the way I work. Before bringing forward legislation, I do not only prepare it myself with the assistance of departmental officers; I involve all the members of my committee in its preparation, so that they know what is going on and can support the legislation.

**Mr Shaw:** Why don't you hold an all-party meeting?

**Mr LESTER:** Would the honourable member for Wynnum like to come?

**Mr Shaw:** Yes.

**Mr LESTER:** No problem.

The honourable member for Nundah (Sir William Knox) referred to the changes in patterns of policy and to the flexing up of regulations that pertain to small shops and bigger shops. He endeavoured to make a contribution to the debate that was worth while. Of course, this matter is of interest to him because he was my predecessor.

The honourable member led changes to the regulations that governed the trading of hardware stores, but not without difficulty. As he pointed out, the controversy associated with change soon died down when everybody got on with the job, and everybody is a lot happier as a result. His comment reminded me of the time that the Government tried to introduce late-night shopping. I can remember all of the trouble that occurred because of that, but I would like to see someone try to repeal that legislation.

As the honourable member for Nundah has said, Government policy has to be flexible enough to accommodate what people want without attempting to accomplish too much, too soon. However, I believe that everybody will be happy as long as legislation such as the Factories and Shops Act is implemented in a way that suits everybody.

The honourable member for Nudgee (Mr Vaughan) made some remarks about the trading carried on by small shops. He referred to the availability of tin-openers and the like. I have to point out to the honourable member that representatives of small business did not put any of those views to me when discussions were held. In the exempt shops category, representatives of small business ownership resisted a suggestion that that category of business be opened up by amendment of the regulations because it was feared that, as a result, small businesses would be brought directly into competition with supermarkets.

I will not throw away the points made by the honourable member for Nudgee, because I think that his remarks are worth investigating. The honourable member need not be too upset about the provision that relates to trading for seven days. I point out that what is proposed by the amendment is subject to the conditions of awards that have previously been determined.

I am concerned, however, that the honourable member has referred to some small-business owners who do not pay their employees the correct wages or try to vary the awards on an informal basis. I have to say quite frankly to the honourable member that the reason is that they cannot afford to conduct their businesses in any other way.

**Mr Vaughan:** Does the Minister admit that it is being done?

**Mr LESTER:** No. That was said by the honourable member for Nudgee. Some business-operators do it; I do not think that there is any doubt about that. Is the honourable member for Nudgee going to become political about this?

**Mr Vaughan:** Not very many of them are being prosecuted.

**Mr LESTER:** The honourable member for Nudgee made a comment and I said in all honesty that perhaps there are some—I repeat, “perhaps there are some”.

**Mr Vaughan:** Not “perhaps”.

**Mr LESTER:** OK. The honourable member for Nudgee has just said that there is one person.

**Mr Vaughan:** I did not say that there was one; I said “not ‘perhaps’.”

**Mr LESTER:** OK, “not ‘perhaps’”. The honourable member for Nudgee made a comment with which I partly agree. Then the honourable member for Nudgee wanted to become political about the whole thing, whereas I was merely trying to be honest. If the honourable member wishes to become political, I will close the discussion and move on to the next topic.

**Mr Vaughan:** Get your inspectors out to inspect a few wages books for a change. Police the award.

**Mr LESTER:** All right. Perhaps the Government could try to police the awards a little better, but many of the problems arise because the small-business owners are in great financial difficulty and there will always be people who will be prepared to make a deal.

The point that must be made is that the small-business operator who engages in that type of activity must always bear the responsibility for it if an inspector is informed. Every complaint that has been received by my department has been investigated. If the shop-keeper is found to be wrong, he is prosecuted. It cannot be said that not many shop-owners are prosecuted, because I have signed dozens of prosecution directives for cases involving under-payment of wages. The result is that the shop-owner has to bring the payments up to scratch. If the honourable member for Nudgee knows of any cases that should be prosecuted, he need only furnish me with the name of the business involved and I will ensure that the complaint is investigated.

I turn now to comment on the contribution to the debate made by the honourable member for Redcliffe (Mr White)——

**Mr Shaw:** Foxy Video—they do it all the time.

**Mr LESTER:** If they get caught, they are in trouble.

**Mr Shaw:** They do get caught, and then they get rid of those employees. They get another bunch of young kids in, and then they start all over again.

**Mr Vaughan:** It goes on and on.

**Mr LESTER:** That is not good, but I thank the honourable members for their comments.

The honourable member for Redcliffe recognises that the Government must be aware of the reality of commercial activity these days. Certainly, he commented on gradually making hours and conditions of employment more flexible. Those matters may have to be looked at in the future. Some overseas countries that have such conditions are competing very successfully with Australia. We do not have to look very far to find how competitive we have been in recent times. For instance, in the last month, we imported over \$1 billion worth of goods more than we exported. If honourable members opposite think that that is not serious and that the Government should do nothing about it, they are in for a hell of a shock. Many of our grandchildren will have no job

opportunities. I hope that all honourable members get their heads down and get on with doing what will improve conditions.

Motion (Mr Lester) agreed to.

#### Committee

Clauses 1 and 2, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

#### Third Reading

Bill, on motion of Mr Lester, by leave, read a third time.

### GATEWAY BRIDGE AGREEMENT ACT AMENDMENT BILL

#### Second Reading—Resumption of Debate

Debate resumed from 19 November (see p. 2514) on Mr Hinze's motion—

“That the Bill be now read a second time.”

Mr SHAW (Wynnum) (4.48 p.m.): I describe this measure as a tidying-up Bill. The date for the opening of the bridge is approaching, and this is a final attempt to tidy up the legislation in anticipation of that event.

Without doubt, the bridge will have a marked effect on the city. In the initial stages, it is estimated that 12 000 vehicles a day will use the bridge and that that number will increase to an estimated 60 000 vehicles within a short time. Although the bridge will be a great boon, the volume of traffic will create problems. Some unforeseen results will become apparent as traffic patterns change as a result of people using the bridge.

The experts have said that the opening of the bridge will result in fewer vehicles travelling through Fortitude Valley to get to areas on the north side of the river. Without doubt that will be so, but the traffic flow on Kingsford Smith Drive in the opposite direction could well be increased. People may decide that it is quicker of a morning to go over the Gateway Bridge and along Kingsford Smith Drive to get to Fortitude Valley. There will be a complete reversal of the normal traffic patterns, and that matter will have to be looked at.

Already, with the development of the bridge, many problems are occurring. The member for Lytton (Mr Burns), whose electorate adjoins mine, has complained about the problems on Wynnum Road and Old Cleveland Road. When the bridge opens, those intersections will be controlled by traffic-lights, and problems will arise. Already problems have been experienced. In the mornings, great delays occur at intersections along the arterial road. Those intersections are under police control. One side issue is that the skills that policemen used to have in directing traffic seem to have been lost.

Mr Hinze: Do you remember “Dancing Dickie”?

Mr SHAW: Yes. People such as “Dancing Dickie” had the skill to keep traffic moving. I am not criticising the police. A skill that is not used is a skill lost.

In the mornings, delays are increasing as police allow the traffic to back up for quite a distance. When vehicles finally reach the intersection, a policeman holds up his hand, and a further delay occurs. That is a petty annoyance.

As the volume of traffic using the Gateway Bridge increases, delays at those intersections also will increase. A lot of the traffic will be made up of heavy vehicles. Those intersections will be controlled only by traffic-lights. It is a cost-cutting exercise. Because the Government is trying to cut costs and save money, or because it miscalculated in its earlier estimates, overpasses will not be built. It is a second-rate job; there is no other way to describe it. Lives will be lost at those intersections, as they are at other busy intersections throughout Brisbane. Because the Government is unable to provide

overpasses, a design fault is being built into the system. The Government is building death-traps at those intersections. It gives me no pleasure to predict that in the future a serious accident will occur. I am quite certain that lives will be lost as heavy vehicles try to beat the red lights at those intersections through which a heavy volume of traffic will be travelling both ways.

In fact, it will be an intersection of freeways. Wynnum Road is virtually a freeway, and a freeway will lead onto the bridge. Nowhere else have I seen two freeways intersect. It is a great pity that this worthwhile project will be marred in that way.

With the opening of the Gateway Bridge, the greatest benefit will be the saving of time and distance travelled. In referring to time being saved, it is worth looking at the delays that will occur in the paying of the toll. The department has made conflicting statements about the use of credit cards. On one occasion it was predicted that, on the payment of a sum of money, drivers would be able to obtain a credit card, which presumably they would insert into a slot that would open a toll-gate. The toll-gate would not open until the card was taken out. That in itself would create delays.

Another version of the story that was issued by the department was that a toll-collector would collect the credit card from the driver, insert it into the machine, which would open the gate, and give back the card. The first version will probably eventuate, but if anyone has any doubt that this will lead to considerable delays, he need only observe what happens at parking stations that have a similar set-up. What usually happens when a driver has to insert a card or pull a ticket out is that he pulls up too far away from the machine. These drivers have a very poor idea of how long their arm is. As a result, they have to stop, get out of the car, pull the ticket out of the machine and get back in again. Because drivers cannot handle that situation, long delays frequently occur.

The six toll-gates at the opening to the bridge should be enough to cope with the traffic. However, in similar situations all round the world, the operators decide to block off three or four lanes because only two are needed to cope with the traffic flow. However, within a short time, a queue backs up. Given that the toll-gates in question are placed at the bottom of a very steep incline—that has been the subject of a deal of conjecture—it is essential that delays be kept to a minimum.

I am also a little worried about the onus that is to be placed on owners concerning fines. I can understand why the provision has been introduced, and in normal circumstances it is probably the best way to go. However, I wonder whether provision has been made to cover the eventuality of people using stolen cards to joy-ride a number of times across the bridge and, in the process, run up a large bill. Under this legislation, the authorities have been given carte blanche to prosecute; they do not have to establish who is at fault.

Experience in the electricity industry has shown how ruthlessly these powers are applied. Innocent people are told in no uncertain terms to pay up or else. The authorities are not interested in their complaints or in the rights or wrongs of a particular incident. I would hate to see that occur on the Gateway Bridge. Although the possibility of stolen cards being misused is a small one, it will be very annoying for the people who have lost their cards, and, on top of all the other troubles, they will face quite a large bill.

In recognition of the need to keep the traffic moving, the Bill provides operators with the power to remove vehicles in case of break-down. The Bill empowers the operator to recover the costs of moving these vehicles. Because there is no protection of the motorist, I express the hope that those costs will be reasonable. The Bill gives the operators the power to establish what they believe their costs to be, and those costs can be loaded to a large degree with, among other things, administration costs. The motorist has no option but to pay. If a motorist breaks down on the bridge, the operator will hook his car up and tow it away. There is no freedom of choice or competition. The motorist will then have to pay what the operator thinks is a fair thing. I hope that the cost of the operator will be just that, with nothing else added.

A major concern is the possibility of very heavy vehicles breaking down on those very steep inclines and the drivers not being able to hold the vehicles on the inclines. Considerable doubt has been expressed by people who should know, that it is quite possible that such vehicles will run backwards down the incline if they do break down. The possibilities attaching to it are quite horrendous. Certainly, the removal of those vehicles will be a great problem.

I again express the view that has been put forward by those who should know that placing the toll-gates at the very bottom of that incline is a mistake, because it will mean that very heavy vehicles will have to stop and then tackle that steep rise from a standing start.

**Mr Burns:** I can tell you that some of them will not get over the top of that bridge when they are fully loaded. A semi-trailer starting from the bottom, as you said, will not make it.

**Mr SHAW:** That is so. A concern that has been expressed is whether some of the drivers will be able to stop the vehicles from running backwards. If that happens, it will be quite horrendous.

I question why it was necessary to place the toll-gates at the very bottom of the incline. One only has to see transport drivers in operation on the roads and highways round Brisbane to realise that they have a great reluctance to stop on steep inclines. The reasons are obvious.

I point out to the House the quite obvious safety factor in avoiding long queues at the toll-gate at the bottom of that incline and avoiding slow-moving queues of vehicles behind a heavy transport half way up that incline. I certainly hope that I never find myself caught behind one of them as it grinds its way up that very steep incline, wondering whether or not it will make it over the top.

It is a source of great regret to me that the trend in building bridges is to eliminate provision for pedestrians and cyclists. The department and the operators state that the use to which they are put does not warrant the great cost of providing such facilities. I wonder whether that is really so because it is very difficult to estimate the demand when the service is not provided. Certainly, I agree that the provision of pedestrian walkways on very long bridges that are fed only by a freeway is financially questionable. More consideration should be given to allowing cyclists to use the emergency stopping lane, which is a necessity. The difficulties in providing for pedestrians are even greater.

**Mr Burns:** Do you think they would be able to fish from it?

**Mr SHAW:** I will certainly say that, knowing some of the fisherman as I do, I am sure that many would be prepared to give it a go.

Seriously, I believe that, if it was at all possible, it would be a great advantage for people other than motorists to be able to get to work by crossing the river at that point rather than having to go all the way round or to use a motor car and so increase the density of traffic. I know that problems attach to that suggestion. I would simply like to think that every consideration has been given to overcoming those problems and that the need for that facility has been fully considered.

The provision of this bridge is a landmark in every sense of the word. It is a landmark in that it will change the traffic patterns round Brisbane. It is a landmark in that it can be seen from all over Brisbane. Certainly, people will be able to gain a sense of direction from seeing it from many miles away.

In conclusion, I might add that it is quite notable that the date announced for the opening of the bridge for public use is 12 January, which happens to be my birthday. I am sure that that was taken into consideration. I am glad that the department did not alter it by one day, that is, to the day after, which is the birthday of the Premier and Treasurer. I will be thinking of the Minister on that occasion. However, I am sure that,

if previous precedents are followed, members of the Opposition will not receive an invitation to the opening.

**Hon. Sir WILLIAM KNOX (Nundah) (5.5 p.m.):** As has been pointed out, this legislation is tidying-up legislation in anticipation of the opening of the bridge in the new year. The bridge has a very interesting history. It goes back to the late '50s when studies were made in Brisbane by Maunsell and Partners on the possibility of crossings. Honourable members may recall that at that time, it was decided to proceed with vehicular ferries.

The 1976 Budget that I brought down as Treasurer provided funds for a feasibility study to get the bridge under way. That study was carried out. In 1978, armed with that information, I was able to go round the world to various people and encourage them to take an interest in the development of that bridge as a managerial operation by private enterprise. It is true that the Government underwrites the whole operation, but the management of it is the hands of private entrepreneurs who, I am quite confident, will do a very fine job.

I commend the Minister for the very special interest that he has taken in this project from the moment he became the Minister for Main Roads. It is not just a bridge; it is a structure that connects tens of thousand of people with their work, occupations, shopping centres and recreation areas in a more convenient way than is presently the case. I hope that the road system that goes with the bridge will be redesignated as Highway 1. In fact, it will be part of the highway from Melbourne to Cairns. When it joins the highway at Springwood at one end and Strathpine at the other, it will provide a very convenient bypass——

**Mr Simpson: Bald Hills.**

**Sir WILLIAM KNOX:** It will come out at the Pine River at Strathpine. It will be convenient——

**Mr Simpson: Bald Hills.**

**Sir WILLIAM KNOX:** It is past Bald Hills that it joins the highway.

**An Honourable Member: Bracken Ridge.**

**Sir WILLIAM KNOX:** I am receiving all sorts of nomenclature. It happens to be just this side of the boundary of Brisbane, right on the Pine River. That is the spot.

The distance to be travelled will be reduced remarkably. The journey from Strathpine to Springwood will take between 20 and 25 minutes. In the whole operation, only seven or eight intersections will exist. It will be a very limited-access highway. The speed limit on the highway will be about 100 km/h. Next to the bridge there will be connections to the airport and to the port of Brisbane on both sides of the river, which are very conveniently placed, and there will be connections between Boondall, Chandler and the QE II sports ground. In fact, the travel time between Boondall and the QE II sports grounds will be about 15 minutes. The staging of the Olympic Games or any operation requiring all those sporting facilities will be made very much easier because of the Gateway Bridge. The bridge will have an enormous social and economic impact on the whole region between the Sunshine Coast and the Gold Coast. It will be quicker to go from Southport to Brisbane Airport than it will be to go from Southport to Coolangatta. That is very impressive.

It will be very convenient for people on the south side of the river to shop and work on the north side, and vice versa. Opportunities will be opened up for people who have never dreamt of using the facilities on the opposite side of the river. The large shopping centres on both sides of the river expect the movement of people across the river. When it was first mooted in 1976, the bridge was forecast to carry about 13 000 units a day. I was one of the many people who doubted that and asked for the studies to be done again. Surprisingly, the studies still arrived at a similar figure. From what I

have seen and heard of the development associated with the bridge, I am now quite sure that that figure will be exceeded.

One would hope that a great deal of the heavy commercial traffic will use the bridge rather than travel through Fortitude Valley or the centre of the city. Presumably that will be the case for the great proportion of traffic, because it can conveniently get across the river at that point rather than go all the way round into the city or across the Story Bridge.

Although a toll will be charged on the bridge, it will not be prohibitive. Of course, the toll is designed to meet the amortisation and running costs of the bridge. It is also designed to make the venture attractive commercially. I am pleased to note that the toll for the family car will not be excessive. That will encourage many people to use the bridge when travelling to recreation areas.

The bridge will reduce travelling time and provide a great deal of convenience. It will be a very important part of social and economic life in Brisbane, unlike the bridge in Melbourne, which was a bit of a white elephant. Probably one day that bridge will cease to be a white elephant. However, the Gateway Bridge will certainly attract a tremendous amount of traffic and interest. It is an enormously valuable contribution to the environment and our way of life.

The Bill deals with advertising. I am not sure how that will be policed. Perhaps the Minister's advisers might be in a position to tell him. Although I agree that people should not be allowed to daub signs all over the bridge, tempted as they might be to do so—

**Mr Eaton:** Couldn't they put up a sign every so often—"Vote Liberal"?

**Sir WILLIAM KNOX:** People could do that, too.

I understand that the bridge will be lit up at night. That will be very impressive.

The regulations deal with signs on vehicles. I am not sure what that means, because most commercial vehicles carry advertising material of some sort.

**Mr Shaw:** They would have to leave them at the toll-gates.

**Sir WILLIAM KNOX:** Yes.

I am wondering how that is to be administered, or whether exemptions will be allowed, because most commercial vehicles carry advertising material of some sort. Certainly, the big pantechnicons do. Vehicles servicing retail outlets also tend to carry a good deal of advertising material. I hope that that will not be prohibited on the bridge.

**Mr Innes:** Brisbane City Council buses, and taxis.

**Sir WILLIAM KNOX:** As the honourable member for Sherwood says, Brisbane City Council buses and taxis carry advertising.

A good deal of advertising is carried on mobile units that will be using the bridge. Presumably, that has been thought of and catered for without the creation of any problems.

I turn to break-downs on the bridge. The bridge has a 5 per cent gradient or thereabouts. It is relatively steep. Break-downs on bridges create severe difficulties. Tow-trucks are located at each end of the Sydney Harbour Bridge, and are ready to move in very rapidly as soon as a break-down is reported, to prevent the terrible congestion that results when a break-down occurs. Very bad accidents on that bridge have led to traffic being piled up as far back as Manly on one side and the city on the other.

I realise that traffic levels will not be as high on the Gateway Bridge as they are on the Sydney Harbour Bridge. Nevertheless, a break-down of a substantial commercial vehicle on the bridge would pose very difficult traffic problems. I hope that provision will be made for the immediate removal of vehicles that have broken down and that that situation will be supervised and monitored. I realise that people are tempted to stay

until police arrive to take details. Most break-downs, however, are not caused by accidents, and vehicles should be removed quickly.

**Mr Comben:** Australia has won the test.

**Sir WILLIAM KNOX:** I am pleased. That improves my day.

Particular reference is made in the Bill to an easement for the Royal Queensland Golf Club. I commend the Minister on the way that he has handled resumptions and dealt with those who have been inconvenienced by the construction of the bridge. The Minister has been very accommodating in his dealings with the Royal Queensland Golf Club. He spent time there, particularly in the early stages, looked at the problem and made the agreements necessary for the golf club, a copy of which I have seen and understand. The result is that the construction has not at all interfered with the golf club, which with a minimum of inconvenience, was able to redesign the course and carry out very important engagements on behalf of Australian and international golf. The co-operation between the bridge-constructors and the golf club was commendable. That was due to the special interest that the Minister took in it and insisted upon. Arrangements for compensation to the golf club were very satisfactory to the golf club, again owing to the special interest that the Minister took.

All in all, the bridge will make a magnificent contribution to the social and commercial life of our community. Certainly, it will be a very impressive contribution to the environment of the whole of south-east Queensland.

**Mr BURNS (Lytton) (5.17 p.m.):** There is no doubt that the Gateway Bridge will dominate the skyline of Brisbane. It is a magnificent structure. For many years, people will look back with some pride at the construction period. I hope that it will realise the object of its construction, which was to speed up traffic movement and to divert heavy traffic from places such as Fortitude Valley.

I am bitterly disappointed, as the Minister would know if he has read any of the letters that I have written to him, about the so-called arterial road associated with the bridge. I am pleased to be following the honourable member for Nundah (Sir William Knox) on this occasion, because I can remember, after his return to Parliament in 1978, his prediction that, by 1985, 35,000 to 38,000 vehicles a day would travel across the bridge. The estimates of the Main Roads Department are that, when the bridge opens next year, 12 000 cars a day will use it. However, nobody said to those in the areas near to the bridge that there would be no freeway. No-one told those in areas close to the bridge, who had supported the bridge and put up with the troubles associated with its construction for some time, that there would be no freeway.

What will happen? It was stated that, when the bridge opened in January next year, the traffic on the south side would be diverted into Creek Road, Newnham Road and along the Pacific Highway to the Gold Coast. It was said that, for 12 months, my electorate would have to put up with the 12 000 cars a day using Creek Road, which is an ordinary suburban road. Since then, the reference has been to a four-lane highway. If the Minister would get out of his car for a moment at the Creek Road/Wynnum Road intersection, I would show him the traffic jams that occur now when cars travelling northbound in Creek Road turn right into Wynnum Road. When 12 000 cars a day are added in January next year, there will be problems at that intersection.

Never in the early stages was the term "arterial road" used. It was never anything but "freeway". The assurance was given that it would cut 30 minutes off the time taken by north side people to get to the Gold Coast. I assure the Minister that, until they reach Springwood, they will be stopping at a number of traffic lights. I am not too sure what is to happen at Old Cleveland Road, but there will be traffic lights at Wynnum Road and the Mount Gravatt-Capalaba Road.

Let us assume that the estimate of 12 000 a day is correct—that is, 6 000 cars each way. I am told by Main Roads Department engineers who have been working on the job that about 250 cars each way will use Lytton Road. In other words, 11 500 vehicles,

or 5 750 each way, will cross Wynnum Road at Tingalpa. Everybody in the area was under the impression that a bridge or fly-over would be built at Wynnum Road.

The residents of my electorate will finish up with a road across the paddocks that will not be much higher than the average suburban street, but will lead to an intersection and meet up with Wynnum Road at a set of traffic-lights. At that stage, 11 500 cars will meet what I say will be 26 000 cars.

I realise that the Minister is being advised differently by his advisers as to the estimate of vehicular use; but when I inquired, I was given those figures by a departmental engineer. Moreover, when I asked a question about that of the Minister in Parliament, the Minister refused to answer and told me that what I was saying was wrong, that I could meet the Main Roads Commissioner, and so on. As the Minister most certainly did not give me the answers I demanded, I will use the figure of 26 000 cars a day that are estimated to use Wynnum Road, that is, 13 000 travelling inbound and 13 000 travelling outbound. In addition, there will be 11 500 cars for which a toll has been paid on the bridge, the drivers of which have been assured of a quick and ready access to the freeway system leading to the Gold Coast, having crossed this rather expensive bridge.

It is expected that 11 000 cars will travel across the bridge. I assume, for the purpose of the argument, that approximately 2 000 will turn off to travel along Wynnum Road to the Wynnum and Redlands districts. I assume also, for the sake of argument, that another 1 000 will turn off to go towards the city. In toto, 3 000 cars can be estimated to leave the Gateway Arterial Road, whereas 8 500 cars will have to wait at the traffic-lights while all the other traffic that I have referred to goes up and down the road. Then those 8 500 cars will have to cross the road to get onto the Gateway Arterial Road again, which will lead them to Old Cleveland Road. I understand that the Minister intends that a fly-over will be constructed; but I understand also that it will not be operational until Christmas next year—just in time for the State election campaign!

The flow of traffic from the bridge will have to cross Old Cleveland Road at that stage, and the cars that are heading in the direction of the Gold Coast will meet another set of traffic-lights at the Mount Gravatt-Capalaba Road intersection. At that stage, the traffic will have to stop and wait for the traffic that is flowing in the direction of Redland Bay before it can proceed towards Springwood and onto the freeway system that connects Brisbane and the Gold Coast.

I believe that when the Government talks about doing something positive about traffic problems and a company spends \$100m on the construction of a magnificent bridge, it is skimping on details by cutting out the construction of a couple of overpasses.

Honourable members know that I am one of the Minister's closest watchers; I read all his press statements. I noted in the press a statement by the Minister to the effect that bridges would be constructed over Bracken Ridge Road and the Redcliffe Sub-Arterial road, which are miles away from the Gateway Bridge but have, nevertheless, been included as part of the Gateway Arterial Road system. Although the Minister spoke about the pedestrian underpass for the St John Fisher school, he has not mentioned any pedestrian underpass for the people who wish to cross Creek Road, for the people who live at Tingalpa, for the people who wish to cross Old Cleveland Road, or for any of the people who live on the south side. I will offer the Minister odds of 100 to 1 that the pedestrian underpass to which I have referred will be provided in a National Party electorate.

The next statement that I read was attributed to the honourable member for Pine Rivers (Mrs Chapman). It was to the effect that included among the bridges to be constructed will be a five-span overpass to connect the Gateway Arterial Road with the Bruce Highway, and there was mention also of a two-span bridge that would be constructed across a couple of creeks. However, for the people who for some time have had to put up with trucks and other problems associated with construction of the Gateway Bridge, nothing will be provided.

People who live in the Belmont Heights estate have complained to me about construction work on the Gateway Arterial Road that was going on at one and two o'clock in the morning. Although they had been told that areas of land comprising 20 metres of bush were to be set aside as a buffer zone, that land was used as a gravel dump adjacent to their homes. Very little consideration has been shown for south side residents.

I point out to the Minister that after all the money has been spent in constructing the Gateway Bridge, the test will be whether the pockets of Brisbane motorists will be able to support the use that the Minister expects. The Minister has said that the toll that will be applied to the Gateway Bridge will not be as expensive as the tolls that apply in Sydney and Melbourne. I point out that the toll for the Westgate Bridge in Melbourne was originally about \$1, but because the motorists avoided using the bridge, it was later reduced. If the Minister is not careful, the same thing could occur in Brisbane.

I want to see people use the bridge because the Gateway Bridge will be a magnificent asset for the electorate of Lytton. It will also lead to the opening-up of a section of that electorate that caters for industrial estates. At Lytton, the price of industrial land will go through the ceiling, not only because of the activity of the Port of Brisbane Authority and the Gateway Bridge but also because of the demand for near-city industrial estates. It is a pity that the Minister has not adhered to the Brisbane River Mouth Control Plan. If he had, that would have helped to protect the residents of my electorate from some of the problems they have been experiencing.

Members of the Opposition are concerned about a couple of matters. One most certainly is the grade of the bridge; another is the problems that will be associated with the operation of the bridge during the first 12 months. When I asked the Minister about wind problems on the bridge, he said that he had just had wind. He will get a little wind if he gets on top of the bridge. I was up there the other day. I should hate to be pulling a boat, a trailer or a caravan on the top of the bridge in a 30-knot wind. Any hang-glider could launch himself from the top in a high wind and land in the centre of the city.

**A Government Member:** How would you get on pulling a fish up?

**Mr BURNS:** I said on one occasion that a decent winch would be required to pull one up. Someone the size of the Minister might be able to haul a whiting up, but I do not think that the average fellow would have much success.

Like other members, I am always interested in charities making a few dollars out of the official opening of major public amenities. Early in the piece, I wrote to the Minister and other people about this matter. I take pride in the fact that, when I entered Parliament in 1972, I wrote asking for the construction of a bridge in this area. I do not think anyone has mentioned Sam Ramsden, who held the seat of Merthyr for a long time. He was always talking about a tunnel or a bridge in this area. The honourable member for Yeronga spoke in this Assembly about the tunnels that he saw in Hong Kong and elsewhere. Many members spoke of various types of construction. Finally we have the bridge, and it is a magnificent structure. I hope that it is a great success.

I remember the opening of the Captain Cook Bridge and the port at Fisherman Islands. On those occasions a major charity, such as Rotary, got in first and the small people got little or nothing out of it. I wrote to the Gateway Bridge Company, to the Minister and one of the Government appointees on the board asking that the small organisations in my area be given consideration. I then discovered that the Rotary clubs were putting the word round that they had control. I told a number of people in the Gateway Bridge Company that I was upset and would make known how upset I was. After that, the member for Nundah and I were invited to talk to the Rotary clubs about the opening. At that time, it was agreed that the Rotary clubs would run the opening. I complained because, in the past, the big clubs always got the money.

When I received from Rotary a copy of the "Gateway Bridge Gala Stall Holders Terms and Conditions", I was not surprised to learn that the rental for a charity or

non-profit organisation site is \$100 and I am told that more than 100 sites have been allocated. That means that Rotary is not doing badly. The commercial site rental is \$150.

The people running a stall, such as Boy Scouts, Girl Guides, pony clubs, parents and citizens associations, Lions clubs, and so on, want to sell food or drinks. If commercial organisations, such as Coca-Cola or Kirks, sell drinks, what chance has the little bloke of making a profit if he has to buy their drinks and sell them in competition? Who can compete with major food stalls if commercial organisations are running them? One of the largest fund-raising organisations in my area looked into it and said that there was not a quid in it. It contacted the ice-cream manufacturer from the Minister's area and was told to keep out of it. The ice-cream manufacturer said it would not make any money.

Each site will have a 6-metre frontage and a depth of 4 metres. For the site registration to be accepted, an extra surety equal to 50 per cent of site rental must accompany the site rental. In addition, an extra charge of \$20 will apply for each single-phase electricity outlet used. A nominal charge will also be made for the parking of cars in a parking area set aside for stall-holders. The cheque has to accompany the application.

I suggest to the Minister that the people who will make money out of the opening of the Gateway Bridge are the North Brisbane and Balmoral Rotary Clubs. I argued against the Rotary clubs when they originally suggested using the proceeds for the building of a Rotary park under the north side of the bridge. I said that, when so many people needed assistance and so many charitable organisations were short of money, it was scandalous to use the money raised to build a park.

I must say that Vic Pullar, the president of the Gateway Bridge Company, John Wyatt, and others agreed at the meeting that they would not accept that idea. I must say also that Vic Pullar and other people connected with the Gateway Bridge Company have been very kind in listening to my objections and complaints about this matter.

The Rotary Club of North Brisbane wanted to assist the Mount Hagen scouts and other clubs. I know that the Minister's leader has said a dozen times that charity begins at home. At official openings, such as the one for the Fisherman Islands Bridge, very little money goes to the local organisations. I do not know where the money went on that occasion, but it most certainly did not come back to the people whom I represent. The same thing happened when the Captain Cook Bridge was opened. When these important openings occur, it is about time that the small charity was given an opportunity to get a share.

There is nothing that we can do about the opening of the Gateway Bridge. I hope that 100 000 people will turn up. I have talked the members of many small organisations in my area into paying the fee and taking their chances. I cannot understand why the opening is to be held in the middle of the school holiday period. As many people will be away, it would have been better to have organised the opening for the end of the holiday period when many families had returned to Brisbane.

Many people will want to walk across the Gateway Bridge. As pedestrians will be banned from the bridge in future, people will not have another opportunity to walk across it. It seems to me that it would have been better to have had a gala day when most families were back in Brisbane and not away on holidays, as I will be. I will not be at the opening of the bridge. I have made arrangements to be in Adelaide at that time, and my family will be with me.

**Mr Fouras:** What about people paying to walk across for a good charity?

**Mr BURNS:** That is what this is all about. People will pay a fee and they will be given a certificate stating that they have walked across the bridge. Unfortunately, the Rotary clubs will snaffle most of the money for themselves. The ordinary bloke will have to sell hamburgers at stall 101 down the hill. There should be a better way of organising such a charitable day.

The point that I am making to the Minister is that people were led to believe that they would get a freeway. The Minister said that, by using the bridge, people would save a tremendous amount of time in travelling between the north coast and the south coast. If they have to pass through traffic-lights not only on the south side of the river but also on the north side, in the electorate of the honourable member for Nudgee, the system will become a farce. As I understand it, even if the engineers were given the money tomorrow to build the overpasses, they could not complete the bridges on Wynnum Road until 1987. There has been a lack of consideration not only for the motorists who will use the bridge but also for the people whose properties front Creek Road, who have been inconvenienced during the construction period and will suffer inconvenience for the next 12 months while traffic goes down Creek Road.

**Mr VAUGHAN (Nudgee) (5.33 p.m.):** Since the plans to construct the Gateway Bridge were announced many years ago, I have been closely monitoring the position of the roads leading to and from the bridge. It is one thing to build a huge bridge, such as the Gateway Bridge, that will divert so much traffic away from the city, but it is another thing to plan the roads leading to and from it.

On 20 March 1980, I directed the following question to the Minister for Local Government and Main Roads—

“What existing arterial roads are to be upgraded to link the bridge with Highway 1?”

The Minister replied that there were no plans to build a major road and that the existing roads in the area, including Gerler Road-Junction Road and Toombul Road-Sandgate Road, were to be upgraded. I expressed my concern because I believed that the existing roads in and around the Nundah/Northgate area could not handle the traffic.

On 4 March 1982, I directed the following question to the Minister—

“Is the Main Roads Department planning to construct a main arterial road to link the Gateway Bridge directly with the Bruce Highway via Northgate East, Banyo, Nudgee and Boondall?”

Those suburbs are in my electorate.

The answer I received from the Minister was—

“At the present time, the Main Roads Department is not proposing to construct a road in the location mentioned by the honourable member.”

Subsequently, the Main Roads Department announced that it would upgrade Toombul Road. On questioning the Main Roads Department, I was told that Toombul Road would be upgraded from Sandgate Road to Nudgee Road, that a fly-over would be built over the Sandgate railway line at Northgate and that it would carry the major volume of traffic from the Gateway Bridge.

Quite frankly, I was horrified, but I went along with the proposal because, as I understood it, no plans had been drawn up for a road round the area about which I asked the question initially. I was told that that was 10 to 15 years down the track. Although the upgrading of Toombul Road meant the displacement of many people—about 80 homes were affected—I went along with it because of the importance of the link with the Gateway Bridge.

I pointed out to the department and to the Minister that, if they upgraded Toombul Road, they would also have to upgrade Sandgate Road, because the six lanes of traffic travelling along Toombul Road could not merge with the two or three lanes coming along Sandgate Road from Nundah, to say nothing of all the intersections along that road. I pointed out that a considerable amount of money would have to be spent on Sandgate Road as well.

Later, an announcement was made about the construction of the East West Arterial Road from Nudgee Road to Sandgate Road, which has been completed and is soon to be opened. However, that road will be opened before the alterations to Toombul Road

are completed and before the Gateway Arterial Road is completed. It will not be completed until November or December next year, so traffic will use the East West Arterial Road to Sandgate Road at Westfield Shoppingtown Toombul, but virtually little or nothing has been done about the traffic through Nundah, so some big problems will arise. However, that is not the main problem. I merely wish to point out the lengths to which I have gone, since the Gateway Bridge was announced, to try to impress upon the Government, the Minister and the Main Roads Department the importance of making sure that the roads leading to and from the bridge as well as the bridge itself are constructed. That is particularly true of the roads on the north side.

The honourable member for Lytton (Mr Burns) dealt with the south side roads, but I am particularly concerned about those on the north side. As the honourable member pointed out, there will be at-grade intersections at Wynnum Road and at Creek Road. On the north side, one at-grade intersection will be constructed about which I am extremely concerned. As I said, I pointed out to the Minister that I was concerned about the bypass right round Northgate East, Banyo, Nudgee and Boondall through to the Bruce Highway, and finally the Main Roads Department decided to construct it. However, the problem is that an at-grade intersection will be built on that road, and that will detract from the whole purpose of the road. If Brisbane is to have a road linking the Gateway Bridge to the Bruce Highway, it should be an unrestricted road.

When the plan for the road going round the back of Northgate East, Banyo and Nudgee was first released, there was to be a grade separation where the arterial road crossed Nudgee Road, which is a pretty important road, near the Banyo Tavern. It was supposed to fly over Nudgee Road, go round the bora ring, about which there has been some controversy, round the North Banyo Junior Football Club, cut Childs Road, go under Queens Road, round the back of the St Vincent's orphanage, past the Boondall sports complex and on to the Bruce Highway.

As I said, the first plan was that Nudgee Road and the Gateway Arterial Road would be grade separated. Subsequently, I received a copy of the coloured brochure on the Gateway Bridge. I then discovered that there was to be a diversion round the Nudgee water-holes and that the Gateway Arterial Road was not to cross Nudgee Road near the Banyo Tavern but further down near the Nudgee golf course. The plan shows that the intersection of Nudgee Road and the Gateway Arterial Road will be at the same grade and that it is to be a level or at-grade intersection.

Most honourable members would be aware that Nudgee Road passes the Nudgee golf course and goes on to Nudgee Beach and the Nudgee dump. When I found out about this, I was concerned, as were the people from the Northgate East Progress Association. On 7 October, I wrote to the Minister expressing my concern that there was to be an at-grade intersection at that point. I asked that the two roads be grade separated with provision for traffic to enter or leave the Gateway Arterial Road in either direction. I made that request because of the volume and type of traffic that uses Nudgee Road. A continuous traffic flow has to be maintained.

The Minister replied to my letter on 21 November and stated that it was planned to have a signalised, at-grade facility. Fortunately, that letter arrived prior to this debate. I must compliment the officers of the Main Roads Department for their co-operation right throughout the planning of all of the roadworks on the north side. They have been very co-operative and very helpful. I take my hat off to them for that.

When I made my inquiries of them, I asked, "Why are you not going to have those two roads grade separated?" They told me that initially it was planned to have an at-grade crossing there with "Stop" signs on Nudgee Road. They also told me that, if Brisbane won its bid for the 1992 Olympic Games, the Gateway Arterial Road would be widened from its initial two lanes to a four-lane road between the Boondall sports complex and near Schulz Canal and that money would then be spent on the grade separation of those two roads.

I ask the Minister to face the facts. Anyone who travels north on the Bruce Highway past Bald Hills will see that, wisely so, when that highway was constructed the concrete

overpasses were built. Some of those overpasses over the Bruce Highway past Bald Hills and through to the Bribie Island turn-off are not in use at present, but planning has been made for the future and they have been constructed. My point is: Why in the name of goodness, when the department is building a major road to carry traffic from a major bridge that is to carry a great deal of traffic, is it to have an at-grade crossing at this intersection? I admit that the department has gone from having "Stop" signs to traffic signals.

I will take up a point made by the member for Lytton (Mr Burns). According to the figures I have, the bridge will carry an estimated 12 000 cars a day. However, I say to the Minister that once that road is completed from north of Bald Hills down through Bracken Ridge Road, through Sandgate and round the back of Boondall and North Nudgee and through Northgate East, not only will it generate traffic that will cross the Gateway Bridge but also I will venture to say, the traffic coming towards Brisbane from Bald Hills, Strathpine, Narangba, Kallangur, Redcliffe, Bracken Ridge, Sandgate and Brighton will enter onto the Gateway Arterial Road at the various points on that route, travel along that road down as far as Kingsford Smith Drive near the airport, leave that road and proceed into the city. The same thing will happen for outbound traffic. There is no way in the world that only 12 000 vehicles a day will use that road; the number will be many more than that. That road will generate a great deal of traffic.

**Mr Hinze:** Not crossing the bridge.

**Mr VAUGHAN:** There is no way in the world that all the traffic will cross the bridge, but it will all come down through the intersection of Nudgee Road and the Gateway Arterial Road. The same thing will happen on the south side. The Minister and his department are being penny wise and pound foolish.

From Monday to Friday every week, all of the very, very heavy Waste Management and Cleanaway vehicles will be travelling to the Nudgee dump. Can honourable members imagine what will happen when those heavy vehicles are held up at traffic-lights waiting to cross the Gateway Arterial Road to proceed to the dump, particularly in the morning and in the afternoon peak hours? All the traffic that will be generated by the Gateway Bridge and the Gateway Arterial Road will be banked back on both sides of that intersection.

I monitor what is happening there. That section of land where the Gateway Arterial Road will cross Nudgee Road is already being cleared. I take this opportunity to appeal to the Minister: For God's sake, do not just put in a signalised intersection there, grade separate the two roads now before the construction takes place. The honourable member for Lytton and the honourable member Wynnum have already pointed out that, as sure as anything, accidents will happen at those intersections.

Motorists will become frustrated. The Government has already expressed concern about their jumping the red light. If ever there will be a situation in which motorists will jump a red light, it will be at that intersection. I appeal to the Minister to change the plans and to put in a grade-separated road there.

Recently, on television I watched the Minister open the extensions to the South East Freeway. He challenged people to take him to task about its facilitating his travelling to the racecourses. It should be remembered that the bridge will facilitate the Minister's travelling to Deagon Racecourse. The Minister might be held up at those intersections.

As I said earlier, I did not lodge any objection to 80-odd house-holders in my electorate being pushed out of their homes along Toombul Road in the name of progress. However, I take exception to certain statements made by Ministers, such as the Minister for Transport (Don Lane). When there was a suggestion of a bridge being built across the river to New Farm, the Minister for Transport said, "No way in the world!" An article that appeared in the press under the heading "Government scraps bridge scheme" referred to the Government's scrapping plans to build a bridge over the Brisbane River

at New Farm. The Minister for Transport said, "We don't want a bridge down at New Farm." In the press, the Minister is quoted as saying—

"The people of New Farm will not tolerate a bridge being built in the area which would mean a freeway through residential areas."

A freeway is being constructed through my electorate. What about the people in my electorate? Are they second-rate citizens? A freeway can be scrapped if it is to pass through a Minister's electorate. When there was talk about building a bridge across the Brisbane River in the St Lucia area, Alderman Beanland said that such a bridge would be the height of absurdity because it would pour more traffic into St Lucia. Yet 12 000-odd cars will be poured into my electorate and about 80 house-holders will be dispossessed along Toombul Road. I am supposed to cop that, and I will cop it only in the name of progress. However, when the Government is planning bridges, it should not make fish of one and fowl of the other.

I ask the Minister to take on board what I said about that intersection.

**Hon. R. J. HINZE** (South Coast—Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing) (5.47 p.m.), in reply: If the honourable member who has just resumed his seat could convince the Federal Minister for Transport (Mr Peter Morris), I would gladly accede to the proposals for the grade separations.

**Mr Vaughan:** It was planned initially to grade separate those two roads. I have the map in my hand.

**Mr HINZE:** In the original comments and statements in relation to the Gateway Bridge, it was decided that the approaches would be built a long time after the bridge and that the funds that would be used would be derived from the cash-flow from the bridge.

**Mr Burns:** You still said "freeway".

**Mr HINZE:** But it was going to take a long time.

**Mr Burns:** You said "freeways".

**Mr HINZE:** It was going to take a long time.

I thank all honourable members who have made a contribution to this debate today. The Gateway Bridge, without a doubt, is the most exciting new development in Brisbane for many years. It is destined to become an enduring landmark and equally a tribute to the forward planning of this Government.

I assure all honourable members that the Main Roads Department will be keeping a very careful and close eye on the traffic patterns that develop after the opening of the bridge. Obviously, some flexibility of approach will be needed to make appropriate and satisfactory responses to these traffic patterns as they settle down.

The honourable member for Wynnum (Mr Shaw) raised the subject of Wynnum Road. I assure him that the Main Roads Department is reviewing the estimates of project costs along the Gateway Arterial Road, and there is some hope that savings could be effected within the allocated \$100m budget. Depending upon the extent of these savings, the Main Roads Department will look at providing an overpass at Wynnum Road. Nevertheless, traffic volumes on Wynnum Road and co-ordination with signals at Creek Road will relieve pressure in this area. The honourable member for Wynnum will be the first to admit that everything that is desired cannot be achieved for the \$100m.

On the matter of credit cards for use of the Gateway Bridge—these will be available from the Gateway Bridge Company as will prepaid cards. Credit cards will be processed in the manual lanes whereas prepaid cards will be processed in manual or automatic lanes. Commercial vehicles, because of their size, will need to proceed through the manual lanes. The Gateway Bridge Company has undertaken to provide fast service by making sufficient lanes available.

The Main Roads Department will ensure that the Gateway Bridge Company is reasonable in assessing costs for the removal of vehicles that have broken down on the bridge. It must be understood by all users of the bridge that the prompt removal of broken-down vehicles will be necessary to maintain passage for other motorists.

I assure the honourable member for Wynnum that the grades on the bridge and its approaches are not particularly steep and, in fact, are less steep than those on some of the Riverside Expressway ramps. As the bridge has three lanes each way, it can handle the crossing of a slow vehicle. However, no special problems are envisaged because of the grades affecting the speed of vehicles.

As the honourable member for Wynnum knows, the Gateway Bridge is a private enterprise project that must eventually pay its own way. For that reason, no provision has been made for a pedestrian crossing of the bridge, because there would be little demand for it. In commercial terms, the building of a pedestrian crossing of the bridge just could not be justified.

The honourable member for Nundah (Sir William Knox) suggested that the Gateway Arterial Road be marked as part of Highway 1. I can assure the honourable member that that decision has already been made. That will occur next year when the Gateway Arterial Road is completed.

For the information of the honourable member for Nundah, I point out that traffic experts expect that, initially, 12 000 vehicles a day will cross the bridge. In later years of the franchise period, the number will increase to 60 000. It is impossible to estimate what effect the toll will have on traffic volumes.

I can assure the honourable member for Nundah that the Gateway Bridge Company and the Main Roads Department have an excellent relationship with the Royal Queensland Golf Club, and, as Minister, I again publicly thank the club for its co-operation.

The honourable member for Lytton (Mr Burns) again raised his concerns about traffic volumes on Wynnum Road. The honourable member's figure of an estimated 26 000 vehicles a day on that road is about right, but with an estimated 10 000 to 12 000 on the Gateway Arterial Road, those vehicles can be handled adequately by traffic-lights.

I assure the honourable member that it is my ambition and that of the Government that ultimately the Gateway Arterial Road will be a freeway.

It is true that, initially, on the south side traffic must use Creek Road, but this will only be for the reasonably short period of a few months until the Gateway Arterial Road is completed and provides relief. Except for intersections at Wynnum Road and Mount Gravatt-Capalaba Road and Miles Platting Road, this is a road without intersections.

The honourable member for Lytton generated a great deal of heat about the planned opening date and ceremony for the bridge, and I quite understand his concern for charitable organisations. I am pleased to inform him that the Gateway Bridge Company is spending \$10,000 on facilities for stall-holders alone on the opening day and that all participants will benefit. I can assure the honourable member also that all applicants for participation in the opening have been considered and that the site rent that will be levied simply covers the costs of operation. All profits will go to charity.

The honourable member for Lytton should be aware that the reason the bridge will be opened on the day it is planned to be opened is that that is when it is ready to be opened.

The honourable member can also be assured that the effects of wind have been taken into consideration fully by the bridge's designers, and I can assure him that there will be very little effect until wind speed exceeds about 80 km/h. Variable speed signs will be clearly visible to advise motorists to adjust speed limits in those circumstances.

The honourable member for Nudgee (Mr Vaughan) referred to the particular problems in his electorate of grade separations, for example, at the Bruce Highway connection, Deagon deviation and Sandgate Road. If high traffic predictions are correct,

that means that the bridge will take the load off all other arterial roads. If volume build-up as the honourable member suggests occurs, the need for grade separation will have to be considered at that time.

Motion (Mr Hinze) agreed to.

#### Committee

Mr Menzel (Mulgrave) in the chair; Hon. R. J. Hinze (South Coast—Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing) in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1, as read, agreed to.

Clause 2—Amendment of s. 11; By-laws—

Mr PREST (5.54 p.m.): The Minister stated that no problem will be experienced with slow-moving vehicles or the gradient of the bridge.

On 6 November, a report appeared of a test conducted by Volvo, which showed that trucks using the bridge would face a slow climb up a 5.3 per cent gradient. The report reads—

“The computer test found a fully loaded 21 tonne truck would average 14km/h after stopping to pay toll at the southern end of the bridge.

It used information from the Main Roads Department metropolitan divisional engineer, Mr John Galton.

He said trucks would pay toll, travel 350 m along a 0.5 percent incline and climb the remaining 350 m on a 5.3 percent gradient. Volvo’s most powerful 39.5 tonne truck, fully loaded, would reach a maximum of about 33 km/h at the top.

The Volvo project development manager, Mr Les Carey, said the stop to pay toll would mean trucks would have to change gear about eight times (once every 100 m) while climbing to the top.

He said trucks would impede motorists if they did not stay in the left lane.”

A photograph of the southern approach shows a 12-lane plaza where the tolls will be collected. The six lanes for north-bound traffic will converge into three lanes. That must result in some jostling by traffic attempting to move round the slow-moving trucks.

Every honourable member who has travelled through Fortitude Valley is aware that trucks and buses do not confine themselves to the one lane. Regardless of the number of lanes available to traffic, trucks and buses use every lane, slowing the traffic. If trucks are travelling at 14 km/h, they will hold up traffic and cause bottle-necks. After the official opening of the bridge, that is something that will have to be monitored closely.

Clause 2, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

#### Third Reading

Bill, on motion of Mr Hinze, by leave, read a third time.

*Sitting suspended from 5.59 to 7.15 p.m.*

### SEWERAGE AND WATER SUPPLY ACT AMENDMENT BILL

#### Second Reading—Resumption of Debate

Debate resumed from 19 November (see p. 2515) on Mr Hinze’s motion—

“That the Bill be now read a second time.”

Mr SHAW (Wynnum) (7.15 p.m.): When the Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing introduced the Bill, he described it as a simple measure. I wish to take up that term. It is simple from the point of view of those who administer the Water

Supply and Sewerage Acts, that is, local councils and inspectors who are employed by those councils, which want to achieve better supervision. By virtue of my own experience, I know that councils have experienced great difficulty in controlling the activities of people who either hold licences or pretend to hold them and act illegally. One illegal activity that causes concern is that people who pretend to hold licences forge the signatures of licence-holders. They then carry out work that can only be regarded as faulty and has to be rectified at great expense to the house-holder.

Presentation of the Bill is also a simple exercise from the Government's point of view. Members of the Opposition believe that the approach adopted by the Government is designed to increase revenue obtained by the Government. The Bill really imposes a tax on skill, because the Opposition regards the imposition of a fee of \$20 a year for each licensee as excessive, despite claims made by the Government that the fee relates to covering expenses involved in renewing licences on an annual basis.

As the Minister said in his second-reading speech, at the time the fee went out of existence it cost a licence-holder only 5s. to renew a licence. At that time, most people held at least two and probably three licences, and that would be the case today; so that in today's terms, the fee for renewal would have been \$1.50 for each person. Despite the fact that by today's value the fee would be much higher than \$1.50, I believe that an equivalent sum would be more than sufficient to cover the cost incurred by the Government, bearing in mind the widespread use of computers and cost-saving administrative devices that would be associated with introducing the scheme. My main concern is that although a number of licence-holders may not need a licence to earn income, because they wish to retain a licence they will be forced to keep up payments that they may not be able to afford.

It could be said that I have a vested interest in opposing the legislation because I hold the licences myself—although I have not used them for many years and I hope I will not have to. Nevertheless, I take pride from the fact that it took me five years to qualify for them, and I do not wish to pass them up. I have been advised that my opposition to this Bill could not be construed as displaying a vested interest, and I believe it would be unlikely that anyone would view the matter in that way. Notwithstanding that, to place the matter beyond any doubt and because I am cautious by nature, it is my intention to abstain from voting on the passage of the Bill.

The Minister also said in his second-reading speech that the system of licence renewal on an annual basis was discontinued in 1973 because it was too costly and served no purpose. I take up the points made by the Minister, and ask: If the system was costly then and served no purpose, what has changed? What justifiable reason could the Minister possibly have for reintroducing the system?

I submit that nothing has changed. Despite the fact that many of the changes have occurred in the administration of the Sewerage and Water Supply Act, most have been of a technical nature and have arisen because of technological change that has occurred in the practice of the trade. The changes I have referred to have made very little difference to the duties and responsibilities of licence-holders who will be most affected by the passing of this legislation.

The responsibilities carried by a licence-holder are very extensive and I would probably strain the patience of the Chair if I read them out. Briefly, it is provided that a licensed person must execute and complete all house drainage and plumbing in accordance with the by-laws and in accordance with the plans issued by the local authority. He must execute and complete such house drainage in a thorough and tradesman-like manner, and as expeditiously as is practicable. Many home-owners would challenge an assertion that that is always done. After about seven or eight provisions, the last one reads—

“Comply with any instructions given by the engineer or inspector in accordance with these By-laws.”

The list of requirements seems to be very extensive. With inspectors and others charged with the responsibility of ensuring that work is carried out properly so that the health of Queenslanders is protected, one might wonder why those provisions are not sufficient to ensure that the objective is obtained. There are difficulties, and, as the Minister said, pressure has come from the local authorities to ensure that these changes take place to improve the work done by licensed persons, but I do not believe that this legislation will achieve that end.

The Minister said that this legislation will have the advantage of keeping up to date the list of people who are licensed. The authorities want that to be done mainly because forms come in signed by people with whom they are not familiar. In a council area, the council officers usually know the firms operating in the area, and they know the plumbers who sign the forms to get work done. However, now and again an unfamiliar signature comes to notice and the council has no adequate means of ensuring that the person is licensed.

If the Government wants to ensure that lists are kept up to date, surely it is only necessary to write biannually to people holding licences. If no reply is received, it could be taken that the person is not interested, has changed his address or has passed on. The names of such people could be put on a non-active list. Subsequently, if a form signed by one of them came to the attention of the local authority, it could easily be checked. That is not hard to do in these days of computers. If the name of the applicant is found to be on the non-active list, it would be very easy to discover that. It is not really necessary to impose fees and to make people apply yearly to keep an up-to-date list of licensees.

In my experience, a licence is highly treasured by tradesmen, most of whom have served their apprenticeship indentures. They take pride in their licences in much the same way as those who have degrees and diplomas take pride in them. They realise that they have earned the licence through the studies carried out and the experience gained. No tradesman wants to lose his licence, even though he may not need it. He will therefore feel obliged to keep paying the premium yearly. That amounts purely and simply to a tax on the tradesman to maintain recognition of his skills. At the same time, some doubt exists about the later renewal of a licence if it is not renewed yearly. The tradesman fears that his licence could well be lost for all time.

An indication has been given that a licence will be renewable upon payment of back money. I am concerned about that. If a tradesman employee becomes a foreman, or is placed in an administrative position, he could well be retrenched and find himself unable to pay the back money for the renewal of his licence. It could amount to hundreds of dollars. If electricians do not renew their licences, they have to sit for another examination and start all over again to gain their qualifications. That also will place pressure on people to maintain their licences.

I shall digress for a moment. The wording of the notification sent to electricians who elect not to renew their licence is most unfortunate. They are told that the licence has been suspended. Most tradesmen regard that as an insult. If their licence is suspended, they have not been doing their job properly. That is a blow to their pride. They take exception to that sort of wording. I hope that the notification that is sent to plumbers will be worded differently.

Local authorities experience problems in enforcing the requirements of the Act, and annual renewals will not overcome those problems. One of the biggest problems is the identification of licensed people. The problem arises when an application is submitted to carry out work. If the local authority has no record of the licensee's signature, it has nothing with which to compare the signature on the application. The position would be improved out of sight if licensees were given a personal identification number similar to that given to holders of credit cards. Only the licensees would be aware of the number. If the number was not included on an application, the local authority would suspect that the signature was a forgery and would check it out. Quite often, signatures on applications are forgeries.

Let us say that an inspector goes onto work that is being carried out and talks to Bill Smith, who is apparently the licensed person on the job. Bill Smith could have submitted a number of applications over the years. The inspector meets Bill Smith on job after job and tells him what is needed. Eventually, the inspector finds that Bill Smith is not licensed. It is a matter of identification on the job. If the licence contained a photograph or some sort of identification and if a suspicion arose—and suspicion usually arises from the type of work being carried out—the inspectors and local authorities would be able to overcome the problem.

The Plumbers and Gasfitters Employees Union and the Master Plumbers Association have said to the Local Government Department, "We need some sort of change to the system. We need annual licences." Really, what they are after is some way of identifying people committing fraud and doing something about it. It is not a matter of annual licences; the aim is quite different. I query the way in which those bodies are going about it.

I know a plumber who is quite jealous of his licence and will not sign forms for work that he will not carry out. One evening, he returned home and found, on his kitchen table, a big hamper full of groceries. His wife said, "A gentleman came round. He wanted to bring it round in appreciation. He went through difficult financial times some time ago. He had to have some work carried out and you were kind enough to sign his form so that he could do the work himself and get it approved by the council without employing a plumber." Obviously, somebody had forged his signature. He knew absolutely nothing about it, but he profited because he had no way of giving the hamper back. He did not know who had given it to him.

That is an indication of the sort of thing that can occur and, more importantly, go completely undetected. In this case, everybody was happy, so perhaps it did not matter. However, it is when the job goes wrong and the owner is left with large restoration costs that problems arise.

What really concerns the Opposition is that this is really a tax. It is a perfect example of the fallacy of the Government's claims that it is a low-tax administration. What it really indicates is that it is a low-tax Government for some people. As I have said, because of computerisation, information can be collected and letters can be sent out very quickly, so I see no reason why the licence fee should be in excess of \$5 per annum, if a fee has to be imposed at all.

The difficulties go even further than that. Approximately eight to 10 years ago, the Government introduced a scheme under which apprentices who qualified had to pay for their licence. I will say a little more about that later.

The difficulties to which I refer are a reflection of the concern that the National Party and the Liberal Party, in coalition, identified some years ago—that there was a feeling in the general community that people were being overtaxed. The coalition Government launched into a propaganda campaign and, for want of a better word, adjusted the tax schedules. As a result, Queensland has lower commercial taxes, that is, people with businesses that make profits pay less, while the ordinary citizen pays much more.

Over the last 10 years, the Government has reduced land tax, pay-roll tax and some stamp duties, but more than compensating increases have been imposed in departmental and other charges paid by the ordinary working citizen. Currently, revenue received by way of departmental charges amounts to \$1,338.5m, whereas only \$828.5m is received from pay-roll tax, land tax and stamp duty. In other words, a far bigger percentage comes from the small citizens. More importantly, the trend is increasing. Every year, the percentage of departmental charges paid by ordinary citizens is being adjusted by at least the rate of inflation and, in most cases, by more than the inflation rate. The other charges are not. This imbalance has worsened as the years have gone by. Approximately 28.6 per cent of Government revenue is provided by ordinary citizens. In contrast, the revenue derived from the other taxes that I have described is 17.7 per cent of Government revenue. That is a substantial imbalance.

It is not just a matter of encouraging industry; it involves preferential treatment. If the Government's intention was to encourage industry, the Opposition would be in favour of it. But it is a matter of preferential treatment to one section of the community at the expense of the other.

Earlier, I mentioned the introduction of a fee on apprentices. This is a matter of great concern, and it is one of which the Government should be ashamed. Many years ago, at the time of the Labor Government, and for many years after the coalition Government came to power, when an apprentice completed his examinations and qualified at the end of his apprenticeship for a licence to be a plumber, drainer, water fitter or whatever it may be, that licence was given to him as of right because he had completed his examination, in much the same way as degrees and diplomas are granted without the payment of a fee. It is more a matter of a reward for work well done.

This tax has been levied on those sections of the community who can least afford to pay it. An apprentice just out of his time and about to start work is usually thinking about getting married and trying to buy a house. What has this Government done? Upon completion of his apprenticeship and before he can take out a licence to start work—before the Minister corrects me, I should say that I know that this fee has been in operation for about five or six years now—he pays a \$22 fee to receive an interim plumber's licence and a further \$54 to receive his drainer's licence. That is a \$76 fee before he can start work. After having worked for 12 months and gained his experience, he then applies for a full plumber's licence, which involves a further fee of \$54. So he pays a total of \$130.

**Mr Burns:** This Government doesn't tax people!

**Mr SHAW:** No.

This is a tax on skill. It is a charge on young people before they can begin work. On top of that \$130, the Government is to charge them a further \$20 a year to maintain that licence. That is simply revenue to the Government. The Government has absolutely no excuse and no reason for this increase. Now that the Government is to introduce this \$20 a year fee, I hope that the Minister will act quickly to remove this imposition from apprentices who want to gain their full licence. These fees are quite unjustifiable.

I do not doubt for a moment that the Minister has, as he said, received a great number of representations from local authorities and those who have to administer this legislation for some changes and for some strengthening of the requirements to enable them to enforce the licensing provisions. I fully realise that, and the Opposition does not oppose it. However, we do intend to oppose the imposition on tradesmen of what we believe to be a further, new and unnecessary tax. It is quite wrong to say that it is not a new tax, that it applied approximately 10 or 15 years ago. If that argument was to be accepted, the imposition of full death duties and all those other taxes that the Government has so proudly proclaimed to the electorate that it has abolished could be reintroduced at any time.

**Mr INNES (Sherwood) (7.39 p.m.):** The only charge that the member for Wynnum left out—

**Mr R. J. Gibbs:** What would you know about plumbers, apart from the fact that you never pay your bills to them?

**Mr INNES:** I know a little more than the member for Wolston, probably. I would concede that the member for Wolston would know infinitely more about sewers than I do, but perhaps no more about plumbing.

**Mr R. J. Gibbs:** You definitely know more about spouts.

**Mr INNES:** Sewers are the specialty of the honourable member for Wolston.

In creating the charges that face an apprentice plumber before he saddles up to his trade, the member for Wynnum missed the compulsory union fees that will add another \$100 if the apprentice intends to be an employee. I suppose \$100 is the going rate.

In fact, only last week, I received a complaint from a young unemployed person. Before he applied for a job, he was told that he would have to join the relevant union. There was no guarantee that he would obtain the job. A payment of \$100 from his dole payments was involved. Some add-on costs are imposed by organisations other than Government organisations.

**Mr Vaughan:** Is there a Bar Association?

**Mr INNES:** Strangely enough, it is voluntary. One does not have to be a member of the Bar Association of Queensland. One can practise at the bar without being a member of the association. It is voluntary unionism. I am not sure whether Arnold Bennett was a member of the Bar Association. It is a voluntary employment association to which I am happy to contribute, but I do not need to.

The legislation is supported by the Master Plumbers Association of Queensland, the Plumbers and Gasfitters Employees Union of Australia and the other organisations referred to in the Minister's speech. However, some people, even members of the Master Plumbers Association, would be less enthusiastic than the Master Plumbers Association about what is proposed. I suppose that some of the 10 000 licences referred to would be multiple licences held by plumbers and drainers. The multiplication of \$20 by 10 000 gives \$200,000, which is not an insignificant sum. An annual licence fee of \$20 a year, as well as the obligation to be licensed before practising a trade, is an imposition. The members of the Master Plumbers Association of Queensland hold a particular view. Some plumbers fear that the non-tradesman, the handyman-type person, the electrician who also does plumbing work when he is fitting a hot-water system, and the odd-job man who fixes up everything, who are used increasingly by the real estate industry, are working in areas that are beyond their strict trade qualifications. It has been suggested that that can involve danger or inconvenience to members of the public. Some plumbers are worried that the annual licence fee will add to the costs borne by legitimate plumbers, who must already pay \$30 to the local authority for each connection to a new house, whereas the unauthorised and unqualified person does not pay that sum. Some plumbers believe that this is an extra cost for the legitimate tradesman who already complies with the rules, obligations and responsibilities of his trade. They do not believe that the legislation will result in the extra policing and the cleaning up of the system that is the apparent desire of the Master Plumbers Association.

I notice that the fees will be discretionary. Although the Minister has indicated that the fee will be \$20, there is no stipulation in regard to it. The proposed section 12A is discretionary in nature. The fees could be for any amount and the licence could be for any duration. The Government and the licensing board should bear in mind that many plumbers, who are good tradesman and practise lawfully, query the value of the new licensing system and do not believe that the legislation will clean out the untrained and unskilled people in the system. They believe that the system will result in an additional cost of \$20 for the fair dinkum, properly trained and fully qualified tradesman. That is an additional cost for people who, because they are legitimate, already are paying more to local authorities for such things as house connections and inspection fees. Obviously, the person who is untrained does not pay those fees, because if he is rumbled by the local authority, he is out of business and his work will not be approved.

The danger with these policing exercises is that they are just an added cost for people doing the right thing and a further advantage for people doing the wrong thing. In the implementation of the legislation, a realistic view should be taken rather than some high-flown idea of a great new policing system with all the costs that that involves.

**Mr PREST (Port Curtis) (7.46 p.m.):** Very little contained in the Bill is of any consequence, and I am sure that the honourable member for Wynnum (Mr Shaw)

covered all aspects of it. However, I want to comment on the licensing of plumbers, the fee that applies and the reasons behind it.

First, I mention an advertisement in which the Minister for Mines and Energy (Mr I. J. Gibbs) appears saying, "Round my home I change the washers on my taps and what-have-you, but if I want any electrical work carried out I have to get a qualified electrician." Qualified men have to do electrical work, and a fee of \$20 per year will be charged.

**Mr Shaw** interjected.

**Mr PREST:** Yes. The Minister is belittling the people whom he will charge the \$20 for a licence by saying that he does his own work at home, yet he always gets a qualified person to do his electrical work.

I give credit to the honourable member for Wynnum, who said that he believes that he has a pecuniary interest because he has held a plumber's licence for many years, although he has not used it and hopes that he will not have to use it for a long time. The honourable member for Wynnum will refrain from voting on this matter because he believes that he may be accused of having a pecuniary interest. However, during my time as a member of Parliament, many Bills have been voted on by honourable members who have denied ever having a pecuniary interest but whose interest was much greater than the interest that the honourable member for Wynnum would have by holding a plumber's licence.

**Mr Casey:** The Premier had no qualms about voting for all the millions he spent up at the Ten Mile.

**Mr PREST:** There are two rules: one for the Premier, and one for everybody else. However, that is not the case with the honourable member for Wynnum.

There were approximately 10 000 licensees. The reason for providing for registration is to delete from the records those people who have died, gone out of business or do not wish to be recognised as licensed plumbers. It may provide an opportunity for many more people to enter the trade.

As the honourable member for Wynnum said, the increase from a 50 cent fee in 1972 to a \$20 fee today is fairly substantial and could bring the Government about \$200,000. So this is a low-tax State but a very high-charge State. That is all that can be said about it.

Lastly, the Bill does away with the old pound figures and replaces them with dollars. That has been a long time coming.

**Mr Casey:** It makes the fees twice as much straight off.

**Mr PREST:** That is how it looks, anyway.

My main purpose in rising to speak was to mention the honesty of the honourable member for Wynnum in stating that, in a small way, he did have a pecuniary interest. As I have said, it is a trivial interest when compared with the pecuniary interest that other honourable members have had in matters on which they have voted in this House without disclosing that pecuniary interest.

**Hon. N. E. LEE (Yeronga) (7.50 p.m.):** A few provisions in the Bill concern me. The annual fee is to be increased from 50c to \$20.

**Mr Prest:** Prize-money at the races has gone up more than that.

**Mr LEE:** So the honourable member for Port Curtis is in favour of it?

**Mr Prest:** No, I am not.

**Mr LEE:** Why does the member not say what he means?

**An Opposition Member:** You are talking about prize-money.

**Mr LEE:** No, I did not say that. I said that the annual fee will rise by that considerable amount. That is 4 000 per cent.

**Mr Prest** interjected.

**Mr LEE:** If the member for Port Curtis wants to work it out, I will stop for a few minutes while he does. Does he want a calculator or a pen and pencil?

Already the charge to the house-holder for calling a plumber or a gas-fitter is very high. The provision in the Bill will tend to increase that amount. The actual call-out fee for a television-repairer, an electrician or a washing-machine mechanic is usually much higher than the labour cost for the job. It concerns me that the charges imposed by the Bill could tend to increase that amount.

I have not had a great deal of time to consider the provisions of the Bill.

**Mr Davis:** Why not?

**Mr LEE:** I was away on very important business last week, when the honourable member for Brisbane Central ranted and raved in the House, abusing Mr Speaker. If I had been here, I would have called the House to order somehow.

The increased charges imposed by the Bill will not make better tradesmen; nor will they do anything to clean up the industry. If legislation gives the house-holder a better tradesman, I am all for it.

**Mr Shaw:** How long will it take the rest of your blokes to get here?

**Mr LEE:** That is very unkind and unjust. I am speaking at length on this because I feel strongly about the Bill.

If, because of the increased licence fee, the house-holder could be assured of a better job from the tradesman, I would be in favour of it. It is important that the client is satisfied with the job.

**Mr Davis:** When was the last time you fixed a cistern?

**Mr LEE:** Last week-end.

**Mr Davis:** With all your money?

**Mr LEE:** Why not? Perhaps that is one of the reasons why I have a couple of dollars. Unlike the honourable member for Brisbane Central, I am prepared to do a bit of work.

Does the honourable member for Brisbane Central mow his own lawn? Of course not! He would get a poor slave who wanted something done in Parliament to do it for him. He would say that the price for his asking a question in the House is that that poor slave mow the lawn, mend the gas leak or fix the sewerage system. That is how unfair the honourable member for Brisbane Central is.

**Mr Davis:** Tell us all about the way you made money out of the sweat of the workers.

**Mr LEE:** That has nothing to do with the Bill. Although I would like to answer the interjection made by the honourable member for Brisbane Central, out of respect for the Chair I do not think I should.

In his second-reading speech, the Minister said that the proposal was for the annual renewal of the licence to cost \$20 and that it would be applied irrespective of whether a person held one or more licences—"for example, both a plumber's licence and a drainer's licence". That is reasonable. The Minister went on to say—

"I should point out at this stage that the measures proposed to be taken have the full support of the Plumbers and Drainers Examination and Licensing Board, which includes representatives of the Queensland branch of the Plumbers and

Gasfitters Employees Union of Australia and the Master Plumbers Association of Queensland.”

I ask the Minister to confirm that.

**Mr Innes:** Did you read that all members of licensing boards must practise their trade?

**Mr LEE:** There are certainly many quangos.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row):** Order! The levity in the Chamber is consuming too much time, which is something that honourable members do not have enough of. I ask the honourable member for Yeronga to return to the subject-matter of the Bill in a serious manner.

**Mr LEE:** I am reading from the second-reading speech of the Minister, and if the Chair does not think that that is serious, I would be glad to resume my seat. I have not strayed from the provisions of the Bill, for the simple reason that I have read word for word what the Minister said. The Minister has described the legislation as a very simple measure.

**Mr Innes:** It is not simple at all.

**Mr LEE:** The Minister must have faced a very difficult situation when he made the decision to increase the fee from 50c to \$20. It may have been wiser to have increased the fee a little each year. I mentioned previously that increasing the fee to \$20 a year for each licence represents a rise of 4 000 per cent. That cannot be regarded as a simple measure. In my opinion, the increased fee should have been imposed gradually by increases of 50c each year.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The honourable member has already mentioned that aspect, and I suggest that he is indulging in tedious repetition. I will have to take the honourable member to task.

**Mr LEE:** The Minister made a particular point in his speech, when he said—

“When the Act first came into force in 1950, provision was made for the annual renewal of licences of the type referred to and this practice was continued up until 1973, when it was decided to discontinue the practice because of administration costs and the belief that it served little purpose.”

The increase from 50c to \$20 will certainly cover administration costs. A member of the Opposition said that a handsome profit of about \$200,000 a year will be made. That will certainly more than cover administration costs. The 10 000 licences, at \$20 a licence, represents an enormous sum of money. The difference between 10 000 licences at 50c a licence and 10 000 licences at \$20 a licence represents a very large jump in one year.

It is strange that, in 1973, it was considered that the renewal of licences served little purpose yet, in 1985, it is so important that the legislation has to be passed before the end of this year. The Minister may be prepared to answer my important queries about why it is necessary to push ahead with this legislation this year, when it was dropped in 1973 because of the administration costs. If something is worth doing because something better will be done for the client, surely the renewal should not be discontinued. On that basis, the fees could well have been increased by 50c a year from 1973 instead of being increased dramatically to \$20. I am sure that the Minister will answer at length my important queries.

**Mr Bailey** interjected.

**Mr LEE:** I am not talking about numbers. I am talking in good faith about the Bill. It is a very important Bill, but I am at a loss to understand why the renewal of licences was dropped in 1973 and is to be reintroduced in 1985. If it was not important in 1973, why has it suddenly become important?

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The honourable member will address the Chair.

**Mr LEE:** I apologise, Mr Deputy Speaker. That was rude of me. I have been here for 22 years and I should know better. One of the few things I do know about is the etiquette of Parliament. I apologise for what I did. I always try to address my remarks through the Chair. I forgot about that when the honourable member made his inane interjection. I ask the honourable member what his interjection was, so that I may reply through the Chair.

**Mr Bailey:** Why are you going so long?

**Mr LEE:** I am going so long because I am worried about the imposition of this increase.

I am sure that the Minister will give deep thought to what I have said tonight and answer me in detail.

**Hon. R. J. HINZE** (South Coast—Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing) (8.5 p.m.), in reply: The honourable member for Yeronga (Mr Lee) said, "I have been here 22 years and I should know better." We all agree with that. As for the rest of his speech—he can read it himself in the morning. If he can work out what it means, he is a better man than I am.

**Mr Lee:** Shame on you! You are supposed to be intelligent about this.

**Mr HINZE:** And the honourable member was supposed to keep talking until his colleagues returned from Redcliffe and Nundah. At least his colleague the member for Sherwood has returned, so the honourable member for Yeronga has served some purpose.

I thank the honourable members for their contributions to the debate. The main purpose of the Bill is to provide for the annual renewal of sewerage and water supply plumbers' licences and drainers' licences issued by the Plumbers and Drainers Examination and Licensing Board. The proposed annual renewal fee is \$20.

The annual renewal of licences is necessary for the board to maintain an accurate register of licences, and it is supported by the Master Plumbers Association and the Plumbers and Gasfitters Employees Union.

The honourable member for Wynnum (Mr Shaw) agreed that the requirement for the annual renewal of licences would enable local authorities to keep plumbers under surveillance. I can assure him that the \$20 annual fee is only a nominal amount. Because of the effect of inflation since the abandonment of the annual renewal fee in 1973, the 50c fee at that time is comparable with the fee proposed in this Bill.

I assure the honourable member that there is no provision in the Bill that qualified persons who had not renewed their licences for some years could, on later renewal, be required to undertake examinations. The reason for the reintroduction of annual fees is that it will give the board accurate records for practising licensed persons for use by local authority inspectors and avoid the risk of misuse of licences. Recently, there has been some evidence of misuse of deceased's persons' licences.

I can assure all honourable members that the licensing of plumbers and drainers to carry out sewerage and water supply plumbing and drainage was introduced in the days of the previous State Labor Government on the very proper basis that, to protect public health, this work needed to be carried out by qualified people.

To simplify renewal on reapplication, it is proposed to maintain, on computer storage records, the names of licensees who have not paid annual fees. As I said earlier, because of the perceived benefits, the Master Plumbers Association and Plumbers and Gasfitters Employees Union are both strongly in favour of the fee.

Identification of licensees does depend on signature comparison, and it will be a requirement that a renewal licence will have to be signed by the holder before issue.

The member for Wynnum raised the question of a plumber and drainer who does not renew his licence. In such a case, the Plumbers and Drainers Examination and Licensing Board will require the person concerned to apply for renewal of his licence

and, to cover administration costs, he will have to pay an application fee and back fees. The board will not, however, require the plumber or drainer to undertake further examinations to renew his licence. I think that honourable members will agree that that is not an unreasonable practice.

Fees charged by the board are designed to cover the costs of running the Plumbers and Drainers Examination and Licensing Board. No profit is made by the board.

Of course, it must be remembered that the licensing of plumbers and drainers is a protection for the tradesman since, under the Standard Sewerage and Standard Water Supply By-laws, only licensed persons can undertake that class of work.

There is no requirement for a person to take out union membership before he obtains a licence. It is true to say, however, that union fees greatly exceed fees payable under this legislation. The licensing of sewerage and water supply plumbing and draining is necessary in the interest of public health. Fees payable will be fixed by regulation from time to time to cover only costs of administration.

The honourable member for Yeronga queried the rise in the renewal fee from 50c to \$20. The fee of 50c was in force in 1973. As I said, having regard to the change in the value of money in the intervening period, the increase is not considered to be excessive.

Question—That the Bill be now read a second time (Mr Hinze's motion)—put; and the House divided—

In division—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row): Order! I am aware that one honourable member is not really properly attired, but, because the House is in division, I will allow him to remain in the Chamber. However, I remind honourable members that they should wear coats in the Chamber.

AYES, 46		NOES, 28	
Ahern	Knox	Braddy	Warner, A. M.
Alison	Lane	Burns	Yewdale
Austin	Lee	Campbell	
Bailey	Lester	Casey	
Bjelke-Petersen	Lickiss	Comben	
Booth	Lingard	D'Arcy	
Borbidge	Littleproud	De Lacy	
Cahill	McKechnie	Eaton	
Chapman	McPhie	Fouras	
Clauson	Menzel	Gibbs, R. J.	
Cooper	Muntz	Goss	
Elliott	Newton	Kruger	
FitzGerald	Powell	Mackenroth	
Gibbs, I. J.	Randell	McElligott	
Glasson	Simpson	McLean	
Gunn	Stephan	Milliner	
Gygar	Stoneman	Palaszczuk	
Harper	Tenni	Prest	
Harvey	Turner	Price	
Henderson	Wharton	Scott	
Hinze		Smith	
Innes	<i>Tellers:</i>	Underwood	<i>Tellers:</i>
Jennings	Kaus	Vaughan	Davis
Katter	Neal	Warburton	Hamill

Resolved in the affirmative.

#### Committee

Clauses 1 to 7, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

#### Third Reading

Bill, on motion of Mr Hinze, by leave, read a third time.

**MAIN ROADS ACT AMENDMENT BILL**

**Hon. R. J. HINZE** (South Coast—Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing), by leave, without notice: I move—

“That leave be given to bring in a Bill to amend the Main Roads Act 1920-1984 in certain particulars.”

Motion agreed to.

**First Reading**

Bill presented and, on motion of Mr Hinze, read a first time.

**Second Reading**

**Hon. R. J. HINZE** (South Coast—Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing) (8.20 p.m.): I move—

“That the Bill be now read a second time.”

This is a Bill to amend the Main Roads Act 1920-1984 in certain particulars, namely—

to prescribe a head of power to authorise the recovery of registration fees as well as fees when issuing penalty notices for breaches of the Main Roads Regulations; and

to prescribe a head of power for the expansion of the existing personalised plate scheme.

Clause 2 of the Bill prescribes amendments to section 38 of the principal Act that will allow the Commissioner of Main Roads to include on penalty notices an additional fee of up to twice the appropriate annual motor vehicle fee, with regard to certain breaches of the regulations, in addition to any penalty fee imposed. This provision is required to deal with the cases detected by police in which unregistered vehicles, or those on which the registration had been cancelled, have been in use for an excessive period.

The provision in effect allows the commissioner to recover the motor vehicle fee that would have been payable if the vehicle had been registered for that period. The same procedure is applicable should an offender elect to have the case dealt with by a court. Without this provision, the lengthy use of vehicles in these circumstances becomes a less onerous breach than does one involving use of a vehicle with an expired registration of, say, only a few months.

Clause 3 of the Bill prescribes an amendment to section 40 of the principal Act and provides for inclusion of fees or registration fees of a penalty notice in addition to the prescribed penalty of that notice. This proposal expands the provision in existing legislation, thus allowing use of penalty notices for a wider range of offences and thereby reducing the number of offences dealt with by complaint and summons that, at present, must be dealt with through the Magistrates Court.

Clause 4 of the Bill prescribes amendments to the schedule of the principal Act to make provision for—

the sale of traditional, prestige and personalised plates by auction, tender, private treaty or other means approved by the commissioner and the imposition of such fees as may need to be prescribed;

the transfer of the “right to display” of the plates to enable normal legal obligations or right of inheritance to be met; and

validation of sales of personalised and other plates over the counter and by auction since 1 March 1979.

The amending legislation is necessary because of the decline of funds in real terms from the sale of personalised plates for use in the establishment of the Mount Cotton Driver Training Centre. Because of the need for more funds to enable development of

the centre, approval was sought from Cabinet in April 1985 to proceed with the sale of certain number-plates, prior to introduction of appropriate legislation.

As honourable members will be aware, two highly successful number-plate auctions have been held and a gross amount of about \$1.25m was raised for development of the Mount Cotton Driver Training Centre. Members will recall that a special Act titled the Driving Training Centre Act was passed by Parliament for the establishment of the centre.

The proposed amending legislation with regard to section 32 of the Main Roads Act is now required to validate the privileges given with the sale of the new style number-plates and also the old style personalised plates introduced in 1979. In particular, the right to trade and the right to register the plates for an extended period of time without attachment to vehicles is addressed.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Shaw, adjourned.

### **PAY-ROLL TAX ACT AMENDMENT BILL**

**Hon. W. A. M. GUNN** (Somerset—Deputy Premier and Minister Assisting the Treasurer), by leave, without notice: I move—

“That leave be given to bring in a Bill to amend the Pay-roll Tax Act 1971-1984 in certain particulars.”

Motion agreed to.

#### **First Reading**

Bill presented and, on motion of Mr Gunn, read a first time.

#### **Second Reading**

**Hon. W. A. M. GUNN** (Somerset—Deputy Premier and Minister Assisting the Treasurer) (8.25 p.m.): I move—

“That the Bill be now read a second time.”

The major purpose of this Bill is to implement the changes in pay-roll tax concessions that were announced in the 1985-86 Budget speech. The changes, which are to take effect on and from 1 January 1986, are as follows—

the maximum annual pay-roll tax exemption level is to be increased from \$270,000 to \$300,000;

the minimum pay-roll tax exemption of \$39,000 is to be abolished; and

the exemption taper band will be widened so that some amount of exemption will apply right up to pay-rolls of \$1.2m, rather than \$424,000 as at present.

The overall effect of the changes will be that where an employer's annual pay-roll is up to \$300,000, he will be exempt from pay-roll tax, and for pay-rolls in excess of \$300,000, the maximum exemption of \$300,000 will reduce by \$1 for every \$3 by which the pay-roll exceeds that figure, until the exemption is eliminated at pay-rolls of \$1.2m.

It is the policy of the Government that so far as concessions can be provided in the pay-roll tax area, they should be provided in the area of greatest need, and small employers have been identified as having the greatest need. The measures included in this Bill are further evidence of the continued commitment of the Government to assist the small employer.

From 1 January 1986, the maximum exemption level of \$300,000 in Queensland will be at the highest level provided in the States. The only other State to have a similar level is Tasmania. The taper band in Queensland of \$300,000 to \$1.2m, in which employers may claim some exemption, is significantly wider than that in any other State

except South Australia, where, although the taper finishes at about the same level, it commences at \$250,000.

Furthermore, the Government has continued to choose not to impose the 1 per cent surcharge on large pay-rolls that applies in New South Wales to pay-rolls in excess of \$1m, in Victoria to pay-rolls in excess of \$1.2m and in Tasmania, for non-Tasmanian based companies, to pay-rolls in excess of \$5m.

In addition to the above changes in concessions, the Bill contains provision for two further exemptions and two amendments of an administrative nature.

In the exemption area—the wages of Aboriginal and Islander councils are to be exempted to the same extent as wages of local authorities, that is, the definition “local authority” is to include these councils.

Further, a mechanism is to be introduced into the Act under which the wages of a prescribed teachers college that is not a college of advanced education will be exempt from pay-roll tax. The Government intends by Order in Council to exempt wages paid by the McAuley Teachers College until 31 December 1989 or until it becomes a college of advanced education, whichever is the sooner. Other teachers colleges pay pay-roll tax, but because of its unique position the proposed treatment is considered appropriate.

The power of the commissioners to obtain information or evidence in relation to a pay-roll tax matter will also be strengthened. Where a person does not comply with a request by the commissioner for information to be furnished or for that person to attend and give evidence, the court, in addition to imposing a penalty as at present, is to be empowered to—

impose a continuing penalty to a maximum of \$100 a day in respect of any period of non-compliance prior to conviction; and

order that the person comply with the request.

If a person fails to comply with the order of the court that he carry out the request of the commissioner, it is to be an offence under the Act for which such person is liable to a maximum penalty of \$2,000 or 6 months' imprisonment or both and for which the person may be prosecuted at any time.

There is also an amendment in relation to the pay-roll tax treatment of allowances for travel and accommodation for pay-roll tax purposes. Currently, where such allowances do not exceed the prescribed limits, they are totally excluded from taxable wages, and when they do exceed such limits, they are totally included in taxable wages. The Bill provides for such allowances to be included in taxable wages only to the extent that they exceed the prescribed limits.

I commend the Bill to honourable members.

Debate, on motion of Mr Burns, adjourned.

### **RIVER IMPROVEMENT TRUST ACT AMENDMENT BILL**

**Hon. W. A. M. GUNN** (Somerset—Deputy Premier and Minister Assisting the Treasurer and acting Minister for Water Resources and Maritime Services), by leave, without notice: I move—

“That leave be given to bring in a Bill to amend the River Improvement Trust Act 1940-1983 in certain particulars.”

Motion agreed to.

### **First Reading**

Bill presented and, on motion of Mr Gunn, read a first time.

### Second Reading

**Hon. W. A. M. GUNN** (Somerset—Deputy Premier and Minister Assisting the Treasurer and acting Minister for Water Resources and Maritime Services) (8.31 p.m.): I move—

“That the Bill be now read a second time.”

A river improvement area and a river improvement trust may only be constituted by application by a local authority or by two or more local authorities. In general, a river improvement area comprises the whole area of the local authority or authorities constituting the trust.

There are presently 20 river improvement trusts. Eleven are situated in north Queensland, within the high-rainfall, cane-growing districts, and seven are located on the Darling Downs. The remaining two trusts are in the Ipswich and Boonah districts. Their function is to protect and improve the beds and banks of rivers in their respective areas; to repair and prevent damage to the beds and banks of rivers; and to prevent inundation of land by floodwaters from rivers. To perform this function, trusts must borrow money and exercise a regulatory role. Recurrent expenditure is funded by a precept on the local authority.

The principal amendments that the Government proposes in this Bill will—

- (i) extend the borrowing powers of river improvement trusts and enable them, where necessary, to take advantage of a range of borrowing arrangements;
- (ii) widen their powers to control activities prejudicial to the stability of river-banks within their areas;
- (iii) allows trusts to establish a reserve fund comprising a number of reserve accounts;
- (iv) increase the penalties for breaches against the Act and regulations; and
- (v) remove a seeming conflict in the Act in respect of the application of a loan balance.

I will now enlarge on the intent of and reason for these principal amendments. Section 8 of the Act allows trusts to borrow only from the Treasurer or by the sale of debentures. The Bill proposes that they be authorised to borrow from the Treasurer, to sell debentures, bonds and inscribed stock or other securities approved by the Treasurer, and to enter into any other financial arrangements that the Treasurer approves.

Where appropriate, trusts will be able to take advantage of the changing requirements of lending institutions. Amendment of the relevant section in this regard will align the River Improvement Trust Act with similar provisions in the Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Act. Trusts will continue to obtain the prior sanction of the Treasurer and the authority of the Governor in Council to borrow.

Debentures sold under the Act are a charge upon all the assets and revenues of the trust issuing the debenture. Earlier debentures take priority over those issued later. The Bill proposes that debentures and other securities will be a charge upon a trust's revenues only, and each security will rank equally in priority. This will protect the interests of all creditors in the unlikely event that a trust fails to meet its financial commitments. Again, this amendment aligns the Act with the Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Act. The two amendments just referred to are covered by clauses 3 and 4 of the Bill.

The river improvement trusts in north Queensland have been concerned for some time that they have no control over certain activities that are detrimental to the stability of river banks within their respective areas.

Section 11 of the Act presently authorises a trust to serve a notice, called “an improvement notice”, upon an owner or occupier of riparian land within its area. Such notice prohibits the owner or occupier from continuing an activity which caused or contributed to damage to the bank of the adjoining river during a flood or cyclone, or which, in the opinion of the trust, is likely to cause or contribute to river-bank damage.

An owner or occupier causing damage may also be required, again by the service of an improvement notice, to remedy the damage. A river in this context includes any stream of water, whether perennial or intermittent, flowing in a natural or artificially improved channel, together with its tributaries and distributories and, in the case of a tidal stream, any arm or branch.

The Act contains no provision for a trust to control the activities of persons who are not the owners or occupiers of riparian land. As honourable members are aware, there are persons in every community who consider that they have a right to interfere with property without authority, especially if the land appears unoccupied. Such persons may take soil from apparently unoccupied areas adjacent to rivers or may remove material from the bed or banks of a river, and in so doing jeopardise the stability of the river-banks. A river-bank, once damaged, is susceptible to rapid erosion. Flooding of a previously protected area may also result.

This Bill therefore proposes to strengthen and extend the powers of a river improvement trust by enabling it to serve an improvement notice on a person who is not a riparian owner or occupier. As for an owner or occupier, such notice may prohibit an activity that has caused or contributed to river-bank damage in its area, or which, in the opinion of the trust, is likely to cause damage. Similarly, the notice may require such person to remedy any damage caused. The amendment will also enable a trust to take prompt action against persons whose activities within the bed of a river could have detrimental effects.

The proposed amendment does not remove the right of the owner of the land concerned to proceed at law for damages or trespass against the person on whom the improvement notice has been served. It does enable a trust to act quickly to protect a river-bank from damage during critical flood or cyclone periods.

To make the necessary distinction between persons who are owners or occupiers on riparian lands and other persons on whom improvement notices may be served, it is necessary to amend or add to other relevant provisions. The distinction is necessary because a trust must furnish to the Registrar of Titles or his deputy at Rockhampton or Townsville, or to the Registrar of Dealings within the Department of Lands, whichever is appropriate, notification of the giving of a notice to a riparian owner or occupier. The amendments in respect of the issue of an improvement notice are contained in clause 6 of the Bill.

I now turn to clause 8 of the Bill, which proposes amendment of section 12 of the Act—Fund of the Trust. The section requires a trust to establish a general fund, a loan fund and an emergency fund. In addition, a trust may establish a plant maintenance reserve fund and a plant renewal and purchase reserve fund.

The North Queensland River Improvement Trust's Association has drawn attention to a need to provide greater flexibility in the establishment of reserve funds to meet trusts' emergent and future expenses. The Bill provides for a trust to establish, with the approval of the Minister, reserve accounts to meet a particular need. One such reserve account could be a works maintenance reserve account to provide for long-term maintenance of a trust's works. A trust will be required to include, in its annual budget, the amount proposed to be transferred to any reserve account.

With the operations of trusts becoming more complex, it is expected that requests will be forthcoming for approval to establish other reserve accounts, and the amendment will obviate the need to have the Act amended each time a new type of reserve account is agreed to or needed.

The next of the principal amendments covered by the Bill is the revision of the penalties that may be imposed under the Act. The maximum penalties now proposed have been considered in terms of the seriousness of the offence, and providing sufficient deterrent to dissuade deliberate breaches of the Act. These amendments are contained in clauses 6, 10 and 11 of the Bill. The proposed maximum penalties range from \$1,000

to \$5,000, the latter being for a second or subsequent failure to comply with an improvement notice.

In examining the penalty provision, it was decided to remove provisions which allow a court to impose a daily penalty for a continuing offence. It is expected that the higher initial penalty will deter persons from knowingly offending against the Act. In addition, my department was advised that, under the circumstances, the daily penalty provisions are of limited administrative assistance.

Honourable members will note that, in the amendment of penalties, the amounts omitted are referred to in the old currency. The Decimal Currency Act of 1965 provided that any reference in an Act to an amount of money shall, unless inappropriate, be construed as a reference to a corresponding amount in the new currency. That action did not, however, amend the actual wording of the Act. As the penalty amounts in the River Improvement Trust Act have not been amended since 1965, they are presently described in the old currency, and the amendment must be in those terms.

The last of the principal amendments relates to the disposition of a balance of a loan fund. The Act currently requires in one section that any unexpended balance shall be applied as directed by the Treasurer. Elsewhere, the Act provides that "any balance is to be credited to the General Fund". The amendment removes the seeming conflict and leaves the application of any unexpended amount as directed by the Treasurer. Again, this is in accord with the Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Act.

In addition to the principal amendments, certain changes are proposed that will allow provisions dealing with the registration of contracts, between a trust and a land-owner, and improvement notices to accord with intended practices in the Titles Office and by other registering authorities. These amendments will enable such authorities to comply with the Act following the introduction of registration practices based on computer-operated systems.

The opportunity is taken also to clarify certain definitions, remove redundancies and update statutory references.

All the amendments proposed are necessary to facilitate the functions of river improvement trusts and for their effective operation and administration.

I trust that these remarks will provide honourable members with adequate information for their consideration of the Bill, and I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Davis, adjourned.

### **QUEENSLAND MARINE (SEA DUMPING) BILL**

**Hon. W. A. M. GUNN** (Somerset—Deputy Premier and Minister Assisting the Treasurer and acting Minister for Water Resources and Maritime Services), by leave, without notice: I move—

"That leave be given to bring in a Bill to provide for the protection of the environment by regulating the dumping into the sea, and the incineration at sea, of wastes and other matter and the dumping into the sea of certain other objects, and for other purposes."

Motion agreed to.

#### **First Reading**

Bill presented and, on motion of Mr Gunn, read a first time.

#### **Second Reading**

**Hon. W. A. M. GUNN** (Somerset—Deputy Premier and Minister Assisting the Treasurer and acting Minister for Water Resources and Maritime Services) (8.44 p.m.): I move—

"That the Bill be now read a second time."

This is a relatively short measure to control, in the interests of the marine environment, the dumping of wastes or other matter, into the State's coastal waters from vessels, aircraft or platforms at sea.

To enable Australia to ratify the International Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and Other Matter, the Environment Protection (Sea Dumping) Act 1981, was proclaimed by the Commonwealth on 6 March 1984. The convention, known as the London Dumping Convention, was ratified on 21 August 1985.

The Commonwealth legislation applies outside the territorial sea, and it applies also within the territorial sea in the absence of State legislation. The purpose of the Bill is to apply the principles of the convention within the territorial sea. It will bring under State legislation and administration the dumping into the sea of wastes and other matter and waste-incineration activities at sea within the three-mile coastal strip for which the State generally has responsibility under the off-shore settlement with the Commonwealth.

Under the Bill, it will be an offence to dump materials into the sea or incinerate them at sea within the area of jurisdiction except in accordance with a permit granted by the Minister under the conditions laid down in the Bill. The convention itself is included as a schedule to the Bill, and the dumping of specified noxious substances listed in Annex I to the convention will be absolutely prohibited, as will the incineration at sea of most such substances.

The Bill applies to all dumping from a vessel, aircraft or platform at sea, and includes the dumping of a vessel, aircraft or platform itself. The loading in the State or in coastal waters of material for dumping or incineration at sea is also cited as an offence.

The definition of "dumping" excludes the disposal of wastes or other matter incidental to, or derived from, the normal operation of vessels, aircraft or platforms.

Defences against prosecution are provided for in the case of necessity to secure the safety of human life or the safety of a vessel, aircraft or platform.

Where the likely effects of dumping or incineration on the ecology are not known, an applicant for a permit may be required to carry out, at his cost, any required research or analysis before a permit is granted or he may be required to carry out research and monitoring during the course of the dumping or incineration.

The Queensland legislation will go beyond the provisions of the convention in that it will apply to the dumping of wastes or other matter arising from the mining of seabed mineral resources, in respect of which there is as yet no agreement at the international level.

It is anticipated that the majority of applications for permits will be in respect of the dumping of dredge spoil arising from the provision and maintenance of harbour channels and basins. The passage of the Bill will mean that harbour boards and others proposing to carry out dredging will be in a position to obtain permits for the dumping of dredged spoil from the State Government, rather than having to approach the Commonwealth Government, unless of course the dumping area extends outside the three-mile limit of the territorial sea. Under the convention, dredge spoil containing otherwise prohibited substances may be dumped, provided the prohibited substances are contained only as trace contaminants.

The Bill will not affect the operation of the Pollution of Waters by Oil Act, which will continue to control pollution from oil or oily wastes discharged from land or ship sources.

I shall now deal with the main provisions of the Bill in detail. The Bill does not apply to a vessel, aircraft or platform of the defence force of Australia, nor to the naval, military or air forces of a foreign country. The Bill is binding on the Crown, and the person in charge of a State-owned vessel, aircraft or platform may be prosecuted for an offence against the Act.

The Bill provides that, except in accordance with a permit granted by the Minister, the dumping of any wastes or other matter other than those specifically excluded by the convention into the coastal waters, from any vessel, aircraft or platform is an offence and the owner and person in charge thereof and the owner of the wastes each commit an offence against the Act.

The dumping of wastes or other matter arising from the exploration, exploitation or associated processing of sea-bed mineral resources is also an offence.

The loading onto a vessel, aircraft or platform on land in the State or in coastal waters or any wastes for the purpose of dumping at sea is also an offence, as is also the dumping at sea of a vessel, aircraft or platform itself.

The Bill contains a defence against the offence of dumping where the dumping was necessary to secure the safety of human life or the safety of the vessel, aircraft or platform, in the case of force majeure caused by stress of weather. There is also a defence where the dumping was the only reasonable way of averting or diminishing a threat to human life or to the safety of the vessel, aircraft or platform. Both defences are allowed, provided that in each case action was taken reasonable to the circumstances to ensure that damage to human or marine life was minimised and that a report on the dumping was furnished to the Minister as soon as practicable after the occurrence of the dumping.

The penalties for offences vary from \$10,000 to \$100,000, with the penalty for an offence by a body corporate being substantially higher than if the offence is by a natural person.

The Bill prohibits the incineration within coastal waters of certain wastes or other matter as specified in the convention and requires that a permit be obtained in respect of the incineration of other matters. Substantial penalties for offences against these provisions are also contained in the Bill.

The Bill contains provision that where wastes are dumped in contravention of the Act, the Minister may cause steps to be taken to repair or remedy any condition or damage arising from the dumping. These steps may be taken where the Minister considers that the dumping is likely to cause an obstruction or a danger to vessels or could result in harm to human or marine life or could result in interference with the exercise of the sovereign rights of Australia as a coastal State to explore and exploit the natural resources of the sea-bed.

The Bill provides that where the State has incurred expenses or other liabilities in relation to the repairing or remedying any condition or mitigating any damage arising from the dumping, the person convicted is liable to pay to the State those expenses and liabilities. An inspector may detain a vessel or aircraft until the amount is paid or security given for payment. The vessel or aircraft may be detained only where it is in the State or in coastal waters, and further penalties are provided where the detained vessel or aircraft goes to sea or leaves the State before being released from detention.

The Bill sets out the procedures to be followed by an applicant for the issue of a permit by the Minister. The Minister, before giving consideration to the application, may require the applicant to enter into an agreement with the State that the applicant will undertake such research and analysis as specified in the agreement to determine the effect the proposed dumping or incineration might have on the marine environment. The agreement may also provide that the applicant will reimburse the State any expenses incurred by the State in undertaking or supervising the research and analysis. If the applicant fails to carry out the required research or analysis, the State may undertake the work at the cost of the applicant.

In considering the granting of a permit, the Minister is required to have regard to the factors, matters or recommendations set forth in the convention, and before granting a permit, the Minister may require the applicant to enter into an agreement with the State for the applicant to undertake research and monitoring relating to the consequences of the release into the marine environment through the proposed dumping or incineration at sea operation of any contaminants. The applicant may also be required to investigate

the possibility of avoiding or reducing the need for further dumping or incineration at sea by him. The supervision of research, monitoring or investigation shall be at the expense of the applicant.

The Bill provides that the Minister may at any time vary, suspend or revoke a permit where a provision of the Bill or a condition of a permit has been contravened by the holder of the permit or where the Minister considers it necessary to do so in order to properly regulate the activities with which the Bill is concerned.

The Bill also contains provisions in relation to dumping of radioactive wastes or other matter and, where a permit has been granted for such dumping, the Bill provides for the supervision of the dumping by escorting officers appointed by the Minister. The functions of an escorting officer include the monitoring of radiation levels caused by the wastes or other matter. While these provisions are included in accordance with the requirements of the convention, there is little likelihood of any permit being requested or granted in respect of coastal waters.

The Bill empowers the Governor in Council to appoint inspectors or acting inspectors. A member of the police force of Queensland is automatically an inspector for the purpose of the Bill. The Bill allows the boarding of any vessel, aircraft or platform by an inspector if he believes on reasonable grounds that the vessel, aircraft or platform contains any matter or thing that is to be dumped into the sea or incinerated at sea. An inspector may, with the consent of the occupier of any premises, enter the premises for the purpose of exercising his powers under the Bill, or the inspector may apply to a justice for a warrant authorising his entry onto the premises.

The functions of an inspector include taking copies of any documents that relate to loading, dumping or incineration at sea of any matter, to inspect the wastes being dumped and to observe the dumping of the wastes into the sea. An inspector also has power under the Bill to arrest without warrant any person who hinders or assaults him or a person accompanying the inspector, or where the inspector has reason to believe that the person has committed an offence against the Bill and failed to state his full name or usual place of residence when required to do so, or if the inspector has reason to believe that the person would fail to attend court to answer to a summons or would continue or repeat the offence if not arrested.

The Bill provides that the Supreme Court may, on application by the Attorney-General or by an interested person, grant an injunction restraining a person from engaging in conduct that constitutes an offence under the Bill.

The Bill also allows the Minister to delegate his powers under the Act to a person holding a specified office in the public service.

The Bill also prescribes penalties in respect of persons giving false or misleading information to the Minister or to an inspector, and the penalties for non-compliance with conditions of a permit.

The Bill is complementary to the Pollution of Waters By Oil Act 1973, and where the dumping of oil constitutes an offence against that Act, and that Act provides the offender with a defence to a charge against that Act, the offender will not be liable to punishment under this Bill in respect of the dumping.

Finally, the Bill contains a provision for the making of regulations by the Governor in Council where necessary or expedient for the purposes of the Bill.

The schedules to the Bill contain the convention, its protocols and the annexes to the convention.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Prest, adjourned.

**CLERMONT-BLAIR ATHOL/BLAIR ATHOL-WOTONGA CONNECTION****Initiation**

**Hon. D. F. LANE** (Merthyr—Minister for Transport): I move—

“That Mr Speaker do now leave the chair and the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider the following resolution—

‘That the House approves of the working plan, section and book of reference for a connection between the existing Clermont-Blair Athol branch railway and the new Blair Athol-Wotonga railway in central Queensland.’ ”

Motion agreed to.

**Committee**

**Hon. D. F. LANE** (Merthyr—Minister for Transport) (8.57 p.m.): I move—

“That the House approves of the working plan, section and book of reference for a connection between the existing Clermont-Blair Athol branch railway and the new Blair Athol-Wotonga railway in central Queensland.”

Honourable members will be aware that the Queensland Government has committed itself to the electrification of certain main line railways in central Queensland. Stages 1 and 2 are concerned with electrification of the coal-carrying railways of the Blackwater and Goonyella systems respectively. Whereas stages 1 and 2 are concerned with improving the efficiency of rail transport of coal, stage 3 of the main line electrification project is concerned mainly with improving the efficiency and flexibility of rail transport of grain from the grain-growing areas of the Central Highlands around Clermont and Emerald to the ports of Gladstone and Mackay.

The new rail connection between Clermont and Blair Athol forms part of stage 3 of the main line electrification project. Although the railway will not be electrified, it is being constructed in conjunction with electrification of the central line between Tolmies and Emerald, as part of an overall scheme to improve the overall efficiency and flexibility of the rail transport of grain in these areas.

The Queensland Government's record stands alone in railway development in this country. Electrification of main line railways in central Queensland, when completed, will cost more than \$680m.

The area around Clermont is a fast developing grain-growing area. For some time, growers in the area have been asking that a link between Clermont and Blair Athol—the so-called missing link—be constructed. After construction of the connection, Clermont will be 136 km closer to Mackay than to Gladstone, with resulting benefits to grain-growers in the area. At present, the nearest port to Clermont with grain-handling facilities is Gladstone, about 463 km away. After construction of the connection, the port of Mackay, which also has grain-handling facilities, will be only 327 km away.

Commissioned studies of the potential growth in grain traffic have indicated for some time the likelihood of a shipping capacity shortfall at Gladstone. The provision of this rail link will provide the required increased capacity and operational flexibility because of the existence of two grain ports, Mackay and Gladstone, effectively serving central Queensland. This will allow grain to be diverted to either port as the need arises during times of above average production or during periods when one port is not operational.

It has been estimated that, with increased grower confidence following construction of the link, an additional 36 000 ha would become accessible in the Kilcummin area. The rail task to handle the resultant yield can be ideally integrated with the recently completed duplication of the major coal haulage link from Coppabella to the junction with the north coast link at Yukan and thence to Mackay. The potential diverted traffic

currently originating from the Capella/Clermont area of 150 000 tonnes per annum is expected to increase.

Grain traffic originating from the area will benefit from the shorter route to the port of Mackay. The greater efficiency of this operation in terms of delivery time and cost will contribute significantly towards the export competitiveness of Queensland grain.

The proposed route involves the construction of approximately 8.3 km of new line. The proposed route leaves the existing Clermont-Blair Athol branch line at 114.2 km and proceeds in a northerly direction along the edge of State forest 117 before crossing the Blair Athol-Charters Towers connection road. The alignment then turns to the north west at 117.5 km, crossing the north-eastern corner of the Blair Athol mine lease before connecting to the Blair Athol-Wotonga railway at kilometre 103.6 km on that railway. The estimated cost of the proposed connection is \$2,850,000.

The Queensland Government recognises the benefits to be obtained from its continuing commitment to rail development. Those benefits are not measured only in terms of the number of passengers using trains or tonnages of freight and minerals carried; they are reflected in employment opportunities and in savings in other areas, such as reduced freight costs to rail-users and increased flexibility of rail operation.

The advantages to the State by way of improved transport facilities and increased export and development opportunities, especially for primary industries, are significant, and, accordingly, I have no hesitation in recommending the construction of the rail connection between the existing Clermont-Blair Athol branch railway and the Blair Athol-Wotonga railway.

I commend the proposal to the Committee.

**Mr MILLINER (Everton) (9.1 p.m.):** In rising to speak to the motion before the Committee, I point out that the Opposition does not oppose the motion. We believe that a commonsense proposal has been put forward. Obviously, the missing link, when established, will provide tremendous services to the people in that area. My very good friend and colleague the honourable member for Mackay (Mr Casey) would be aware of the benefits that will be provided in the area because he, the people of Mackay, the Mackay City Council and the development bureau for years have been pushing to have the missing link established in the area. I pay tribute to him and to the people of Mackay for the campaign that they have conducted.

The Minister indicated that primary producers in the Clermont/Emerald area will be closer to the port of Mackay than to the port of Gladstone. That will involve a significant saving in transporting grain to the port. Queensland is trying to export as much as it can.

**Mr Prest:** Gladstone has the expertise to handle it.

**Mr MILLINER:** I have no doubt about that. There is no doubt that the port of Gladstone is very good. It is well served by the people who work there. It is a fact of life that the proposed railway will put the port of Mackay closer to the product. Growers are trying to implement economies. The product must be railed to the nearest port. That is not a reflection on the good people of Gladstone who operate the port of Gladstone. There is no doubt that they are highly efficient and make a tremendous contribution to the wealth of this State. However, as I have said, the proposal indicates clearly that the primary producers of the Emerald/Clermont district will benefit from the establishment of the missing link.

Honourable members hear a great deal about the tourist potential of this State. I have been a little cynical about it. As one travels throughout the State, one hears from all sections of the community that tourism is the panacea and that it will bring thousands of jobs and millions of dollars into this State. In the Central Highlands, particularly round the coal mines, a potential exists to develop a fairly substantial tourist industry. The Blair Athol mine is unique because the coal seam is about 30 metres deep. It is a spectacular sight. On a recent visit to that mine, I learnt that the mine management

indicated that, at one stage, the service clubs from Mackay organised a trip by train to the mine. The trip was booked out in advance and it was an extremely successful venture. The potential exists to establish a tourist development in that area, particularly using rail. I certainly hope that the Minister does consider all aspects of developing that area for the benefit of the residents.

I turn to trackwork. The resolution indicated that tracks would be constructed on timber sleepers. Honourable members have heard the Government encouraging industries to decentralise and move out into the country areas. A couple of industries did move up into the Mackay area to manufacture concrete railway sleepers. Because of the development that took place in that area, those two firms did produce quite a number of railway sleepers and it was a fairly profitable operation for them. However, I understand that, because of the recession and the downturn in development in the Mackay area, one of the companies is no longer producing concrete railway sleepers and the other is really battling just to survive.

I would have hoped that the Government, in constructing this missing link, would have considered using concrete railway sleepers produced in the Mackay area to help the local industries to remain viable. I ask the Minister to indicate in his reply whether there is a special reason why timber sleepers are being used rather than concrete sleepers.

As I have said, the Opposition does not oppose the resolution; in fact, Opposition members support it.

Mr CASEY (Mackay) (9.7 p.m.): I join with the honourable member for Everton, on behalf of the Opposition, in supporting the resolution and the fact that this work is now well and truly under way for the benefit of not only the region concerned but also Queensland as a whole and, more especially, for the benefit of the grain industry in this State. However, as a local, I would be remiss if I did not say that it is about time.

An excellent opportunity existed only two and a half years ago, when the Blair Athol line was being extended from Goonyella to Blair Athol, to continue on with that work. At the time, the Railway Department procrastinated instead of going ahead with the proposal. It could have used machinery, particularly expensive track-laying equipment, that was on site at that time to complete the work. However, that did not happen. If the work had been carried out then, it would have meant effective savings to the taxpayers of Queensland.

It is an excellent follow-on from the construction of the Blair Athol line, and it clearly indicates the way in which the coal industry has helped to open up other areas of Queensland. The mining industry generally has helped to open up other areas of Queensland. The history of this State reveals that that has happened on many occasions. The Great Northern Railway to Cloncurry was opened up specifically for the mining industry in the first instance, and great benefits flowed on to the cattle industry and to the pastoral industry generally. Many other more remote parts of the State and the Tablelands were opened up by the mining industry. I could mention many other parts of this State in which other industries have been helped initially by people who were prepared to go out and establish the mining industry.

I am very pleased that this proposal is coming to finality in the form of the resolution tabled by the Minister. I would add a further comment to one of the later comments made by the honourable member for Everton, who was recently in the area and studied it closely. The honourable member has a very good grasp of the situation.

My comment relates to the provision of the railway sleepers. Often the Premier, the Minister and other members of the Government announce with great gusto the opening up of new projects and industry in this State. As the Minister has said, many thousands of man-hours of work will be provided.

It is only a couple of years ago that I sat and listened to the Premier's diatribe at the opening of the Humes pre-stressed concrete sleeper plant in Mackay, which was claimed to be a great development for the area. Once the sleepers were manufactured for the contract the company had on hand, no further contracts were forthcoming from

the Railway Department and the plant had to be closed down. It has been closed now for a period of almost 12 months. It stands there with a little plaque proclaiming that it was opened by the Premier on a date in 1983. Another plaque should be placed beneath it saying that, owing to a reticence by the Railway Department to award further contracts to it, it was closed early in 1985.

A second plant was opened up in Mackay for a similar reason. As the member for Everton has already said, it has completed its contract for the Railway Department and is chasing the department for further contracts in order to retain its employees. It has sought an order for pre-stressed concrete light poles for the State Electricity Commission. The Minister for Mines and Energy (Mr I. J. Gibbs) is in the Chamber. I mention to him that that company has not been successful in obtaining support from his portfolio. I reiterate that much gusto—all the attendant public relations—is attached to official openings, but nothing is said about the closures.

On the occasion of the passing of such a resolution by the Parliament of Queensland, I would be remiss if I did not place in *Hansard* recognition of two great Queenslanders who, a long time ago, had a dream that this resolution brings to reality. I refer to the late Mr John Mulherin, who was a moving force in the construction of the Mackay Harbour, and the late Dr Henry Taylor. Anyone who moved through the Mackay area in the last 50 years would have known of him. He was the doyen of those who advocated development for the area. I associate their names with this proposal.

Back in the 1940s, they set the lead for the Mackay-Blair Athol rail league in an effort to advance a proposal for a railway line from Mackay to Blair Athol and then to Clermont. It is not until the mining industry has opened up the area that their dream is to be realised. However, it is as well that the Parliament records the names of the pioneers and notes their dreams and enthusiasm. So many obstacles had to be overcome in those days to herald today's achievement. They knew of the wealth of the Mackay hinterland—of the magnificent soils of the Central Highlands—and the potential of the grain-growing area. I pay tribute to them and to the others who were associated with them in the old Mackay-Blair Athol railway league. As a very young boy, I learned a great deal about that area from hearing them speak at public meetings in Mackay about their desires to open up and develop that district.

It is just on 20 years ago that I first became a member of the Mackay Harbour Board. Regular meetings were then held of people from the Central Highlands—from shires covering that area and the hinterland of the northern coastal belt in from Mackay—proclaiming the potential of those areas. They were following in the footsteps of those who had gone before, trying to encourage Governments, companies, corporations and anybody else to look at the potential of the areas in order to achieve the development of such a beautiful part of Queensland, which was then going begging. Food is now grown in that area for export to the world's markets, providing income for a number of people.

**Mr FitzGerald:** The Peak Downs socialist experiment failed. It was shown to be a disaster, wasn't it?

**Mr CASEY:** The member for Lockyer does not know what he is talking about. If he would care to inspect the area I have mentioned, he would find that there has been no failure. It was a dream of the pioneers.

If one were to read the history of this State that relates to areas surrounding the Warwick and Lockyer electorates, one would see clearly that the pioneers went in and opened up the land but eventually had to walk away because of the hard economic times, drought, flood and so many other problems. In contrast, their successors persevered and overcame the problems that beset them in the early days. The settlers eventually received help and support from the Government and, although the initial concept at Peak Downs was extremely difficult to achieve in reality, if one were to go there now, one would find that many farmers who occupy the land that has been subdivided are

making a good living out of growing grain. It will be seen that history has repeated itself. I think that you, Mr Booth, would be the first person to agree with me.

Unfortunately and tragically, the history of this State clearly shows that on many occasions the early pioneers suffered most, but at least they retained their dreams and had a vision of what the area would become, as have the other people I mentioned earlier. Their dream and vision was of the Central Highlands becoming a place that would grow food to feed the starving millions of people throughout the world, and that has become a reality.

The Minister has already quoted figures that illustrate the haulage that the Railway Department expects to transport from that area. I can assure the Minister that those figures will increase. A report on grain-growing has been completed by Ullman and Nolan, consulting engineers of Mackay, and it shows the expected yield of grain-growing in that area for the immediate future. More is to come. The Minister mentioned the Kilcummin area, and I mentioned the area around Avon Downs and the Suttor River. In the debate on the Estimates for the Lands Department, I mentioned all the land that will be opened up when the railway line is completed. I repeat that now, because that area is one of the few major areas remaining in Australia that can be opened up to produce additional crops and closer settlement without the need for the construction of major water schemes.

I say that purely and simply because better transportation access will be provided by that railway line. Moreover, as well as providing the railway line, the State Government should look very closely at reports that have been furnished about that area by the group that I mentioned previously that was consulted by the various shire councils that are involved. I have not brought that documentation into the Chamber this evening, but it clearly shows a need for the provision of service roads into those areas with grain-producing potential, and also out of the area in the direction of the railway line, and back to Kilcummin, Moranbah, the Clermont area itself and into the shire of Peak Downs. The service roads could come even farther east into the Isaac River country and round the Dysart area. There are large areas of land that need service roads so that the grain can be hauled to the railhead. That will be a matter of great importance.

I feel sure that the Minister will take note of what I am saying and will recognise the need for Cabinet to approve of the provision of the transportation services. A future Australian Labor Party Government will press for the introduction of those transportation services, and will ensure that roadworks are undertaken and a commitment obtained from local authorities as to the construction of minor roads into the major food-production areas. That type of Government action will be required because of the construction of this railway line and the consequent possibility of transporting grain to the port of Mackay.

The construction of the railway line will not mean that any port activity will be taken away from Gladstone. If the Minister examines the full grains report, he will see that potential exists for the expansion of grain production in the southern areas of the Central Highlands and also in areas that stretch to the coast. Those areas can be developed by the Government, and that will take up any leeway created by the transportation of grain from the Peak Downs area to the port of Mackay instead of the port of Gladstone. The total potential for growth in the future is enormous. By constructing this 13 km of railway line and closing the gap with the Blair Athol coal line through to Yukan and then along the interconnector from Yukan to Mackay, the Government is providing an excellent facility. As I said at the outset, it is a facility that is long overdue. For a long time it was a dream of the pioneers. It is worthy of the support of all members.

**Mr PREST (Port Curtis) (9.20 p.m.):** I have much pleasure in speaking to the proposal to extend the spur line from the Clermont-Blair Athol section.

I was interested to hear the member for Lockyer say that the Queensland-British Food Corporation project in 1947 was not successful. That project showed the people

of this nation what could be grown in that area where the rainfall was considered to be insufficient to service a large grain-growing industry. I give all credit to those who were in government in 1947, and I give thanks to the foresight of that Labor Government. Following on that project, great expansion took place in the city of Gladstone.

I give credit to the then chairman of the Gladstone Harbour Board (the late Marty Hanson), who was member for Port Curtis prior to his death. His foresight was responsible for the development of the port into one of Queensland's major grain ports, particularly as the grain port for central Queensland. So much grain is being produced in the Central Highlands area that it is beyond the capacity of the grain boards to handle it. Problems arise when a ship enters port to load grain. The Railway Department also has problems in handling the grain stored in silos and on properties in the area. The Railway Department carries as much grain as it can handle and road transport also carries huge quantities of grain.

It has been said that the QBFC project was not a success, but so much grain is now being grown in central Queensland that Mackay has become a major grain-exporting port. The construction of the spur line will place Mackay 136 km closer than Gladstone to the grain-growing areas. As the member for Mackay said, Mackay will not take work away from the port of Gladstone but, rather, will complement it.

The Minister said that, because of the expansion in grain production, 36 000 ha will become available in the Kilcummin area and a further 115 000 tonnes of grain could be produced in that area.

Grain production makes a big contribution in the employment of many people, particularly on the farms, in the rail system and in the trucking system.

I join with the Minister in saying that the proposition placed before us is in the interests of Queensland. Some employment will be created by the building of the 8 km of line, which will be of special benefit to the Clermont, Blair Athol and Emerald areas.

I say "Thank you" to the Government in 1947 for having the foresight to recognise what could be done in central Queensland. I am happy to say that the area has gone on to bigger and better production. The grain industry in Central Queensland has a very bright future. I feel certain that that area can take over from the Darling Downs as the major grain-growing area of Queensland.

**Hon. V. P. LESTER** (Peak Downs—Minister for Employment and Industrial Affairs) (9.25 p.m.): I am most appreciative of the efforts of the Minister for Transport (Mr Lane) and all who have assisted in bringing this proposal to fruition. Leaving aside my ministerial role and speaking as the member for Peak Downs and representing the towns of Clermont and Blair Athol, I point out that it is great that, at long last, through the Blair Athol coal connection, the town of Clermont will be linked to the Mackay area.

Of course, it all started with the coming into production of the modern coal mine that has been built at Blair Athol. In the early days, when that mine was being constructed, the then Treasurer (Sir Llewellyn Edwards) promised that the line would be part of the deal. Unfortunately, it took a little while for the deal to become a reality.

The matter was then taken up by the Minister for Transport (Mr Lane). He received deputations in Emerald and then in Clermont. He visited Clermont, and I can remember the deputations that he received from the council and other interested groups. He was willing to listen to the people. He made very effort to obtain, from Treasury, the money required to make this important connection. Ultimately, he was successful.

The connection will help with the shipment of grain from as far south as the Capella area. It will also help with the shipment of coal from Blair Athol to Rockhampton for the Rockhampton cement works and other industries. The steaming coal industry has a great future, and I believe that this new railway line will help it.

The railway line will be of a standard similar to that of the Great Northern Railway Line. It will be a fair dinkum railway line, not a little, light railway line. That will mean a good deal for the area.

This is a very happy moment for me tonight. I am happy to be able to participate in this debate on behalf of the people of Clermont and the Central Highlands. I welcome this new era in the Central Highlands.

**Hon. D. F. LANE** (Merthyr—Minister for Transport) (9.28 p.m.), in reply: This evening, it has been a brief but interesting debate on the Government's plan to build the connection between the existing Clermont-Blair Athol branch railway and the new Blair Athol-Wotonga railway in central Queensland. I am a little disappointed that such little interest has been shown in the significant decision that is being made in this Chamber tonight.

For a number of years, the residents and industries in the area in which this railway line is being built have waited for such a result to be achieved. However, it is good news. I take this opportunity of placing, on the parliamentary record, that this railway connection would not be built now were it not for the constant representations of the member for Peak Downs (Vince Lester). On many occasions since he became the member for Peak Downs, in the company of interested and local parties, he has raised with me the matter of this connection. The fruits of his efforts are to be seen in this Chamber this evening.

It is a connection that so obviously should be made. It is part of the evolution of the State and even of this nation that such a connection needed to wait until funding was available from some other viable source. Of course, the source from which the funding has been generated is the development of the coal mines in the area, particularly the Blair Athol mine.

When the Government adopted the massive main line electrification project, it made certain estimates and undertook certain financial arrangements to bring it about. At the moment, it is a buyer's market for calling tenders and for entering into contracts to have civil and construction works carried out. Therefore, it was inevitable, because of the timing of this particular project and the state of the economy of the country, that the tenders came in under budget to the extent that the Government was able to find that spare bit of finance—in this case, millions of dollars—to allow for the financing of this very important connection, and I am pleased that the proposal has come before the Committee tonight.

One of the Opposition members raised the matter of the Humes concrete sleeper plant in Mackay. I am sorry that it is not working constantly in producing concrete sleepers, and I am sure that all honourable members would like to see that happen. However, when Humes won the multimillion-dollar tender, on which basis the plant was constructed, the company knew that it had to continue to compete in price and that the need for concrete sleepers was limited, although millions will be needed, to the extent that a constant flow of work through that plant would not necessarily occur. That has been the case.

The department purchases concrete sleepers on a regular, annual basis for the heavy traffic lines, and it would be a waste of the department's financial resources to purchase concrete sleepers for all the lines, some of which carry lighter traffic. On those lines, timber sleepers do just as well and, even in the long run, they are a lot cheaper than concrete sleepers. That is the reason why timber sleepers have not been replaced with concrete sleepers on all lines.

Honourable members should bear in mind that most of the timber sleepers that are used by Queensland Railways are cut and supplied in Queensland by Queenslanders. To take work away from the cutters of timber sleepers to give work to the manufacturers of concrete sleepers would be robbing Peter to pay Paul. Other benefits must flow, and on some of the lines such a change cannot be justified.

I must comment on a significant personal item that has arisen in the debate tonight. I would like to have it noted in the parliamentary record that, after many years of debate in this Chamber, the honourable member for Mackay finally pronounced the name of his home town correctly. I noticed that, during the debate, he referred to the

town as "Mack-i" (as in "eye"), instead of "Mack-a" (as in "OK"). It is not spelt "McKay". He has obviously been persuaded to use the correct pronunciation, and I place it on the parliamentary record that "Mack-i" is the correct pronunciation. It was named after a pioneer family of that name, the relatives of whom still live in Brisbane. They will vouch for the pronunciation.

**Mr Casey:** It can be "ee-ther" or "eye-ther"!

**Mr LANE:** The honourable member slipped tonight and gave the Committee an honest pronunciation, and I am grateful for that. I used to think that "Mack-i" was the tory pronunciation and that "Mack-a" was the Labor pronunciation, but perhaps that is not so.

Motion (Mr Lane) agreed to.

Resolution reported and agreed to.

## GOLD COAST RAILWAY FROM BEENLEIGH TO ROBINA

### Initiation

**Hon. D. F. LANE** (Merthyr—Minister for Transport): I move—

"That Mr Speaker do now leave the chair and the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider the following resolution—

'That the House approves of the working plan, section and book of reference for construction of a railway from Beenleigh to Robina.'

Motion agreed to.

### Committee

**Hon. D. F. LANE** (Merthyr—Minister for Transport) (9.36 p.m.): I move—

"That the House approves of the working plan, section and book of reference for construction of a railway from Beenleigh to Robina."

Honourable members would be aware of the Government's commitment to provide efficient public transport facilities. Evidence of this commitment is the electrification of the Brisbane suburban rail network where patronage has been growing steadily since 1979. In 1979, approximately 26 million suburban passenger journeys were made. In the last 12 months of operation, more than 37 million suburban passenger journeys were made. Patronage of suburban trains is assured to rise even further with the commissioning of electric train services to Caboolture and the extension of the Thorneside line to Wellington Point next year. Planning for a further extension to Cleveland is already well advanced.

It is now planned to extend electric services to the Gold Coast. The provision of an electrified, high speed, interurban railway system between Brisbane and the Gold Coast will provide a high standard of public transport both in terms of passenger comfort and journey time.

A journey from the southern terminus of the new railway west of Mermaid Beach to Central Station with intermediate stops at Nerang, Helensvale, Coomera, Ormeau and Beenleigh stations will take about 65 minutes. The interurban rolling-stock will be capable of speeds up to 160 km/h—100 miles per hour—and will be similar to the present suburban electric multiple unit rolling-stock which has received wide acceptance as the best of its kind in Australia and possibly the world.

Forecasts of the rail patronage potential of the Beenleigh to Gold Coast corridor indicate a fourfold increase over the initial 10-year period of operation. This reflects the fact that parts of the Albert shire that will be served by the railway have experienced annual population growths of 19 per cent compared with an average annual growth in this part of the State of 8.4 per cent in the period 1976 to 1983.

The project will involve the construction of nearly 46 km of new railway line as well as duplication of the existing route between Kuraby and Beenleigh and provision of a third rail on the section of standard gauge track between Yeerongpilly and South Brisbane to allow for the express passage of the Gold Coast trains.

All new stations between Beenleigh and Robina will have commuter car-parking, kiss-and-ride, taxi and bus/rail interchange facilities. In keeping with the rest of the suburban rail network, an off-peak hourly service will be provided and peak period trains will run at half-hourly intervals.

The estimated cost of construction of the railway and provision of rolling-stock is \$150m in December 1984 dollars, with land resumption costs expected to be approximately 6 per cent of this overall cost. It has been estimated that, based on commencing operation in 1989, fare income will cover the operating costs of the railway by 1991 and that, by the year 2004, all operating costs and annual servicing of capital debt will be balanced by fare income.

The project will have the immediate benefits of employment generation as well as the long-term benefits of providing an alternative to road transport on the busy south coast road network.

I commend the proposal to the Committee.

**Mr MILLINER (Everton) (9.40 p.m.):** It is amazing how the wheel turns full circle. Shortly after its election, the coalition Government decided that the Gold Coast railway line was not a viable proposition and promptly ripped it up, along with a number of other railway lines, including the railway line in the Cleveland area. It is amazing how the Government is now being forced to reconstruct those railway lines.

The Opposition does not object to the proposal. Obviously, a tremendous need exists for a railway to the Gold Coast area.

**Mr Borbidge:** That is not what Mr Davis is saying.

**Mr MILLINER:** The honourable member for Brisbane Central indicated that there is a need for it.

**Mr Davis** interjected.

**Mr MILLINER:** Members of the Opposition have said many times that they would reconstruct the line to the Gold Coast. Obviously, with the development in the Gold Coast area and in the corridor between Brisbane and the Gold Coast, a need exists for a rapid transportation system.

Many people are now moving to the Gold Coast and require transport to Brisbane to fulfil their work commitments. Many of those people now travel on the bus services. Lately, it has been interesting to note that the existing Gold Coast highway that was opened recently by the Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing (Mr Hinze) should have been upgraded to a six-lane highway. Because of the amount of traffic carried by that highway, there is no doubt that, in the foreseeable future, the highway will need upgrading. The proposed railway line will relieve the traffic congestion on the highway for a number of years. As I said, it is welcome.

The planning of all future urban public transport not only between Brisbane and the Gold Coast but also throughout the south-east corner of Queensland needs to be examined. People are moving into the outer suburbs. Newspapers display advertisements of land for sale at places such as Dayboro and Samford. That is another area in which the Government ripped up the railway line. In that area there will undoubtedly be a need for some form of public transport.

When one reads the debate that has taken place over proposed schemes for public transport to the Gold Coast, one notes that various proposals have been put forward using such forms of transport as helicopters and hovercraft. It is obvious that the railway is the most suitable form of transport.

I am pleased that the proposal incorporates an intersuburban bus service. When providing rail services, it is very important that feeder services are provided so that people do not need to use their own private motor vehicles. They should be able to use a fully integrated public transportation system.

**Mr Davis:** With all due respect, it is not exactly a Gold Coast railway.

**Mr MILLINER:** It is not a Gold Coast railway; it will service the entire area.

The time taken for trains to travel from Central Station to the Gold Coast will be about 65 minutes. It is obvious that people will use the service. Some people in my electorate prefer to use the fast electric trains than their own motor vehicles.

I know a gentleman who holds a very senior position in a company. He is entitled to the use of a motor vehicle. Because he can travel from Ferny Grove to the city more quickly by electric train, he has declined the use of that motor vehicle. He prefers to enjoy the comfort of the electric train on which he can read his newspaper rather than sit in a motor vehicle and battle the traffic from Ferny Grove to the metropolitan area. If somebody can travel from Robina on the Gold Coast to Brisbane by train in 65 minutes or by motor vehicle, which will involve long delays, he will use the train, because of its convenience.

In addition to transporting workers from the Gold Coast area to the metropolitan area, the rail link will also assist tourism on the Gold Coast. For many years, requests have been received from various groups for an international airport at the Gold Coast. It has been fairly difficult for international tourists to get from Brisbane Airport to the Gold Coast area. I believe that the fast electric train service that will operate between Brisbane and the Gold Coast will eliminate the need for an international airport at the Gold Coast.

Recently, I read a report in which some of the airlines suggested that Australians were adopting the mentality of wanting an international airport. People in Rockhampton, Mackay and various other cities want an international airport. The comment was made that Australia has more international airports than many other larger countries that have a great many more international air passengers.

Obviously, the rail link will assist the tourist industry by providing a rapid transportation system from Brisbane to the Gold Coast. My colleague the honourable member for Bundaberg (Mr Campbell) also will say something about the Gold Coast railway line, but the Opposition does not oppose the resolution put forward.

**Hon. I. J. GIBBS** (Albert—Minister for Mines and Energy) (9.47 p.m.): The book of reference will create history. The previous speaker said that he supports the proposal. However, he did mention the pulling up of the railway line in 1964. Over the years, that action has received a great deal of criticism. I was not the decision-maker then; but having lived in the area and seen the railway operating, I can say that the pulling up of the line in 1964 was the best thing that could have happened. It was antiquated, light rail. Locomotives could not get up any speed.

The rail line from Beenleigh to Robina will now be established. The second stage of the electrification from Kingston to Beenleigh is complete. I thank the Minister and the Premier for their support in having the line continued to Beenleigh. It has been a great success. Now the tunnelling has been approved. A ring road is to be built around Beenleigh because of the development taking place there. My department has received great co-operation from the Railway Department, the Government and Cabinet in having Beenleigh properly planned and in getting the central-area plan in Beenleigh under way.

The trains on the line to Robina will travel at 160 km/h. That is fast, modern transport. It could never have been achieved on the old line. If one looks at the route of the old line on the map today, one wonders why a snake would not break its back trying to crawl up it. The Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing (Mr Hinze), who is in the Chamber tonight, is interested in seeing this book of reference go

through. The Minister and I got enough support in Cabinet to have this proposal introduced.

The honourable member for Surfers Paradise (Mr Borbidge) and the honourable member for Southport (Mr Jennings) have been pushing for this proposal all along the line. It has been a great effort, and there has been great co-operation. Having laid the foundation to allow the resumptions to happen so that planning for the railway line can proceed, it is now only a matter of getting it under way as quickly as possible.

The railway line will be a tremendous project. It will cost a great deal of money, and it will not be easy to build. Many people ask, "Why do you want to establish a railway line? Why don't you put more money into roads? Why don't you do this? Why don't you do that? Isn't the railway line too far out of town?"

All I can say is that by about the year 2005, approximately 1 000 000 people will live between Springwood and the border.

They will spread from the sea right to the mountains. Every possible mode of transport—rail, road and water—will be required to move people between the Gold Coast and Brisbane. I have no doubt that future technology will provide rapid water transport to move people from the Gold Coast to the Brisbane River.

I pay a great tribute to the Government for supporting, in Cabinet, the Honourable Russ Hinze and me, as well as the other two representatives from the Gold Coast (Mr Rob Borbidge and Mr Doug Jennings). I thank the Minister also for working hard on the project and making it happen. As Minister for Transport, he is enjoying playing his role in one of Queensland's most historic periods.

We often think that we are doing a great job, but we ought to cast our minds back to the pioneers who built railway lines all the way to Cairns and to the west. What a job it must have been in those days, with horses and scoops, picks and shovels. Our task with today's modern machinery pales in comparison.

Tonight's debate is a historic occasion. Coincidentally, members of the Beenleigh Chamber of Commerce, with two of their guests, John Emerson and Chris Connolly, are in the gallery, to witness one of the most historic occasions in Queensland's transportation history—the creation of a link from Brisbane to Robina, which will serve the Albert shire and the Gold Coast. I am very proud to be in the Chamber and part of it. I thank the Minister very much for making it happen. We all look forward to its being brought to fruition.

**Hon. R. J. HINZE** (South Coast—Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing) (9.52 p.m.): I join in heaping commendation on the Minister for Transport for bringing before the Parliament a proposal for a railway line between Beenleigh and Robina, on the Gold Coast. A few minutes ago, a member of the Opposition said that the Parliament is seeing the wheel turn full circle.

**Mr Davis** interjected.

**Mr HINZE:** The member for Brisbane Central should not get upset.

**Mr Davis:** If we make a list, why don't we stick to it?

**Mr HINZE:** It is Christmas-time. The member for Brisbane Central should have a little joy in his heart. He is looking miserable. For once in his life, he should smile.

**Mr Milliner:** Who are you—Santa Clause or Rudolph?

**Mr HINZE:** I could be either.

**Mr Milliner:** You are certainly not a fairy.

**Mr HINZE:** With his shiny head, the member for Everton could be Rudolph, too.

I repeat that I heap commendation on the Minister for Transport. He has been able to turn a railway deficit of \$100m two years ago into \$100m surplus this financial

year. That is a sizeable undertaking. One realises that South Australia, for instance, is assisted by Commonwealth funds. In Queensland, however, the department had to do all the work to turn a strangulating loss into a profit.

I have entered the debate specifically to say that, in 1966, I made a speech in the Parliament asking for the restoration of the Gold Coast railway line. At one time, I occupied the position of chairman of a joint local authority committee comprising the Gold Coast, Albert, Tweed Heads and Byron Bay, which asked for a standard gauge rail link into New South Wales.

This proposal is for the termination of the line at Robina. In my opinion, the line ought to be continued through Coolangatta into New South Wales. The population of the area will demand a service such as that which will be provided by this railway line.

Trains that will use the line will be capable of speeds of 160 km/h and can transport people from New South Wales and the Gold Coast into this city of which all are proud. Of course, all honourable members claim that Brisbane is one of the best cities in the world.

It will be a great thrill when the line is in use once again. For the past 20 or 30 years, it has been waiting to be restored. As my colleague the member for Albert and Minister for Mines and Energy (Mr I. J. Gibbs) has said, he, along with the honourable members for Surfers Paradise (Mr Borbidge), Southport (Mr Jennings) and me, represent the famous Gold Coast area. By virtue of the redistribution, two new seats will be created in that area and that will mean an additional two parliamentary representatives.

At one time, in this House, I was a voice in the wilderness. I was the only member who spoke on behalf of the electors who lived at the Gold Coast. Of course, after the next election, and because of the redistribution of boundaries, six parliamentarians will represent that area. I will be looking for support to have the railway that is the subject of this motion extended to Coolangatta and into New South Wales.

I conclude my contribution to the debate by saying that it is a great thrill to witness the Railway Department presenting a motion, through the efforts of the Minister for Transport (Mr Lane), which will give effect to safeguarding the required alignment and the corridor so that it can be fenced. When that has been completed, it can be regarded as the alignment for the new Gold Coast line.

Honourable members have witnessed other developments on the Gold Coast which have been made possible by the investment of millions of dollars by private enterprise corporations. Millions of dollars has been spent on the construction of high-rise hotels to cater for the tourist traffic.

In the last few weeks, the Government announced a proposal to strengthen the mouth of the Nerang River by the construction of groynes which will provide a safe passage for vessels to the open sea. All of the things that I have mentioned are taking place on the Gold Coast, and it is necessary to provide the people who live in that area with an opportunity of coming to Brisbane by rail if they so desire.

I congratulate the Minister for Transport and the officers of his department on the presentation of the motion.

**Mr CAMPBELL (Bundaberg) (9.57 p.m.):** In the words of Longfellow, "Decide not rashly. Decision made, can never be recalled." In this case, the decision is being recalled at a cost of \$150m.

It is important to examine the history of proposals to operate a rail service between Brisbane and the Gold Coast. What the Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing (Mr Hinze) has said was actually said many years ago when the decision was first made to terminate that service but, at that time, those words were said in protest by members of the public. The chickens have come home to roost.

The opinions of the local people who were represented by National Party members were recorded in various newspaper articles and I would like to quote some of them. One is titled "Shocked, stunned on Southport line". The article reads—

"Gold Coast City Council alderman Mr. H. F. Samuel said last night that he was 'shocked and stunned' by the Government's decision to end the Southport rail service.

Alderman Samuel was one of the leaders in the fight to establish a Gold Coast commuter service two years ago.

'The Government has not given this line a fair chance,' he said last night.

'We wanted a fast, efficient, express commuter service like the one between Sydney and the Blue Mountains.

'Instead they have run slow, stop-start trains which have achieved very little.' "

That is precisely what is being said today, 21 years later.

At that time, the Minister for Transport (Mr Chalk) expressed the following opinion—

"Chalk's 'no' to union demands

The Transport Minister (Mr Chalk) yesterday told railway union representatives he could not grant demands from the unions."

Most people spoke up and said that the line should have remained in operation.

Another article, headed "Protest at coast rail close-down", reads as follows—

"The member for Albert in the Legislative Assembly (Mr. C. C. Carey, C.P.) tomorrow will bring to Brisbane a petition containing 12,581 names protesting against the planned closure of the Southport-Beenleigh railway line."

That quote bears even more significance because it has been said again 21 years later.

Another article reads—

"N.S.W. may be asked  
to extend coast  
railway to Brisbane

SOUTHPORT.—A public meeting to be called at Southport will discuss the possibility of the New South Wales Railways Department extending a 4ft. 8in. standard gauge line from Murwillumbah through the Gold Coast to Brisbane.

The meeting will be called to discuss the future of rail land between Coolangatta and Beenleigh following the closing of the Southport-Beenleigh line on June 30."

It is interesting that the person who had the foresight to call this meeting was the South Coast Provincial Trades and Labor Council secretary (Mr H. I. Evans). In other words, Labor people—the ordinary workers and their representatives—could see what was needed.

Perhaps it is even more interesting to go back to what was said in *Hansard* to see exactly what Labor people said in debating a motion for adjournment of the House moved by the then Leader of the Opposition (Mr Duggan) to point out that the Government should look again at the closure of railway lines in Queensland. It is very interesting to recount what he said. I believe his words will be almost exactly those that will be used shortly by the member for Surfers Paradise.

He said—

"On the South Coast we have one of the finest strips of beaches in the world and the area is justly famous for those beaches. What is the population of the South Coast? There are 35 800 permanent residents, plus 10 000 at Tweed Heads and 15 000 in the Albert Shire. Those figures are taken from Government statistics. In the past seven years the population has increased by 20 800, which is the fastest growth rate of any area in Queensland. In addition, 130 000 more people reside on

the South Coast during the Christmas vacation, plus 37 000 campers. I have here a report of the statement by the Minister in the Telegraph on 10 April, 1961, under the heading, 'Railway to Coast is Safe. Assurance by Chalk.' It says—

'The Southport railway line is safe at least for the time being.

The Transport Minister, Mr Chalk, gave this assurance today.

Mr Chalk said closure of the Southport line had been considered, but it was decided to keep it in operation.

Mr Chalk said industry could still develop in and around Southport which would justify continuation of the line.' ”

How true those words are, so why was the line ripped up four years later?

It is important to remember what was said by the then Opposition and it is also important to realise that the Government back-bench had enough intestinal fortitude to go against what Cabinet was doing.

Mr Carey, the then member for Southport, said that he supported the Leader of the Opposition. Later, he said—

“I have received many requests from constituents in my area bringing to my notice their worries, concerns and disappointments at the news of the intended closure of their railway, and as the elected representative of the Albert electorate it is a pleasure for me, as well as my duty, to bring to the Government's notice this morning the points my constituents have raised with me.

I make a very strong appeal to the Minister, and through him to Cabinet, for a reversal of the decision to close the line from Beenleigh to Southport. I agree with the Leader of the Opposition that the area that this line serves is a very important one and I feel that we should retain this public utility because of the growth and development that is taking place on the South Coast.”

The then member for South Coast said exactly the same and put a request to Cabinet in these terms—

“Give us a breathing space. Continue the railway service, improve it if you can, and give the people some kind of incentive to use it. Give it a trial. Let us get the people to use the line. Let us tell them they must either use it or lose it.”

All those matters are very interesting. The back-benchers and the people in the area wanted the line kept open, as did members of the Opposition.

A statement by the then Minister for Education (Mr Pizzey) is very interesting. This statement will really tickle the fancy of the Minister for Transport—

“Mention has been made of the transport of school children. Parents everywhere in Queensland plead with me to set up road services rather than transport by rail motor. Road transport is considered to have greater security and safety.”

In 1985, with the road carnage as it is, I do not believe that the people in Campaign Against Road Slaughter (CARS) would agree.

With reference to the Gold Coast railway from Beenleigh to Robina—in considering the statement made by the Minister, we have to look at one very important matter and that is the evaluation of the proposal. It undermines the whole spirit of the PA Consultants report. A secret report by the Railway Department revealed that major reorganisation, cost-effectiveness, productivity, profitability, staff redundancies, transfers, new working procedures and methods were all taken into account. All those measures were introduced, supposedly to reduce costs and increase productivity.

Now, the Railway Department is to spend \$150m on this railway line. I can only say that that estimate has been made in a very shabby way. The evaluation leaves a lot to be desired. The estimated cost of the railway line is \$150m. When the Government announces the costs of major projects, it can be guaranteed that those costs have been underestimated. The estimate includes the cost of the construction of 13 rail bridges, 10

road bridges over the railway line and 26 rail bridges over waterways. That is just part of the capital cost. The cost is supposedly based in December 1984 dollars. I can see the cost increasing to much more than \$150m. Any management that is supposedly looking at costs and profitability should also look at the major expenditure.

Let us look at a total evaluation of this railway line. The Commissioner for Railways, in his report to the Parliament, said—

“Patronage estimates generate revenue in December 1984 dollars of \$5.13 Million in the first full year of operation rising to \$23.393 Million after 25 years.”

Those are the proposed costings that we have. When one looks closely at the costings for this project, one sees that they are a little dubious.

I shall look at another project, the Bjelke-Petersen Dam. It is another large project. We had an opportunity to see the report of the Department of Primary Industries.

**Mr FitzGerald:** This is a bit off the rail.

**Mr CAMPBELL:** No, it is not. My comments go back to project evaluation. When that report was made, it was stated that the project would be very marginal economically. At that time in 1979-1980, the cost was put at \$17m. It has been found that the dam is leaking and the cost has increased to \$40m. That is money that Queenslanders really cannot afford. That project came to mind because of the following statement by the Commissioner for Railways—

“The advantages to the State by way of employment generation and growth stimulus to the region are considerable and construction of the railway is recommended.”

Wherever money is spent, there will be the same employment generation and growth stimulus. That is why one has to look dubiously at statements such as those made by the Commissioner for Railways.

I contacted the office of the Deputy Commissioner for Railways and asked whether I could look at the project evaluation. I was told that I could not see it; what was contained in the commissioner's report was all that I could get. Members of the Legislative Assembly have been told that they cannot get the full costings to see whether money is to be spent wisely. Money could be spent on other projects. A railway line could be built to Redcliffe. A new railway station could be built at Bundaberg. How do we know that this money could not be better spent on those projects? I am not saying that a railway line to the Gold Coast is not needed. It is needed now, and it was needed 25 years ago. The lack of foresight shown at that time leaves a lot to be desired.

I carried out an evaluation based on the very skimpy information that has been provided to us. I could show only the yearly increases in costs and make assumptions about expenditure. Using a discount factor of 5 per cent on the present value of cash flow, I reached a negative figure of \$58.9m. Using a discount factor of 10 per cent, I reached a negative figure of \$85.8m.

**Mr Borbidge:** Are they your figures?

**Mr CAMPBELL:** They are my figures. The Railway Department would not give me the figures.

**Mr Borbidge:** You were not too hot on the Treasury estimates.

**Mr CAMPBELL:** Tomorrow, I will deal with the donkey economics of the Deputy Premier and Minister Assisting the Treasurer (Mr Gunn). The honourable member should not worry about that.

Given the nature of such a rigorous evaluation of all accepted railway expenditure and reorganisation, I must question whether the Railway Department did a proper project evaluation and compared this expenditure with expenditure on other projects. If so, was a full report of the evaluation carried out and, if not, why not? If it was, what

was the benefit/cost ratio of the project? What was the calculated cash flow for the project? What is the internal rate of return for the project? What is the average rate of return of the project? What were the discount rates used in the analysis? They are all accepted procedures for looking at project evaluation and, if the Railway Department is being fair dinkum and gets experts in, it must do so right along the line. I make those points only because major changes have occurred in the reorganisation of the Railway Department, and all expenditure must be considered.

The Opposition supports the proposal.

**Mr Simpson:** What!

**Mr CAMPBELL:** What I do not support is the way in which it has been prepared. When the line was discontinued, the then National-Liberal Party Cabinet did not listen to the people, to the local member in the electorate of Albert and those on the Gold Coast or to the local Trades and Labor people. Now, the wheel has turned. The Opposition looks forward to a very fast, efficient rail service down to that area. However, the Opposition also seeks proper project evaluation all over Queensland. The Opposition supports the proposal.

**Mr BORBIDGE (Surfers Paradise) (10.12 p.m.):** It gives me great pleasure to support the resolution before the Committee. Like my colleagues from the Gold Coast, I commend the Minister for Transport, and I endorse the comments made in this debate by the Minister for Mines and Energy and member for Albert (Mr I. J. Gibbs) and the Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing and member for South Coast (Mr Hinze).

Having listened to the debate, I find it a little difficult to comprehend the attitude expressed here tonight by the Opposition. On one hand, Opposition members have said they support the Government proposal; yet, on the other, they seem to be saying that they do not support it. Earlier in the debate, the Opposition Whip seemed to be at odds with the Opposition spokesman on transportation matters. The Committee was treated to a long dissertation by the member for Bundaberg about what happened in 1964. I make the point that this is not 1964; this is 1985. The Government is responding to the needs of probably the greatest growth area that this country has produced.

**Mr Campbell:** It was that then, too.

**Mr BORBIDGE:** If the honourable member will be patient, he will hear me make a few points that he may like to take into consideration.

The honourable member mentioned the decision to tear up the rail link in 1964. For the benefit of the honourable member, I will enlighten him a little. No-one could have predicted the enormous growth that the Gold Coast and the Albert shire have experienced. With due respect to honourable members opposite, I suggest that no-one on that side would have got up in that debate and said that the area would have a growth rate of up to 18 per cent in 1985. Opposition members conveniently overlook the fact that, in that era, the rail link did not serve the growth areas that were developing at that time. They have conveniently ignored the fact that the rail link as it existed would have required massive upgrading. Those facts have been conveniently ignored by Labor Party members tonight.

**Opposition Members interjected.**

**Mr BORBIDGE:** For the benefit of the honourable members who are interjecting, I point out that the Committee is not talking about a red rattler; it is talking about a modern, 160 km/h, high-speed intercity link.

The technology is of the 1980s and the 1990s, not of the 1950s and the 1960s, which is the era in which the mentality of honourable members opposite is trapped. I would have hoped that the Labor Party would be a little more honest in this debate and that the various members of the Opposition who have contributed to it would have been in agreement; but even that, apparently, is beyond them.

The project before the Committee is a massive one. It has enormous implications for the Gold Coast region. As other members who have preceded me in this debate have mentioned, it represents an investment by the Government of approximately \$150m in the Gold Coast region; trains travelling at speeds of up to 160 km/h, travelling time from Robina to Central Station in Brisbane being 65 minutes; trains running half-hourly at peak times and hourly at other times; the construction of 13 rail bridges over roadways, 10 road bridges over the railway line and 26 rail bridges over waterways; and stations at Ormeau, Coomera, Helensvale, Nerang and Robina, with alternative sites for stations at Coomera, Helensvale and Robina being investigated. The rolling-stock will be 10 three-car electric multiple units, each being capable of carrying 200 people.

It is an extremely exciting development and one that I am sure, underneath the politics that one sees in this Chamber, deserves, and should receive, the support of all honourable members. As honourable members have seen from the reports tabled by the Minister, the new rail link is set to become as profitable as any passenger rail service in Australia. It is expected to return more than \$5m in its first full year and generate profit within three years.

It is appropriate to pay tribute to the Minister for the enormous transformation that has occurred in Queensland railways in recent years. The Railway Department is now an extremely efficient, well-run organisation. The Minister deserves credit for dragging the railway system out of the last century and providing Queensland with the sort of service and infrastructure that it requires for the next century. The calculations upon 1984 dollar valuations are based on an expected completion date of 1989. The construction of 45.6 km of track will, as has been earlier indicated, provide considerable employment.

Ten trains will operate on the line. Estimates of patronage on the new Robina rail link indicate revenue will rise to more than \$23m after 25 years. I know that the Government has been eager to proceed with the rail link as soon as possible. I note the completion date is 1989. I would hope that, if circumstances permit, as the project gets along the track it may be possible for it to be completed in time for Expo 88.

The Gold Coast is entering upon an incredibly exciting period. Last week-end saw the opening of the casino. Massive hotel developments are under way, and the stabilisation of the Southport bar is almost completed. Two other relevant developments are the construction of the Gateway Bridge and the redevelopment of the Brisbane International Airport. As I said, the Gold Coast is entering its most exciting era, and this project will be very much a bench-mark for what is to come and testimony to the commitment of this Government to the area.

Most of what I did want to say has been said by honourable members who have preceded me. I will not delay the Committee except to compliment the Minister and the Government. As the Minister for Mines and Energy and member for Albert (Mr I. J. Gibbs) indicated, what honourable members are witnessing tonight in this Chamber is history. It also shows what can be achieved with teamwork—teamwork between the Government members representing the area and the Minister for Transport and his Cabinet colleagues.

I support very strongly the motion before the Committee. It is one that will have immense and profound implications for the area that I represent.

**Mr DAVIS** (Brisbane Central) (10.20 p.m.): As would be expected, the honourable member for "Sufferers" Paradise commended the Minister for the proposal. I state clearly that the Opposition supports the extension of the railway line from Beenleigh to Robina. Opposition members have supported that concept ever since the Government, including Mr Hinze and Mr Carey, first considered the proposal. For the benefit of new members, I point out that at that time Mr Carey was a strong supporter of road transport. He was the member for Albert and the director of Woods Transport. Woods Transport was the main operator that operated between—

**Mr Borbidge:** Mr Hinze wasn't in the House at the time it was pulled up.

**Mr DAVIS:** For the benefit of the member for "Sufferers" Paradise, I point out that Mr Hinze came in just after it was pulled up. Mr Carey was a member of the Government at that time. He was the director and main share-holder in Woods Transport, the main operator of road transport in that area. As soon as trains stopped running from Southport to Beenleigh, Woods Transport immediately took all road transport permits. I do not know whether it was by chance or not, but Woods Transport sold out to TNT, the multinational transport company, and made a nice healthy profit. That is an anecdote from the past.

**Mr Borbidge:** You are reflecting on someone who has passed on.

**Mr DAVIS:** The oldest trick in the book is to say that a member is reflecting on someone who has passed on.

I ask the Minister: Whatever happened to the Redcliffe railway line? The Opposition would be prepared to spend \$169m on that line. As I said earlier, it supports such a proposal. What happened to the railway line that goes to Kippa-Ring, which is in the electorate of my colleague the honourable member for Murrumba (Mr Kruger)? Honourable members have heard nothing more about it. Each time a railway proposal is put to the Committee, I ask that question. Everybody in Redcliffe is waiting to go for a ride on the Redcliffe line.

The honourable member for Albert (Mr I. J. Gibbs) had his friend from the Beenleigh Chamber of Commerce in the lobby. During this historical moment—perhaps I should say "hysterical"—it is appropriate to make the point that the Minister made a hefty profit on some of the land. That matter was raised by the honourable member for Mackay (Mr Casey). Government members drew the attention of the Committee to the fact that the old trains were slow and were not operating efficiently. It is surprising that, as soon as the service was stopped, the right of way was sold.

Earlier, the honourable member for Surfers Paradise said, "Who would ever have known how the Gold Coast was going to expand?" A person would not need to be very bright to realise that the Gold Coast was expanding at a great rate between 1961 and 1964. It went from a boom to a bust in 1961, but from then on it picked up. A perusal of the speeches of Opposition members at that time will show that in the Albert by-election campaign they made great play of the railway line. They said that not only the line should be saved but also that the right of way should be saved. I can give a classic example of the way in which the Queensland Government thinks. This far-sighted Government and the people of this State will pay a great deal more money because the right of way was sold to developers as soon as possible.

For the benefit of the honourable member for Surfers Paradise, who should know, I will refresh his memory on the route of the old line. Apart from the line that has been mentioned already, the railway line went from Nerang, through Mudgeeraba, right down to West Burleigh, Currumbin, Tugun, Bilinga, Kirra and Coolangatta. Would it not be marvellous if those lines had been retained? The Labor Opposition said that the right of way should be retained. When the line from Nerang to Coolangatta was pulled up, the land was sold immediately to developers and friends of the Government.

What happened when the line from Beenleigh to Southport was pulled up? Exactly the same thing! The Government did not show the insight in connection with the rail link between Beenleigh and the Gold Coast that was shown with the preservation of a right of way in Redlands. Queenslanders will have to pay millions and millions of dollars for the resumption of land.

I will cite a classic example of the supposed foresight of this Government. It pulled up the line from Beenleigh to the Gold Coast and sold the land, but it kept the 48 miles of line to Beaudesert. The only thing that runs on the line to Beaudesert—almost exactly the same distance—is one train a couple of days a week. That is about all that runs to Beaudesert.

**Mr Lane:** What about the cattle?

**Mr DAVIS:** The cattle are inside the wagons that go there. One train a week is all that is needed for one load of cattle.

**Mr Borbidge** interjected.

**Mr DAVIS:** The honourable member for Surfers Paradise should not criticise the Opposition for its foresight in saying that the right of way should not have been sold. I do not think I have seen worse local public transport than that in the area represented by the honourable member for Surfers Paradise. If honourable members want an unusual experience, they should get on a bus in the tourist area of Surfers Paradise in peak hour and try to go to Coolangatta. I almost said "Sufferers" Paradise, because it actually is "Sufferers" Paradise when one gets on a bus and tries to go from Surfers Paradise down to Coolangatta.

**Mr Lane** interjected.

**Mr DAVIS:** What did the Minister say?

**Mr Lane:** Did you drop your mike?

**Mr DAVIS:** No, I did not. I have just stated a simple fact.

The line will go right out into the country. It will not go anywhere near the——

**Mr Lane:** Where would you like it—up Cavill Avenue?

**Mr DAVIS:** Actually, that is not a bad idea. I think that is something that the Minister should be thinking about. It would at least give the honourable member for Surfers Paradise and his colleagues something.

**Mr Borbidge** interjected.

**Mr DAVIS:** At least the policies of the Labor Party reflect far-sightedness.

**Mr Borbidge:** It hasn't been very clear tonight.

**Mr DAVIS:** I want the honourable member for Surfers Paradise to listen, and I want this to sink in. Firstly, the Labor Party supports the construction of the railway line to Robina. Secondly, the Labor Party did not support the pulling up of the line, and the land should never have been given to friends of the Government when it was sold. Thirdly, the Labor Party believes that when a new line is to be put down, it should at least be put where the development is now rather than out in the country, again supporting developer friends of the honourable member for Surfers Paradise. Obviously, most of the residents of Robina contribute to the National Party, and they are the ones who are being supported.

The railway line to Robina will cost the State millions of dollars. Opposition members support it, but we know that some of the figures that the Minister has put forward are not realistic. The Labor Party knows that the line will be subsidised in the future, because there is no way that it will pay.

**Mr INNES (Sherwood) (10.29 p.m.):** The Liberal Party supports the proposal. The extension of——

**Mr Campbell:** And the railway line to Redcliffe.

**Mr INNES:** And the railway line to Redcliffe.

The extension of rail services to significant population centres is the extension of a facility that is desirable for every community and every community should have. Those of us who already benefit from established railway systems and the modern electric passenger rail services only wish that other people could share that magnificent benefit.

A number of valid statements have been made on both sides of the Chamber. The honourable member for Albert correctly said that if the old line had not been torn up, it would not have been possible to build a modern system capable of a maximum speed

of 160 km/h. The old line was incapable of being upgraded or modified, except with substantial land acquisitions.

**Mr Borbidge:** It would not have been able to service the growth areas.

**Mr INNES:** Personally, I think that there is some validity in the criticism relative to the problems of the areas that it now services. Doubtless, that is because the Government has been required to go inland to secure land. I have lived in a city in which a major population centre was connected to nearby beaches by a fast electric rail system. The city of Istanbul is connected to its beach resorts by an electric rail system. There, city-dwellers can literally board a train in their shorts, carrying their towels, and then walk from the station to the beach. Because of the intensity of development at Surfers Paradise, that obviously is not possible, but the proposed link would be of enormous benefit. In terms of the total use of a rail system, it provides a very important injection of passengers at a time when Monday-to-Friday commuters are not travelling.

The proposed route is not particularly well suited to present development; it is certainly well suited to future development. The member for Albert has a vision of house-to-house development from the beach to the mountains. I am not sure how many of the present residents of the Gold Coast would particularly welcome the prospect of total urbanisation of what is now a delightful mix of town, mountains and fields.

For some foreseeable time, there will be problems in linking existing population areas to the stations. The moment a significant journey by some other form of public transport is interposed, the attractiveness of the proposed rail service is decreased. The time of 65 minutes is possibly slower than the alternative travel by road; perhaps it is even Stephen. However, if one drove to the city, one would have the flexibility of transport there. On the other hand, if a person drives to the station and boards a train, unless his destination at the other end is in close proximity to the station, he has a three-phase travel problem—from his home to the station, the journey on the train, and then from the train to his destination.

The member for Bundaberg (Mr Campbell) is probably right: the figures were done by Treasury as well as by the Railway Department, and they simply do not stack up economically. A variety of approaches was tried, and nothing stacked up economically. Cross-subsidisation through the coal tax will be involved. That happened for metropolitan rail systems, so it cannot be begrudged if a similar benefit is extended to services to other areas. Let there be no mistake about it, however: if the capital cost is to be amortised, the project in pure economic terms is probably not even marginal. It will result in a loss and require a subsidy, albeit a subsidy that has been extended to other regions. One cannot knock the project on that basis alone.

Undoubtedly, a major population centre is to be serviced. The availability of a fast, modern service is a good thing. I would think that the observation of the Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing (Mr Hinze) that the system should be extended across the border to service the development in northern New South Wales is a possibility that should be embraced. If that amount of capital is being invested in a system that is so close to the border, a little more might as well be injected to harness the population centres that already exist to the south.

The Liberal Party would agree with the people who have expressed reservations about the economics of the project. I think it is probably wrong for the honourable member for Surfers Paradise (Mr Borbidge) to say that figures illustrate that the rail service will be the most profitable railway in Australia. I do not think that is true; however, I suppose it will be as profitable as other passenger services that operate on the basis of a significant degree of cross-subsidisation.

**Mr Davis:** Can you imagine people driving from Surfers Paradise to the Robina rail link, and then going all the way back again?

**Mr INNES:** There is a problem associated with those who will use the rail service. Undoubtedly, the people who live in the areas that develop around the stations will find

the rail service of major benefit. In addition, older people, because of the frailty that comes with old age, will find the service useful and others will find the service useful because of their youth, or because their life-style might involve travelling from the Gold Coast to Brisbane and they do not wish to travel alone or travel by coach.

**Mr Borbidge:** One coach company presently operates in excess of 16 services a day.

**Mr INNES:** In terms of pure economics, there can be absolutely not doubt that modern coach travel is an alternative, particularly when one considers the type provided by a company such as Greyhound. Coach travel is definitely a more economical proposition—

**Mr Borbidge:** It takes more than two hours to get to Brisbane.

**Mr INNES:** It is faster than that now, but when consideration is given to the magnitude of expenditure that is involved and the development that will result, a variety of alternative systems of travel will be available, and it is reasonable to expect that it will be.

The Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing (Mr Hinze) commended the Minister for Transport for the turn-around in profitability. However, it may not surprise people if I say yet again that the turn-around in profitability of the Railway Department has been due almost entirely to the taxation revenue that is provided by the coal industry. The passenger services that operate in this State are being cross-subsidised to a great extent by the coal companies that pay the enormous taxation components that are attached to coal rail freights.

**Mr Ahern:** Very substantial savings have been made owing to the implementation of the PA report.

**Mr INNES:** The figure of \$20m has been mentioned as the cost-saving, but it is well known that revenue derived from coal transportation charges injects income into the \$350m to \$400m total, of which half is a taxation component. If the coal freight factor were taken out, the whole scheme would fall flat on its face.

**Mr Ahern:** Surely \$20m in cost savings is commendable.

**Mr INNES:** It is significant. It is commendable and significant, and I say that without reservation.

However, when the Government refers to \$750m for the cost of electrification and \$150m for the cost of this new line, to millions of dollars worth of new lines being put down elsewhere in the metropolitan area, and to the modernisation of the electric train fleet, it must be realised that that would not be possible without the funds that have been provided by way of the imposition of a coal freight tax. That is not said in an attempt to denigrate the moves that have been made by the Minister for Transport and the Commissioner for Railways to rationalise and make the system more economic. Those gentlemen are to be commended without reservation.

Honourable members should understand what the Government intends to do. It is providing a new service, and that is fine; but it is being provided at a cost, and undoubtedly that cost involves a level of subsidisation. That kind of thing happens elsewhere. The people who live on the Gold Coast are entitled to expect benefits from action taken by this Government that is similar to the action taken in other States.

I commend the possibilities for extension of the system that were addressed by the honourable member for the South Coast and Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing (Mr Hinze). While extension of the system is being considered, that proposal also should be looked at. The matter of co-ordinating feeder services will also be a vital factor in maximising the use of the proposed service.

**Mr PREST (Port Curtis) (10.39 p.m.):** I have pleasure in speaking to the motion that provides for extension of the rail line to Robina. Having spent 30 years in the

employ of the Railway Department, I always welcome expansion or good things that are about to happen in the railways. During those 30 years, much progress took place, and it has continued. Unfortunately, because of the changes made lately, we cannot agree with everything that has been done. I am very concerned about the two-man crews. At some time in future, the Minister and the department will be sorry for making that decision.

**A Government Member:** You want only a one-man crew.

**Mr PREST:** No, I believe firstly in safety.

In my years in the railway, I saw progress from the PB loco that pulled 150 tonnes to the Garratts that pulled 600 tonnes to the diesels and the diesel electrics. The railway then progressed to the triple-headers, which were good for the crew and the development of the railway system. Today, instead of one diesel pulling 1 000 tonnes, or three diesels pulling 3 000 to 4 000 tonnes, six diesels are pulling 8 000 tonnes and more. Honourable members should realise what the changes have meant in productivity.

The increase in tonnages handled is attributable to the foresight of the people in earlier days. No doubt thanks to the wisdom of the present Minister for Transport and others who saw that the railway system was on the right track, the progress has continued.

In the history of the railways, a bad decision was made in 1957, after the change in Government, to stop the electrification of the Brisbane rail system. Electrification was not completed until the early 1980s. That decision cost millions and millions of dollars in extra construction costs and in returns to the Queensland railways. After 23 years, the Government has realised how shortsighted it has been and says that electrification is the in thing. But electrification was the in thing in 1957. The Government is about 30 years behind the times.

The second bad decision made by the Government was to dismantle unprofitable lines in the early 1960s. Because the line to the Gold Coast was one of the lines dismantled, we are today considering the proposal to construct a new 54 km section of line at a cost of \$150m on December 1984 figures. With inflation running at 5 per cent or 6 per cent per annum, and the line not to be completed until 1989, as the member for Bundaberg said, the cost will exceed the 1984 estimate of \$150m.

**Mr Davis:** That means we will carry that debt when we are in Government.

**Mr PREST:** There can be no doubt about that. The honourable member may rest assured that, thanks to the calibre of the then Labor Government, many changes will be made for the benefit of Queensland rather than for one section of Queensland.

I was interested to learn the route of the proposed line. I wanted to know whether it went anywhere near the TAB at Oxenford. I am talking about 1984, and honourable members know who was going to get the TAB licence in that year. I thought that the route might go through the drive-in bottle department of the Oxenford Hotel so that the train passengers could have 15 minutes for refreshments.

**The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr Booth):** Order! I suggest that the honourable member return to the subject under discussion.

**Mr PREST:** Yes.

When the electric trains were extended to Beenleigh, an area of land on which the railway station was to be built was owned by the Minister for Mines and Energy, his wife and his friends.

Under this proposal, \$9m is being provided for the cost of resuming land. Who will reap the benefit of that? Honourable members have been told that \$9m will be split up amongst the people in the know.

**Mr Davis:** Does it go anywhere near Mr Charlie Holm?

**Mr PREST:** I note a reference to developments at Canowindra. That might be the area of which the honourable member is speaking. Some people will make a considerable amount of money from the resumption of land for the railway line.

**Mr Borbidge:** Is it a sin to be a member of the National Party?

**Mr PREST:** If it was me, yes.

**Mr Littleproud:** We would not have you.

**Mr PREST:** I do not know about that. The National Party has a new member in the Parliament. His father would not stand for the seat of Redlands, and the National Party gave his son the nomination after a contribution of \$40,000 was made to the Bjelke-Petersen Foundation. I assure the honourable member that the National Party will have anyone, provided the money is right—anything for a price. It is said that Queensland has the best Government that money can buy, and that is true.

To get back to the route of this railway line—it passes Coomera, where Dreamworld is situated, Nerang, Helensvale and Boonaroo, and terminates at Robina. I am concerned about the speed at which this train will travel. It is to travel at 160 km/h. I have great faith in the railway system and in the employees, but I am concerned that Queensland people just will not be used to that sort of speed.

**Mr Underwood:** The suburban trains are supposed to do 100 km/h, but they cannot do it because the machinery can't take the strain; it falls apart.

**Mr PREST:** I would not be surprised about that.

On 26 October 1985, the following article appeared in *The Courier-Mail*—

“Sunlander the slowest

CANBERRA.—Queensland's Sunlander has been singled out for special attention at a national conference—as Australia's slowest train.

According to material distributed by National Infrastructure Forum organisers, the Sunlander's average speed of 46 km/h puts it well behind other long-distance trains in Australia and overseas.

The Sunlander takes 36 hours 50 minutes to complete its 1678 km journey from Brisbane to Cairns.

The Southern Aurora moves between Sydney and Melbourne at an average 74 km/h and the Indian Pacific on the Perth-Sydney route at 62 km/h.

But all these, say conference organisers, are far behind the big passenger trains of Europe.”

I have travelled on The Alice between Sydney and Alice Springs, on The Ghan between Alice Springs and Adelaide, on The Overlander between Adelaide and Melbourne and on The Southern Aurora between Melbourne and Sydney. When one talks about Queensland's passenger trains, one should sing that old song *I'll Walk Beside You*. They leave a lot to be desired.

As the member for Brisbane Central said earlier, with the change in Government in this State shortly, there will be a marked improvement in passenger rail services in Queensland. Mark my words on that!

In his speech, the Minister for Transport said—

“Honourable members would be aware of the Government's commitment to provide efficient public transport facilities. Evidence of this commitment is the electrification of the Brisbane suburban rail network where patronage has been growing steadily since 1979. In 1979, approximately 26 million suburban passenger journeys were made. In the last 12 months of operation, more than 37 million suburban passenger journeys were made.”

That may well be so, and I do not doubt the Minister's figures. However, what is the reason for that? As a result of the Government's policies, it is virtually impossible to own and use a motor vehicle as a form of transportation. Queensland has the dearest petrol in Australia, the dearest motor vehicle registration fees and, recently, third-party insurance premiums were increased by massive amounts to the point at which they are now in excess of premiums in other States. And let us not talk about air travel. The cost of air travel has increased by about 400 per cent in the last eight years, and it is no wonder that people are having to go back to rail transport.

In the Minister's speech, he spoke only about the metropolitan area where the lines are electrified. What about public transport across the length and breadth of Queensland? What has the Government done about that? On current trends, in excess of 500 people will be killed on Queensland roads and many thousands of others will be injured, sometimes permanently.

**Mr Menzel:** The people in Canberra won't give us enough money for the roads.

**Mr PREST:** Oh, poor old Canberra. Government members should be big enough to bear the brunt and take some of the responsibility for their own actions.

Because of the high cost of owning a motor vehicle for private transport, people in the metropolitan area have increased their patronage of the rail system. We on this side of the Committee are pleased that the Government is coming to life again. It has realised that, in 1964, it did the people of the Gold Coast and the surrounding region a wrong when it pulled up——

**Mr Davis:** Ripped up.

**Mr PREST:** Yes, when it ripped up the Gold Coast railway.

I heard a member say that the condition of the track was such that it could not be rehabilitated. Every track in Queensland can be rehabilitated. The track between Mount Isa and Townsville is still on the same base as it was years ago. It was rehabilitated on the same foundation so, if it can be done to a track that carries heavy ore trains between Mount Isa and Townsville, it could have been done on the track between Brisbane and the Gold Coast.

Opposition members are happy at the expansion of the rail system. We are also happy that a service such as this may reduce the carnage on our roads, in this case between Brisbane and the Gold Coast. We are also happy for the people on the Gold Coast and the surrounding regions that this line will service.

**Hon. D. F. LANE (Merthyr—Minister for Transport)** (10.54 p.m.), in reply: This is indeed a historic occasion because the Committee has set about reserving the route for the re-establishment of a railway line towards the coastal areas south of Brisbane.

Some comment has been made about the pulling up of the existing line back in the '60s. I have mentioned often enough in this place the futility of continuing with the old line, which followed a winding route that bore no real relationship to the current route, which is designed for rolling-stock that will maintain speeds of 160 km/h on a 3 ft 6 in. gauge. All honourable members should be aware of the rarity of the development of a high-speed railway line for passenger traffic on that relatively narrow gauge.

I believe that the Queensland Railway Department has the experience and has at its disposal the technology to develop such a railway line. If that were not the case, this project would not be embarked upon in this way. Indeed, the feasibility studies and the reports that have been received leading up to this proposal coming before the Chamber have testified to the fact that this can be done.

The Queensland Railway Department has called on the resources of a number of overseas design firms and consultants experienced in the very sophisticated field of designing rolling-stock, track, signalling, communications and all of the other infrastructure that goes towards the make-up of a line of this kind. The department has the contacts,

the experience and the interface with overseas designers and their technology to be able to construct such a railway line to the Gold Coast.

Tonight the Committee is laying the corner-stone of a proposal to reserve a railway route that I feel confident will be remembered in the decades ahead as a very positive step by this Government. Much of the credit will go to the Government and to the departmental officers who have put together the proposal that will lead to the decision that I am sure will be taken tonight.

The honourable member for Port Curtis (Mr Prest) trotted out the old hardy annual of the possibility of rail electrification under a previous Labor Government. That is nonsense. I am almost tired of having to refute that suggestion in this place and of having to point out that the system that the Labor Government had in mind was a 1 500 volt DC energised system that would have fallen by the wayside many, many years ago. The decision taken by this Government to go to diesel electric and then to move on to the most modern electric 25 kV system was much better.

**Mr Prest:** That is like saying that you won't buy a 1957 motor car but you will wait until 1980 to get a better one. That is what you are saying.

**Mr LANE:** When a Government is investing the many millions of dollars that are involved in rail development, that proposition that the honourable member for Port Curtis put in such a silly way is the way to go.

I see no point in prolonging this debate any further. All sides of the Committee have supported the proposal. Some have endeavoured to damn it with faint praise but, in general, honourable members could do nothing other than support it. I commend the motion to the Committee.

Motion (Mr Lane) agreed to.

Resolution reported and agreed to.

#### **AMBULANCE SERVICES ACT AMENDMENT BILL**

**Hon. B. D. AUSTIN** (Wavell—Minister for Health), by leave, without notice: I move—

“That leave be given to bring in a Bill to amend the Ambulance Services Act 1967-1983 in certain particulars.”

Motion agreed to.

#### **First Reading**

Bill presented and, on motion of Mr Austin, read a first time.

#### **Second Reading**

**Hon. B. D. AUSTIN** (Wavell—Minister for Health) (11.1 p.m.): I move—

“That the Bill be now read a second time.”

Honourable members will be aware that for a number of years a review has been proceeding into the Queensland Ambulance Service, and particularly in regard to the Ambulance Services Act 1967-1983. Prior to proceeding with an explanation of the Bill, I should like to give a brief outline of the early development of ambulance services in this State.

An accident at the Brisbane Show Grounds in August 1892 initially gave birth to the idea of the need for an ambulance service. A rider in the maiden Hunter's Plate was thrown from a horse and received a broken leg. Bystanders placed the rider in what was termed a “Molly Brown Cab”—a horse drawn four-wheeled vehicle with a small entrance at the rear—and he was taken to hospital.

From that point on, the ambulance service in Queensland gradually developed. A meeting was held on 12 September 1892, when the City Ambulance Transport Brigade

was formed. The first official meeting of that organisation was held on 22 December 1892 in the Courier building, situated on the corner of Queen and Edward Streets, Brisbane, and the late Colonel Honourable A. J. Thynne became president of the new brigade.

It is interesting to note that the first equipment available to the brigade was an ambulance stretcher carried by two straps over the shoulders of two bearers. The first patient was transported from Taringa to a private hospital at New Farm, the patient being taken by train to Brunswick Street Station and then carried to the hospital opposite New Farm Park.

Subsequent years saw the introduction of the first litter, being a stretcher on a pair of large wheels that was pushed along the road. In 1897, horses were brought into use, and it was not until the early stages of World War I that the motor vehicle was used for the transport of patients.

The gradual expansion relative to the establishment of brigades in the State continued in the early part of this century. In 1901, centres were opened at Charters Towers, Rockhampton and Townsville. Other centres that followed were Toowoomba and Warwick in 1902, Gympie and Mackay in 1903, Cairns in 1905 and Ipswich in 1906.

In 1897, the brigade was brought under the provisions of the Hospitals Act and remained under the provisions of that Act until 1967, when a new Act, the Ambulance Services Act, was passed in this Chamber. The new Act provided sweeping changes to the status of the Queensland Ambulance Transport Brigade, the most significant being the establishment of the State Council of the Queensland Ambulance Transport Brigade.

It can be seen that the ambulance service has developed steadily since the early years and has provided the residents of this State with a service that is second to none. The service has truly upheld its motto—"Ready Always"—and must be congratulated on the fine work that it has carried out. It is an organisation that is held in the highest esteem by the people of this State.

The Government, in recognition of the need for the continuance of a first-class ambulance service, commissioned a report to be prepared, and, in March 1981, a report by a committee established to review ambulance services was presented to Parliament. That report was distributed throughout the State to many interested bodies, including ambulance brigades, for the purpose of review and comment.

At this juncture, I express my appreciation to the many people and organisations who submitted their recommendations relative to the review of ambulance services. These recommendations certainly assisted in the overall review of this service.

The Bill has been drafted with a view to improving the overall concept of ambulance services in this State, particularly in relation to the administrative and financial aspects of the service.

Initially, let me say that the Government does not intend to change the committee/brigade structure or the zonal concept presently provided for in the Act, as it is considered to be an integral and valuable part of the overall structure and any amendment at this time is unwarranted and unnecessary.

It is intended, however, to restructure the present State council. The existing body is considered to be too large and unwieldy for effective and efficient management and it has been necessary for it to operate through a system of council committees. The present council consists of 25 members, namely—

- 13 zonal representatives;
- four representatives of the relevant unions and the Ambulance Superintendents Association;
- three representatives of the St John Ambulance Association and Brigade;
- four persons appointed by the Governor in Council; and
- the superintendent of the Queensland Ambulance Transport Brigade in Brisbane.

It is proposed to replace the State council with a new board, to be named the Queensland Ambulance Services Board. It will comprise nine members instead of the 25 presently on the State council. It is felt that the smaller board will streamline proceedings and be in a far better position to effectively and efficiently manage State-wide ambulance services.

Service representation has been retained on the board but has been reduced to three persons, being a representative elected by ambulance committees from each of three regions to be established in the State. I will explain the "regional" concept later.

The remaining board members will consist of the following and their term of appointment will not exceed three years—

a medical practitioner;

a person nominated by an industrial association of employees that is accepted by the Minister as representing employees who are members of brigades; and

four other persons.

It will be noted that the provisions contained in the amendment to the second schedule provide for the election of the regional representatives whereas the remaining members will be appointed by the Governor in Council or, alternatively, the Minister.

Clause 35 of the Bill establishes the three regions in the State to be the northern, central and southern regions to be approved by the Governor in Council. It also provides for the conduct of regional conferences to be held from time to time but not more than twice yearly, except in exceptional circumstances. Those conferences will be attended by representatives from each zone with the regional representative as chairman. The zonal representatives will be elected by the members of committees of areas within each zone.

The purpose of those conferences is to enable zonal representatives to exchange views with respect to the conduct of ambulance services and also to discuss matters of mutual interest and formulate recommendations that the regional representative, who is chairman of the conference, may submit to the Queensland Ambulance Services Board in his capacity as a member of that board.

The Bill authorises the making of regulations prescribing the time when and the manner in which elections for zonal representatives shall be held; the manner in which conferences shall be held; the manner in which the business shall be conducted; and all other matters associated with the conference.

The duties of the new board have been enhanced to enable the board to ensure that committees are effective with regard to the provision of services and the application of funds and that they are administered efficiently.

In order to assist the board in the day-to-day organisation and control of ambulance services, it is intended to appoint a manager to the board. The creation of such a position is warranted when one considers that for the current financial year alone, the estimated Government contribution to the ambulance service will be in excess of \$20m. The position will be established along similar lines to that of a hospital manager appointed under the provisions of the Hospitals Act. The manager of the board will be required to perform the secretarial and administrative work to ensure the proper performance of the board's function and exercise of the board's powers and authorities under the Act.

It is proposed not to terminate the services of the secretary of the State council but to continue his services, without loss of remuneration, in another capacity as an employee of the new board.

A provision has been included to allow the board, subject to ministerial approval, to appoint an inspector of committees. The inspector will be required to ensure that committees and brigades comply with the provisions of the Act. It will be noted that the inspector has been given certain powers to investigate committees and brigades where necessary. This is a power that has been sought by State council for some time.

Clause 15 authorises the appointment of assistant inspectors by the board. Where necessary, the inspector may authorise an assistant inspector to carry out and perform his duties and responsibilities, including the exercise of his powers. It will be evident that the general powers and duties of committees have been redefined to ensure that they provide not only an ambulance transport service within their area but also a service outside their area when requested by the board to do so. This provision has been included to ensure that the Ambulance Services Board is in a position to direct a committee to provide assistance to a committee in another area in times of emergency or in a disaster situation.

For a number of years, the provision of reciprocal rights for contributors has been a problem in some areas of the State. The existing Act has made no mention of this and, as a result, it has led to difficulties being experienced by contributors from time to time. In order to overcome this anomaly, a provision has been included in the Bill that will require brigades conducted by committees to provide reciprocal rights to contributors to other ambulance brigades.

The State council, under the provisions of the Act, lacked the capacity to control the number of staff appointed by committees. It is considered that, in line with the revised supervisory powers of the Ambulance Services Board, that board should have an input into the maximum number of staff that may be appointed by a committee. Similarly, the board, particularly as it will be responsible for the conduct of training programs for ambulance officers, should be in a position to determine qualifications for appointment to certain positions.

Clause 33 will enable committees throughout the State to standardise annual contribution rates, that is, to set fees between a minimum and a maximum amount, such amounts to be determined by the Minister and published in the *Government Gazette*. The purpose of this amendment is to require committees to set fees within a minimum and maximum tolerance and thus standardise, as far as can be achieved, the annual subscription fee throughout the entire State.

The present section 47 of the Ambulance Services Act relates to unlawfully carrying on of transport, etc., and provides that a person shall not carry on ambulance transport, first aid or teaching of first aid unless the person is an ambulance committee or a hospitals board within the meaning of the Hospitals Act. Subsection (2) provides an exemption for the St John Ambulance Association and the St John Ambulance Brigade to carry on certain functions within or outside an ambulance area.

It will be noted that, although the actual wording of this section has been amended in the Bill to clarify the role of the St John Ambulance Association and Brigade, the actual thrust of the amendment has not changed the previous intention and the St John Ambulance Association and Brigade are still able to carry out the same duties and responsibilities as before. The amendment could be classed as a cosmetic alteration to the Act by including the St John Ambulance Association and Brigade as a positive statement in the opening subsection together with committees and hospital boards rather than as an exception as provided in the existing Act.

Section 48 of the Act relates to unauthorised collections and provides that a person shall not solicit or accept from the public any moneys by public contribution for the purposes of treatment of the sick, ambulance transport, first aid or the teaching of first aid unless the person is a committee or a board within the meaning of the Hospitals Act. No reference is made in the section to the St John Ambulance Association or Brigade and it is felt that this is a restriction of those bodies in view of their world-wide authority and position in the teaching of first aid.

The proposed amendment to section 48 will overcome the existing restrictions and allow that association and brigade to engage in fund-raising without the need to seek the approval of the Minister for Health in each instance. They will, however, still be required to seek approval to raise funds under the provisions of the Collections Act.

Penalty provisions provided for in the Act have been reviewed and increased to correspond with current-day values.

With regard to the regulation-making powers—certain additional heads of power have been included to enable the Ambulance Services Board to provide for the standardisation of equipment, vehicles, etc., and to provide training programs for brigade members. Honourable members will no doubt recollect that these requirements were included in the report by the Committee of Review of Ambulance Services.

A provision is also included in the regulation-making powers to regulate the use of land and buildings and the construction of buildings on such land. These requirements will allow the board to supervise the use of land and the construction of buildings thereon.

The State council, over a period, has indicated its concern with the heavy costs associated with legal representation imposed on the council, committees and appellants during appeals against appointment and punishment required under the provisions of the existing Act.

The amendment makes it clear that the appellant is able to nominate whether he wishes to represent himself or to be represented by an agent or to seek legal representation along similar lines to the requirements provided for under the provisions of the Public Service Act. Following the nomination by the appellant, the Ambulance Services Board and the committee concerned will then, and only then, proceed to acquire equal representation. This revised approach to the appeal system will not only be fair to all parties concerned, but also should help reduce the cost of appeals, particularly in cases in which legal representation is not engaged.

A further concern of the State council relates to the constitution of the Appeal Board. The council considers that the existing provisions could favour the appellant in some instances. For example, the Appointment Board may appoint an officer from another brigade area and pass over a more senior deputy superintendent who may be employed by the local committee where the vacancy occurs. The Appeal Board currently provided for in the Act may consist of a magistrate, a representative of an industrial union and a representative of the committee where the vacancy occurs. The State council believes that this composition may favour the appellant in that the union representative could be expected to vote for the appellant and the local committee representative might also tend to favour the local officer.

Following a close review of the present provisions relating to appeals, it is felt that the existing provisions should be amended to ensure that the overall appeal system is fair to all concerned. Justice must not only be done but must be seen to be done. An amendment has therefore been included in the Bill to provide for the constitution of an Appeal Board by a magistrate sitting alone. It is considered that the magistrate sitting alone would be in a position to adjudicate on points of law and points of fact in an unbiased manner and would be able to gain whatever information he required by examination of witnesses during the conduct of the hearing in order to bring down a fair and just decision.

The seventh schedule of the existing Act regarding the establishment of the Appointment Board has been amended owing to the revised constitution of the new Ambulance Services Board. The new provision reduces the size of the Appointment Board from five members to three. A further provision, however, allows for the appointment of an additional member to the Appointment Board being a member of the committee making the appointment.

Mr Speaker, I will now deal in some detail with the financial provisions included in the Bill.

In the past, the ambulance service has been funded by the Government by means of an open-ended endowment scheme under which consolidated revenue paid a dollar-for-dollar subsidy on endowable collections of ambulance committees. That method of funding was related solely to public fund-raising ability, and did not bear any relationship

to expenditure or need. At the same time, all other Government-funded agencies have been required to budget in accordance with an approved allocation, but no such restriction was applied to the ambulance service.

Over a 10-year period, 1975-76 to 1984-85, the Government endowment paid has increased from \$5,184,032 to \$19,621,287, which represents an overall increase of 380 per centum. For the past four years, the percentage increase per year on the previous year's endowment has been—

1984-85	16.6 per centum
1983-84	19 per centum
1982-83	26.7 per centum
1981-82	17 per centum

It will be noted that those increases have been well in excess of the Government escalation rate for its services generally. At the same time, the investment and credit balances held by the various ambulance committees have also tended to increase.

Honourable members will be aware that the financial viability of ambulance committees varies enormously throughout the State, and extends from committees that could be regarded as wealthy to those that could be termed as being in poor circumstances. The Government has resolved to address that imbalance as it views the needs of the ambulance service as a whole. It considers that there should be mechanisms in place by which the Government's allocation can be distributed equitably for the benefit of all Queenslanders, and not necessarily in relation to the ability of committees to undertake public fund-raising. Accordingly, section 14 of the Act is to be amended to make provision for a grant rather than endowment, and for the Queensland Ambulance Services Board to retain 10 per centum of the grant each year to enable it to conduct its own affairs and to make special grants to committees in needy or necessitous circumstances.

The legislation presently empowers the State council to deduct an amount of 5 per centum from the endowment to enable it to conduct its affairs, but to date it has only deducted up to 3.5 per centum. The additional deduction is to provide a financial pool from which the Board will be able to assist more effectively committees in need and to overcome the inequities in the present method. New section 32A provides the machinery for special grants, and it will be observed that one of the conditions for such a grant to be provided is that it is necessary for the purpose of balancing the budgets of the committees.

The Queensland Ambulance Services Board has a serious responsibility to give effect to those provisions and to ensure that such amounts are made available only to those in genuine need or necessitous circumstances. It must be made clear that those provisions should not be construed to mean that the Government will pick up any shortfall in fund-raising. That was not the case, nor was it intended to be, and that should be clearly understood. The present State council already makes some grants available to committees in such circumstances, but the intention of the proposed amendments is to assist them further in that regard on a planned basis.

The distribution of the remaining grant to committees has been, as I have said, based on a committee's endowable collections. That is to be amended to relate it to the expenditure of committees, which seems to the Government to be a more rational approach. The amount of the grant is not to exceed more than 50 per centum of the total expenditure provided in any one year.

The Government has determined that in line with other Government agencies, the open endedness of the endowment scheme cannot be continued. A fixed grant representing 50 per centum of the 1983-84 expenditure by the ambulance service, escalated from year to year in line with the normal Government escalation rates, will be the basis of future Government funding. Again, the Queensland Ambulance Services Board has a weighty responsibility for the equitable distribution of that grant.

A new Part IIA—Ambulance Services Standing Committee—is to be inserted in the legislation. The purpose of that committee, which will have equal representation by the Queensland Ambulance Services Board and the Department of Health, is to overview the Government grant and to ensure that both the grant and the special grant are administered equitably and in the interest of the service as a whole. The committee will also have the responsibility for reviewing committee budgets prior to their submission to the Governor in Council for approval. It will provide a formal link between the board and the department on matters related to finance and funding.

The provision of capital works by the board and the various committees has also been looked at, and the requirements have been strengthened. A new section has been included that will require the board and committees to submit proposals, together with all necessary detail regarding such works, to the Minister for approval prior to initiating fund-raising, appropriating moneys or incurring any liability in relation to those works. Investment powers of the State council and committees are not provided for in the present Act, although a number of existing committees have considerable investments. A suitable provision has been included to formalise such investments that will require the board and committees to comply with section 48 (1) of the Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Act 1982.

It will be evident that the provisions relating to the expenditure of trust funds by committees have been relaxed to some extent. Amounts of less than \$1,000 for proposed expenditure now require only the prior approval of the board, whereas the existing provisions apply to amounts in excess of \$1,000.

Section 17 of the existing Act specifies the action to be taken if emergent or extraordinary circumstances arise that require the present State council to make a disbursement from its general fund that was not provided for in its budget or would cause its budget provision to be exceeded.

An amendment has been included that will afford the Queensland Ambulance Services Board some relief from the existing requirements that there is a need in every such circumstance to obtain approval of the Minister to make such a disbursement before making it, where the legislation refers to disbursement items.

These new provisions will considerably reduce the present work-load by providing that the board can, by its own resolution, effect transfers from any surplus arising in any other budget classification of the same service or undertaking of the board to achieve a sufficient sum in any budget classification or subdivision.

The board will be required, however, to obtain prior ministerial approval to incur expenditure where any disbursement heading is deficient or it is unable to transfer sufficient sums within budget classifications. This requirement will ensure that adequate central financial control is retained and, in addition, the reduced number of required approvals will expedite processing.

The amendment also imposes a liability on board members with regard to the making of unauthorised disbursements by providing that each member of the board who voted for such disbursement is liable to repay the amount of such disbursement to the board. A similar provision also applies to committees.

No doubt honourable members will recall that a Bill to amend the Financial Administration and Audit Act 1977-1985 was recently introduced to this House in order to include statutory authorities within the ambit of its provisions. The Queensland Ambulance Services Board is a statutory body within the meaning of this Act and therefore its provisions will automatically apply to the board.

With respect to ambulance committees, it should be noted that they are not strictly statutory authorities within the meaning of the Bill to amend the Financial Administration and Audit Act. In view of this, action has been taken to amend the Ambulance Services Act to ensure that committees are required to comply with the provisions of the Financial Administration and Audit Act as amended subject to certain modifications. This will

obviate the need for repeating in total the financial provisions of the Financial Administration and Audit Act in the Ambulance Services Act.

It is considered that the amendments outlined in this Bill will be to the advantage of ambulance services on a State-wide basis and will be of benefit to the community generally.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr McElligott, adjourned.

## QUEENSLAND THEATRE COMPANY ACT AND ANOTHER ACT AMENDMENT BILL

### Second Reading—Resumption of Debate

Debate resumed from 19 November (see p. 2517) on Mr McKechnie's motion—  
"That the Bill be now read a second time."

Mr UNDERWOOD (Ipswich West) (11.22 p.m.): As the Minister outlined, the proposals before us tonight are basically machinery matters of small consequence in the first part, but of significant consequence to the people involved in the second part.

The first part deals with changing the name of the Queensland Theatre Company to that of the Royal Queensland Theatre Company. We have no objection at all to that proposal. It is interesting to note that the approval by the Queen of her patronage was given in September 1984. It has taken the Government more than 12 months to get its act together to have this small piece of legislation drawn up. I wonder what the Government has been doing for the past 12 months about putting the Queen's wishes into operation. Quite clearly it has been doing very little.

It is interesting to note that the change in title stems from an event in 1970 when the Queen was present at a Royal Command Performance of *A Rum-Do!* In those days, she was the Queen of England. In the intervening period since then, the Whitlam Labor Government had her proclaimed as the Queen of Australia. Government members like to think that they have a monopoly on this topic, but the Queen is now the Queen of Australia rather than the Queen of England or the Queen of the British Empire. That is attributable to the Labor Government in Canberra of the mid-1970s. From time to time it is well to remind Government members of that.

The Minister talked about the growing public interest in the Queensland Theatre Company. It is a matter of concern that public interest is growing not across the board, but in a particular area. The Minister talked about the number of subscriptions. A recent survey undertaken by the theatre industry showed that the number of subscribers is growing in the upper-income bracket—the yuppies, and the middle to higher-income groups. It is good to see people becoming interested and involved in supporting the theatre. Other groups in the community have a right to be involved, and they do become involved. However, financial constraints, constraints imposed by logistics in going to the theatre, and the availability of performances, limit their attendance. A greater effort needs to be made to make theatre available to all people who wish to attend it, both in terms of location and in terms of cost.

One of the matters that I note about the new Performing Arts Complex and other theatres is the cost of attending performances. That cost can be met by people in the middle to higher-income groups, but it is beyond the means of the families in the middle to lower-income groups, particularly when they have to travel to a theatre in the centre of Brisbane, find parking, pay the cost of the tickets for the performance, and travel home again. That makes the event very expensive. Families in the middle to lower-income group shy away from attending the theatre, basically because they just cannot afford it. That is a major concern.

The second provision in the legislation relates to the superannuation scheme for people employed by the Queensland Theatre Company and the Queensland Performing Arts Trust. Once again, this lackadaisical Government has been found out. In 1983, the Auditor-General drew attention to the fact that superannuation was being offered to employees of those two bodies without legislative authority. A period of two years has elapsed since the Auditor-General advised that legislative authority should be given or refused by Parliament. Once again, the Government has been caught out. These are serious matters. One wonders what other matters that have been advised by officers of the Government have not been attended to because the Government is not doing its job properly and efficiently. The Opposition has no complaints about that part of the legislation. In fact, we agree with it.

It is interesting to reflect on the attitude that the Government adopts towards superannuation for the employees covered by this Bill and for sacked SEQEB employees who have lost the right to provide for their own and their families' future. Both in this Chamber and outside it, I have said that it is time for the Government to relent, to show some compassion and to give those people back their livelihoods and their future. I ask Government members to consider how they would feel if, tomorrow, they lost their superannuation rights. They would be devastated. Most people would be devastated if they lost their superannuation rights. All their plans for the future would be gone down the plug hole. That is exactly what has happened to the SEQEB employees. The Government has had a win. It is time for the Government to reconsider the matter and show some of the Christian charity about which it is always talking. Let the Government put its words into action.

**An Opposition Member interjected.**

**Mr UNDERWOOD:** It certainly is noticeable by its absence.

Every time superannuation is discussed in this Chamber, it certainly brings to mind the position in which the Government has placed those SEQEB employees. I call upon the Government to reverse its decision.

The Opposition has no objection to the Bill. It supports the Bill.

**Mr PALASZCZUK (Archerfield) (11.29 p.m.):** I support the Bill. In doing so, I must say that I cannot understand why all those organisations must use the prefix "Royal" in their name. I am sure that the ordinary theatre-goer does not give two hoots whether the Queensland Theatre Company is "Royal" or not. People pay their money to see the company perform. I do not think that the prefix "Royal" will sell one more ticket. As a matter of fact, I am sure that it will not. I suppose that it does give the hierarchy of the Royal Queensland Theatre Company a warm inner glow.

I support the extension of a superannuation scheme to as many people as possible. After all, we in this Chamber are covered by a generous superannuation scheme, so why should not other members of the work-force be covered? As much of the employees' money will be involved in a superannuation scheme, it is only fair and proper that an impartial auditor such as the Auditor-General keep an eye on any superannuation scheme or arrangement that the Royal Queensland Theatre Company participates in.

It is appropriate that I mention a man who gave great support and encouragement to the Royal Queensland Theatre Company. I refer, of course, to the former Director of Cultural Activities (Mr Kevin Siddell). His resignation was a great loss to the arts in Queensland. He worked his heart out to cultivate and promote the arts in Queensland, and he most certainly did not deserve the shabby treatment that he received from the Minister for The Arts (Mr McKecknie).

One had only to read the monthly cultural affairs diary to realise how widely Mr Siddell travelled to promote the arts in Queensland. Above all, he did not favour one section over another. He was equally at home with the brass section as with the Bach society. I have noticed on my travels throughout Queensland from Townsville to the Gold Coast that, whenever the arts are discussed, the name of Kevin Siddell is spoken

with great admiration and respect. The arts community in Queensland appreciated his efforts on their behalf even though the Minister and the Government did not. The Minister has a great deal to answer for concerning the resignation of Mr Kevin Siddell.

I would like the Minister to tell the House what was so wrong with Kevin Siddell's report on the arts in Queensland that all copies were withdrawn and shredded. I have a sneaking suspicion that, in his report, Mr Siddell may have been a little too thorough, frank and forthright in carrying out the brief given to him by the Minister's minder and under secretary, Mr Callaghan. I am not alone in this view, because it is shared by the arts community in Queensland who know the painstaking work that Mr Siddell undertook in interviewing people across the length and breadth of Queensland to prepare his report.

I am interested in whether the Minister read the report. Perhaps he decided that it was too damaging to the Government and himself and ordered its destruction, or perhaps he received advice from his under secretary that it be shredded.

**Mr Scott:** Shame on him.

**Mr PALASZCZUK:** Yes, shame on him. Either way, a lot of tax-payers' money was wasted. So much for good house-keeping by this Government!

The Minister is very lucky that all copies have been shredded, because I assure him that, if one copy had fallen off the back of a truck, I would have broken a leg to get into this Chamber to table it.

The Minister, as political head of the Department of The Arts, National Parks and Sport, must put up with the distrust and doubts of the arts community. In a way, he is in a bind, because he is the second most junior Minister, and his under secretary (Mr Callaghan) is very powerful and ambitious. As Quentin Dempster pointed out in this article in *The Sunday Mail* of 26 May 1985, the Minister's department has become a repository of former members of the Premier's staff, and with so many ambitious backbenchers trying to get the Premier's ear, I suppose that Mr McKechnie has to tread very warily.

It is timely in this debate to make a few comments on the arts in Queensland generally. To be honest, when one looks at their place in the pecking order of the Government, it is obvious that the Government does not think very much of the arts.

**Mr FitzGerald:** Look across the river.

**Mr PALASZCZUK:** I will come to the buildings across the river in a moment.

Just digressing, but in support of my argument, I note that the Minister for Industry, Small Business and Technology (Mr Ahern), an aspirant for the Premier's job, suggested in an article in *The Sunday Mail* of 2 June 1985 that the cultural portfolio be transferred to the Premier. I can understand Neville Wran and John Cain being Ministers for The Arts, but with all due respect to the Premier, I cannot imagine him fulfilling that role. A worthy Premier would aspire to having The Arts in his portfolio, except in Queensland.

Perhaps the Minister for Industry, Small Business and Technology (Mr Ahern) is flying a kite—I do not know—but I do know that the member for Carnarvon (Mr McKechnie) has a grab-bag of portfolios—Tourism, Sport, National Parks and The Arts. Honourable members can forget about tourism—Sir Frank Moore has sewn that up. As I have said previously in the House, Sir Frank Moore has a direct line to the Premier and Treasurer and does not bother with the Minister. The Minister seems to take a passing interest in National Parks and Sport, but the Cinderella of the portfolio, The Arts, comes in stone motherless last. Like the real Cinderella, The Arts definitely does not get an invitation to any of the Minister's balls.

**Mr Smith:** They have to go round with their begging bag.

**Mr PALASZCZUK:** Yes, that is right.

Before the Minister jumps up and down and tries to tell the House what the Government has done for the arts and points to the construction of the Queensland

Cultural Centre, as the member for Lockyer (Mr Fitzgerald) and other Government back-benchers have done, I should say that bodies such as the Royal Queensland Theatre Company are the arts. Anyone can build a theatre or a cultural centre—call it whatever—but bricks and mortar are not the arts. The arts are the Royal Queensland Theatre Company, the Queensland Symphony Orchestra, painting, pottery, the Lyric Opera, right down to the brass bands that play in New Farm Park on Sunday. Those are the arts in Queensland.

For most people life is quite humdrum, boring and monotonous. They need the arts to lift them out of that only for a few hours. A perfect example of that is the large number of theatre groups that have sprung up in recent years. Not even the smallest outback town has a theatre or drama group.

**Government Members** interjected.

**Mr PALASZCZUK:** I apologise to the House. I meant to say that now, just about every country town has a theatre or drama group. It is essential that those groups, no matter how small, be encouraged and allowed to develop by themselves. It would be unwise if they were to have city ideas rammed down their throats.

**Mr De Lacy:** The member for Maryborough has a one-man show.

**Mr PALASZCZUK:** That is right; he is the clown of the year.

Most of the larger cities and provincial towns have built theatres and civic auditoriums to attract artists of stature to perform. Usually these people would not venture out of the capital cities. I understand that one of the problems experienced by groups such as the Royal Queensland Theatre Company is the high cost of hiring the Queensland Cultural Centre. If a company such as the Royal Queensland Theatre Company with its large grants from Government funds finds it difficult to contain costs, how can a company such as the Queensland Youth Orchestra afford to hire the Queensland Cultural Centre? The centre should be shared with the public at large. Perhaps the Minister should have a look at this.

Another suggestion I make to the Minister is to promote groups such as the Royal Queensland Theatre Company on television. His colleagues the Minister for Transport (Mr Lane) and the Minister for Health (Mr Austin) use this medium. Night after night, Mr Lane appears on television and tells the State how good his trains are. Mr Austin tells the public how to prevent every disease known to man and to write for one of his booklets on the subject. I know that, with an election coming on next year, for political purposes these two gentlemen have to keep their faces before the public.

The Government does not do enough to promote the arts. The people of Queensland have to be made more arts conscious. Having said that, I should add that it is no use promoting the arts if the general public cannot afford to go. I am not having a shot at the Royal Queensland Theatre Company in particular, but I invite honourable members to examine the cost of a theatre ticket. The average family man cannot afford a ticket for himself, let alone for his family. These prices reinforce the view of the man in the street that the theatre and the Queensland Cultural Centre are just for the rich. It is no use the Minister and the Premier and Treasurer saying that the Queensland Cultural Centre is for all Queenslanders, when the only place most people can afford is the free admission to the Queensland Art Gallery.

In conclusion, I congratulate the Royal Queensland Theatre Company on its past high standard and I wish it well for the 1986 season.

**Mr SMITH (Townsville West) (11.40 p.m.):** I would like to make a few comments on the Bill. I was not able to find the Whip.

**Mr Davis:** You're right.

**Mr SMITH:** I was referring to the Government Whip.

I do not necessarily agree with the criticism of the departmental officers, but I certainly do join in the criticism of the Government for its lack of funding for the arts in Queensland. That is nothing new coming from me; the Minister is well aware of my opinion. I believe that the officers have a very difficult task in allocating the very small funds that are available in Queensland. I draw to the Minister's attention the difficulty that the performing companies have in funding their full-time artists and performers. If some sort of core of excellence is to be maintained in Queensland, artists cannot be put in a position in which they cannot be assured of full employment. When they are given employment for 28 to 40 weeks a year, that is not good enough. After a short time, anybody with any talent looks for greener pastures. He heads south or goes overseas. That is a matter on which there ought to be more concentration. I think that the Minister should be arguing more forcefully in Cabinet for additional funds in that area.

Last year, I had some critical comments to make to the Minister about the funding of the North Queensland Ballet, which is now known as Dance North. I express my satisfaction at the considerable increase in funding this year. That is appreciated. I bring to the Minister's attention that the performance of that company has been recognised by the Federal authorities. As the Minister knows, it was recently given a magnificent grant. The Federal grant was much greater than the Queensland grant. The company is now able to do a great deal more than it was able to do in previous years. However, it still comes back to the point that I made, that professional people are not assured of full-time employment.

As previous speakers said, the problem with Queensland is that it is the No. 1 State with respect to per capita funding for sport; however, it is stone motherless last with respect to funding of the arts. As long as that continues, Queensland will be known as the hill-billy State. It is the responsibility of the Minister for The Arts to do something about that.

**Mr Davis:** We are with hill-billy Ministers.

**Mr SMITH:** The honourable member for Brisbane Central expressed a particular view. I will not be so unkind as to say that. However, one could be forgiven for drawing that conclusion if the end result points to that situation.

**Hon. P. R. McKECHNIE** (Carnarvon—Minister for Tourism, National Parks, Sport and The Arts) (11.42 p.m.), in reply: On behalf of the Opposition, the honourable member for Ipswich West (Mr Underwood) said that he agreed with the Bill. I thank members of the Opposition for their support. He referred to the cost of the Performing Arts Complex, the cost of performances, etc. He may not be aware that some of the performances were free. It is the deliberate policy of the Government that, from time to time, people have the opportunity to go there at no cost. It is the policy of the Government to obtain a return on some of the more popular performances, particularly the ones that come from the south, so that genuine local performers can be subsidised in an endeavour to keep costs down.

Recently, I spoke to a representative of a shire council about some of the in-reach programs under which people from country areas come to Brisbane to receive tuition in a wide range of activities at the Queensland Art Gallery and the Performing Arts Complex. He said how grateful country people are for the assistance that is given to them under the in-reach and out-reach programs.

The honourable member for Archerfield (Mr Palaszczuk) had his little dig about royalty.

**Mr LEE:** I rise to a point of order. Could the Minister move to another microphone so that the static is removed?

**Mr McKECHNIE:** I am pleased that the honourable member for Yeronga is so keen to hear me.

Perhaps I should reiterate what I said. I was not aware that the microphone was not working. I am pleased that the Opposition supports the Bill because it is a practical, worthwhile Bill. It is mainly a machinery Bill.

The Opposition spokesman mentioned the costs of the Performing Arts Complex. I point out that some of the performances there are free. That is a deliberate policy of the Government. The money raised by the charges for the more popular performances is used to cross-subsidise local groups that want to perform there and cannot afford the listed charges.

The honourable member for Archerfield (Mr Palasczuck) had a dig at royalty. I understand why he did that. I know that his endorsement is under threat from the lefties. Government members understand that. Recently, when Cabinet Ministers and their wives were lining up to meet royalty at the Sheraton Hotel, who was there trying to put his daughter ahead, next to the Minister for Northern Development and Aboriginal and Island Affairs (Mr Katter)? It was the honourable member for Lytton (Mr Burns). His daughter was the 39th person to meet royalty and the honourable member for Lytton was the 40th.

The honourable member for Archerfield also resurrected the resignation of Kevin Siddell. As a back-bencher, I had a good relationship with Kevin Siddell. However, when I became a Minister I arranged for my departments to be thoroughly investigated by experts, who are available to Ministers for that purpose, and the department headed by Kevin Siddell did not shape up very well at all. As a matter of fact, he was considered to be an incompetent administrator. That is the reason that he fell from favour. That is a fact. It has been stated publicly before. I regret that I have to say that, but it is a fact. The report sent to me by Kevin Siddell was an internal report. It is confidential and will remain so.

The honourable member for Townsville West (Mr Smith) expressed gratitude for the help given to Dance North. Sometimes I find rather embarrassing the praise that I receive personally from the officers and chairmen of the various trusts mentioned when I attend performances at the Queensland Cultural Centre. They appreciate the support that I give to the arts. It is something that I do not seek, but it is freely given. I believe that that gives the lie to all this nonsense about The Arts coming last in my portfolio. I do care very much for the arts. The arts have received a considerable boost in funding since I became the responsible Minister.

The honourable member for Archerfield talked about little groups in the community. I can remember the Federal funding of the Queensland Arts Council being cut. That was one of the organisations that went out onto the highways and byways of this State to help in the isolated areas. The Federal Government chopped its funding and the Queensland Government had to help out to save that organisation from——

**Mr Smith:** I can remember seeing a letter from that group, with a copy to you, about the treatment they were receiving from the Queensland Government.

**Mr McKECHNIE:** I believe that the honourable member is wrong. The Queensland Arts Council was very happy with the assistance that it received from the Queensland Government.

Arts funding in Queensland is increasing. As I said before, I was delighted to be interviewed by a journalist from a southern newspaper that is not usually praiseworthy of the Queensland Government and to have not only the interviewer but also the photographer say that Queensland is now leading Australia in the arts. That is a comment that I hear quite frequently when I move round the country.

Of course, the Opposition treats education in the same way. It considers the amount of money spent rather than the enthusiasm engendered. The arts are really going ahead in Queensland. A company in my electorate receives no help from the Government in its day-to-day running costs but makes a profit and is well received in the community.

Because of the interest that my wife and I take in the organisation, it has made me the patron and my wife the patroness. Therefore, I totally reject that criticism.

Motion (Mr McKechnie) agreed to.

#### Committee

Clauses 1 to 10, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

#### Third Reading

Bill, on motion of Mr McKechnie, by leave, read a third time.

### ADJOURNMENT

**Hon. C. A. WHARTON** (Burnett—Leader of the House): I move—  
“That the House do now adjourn.”

#### Metropolitan Harness Racing Club, Rocklea

**Mr PALASZCZUK** (Archerfield) (11.52 p.m.): The matter that I wish to raise could correctly be described as the battlers versus bureaucracy, the battlers being the patrons of the Metropolitan Harness Racing Club, popularly known as the Rocklea trots, and the bureaucracy being the out-of-touch tall poppies of the Queensland Turf Club. The issue is the refusal to allow, at Rocklea, betting on the Brisbane gallops. I know that the matter was raised on numerous occasions in the House by my predecessor, the late Kev Hooper. However, so many new members are in the House who would not be aware of the issue that it is worth giving it another run for their benefit.

Prior to 1970, it was possible to place a bet at the Rocklea trots on the Brisbane gallops. I am the first to concede that, prior to that time, there were some problems, not the least being personality clashes on the then committee. However, that was 15 years ago. It is high time that the matter was reviewed. The present committee at Rocklea comprises successful businessmen and other reliable citizens. They have succeeded, despite adversities, in erasing the Rocklea stigma of 15 years ago, and in recent years, have built the club once more into a progressive organisation.

I reiterate that, prior to 1970, it was possible to place a bet at the Rocklea trots on the Brisbane gallops. Partly because of the problems I have referred to—and with a good prod from the Queensland Turf Club—that facility was taken from Rocklea. When people inquired, “Why?”, the most persuasive and publicised response was that it was having a detrimental effect on the attendance at Doomben and Eagle Farm race meetings.

As anyone with an ounce of intelligence would know, attendance at race meetings is subject to many variables, such as weather, time of year, class of horse, class of race and size of fields. It is impossible categorically to attribute attendance fluctuations to one single factor. One of the silliest arguments that I have ever heard is that, if betting on gallopers were taken from Rocklea, it would increase attendance at Doomben and Eagle Farm.

It is just pie in the sky thinking for those out-of-touch people on the QTC to imagine that punters from the newer suburbs on the outer southern and south-western areas of Brisbane would travel miles across town to the races. The punters at Rocklea, however, still maintain that the decision to deny them the facility to bet on the gallops was taken out of plain spite.

**Mr Davis:** Of course it was.

**Mr PALASZCZUK:** As the honourable member for Brisbane Central said, it was plain spite.

The Metropolitan Harness Racing Club leases the grounds from the Rocklea Show Society. The trotting club is now the major user of the ground. The Rocklea trots can

truthfully be classed as the "cradle of trotting", because most of the trotters start at that course before graduating to Albion Park. What seems to have been forgotten is that if the cradle at Rocklea is strangled, Albion Park may as well close its doors.

It is all very well to spend millions of dollars on Albion Park, and I do not begrudge that expenditure; but if the horses do not race there, Albion Park will be left with Silks restaurant and an idle piece of valuable real estate. In contrast to that, the Rocklea trots provide a picnic atmosphere, people dress casually when they attend, and patronage is drawn from suburbs as far afield as Eight Mile Plains, Capalaba, Raceview, Ipswich, Woodridge and my electorate of Archerfield. A recent survey showed that even the good people of the Centenary suburbs have found the Rocklea trots to be enjoyable.

**Mr Lee:** How long is the straight?

**Mr PALASZCZUK:** I have answered that question before.

**Mr Lee:** You did not answer a question of mine.

**Mr PALASZCZUK:** Yes. It was the honourable member who asked me.

All the facilities for betting and catering are located under cover, and grandstand facilities are also provided. Ample parking space is available, and the grounds are located on the main Ipswich-Brisbane road with the Beaudesert Road junction nearby. The ground is located near the Rocklea Railway Station and can be reached after a five-minute stroll, which also provides patronage for the railways.

Given the growth that has taken place in the suburbs and that public transport on Saturday afternoon is very poor, more and more people are looking to the Rocklea trots but the present situation effectively penalises the south-side punter.

As I said previously, the late Mr Kevin Hooper raised this matter in the House on numerous occasions. He even led a deputation to the then Minister in charge of racing (Sir William Knox). He received a polite hearing, but that was about all. In 1977, Mr Hooper asked Sir William Knox a question about restoration of the betting activity at Rocklea. As usual, the answer tells us nothing; however, part of the answer was—

"As to the prospects of the Rocklea trots having the concession that they used to have some years ago, I acknowledge that representations have been made to me and that I have been out to meet the folk there, who are very worthy people. There is no prospect of the changes they seek being made, and I would not mislead them into believe that there is."

Once again, no reason was given. It was just a case of being given the usual pat on the head and a swift kick in the tail.

Is it any wonder that the Rocklea punters believe that the Government's inaction is pure spite? The power of the Queensland Turf Club again raises its ugly head. As I said previously, the present committee is excellent and I am sure that the honourable member for Yeronga (Mr Lee) would be the first to agree with me on that, because he was a regular patron at the Rocklea trots, and he knows the length of the straight.

I congratulate the Minister for Racing (Mr Hinze) on all that he has done for the racing industry in Queensland and for the north side of Brisbane in particular.

*Time expired.*

#### **Exchange of Goods for Cash; Consumer Protection**

**Mr INNES (Sherwood) (11.58 p.m.):** I digress from the main topic of my address to say that earlier this year, I extracted from the Minister for Racing (Mr Hinze) an indication that he would improve the Rocklea trots and would not attempt to take over the Department of Primary Industries farm that is situated on the Oxley Creek flats adjacent to the boundary of the electorate of Sherwood. I hope that indicates to the punters who patronise Rocklea that some action has been taken. I strongly support the call for action made by the honourable member for Archerfield (Mr Palaszczuk), and I will support the Minister if and when he takes the appropriate action.

The issue I wish to address tonight involves a matter over which I would not usually invoke the protection of privilege—not that I would not need much protection. I take up this consumer affairs matter only because attempts that have been made by myself and the consumer to have the matter resolved have failed totally.

On 26 August this year, Mr Terry Mahoney, a resident of my electorate and a former National Party candidate who stood against me at a previous election, went to his Burleigh Heads unit with the intention of putting a louvred door in his kitchen. He found that the door he had taken to the unit was not the correct size, so he sent his son to Duncan's Building Supplies, which is a branch of the Adelaide Steamship Company, with measurements for the door he wanted. His son brought back a door which was too big. Apparently the salesman had said that that was the closest fit he could offer and that Mr Mahoney should see how it would fit.

Mr Mahoney found the door to be totally unsuitable, and making it suitable would have involved cutting it down and rebuilding it. He sent his son back to the shop with the door, and a credit note was received for what had been a cash purchase. I refer to a statement made by Kieran Mahoney, which reads in part, "On 26-8-85 I accompanied my father to his unit . . ."

He then describes being sent to purchase a door, and states—

"... the chap who served me told me he did not have one to those exact measurements but gave me the nearest to the measurement he had. I took this door back to the unit, however, it was far too large . . .

The next morning . . . I returned the door to Duncan's with the docket as it was too late to do so the afternoon of the purchase. The door had been paid for by cash . . .

The fellow at Duncan's told me he could not give me a refund for the door and that they would have to send the paper-work to Brisbane—"

that is the start of the double shuffle—

"and that the office would forward Dad the refund. I was given a 'Goods Return Advice Form' . . ."

### *Wednesday, 27 November 1985*

Duncan's Building Supplies has the money and the door. It was a nonsense suggestion that the firm could not return the cash on the day immediately following the purchase.

When ex-sergeant Mahoney returned to Brisbane, he contacted Duncan's office at Mount Gravatt and the person who, he was told, handled the refund. That person told him that he could not do anything about the refund until he had received the necessary paperwork from Burleigh. Mr Mahoney told him that the goods return advice and the docket for the door were available and that he could come over and verify that. However, he was told that that was not possible until the documentation arrived from Burleigh. Mr Mahoney said that, if he did not receive the refund within three days, he would be contacting his local member. He said that, in response to that, he got a snigger.

About four weeks later, when nothing had happened, he telephoned me. I telephoned the manager of Duncan's supplies at Albion and was told that if Mr Mahoney rang back, the matter would be fixed up.

In total frustration, at the request of Mr Mahoney, I raise the matter in the House. I am suggesting that, from the pattern of conduct inflicted on this consumer, the refusal in the first place to give back the cash upon the return of the door, which was known by the company to be likely to be unsuitable, was in itself unusual. The extraordinary double-shuffle of sending the documentation to Brisbane and requiring him to seek the return of the money in Brisbane, the contacts at two different branches of the company in Brisbane being totally unsuccessful, and the attempted intercession by me, have resulted, three months later, in the company's retaining the money and the door. In

other words, the company is retaining a benefit that is not lawfully or properly due to it.

The consumer is apparently deliberately left with a shuffling of papers that, no doubt, is designed to deter him from pursuing his rights to recover his money and to leave the company unjustly enriched.

I take this opportunity to publicise the activities of this company and to warn people about dealing with any of the branches of Duncan's Building Supplies.

### **Consumer Protection and Corporate Law Legislation**

Mr VEIVERS (Ashgrove) (12.3 a.m.): I wish to draw attention to the pathetic state of the laws in this State relative to consumer protection and corporate law and to show how easy it is to operate as a con man in Queensland.

The National Party has had 28 years in office to update and make much-needed changes in our consumer and corporate laws, but it has failed to act. The Government is virtually powerless to act. Because of the support that it gets from many of the shonky dealers who operate in Queensland, it cannot reform the consumer laws.

Contributors to National Party funds are virtually a prerequisite if a company wishes to win a Government or semi-Government contract. It is not what you know but who you know and how much you put in that really counts in this State. That is common knowledge amongst highly reputable organisations that do business with the Queensland Government.

Good companies, both large and small, are being forced to compromise their principles to compete for Government business. On the other hand, companies that have had a long history of poor performance, bad debts and broken agreements continue to operate in Queensland. In many instances they pick up substantial Government and semi-Government contracts. How does that happen? A timely donation to the National Party coffers often does wonders, but it happens also because the State's consumer laws are so weak. Those companies and individuals know that they can hide behind the consumer laws with little likelihood of their being charged or having their past histories exposed.

Before citing an example of an operator with a long history of going broke and of sending decent suppliers and contractors to the wall, but who has still been able to carry on business in this State and pick up the largest contract of its type in the State's history, I will present some facts about the State's consumer and corporate laws.

In 1983-84, the Queensland Government spent only 66c per capita on consumer protection, compared with an expenditure of \$2.74 in South Australia and the average national expenditure of \$1.34.

The 1983-84 report of the Consumer Affairs Bureau reveals that 4 000 complaints resulted in less than 1 per cent of prosecutions. Of the 30 prosecutions, 29 were for failure to supply information to the bureau. Fines averaged less than \$200. It is therefore obvious that many unscrupulous firms can simply stonewall investigations. If they do so, the worst that can happen to them is a \$200 fine.

The Fraud Squad is grossly understaffed. The Federal trade practices legislation imposes a 12-month limit on the laying of charges so, before our Fraud Squad catches up with a white collar criminal, he or she has gone into smoke.

Most importantly, in the area of corporate affairs, Queensland is the only State that does not have a register of company directors. Such a register would keep tabs on shady operators and prevent their establishing companies in Queensland if they have records in other States. A register of company directors would also help to overcome the problem of their going broke and taking other decent businesses down with them.

Let me give an example of how weak Queensland's corporate laws are and how companies and individuals can win massive contracts without sufficient checks being made on their backgrounds. In May this year, a company called Donba Pty Ltd succeeded

in obtaining the \$2m landscaping contract for Jupiters Casino. Inquiries that I have made indicate that that is the largest landscaping contract in the State's history. The principal executive officer of Donba Pty Ltd was Mr Kevin Francis Darley. Mr Darley and the companies with which he has been associated in the landscaping industry have had a long history of poor performance, bad debts, complaints and judgments against them in the District Courts and the Magistrates Court. Tonight, I will not detail the past histories of those companies and the judgments made against them, but there is a long list of judgments and complaints that those associated with the granting of the casino landscaping contract would, or should, have been able to dig up easily if they had looked at Mr Darley's history.

The purpose of my raising this matter tonight is not directed solely against the previous activities of Mr Darley in the landscaping industry. I understand that the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General (Mr Harper) was made aware of the background of Mr Darley's involvement with previous companies in the landscaping industry and his association with Donba Pty Ltd. I understand also that the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General, through the Office of the Commissioner for Corporate Affairs, is considering further action.

The question is: Why and how did Donba Pty Ltd, a company with a management structure that has such a record, get the largest landscaping contract in Queensland's history for a project that demands, in every respect and in every aspect, the highest degree of credibility, competence and reputation?

The State Government has made a great deal of the fact that it has exercised the tightest controls ever over any company in this State's history in the construction and operation of Jupiters Casino. Even though the operations of the casino complex are in the hands of private companies, the Government has made it plain that, because of its 20 per cent share in the profits from the casino and the scope and size of the operation, it has exercised, and will exercise, tougher Government scrutiny than has been exercised over any casino in the world.

That has not been the case with the massive landscaping contract. As a result, I am left wondering how much real scrutiny there has been of other contracts, and how effective those so-called watertight controls will be in keeping undesirable and criminal elements out of the casino. If a register of company directors were held in this State, such a situation surely would not have occurred. The contract could have been awarded without any taint surrounding the operation of the company that was granted the contract, and the landscaping industry would not have been up in arms over the whole matter.

Rip-offs and shonky deals are rife in this State. No wonder Queensland has developed the reputation throughout Australia of being a con man's paradise. In every session of this Assembly, members get up and expose dubious trade practices and relate events in which people have been conned or taken down. When is the Government going to do something about that?

#### **Prostitution in Mount Gravatt Electorate**

**Mr HENDERSON** (Mount Gravatt) (12.8 a.m.): I am privileged to represent in this Parliament one of Queensland's most attractive electorates. The electorate of Mount Gravatt consists of some of this State's finest residential areas. It has magnificent parks and open spaces round Mount Gravatt Mountain. Toohey Forest, fine schools and an excellent road system, including part of the South East Freeway, are all in my electorate. In addition, the electorate has a population of caring, involved and proud citizens.

One blight on every society must be the existence of centres of prostitution. I am sad to have to report to the House that two such places have sprung up in the electorate of Mount Gravatt. I wish to serve notice on both of those despicable operations that I shall not rest until they are closed down. I do not intend to sit idly by and allow the bludgers and harlots to drag the good name of the area down into the gutter.

The first of those operations is set up in a house at the corner of Grenfell Street and Creek Road in Mount Gravatt East. The house looks like an incomplete jigsaw puzzle. My constituents living adjacent to that house are incensed to see the disgraceful trade operating from that place. They are forced to put up with customers coming and going at all hours. Until recently, cars were parked all over the street and on the footpath. Since the police began to crack down on that enterprise, customers have parked in the car-park of the Mountain View Shopping Centre and walked up to the house. However, I notice that occasionally the owners of the house still park a speedboat illegally on the footpath. I hope that the police crack down on that practice, too.

The second operation is centred on a house in a very small street not far from the corner of Kessels Road and Mains Road, Robertson. The women—I hesitate to flatter the operators by calling them women; perhaps I should call them harlots—who operate out of this house are also served notice that I shall pursue the matter in this House until I close them down.

I request constituents who live in the vicinity of these houses to note carefully the comings and goings of customers. If local residents are prepared to provide me with the days, dates, times, number-plates, photos, and names and addresses, I shall have no hesitation in shouting them from every hilltop in the Mount Gravatt electorate.

I also serve notice that, unless these operations close down, I shall, in the new year, give to this House, full, personal particulars of the owners, operators and employees. I have one word of advice to these scum: Get out of my electorate.

On a happier note—I congratulate the honourable member for Surfers Paradise (Mr Borbidge) on becoming the proud father of a baby boy last Friday. I gather that his name is James Robert Borbidge. There is no doubt that his dad will one day be Premier of this State, and that he is a dad of whom James will feel very proud indeed.

#### Electoral Redistribution

**Mr De LACY (Cairns) (12.12 a.m.):** Tonight I will say a few words about the redistribution and the way in which it affects country areas. Last Wednesday, in this place, the Premier implied that I, together with other Labor members who represent provincial city seats, were somehow pleased with or supported the gerrymander or this distortion of the democratic process that parades as a redistribution.

Firstly, I state categorically that I do not support the gerrymander or any of its effects. The Premier further challenged me and others to state in north Queensland that we support the concept of one vote, one value. I say as clearly as I can that I do support the concept of one vote, one value. I have said it in the media and in Parliament, and I repeat it. Indeed, I am prepared to shout it from the tree-tops. As far as I am concerned, the principal of one vote, one value is one of the most fundamental tenets of democracy. The principle that one person's vote is, as nearly as possible, equal to the vote of another person is as fundamental as anything can be in the process of democracy.

**Mr Borbidge:** Do you support the abolition of seats in north Queensland?

**Mr De LACY:** I do not have time for the honourable member's interjection, although I may get onto that point later.

Over the years, as the democratic process has developed, many different methods of electoral weightage have been tried. In the old days, weightage was based on class, rank and hereditary status. In more recent times, weightage has been based on wealth and property. The Premier, by trying to justify this new version of distorting the democratic process, is trying to defend the indefensible.

As Phillip Adams said in *The Weekend Australian*, when he was referring to what is called democracy in Queensland, perhaps it should be called—

“. . . dimocracy, because the lights are going out all over Queensland. Or dumbocracy because you'd have to be an idiot to put up with it.

There's only one contempt of parliament that that figure juggling, convention-breaking Joh hasn't committed. Though he elected his wife to the Senate at least he hasn't done a Caligula and nominated his horse."

He went on to compare this latest desecration of the democratic process to Hitler's burning of the Reichstag in Germany. Adams said that it is only different in scale; it is no different in intent.

In response to the Premier's challenge to me to say that I support the principle of one vote, one value—I challenge the Premier to come to Cairns and tell the people of Cairns why their vote is worth only half as much as the vote of the people in Kingaroy.

Because the Premier and Treasurer is so fond of using racist terms, I will use them so that he and most other Government members will understand. Why is the vote of a person in Cairns worth only half as much as that of an Aboriginal person in Cunnamulla or a Torres Strait Islander on Badu Island?

The Premier knows and I know that the electoral redistribution is a gerrymander and nothing less. It is a gerrymander pure and simple. All of the nonsense that he speaks about providing balanced representation in the country and the cities is just pure nonsense. The gerrymander is a method of rotting the system and of interfering with the democratic process for the single purpose of entrenching his Government in power, even though that may be in direct contravention to the wishes of the people.

The other main concern I have in this regard is the way in which the electoral redistribution will exacerbate divisions between the country and the city. The fact that it will set up new barriers was put very articulately last week in that conservative newspaper the *Queensland Country Life* by a conservative journalist who comes from the country. Kenrick Riley wrote—

"Because I now live in cities, I have developed a philosophy of trying to do something constructive to bridge the invisible, but very real gap between city and country people.

. . . .

However, I now have cause to express my gravest concern—and shame—at what is the most serious wedge driven between city and country people in recent times.

I refer to last week's redistribution . . .".

*Time expired.*

#### **Division Within National Party**

**Mr CAHILL** (Aspley) (12.17 a.m.): This evening, I make reference to a story in yesterday's *Courier-Mail* that is headed "National MLAs 'near revolt'". The article is based on claims by the Liberal Party State director (Mr Gary Neat). The story is a classic example of distortion, inaccuracy, impertinence and arrogance.

**Mr Borbidge:** That is typical.

**Mr CAHILL:** It is typical of certain members in the Liberal Party organisation.

Among other things, Mr Neat said that a revolt was threatening the National Party Government and that the country members of the National Party were fed up with the actions and attitudes of city members. Perhaps Mr Neat thinks that he has invented the tactic: divide and conquer. As honourable members know, that is as old as Julius Caesar, but he carried it off much better than the State director of the Liberal Party.

To say that country members of the National party are fed up with the actions and attitudes of the city members is just not so. It is inaccurate. Mr Neat also said—

"Even within the ranks of the Nationals, there is now a bad feeling between country and city members."

That is not true. It is an impertinence for Mr Neat even to say it. Although he is trying to bring about destabilisation, he must know that it is not so. By a curious coincidence, those of us who came into this House in 1983 to represent city electorates, although we are friendly with nearly all members in the Chamber from all parties, find—at least I do—that some of our closest colleagues happen to be, as the member for Roma has just reminded me—he is one of them—the member for Condamine (Mr Littleproud)——

**Mr De Lacy:** You are damning him with faint praise.

**Mr CAHILL:** Well, it is better than praising him with faint damns.

The member for Burdekin (Mr Stoneman) is another close colleague. The claims of Mr Neat are just not true and it is time that someone said so.

I do not know of any get-rich-quick politicians among the city members. Certainly I am not one. In some ways, despite what the media tells the public about the fabulous salaries that we earn and the fabulous perks that come to us, we tend to go backwards. I wish to make sure that the House knows, and I hope the public knows, that in my view at the moment the only thing revolting in politics in Queensland is the hierarchy of the Liberal Party headed by Mr Neat.

**Mr Henderson:** Do you think that he should be called Gary Bleat and not Gary Neat?

**Mr CAHILL:** It is a possibility. I do not want to delay the House any longer. It is time that someone told Mr Neat to butt out of the National Party's business. He knows nothing about it, and the members of the National Party do not want to know what he thinks about them, because he really does not matter enough.

Motion (Mr Wharton) agreed to.

The House adjourned at 12.21 a.m. (Wednesday).