

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 10 DECEMBER 1985

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

REPORT OF PARLIAMENTARY LIBRARY COMMITTEE

Mr SPEAKER announced the receipt of the report of the Parliamentary Library Committee for the year 1984-85.

Ordered to be printed.

PETITIONS

The Clerk announced the receipt of the following petitions—

Teacher Aides, Endeavour Foundation

From Mr Underwood (181 signatories) praying that the Parliament of Queensland will ensure that teacher aides employed by the Endeavour Foundation maintain their conditions when employed by the Education Department.

Community Youth Centres; Continuation of International Youth Year Programs

From Mr Stephan (35 signatories) praying that the Parliament of Queensland will establish community youth centres wherever possible and for the continuation of International Youth Year programs beyond 1985, where appropriate.

Griffith University Course in Family Relationships

From Mr Katter (41 signatories) praying that the Parliament of Queensland will establish an inquiry into the Griffith University course in family relationships.

Petitions received.

PAPERS

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

Reports—

Commissioner of Water Resources for the year ended 30 June 1985

Operations of the Sub-Departments of the Department of Health for the year ended 30 June 1985

Rural Reconstruction Board for the year ended 30 June 1985

Ninety-ninth report of the Registrar of Friendly Societies

Trustees of the Funeral Benefit Business Trust Fund for the period of 15 months ended 30 June 1985

National Parks and Wildlife Service for the year ended 30 June 1985

Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation for the year ended 30 June 1985

Board of Trustees of Newstead House for the year ended 30 June 1985.

The following papers were laid on the table—

Orders in Council under—

City of Brisbane Act 1924-1984 and the Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Act 1982-1984

Building Societies Act 1985

Money Lenders Act 1916-1979

Supreme Court Act of 1921
 Regulations under the Stamp Act 1894-1985
 Report of the Legal Aid Commission of Queensland for the year ended 30 June 1985,
 Report together with the Financial Statement and Balance Sheet of the Queensland Fish Management Authority for the year ended 30 June 1985.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Report on Progress of Community Services Acts and Amendments to Lands Act

Hon. R. C. KATTER (Flinders—Minister for Northern Development and Aboriginal and Island Affairs) (11.5 a.m.), by leave: The Community Services Acts were proclaimed on 31 May 1984. In this legislation, the Government set out to transfer local government powers to local community councils. The Government believed that the issue of deeds of grant in trust and the ancillary legislation providing for the private ownership of land would nurture a sense of responsibility and would provide for the growth of private enterprise, the foundation-stone of economic independence. It was hoped that the exercise of personal initiative, the producing of something of value, would enable the people on the reserve areas to walk again with their heads held upright.

We are now 18 months into the three-year phase-in period, the half-way mark—a fitting point, Mr Speaker, at which to make a statement to this Assembly.

It is with great surprise that I advise this House of the most extraordinary change. Gone is much of the listlessness and apathy, the neglect of children, unemployment, the ever-flashing frequency of drunkenness and violence. In its place is a growing feeling of hope, responsibility and determination. It is with great pride, Mr Speaker, that I advise the House of increased productivity, increased profitability, qualitative decreases in crime and drunkenness, injuries from violence and illnesses from neglect.

But let me not wallow in words, Mr Speaker. Let me present the House with hard, objective statistics.

Productivity and Profitability

The retail stores, operated to date by the department throughout the various communities, have in the past returned net losses. This trend has now been reversed, as follows—

Year	Gross Profit	Net Profit
1983-84	\$453,489	– \$229,435
1984-85	\$926,919	+ \$86,199

The cattle industry has experienced an increase in turn-off in the order of 300 per cent, as follows—

Year	Total turn-off (including sales and transfers)
1982	957
1983	917
1984	1 768
1985	3 017

The crayfishing industry in the Torres Strait has to date been owned and controlled by mainland and Thursday Island operators. Torres Strait island owner-operators now own and control this industry, worth \$3m this year. On one island alone, a local partnership and its predecessor co-operative recorded sales of \$1.25m this year.

The late Crossfield Ahmat, Chairman of Badu and the Badu Co-operative, estimated that three years ago there were effectively only 30 dinghies operating in Badu and the

Mabuiag areas. There are now well over 100 dinghies operating in this area and dividing up that \$1.25m between them.

The Massig Island freezer has doubled its production, and doubled its production again in the last two years, as shown by the following figures—

Year	Production
1983-84	\$14,000
1984-85	\$34,000
1985-86*	\$36,000

* The first six months of the current financial year.

Small businesses, including those engaged in artefact making, grocery stores, take-away food shops and shops catering for tourists, are doing extremely well. Where there were arguably only three businesses operating three years ago, there are now 17 privately owned and run, self-supporting businesses.

In Edward River, for example, where two years ago, to all intents and purposes, no artefacts were for sale at all, the artefact and tourist catering business this year earned \$1,000 per week during the tourist season.

Council Affairs: Self-management

Over \$2.6m has been expended to, and then expended by, some 20 Torres Strait Island and Aboriginal councils. Not a single dollar of this has gone astray.

Social Indicators

The population of the communities has increased by 10 per cent, with communities closest to larger towns and cities showing the most marked growth. Some at least of the reserves are seen as places where people want to live.

I turn to health and welfare. The number of patients suffering from injuries related to violence has decreased, as has the number suffering from malnutrition, anaemia and other health problems. Every nurse in charge in a reserve area to whom I have spoken has recorded a marked decrease in the number of persons seeking treatment.

At one hospital, where nearly half the incidence of treatment is for injuries from drunkenness and violence, the figures are only a third of what they were three years ago.

A few years ago, malnutrition, neglect and anaemia were constant problems in children, but this year, at Yarrabah, for example, only four children have been treated for anaemia.

The crime rate has dropped "clean in half" in at least two communities where accurate records have been kept. In the last year, I have spoken with most serving officers and, with the exception of one community, all have recorded marked decreases in crime as well as in the number of disturbances. The last time police were called in to quell drunken rioting—unfortunately, in the past, a regular occurrence—was November 1983, with no reported riots since.

Although it is still too early to pass an ultimate judgment upon the Queensland legislation, every single indicator at this stage provides a dramatic score-card of achievement. The legislators in this Assembly have provided a beacon of light on the very bleak, barren landscape of Aboriginal affairs. Queensland has once again demonstrated clearly what needed to be done.

Finally, to those Australians defeated by a constantly reinforced self-image of failure and inability, to those suppressed, drugged and destroyed who, through all the darkness of what is, could see the shining light of what might be and, with God's help, have struggled towards it—to those giants, we who love our country pay tribute.

Annual Report of Director, Department of Children's Services

Hon. G. H. MUNTZ (Whitsunday—Minister for Welfare Services, Youth and Ethnic Affairs) (11.11 a.m.), by leave: In the light of recent media publicity involving the Department of Children's Services, I wish to place the facts before the House.

I make no apology for the comments made by the Director of the Department of Children's Services in his annual report, which was tabled in this House last Thursday. The director has a statutory responsibility to report the situation as he sees it.

I am fully conscious of the upsurge in child-protection notifications and the need to deal with reported cases as quickly and effectively as possible. It is not just a matter for my department. It is a problem for the community and should not be turned into a political football.

Honourable members opposite who have sought to make capital out of the director's comments should remember that his report was for the year ended 30 June last. In the succeeding months, much has been done to address the problem and, well before the tabling of the report, I instructed the director to examine ways and means in which staff could be redeployed to ensure that child-protection cases were dealt with with the utmost urgency.

In addition, the department's needs were not overlooked in the last State Budget. It received an overall increase in funding of 10.5 per cent, which was well in excess of the average figure across all departments. An additional \$150,000 was provided for the expansion of the State's Family Welfare Community Development Worker Program, which was introduced last year.

I add that I have asked the manager of the Internal Operational Audit Service attached to head office to undertake an exercise in the Department of Children's Services to identify areas from which staff might best be redeployed to meet the more urgent needs of the department's statutory obligations. The Chairman of the Public Service Board has kindly offered support personnel for this exercise. The auditor will submit a report to me on priorities for both budgeting and staffing across the department to ensure maximum utilisation of all available resources.

The marked increase in child-abuse notifications does not necessarily mean that the problem has suddenly accentuated out of all proportions. The increase reflects a greater awareness of the problem by the public generally, the vigilance of departmental officers, police and teachers, and the effect of the activities of the community-based SCAN teams, recently established by this Government.

The answer to this serious problem does not necessarily lie in an increase in staff. It requires extensive public education and a greater acceptance of the responsibility of parenthood. Funding of additional staff will never replace the discipline and supervision of responsible parents. Those who choose to be parents must accept that role. The taxpayer cannot be asked to bear the increasing cost of parent neglect.

Any clear-thinking person will agree that the Government must view staffing needs in this area in the light of the requirements of other public services, such as police, teachers, nurses and child-care officers. What many people do not realise is that the blame for the current problem lies to a large extent with the Labor Government in Canberra, which is robbing Queensland annually of millions and millions of dollars. That Government stands condemned for providing Queensland, which has 16 per cent of the nation's population, with only 9 per cent of the total funding of family support services.

Honourable Members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is too much noise in the Chamber. I ask honourable members to reduce the level of conversation.

Mr MUNTZ: The Queensland Government will continue to do everything within its power to alleviate the situation by pursuing a strong philosophy in support of family

life, as demonstrated through the Year of the Family in 1984 and International Youth Year this year, and by the declaration of 1986 as the Year of the Parent.

I have also established a committee under the chairmanship of the honourable member for Greenslopes (Mrs Leisha Harvey), which has the support of my colleague the Minister for Education (the Honourable Lin Powell), with the object of promoting awareness by the community of child abuse.

The committee is concentrating on the publication of an awareness booklet to be distributed to teachers before the beginning of the 1986 school year. I take this opportunity to pay tribute to the excellent work being done by the member for Greenslopes (Mrs Harvey) and her committee. I am sure that the outcome of her committee's deliberations will assist greatly in minimising future child abuse cases.

In contrast to members opposite and their colleagues in Canberra who continue to support easy divorce, legalisation of marijuana and homosexuality, and other policies which erode the stability of the family through higher taxation, lower living standards, and rising prices—all of which place additional stress on the family unit—this Government will continue to press ahead with initiatives that help keep the family together.

ANNUAL REPORT OF DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Suspension of Standing Orders

Mr FOURAS (South Brisbane) (11.17 a.m.): I move—

“That so much of Standing Orders be set aside as would allow me to move for the immediate debate of the 1985 annual report of the Department of Children's Services tabled last Thursday.”

Let us have a debate. If the Minister is fair dinkum, let us have a debate.

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

AYES, 27		NOES, 46	
Braddy	Yewdale	Ahern	Lester
Campbell		Alison	Lickiss
Comben		Austin	Lingard
De Lacy		Bailey	Littleproud
Eaton		Booth	McKechnie
Fouras		Cahill	McPhie
Gibbs, R. J.		Chapman	Menzel
Goss		Clauson	Miller
Hamill		Cooper	Muntz
Kruger		Elliott	Newton
Mackenroth		FitzGerald	Powell
McElligott		Gibbs, I. J.	Randell
McLean		Glasson	Row
Milliner		Gunn	Simpson
Palaszczuk		Gygar	Stephan
Price		Harper	Stoneman
Scott		Harvey	Tenni
Shaw		Henderson	Turner
Underwood		Hinze	Wharton
Vaughan		Jennings	White
Veivers		Katter	
Warburton	<i>Tellers:</i>	Knox	<i>Tellers:</i>
Warner, A. M.	Davis	Lane	Kaus
Wilson	Prest	Lee	Neal

Resolved in the negative.

PRIVILEGE

Matter Referred to Select Committee of Privileges; Ruling by Mr Speaker

Mr **WARBURTON**: Mr Speaker, you may recall that, last week, on a matter of privilege, I stood in this place and sought your ruling on a particular matter. You did indicate that you would be reporting back to the Parliament. As this is the last day of this sitting, I am wondering whether you intend to do that.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! As far as I know, a report was finalised, but I will look into the matter again and report back to the Leader of the Opposition later in the day.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr MENZEL (Mulgrave) (11.24 a.m.), by leave: I was misrepresented in *The Cairns Post* on Friday, 29 November, and Saturday, 30 November. Recently, I stated in Parliament that the Babinda and South Johnstone sugar-mills had given notice of pulling out of the Co-operative Sugar Millers Association. However, the chairman of directors of both the South Johnstone and Babinda sugar-mills refuted my claim in *The Cairns Post*, which misrepresented the facts as I stated them in Parliament.

I will table the minutes of a board of directors meeting of the Babinda sugar-mill dated 15 May 1985, which prove that I was correct, and which contain the following—

“With the Industry in its present state all economics must be looked at. It would seem that being a member of two voluntary associations is a luxury we cannot afford. South Johnstone has given notice of intention to pull out of C.S.M.A. and in view of the fact that the C.S.M.A. Chairman seems to be promoting a single milling organisation with P.S.M.A., we should perhaps voice similar intentions to South Johnstone.

Mr. M. R. Menzel agreed with the Chairman and moved that notice be given to C.S.M.A. of our intention to resign from that Association as at the end of their present financial year. Mr V. Di Marco seconded the motion and it was so RESOLVED.”

Those minutes are signed by the chairman of directors, Mr G. Ghidella, and there has not been a notice of motion since to rescind the motion quoted above.

Recently, I received telephone calls from two directors of the South Johnstone sugar-mill, stating that it is correct that South Johnstone has given the co-operative Sugar Millers Association three months' notice.

It appears that both chairmen must have been under extreme pressure to make the comments that they did.

I will table also a letter given to cane-growers in Proserpine, which states debts of co-operative sugar-mills. The amount stated for Babinda is incorrect. The Babinda Mill owes \$7.6m—not \$18m, as set out in the letter.

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

Mr SPEAKER: Order! If the honourable member for Mulgrave is to continue, he has to show that he has been affected personally. I have not yet heard anything that affects the honourable member personally in regard to this issue.

QUESTIONS UPON NOTICE

Questions submitted on notice were answered as follows—

1. Passing Lanes, Gordonvale-Cairns Road

Mr MENZEL asked the Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing—

Will he consider a proposal to construct passing lanes on the main road between Gordonvale and Cairns, because of the high volume of traffic that has developed in recent years?

Answer—

In order to provide some relief from the delays caused to traffic between Gordonvale and Cairns, recently I released a project that will provide a 2.2km four-lane section between Skeleton Creek and Sawpit Gully. Tenders have already been received for the project, and I expect work to commence following the wet season.

2. **Roadworks, Palmerston Highway**

Mr MENZEL asked the Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing—

How much work remains to be done on the Palmerston Highway and will he give an assurance that the high level of expenditure on the road will continue?

Answer—

I am pleased to advise the Parliament that, following completion of the current 2.1km Palmerston Highway project between the Maalan turn-off and Learmouth Creek, only 1.6km of the old highway between Innisfail and Millaa Millaa will remain. Almost 5.1km of this scenic highway has now been completely reconstructed, and I assure the honourable member that expenditure will continue at the present rate of more than \$1m per annum.

3. **Deficiencies in Mining Act**

Mr PRICE asked the Minister for Mines and Energy—

With reference to recent events in Mount Isa centring on a protracted strike by AWU workers at Mount Isa mine over a safety standards issue at Hilton mine, which highlighted deficiencies in the Mining Act that, had they been addressed sooner, would have avoided not only the strike but also a motion of no confidence by the workers in the Government senior safety inspector—

When will the deficiencies in the Act be addressed with correcting legislation?

Answer—

Quite frankly, I am surprised that the honourable member for Mount Isa asked that this question be put on notice. However I am delighted that he did so, because in doing so he has again brought to the attention of this House and the nation the irresponsible actions by some sections of the Labor movement.

The honourable member may be trying to cover up for his comrades in the Australian Workers Union by trying to divert the responsibility for the 13-day strike at Mount Isa, but the facts show that he cannot get away with it.

The honourable member knows—or, as the local member, he should know—that there was no safety problem at the crib-room at the Hilton mine. The honourable member knows also—or he should know—that even the union representative agreed with the Inspector of Mines and Senior Inspector of Mines, Mount Isa, and the Chief Inspector of Mines, Queensland, all of whom found that the crib-room at the Hilton mine provided “safe and adequate facilities to accommodate up to 16 persons”.

That was the report of the local Mines Department inspectors on the day after the strike began and it was entered in the mine’s record book for all workers to inspect. But that was not enough for the union agitators, who wanted more confrontation, and the strike spread to the main Mount Isa mine.

I point out that the AWU members employed at the Hilton mine did not refer this matter to the company through the established grievance procedures but chose to take immediate strike action. In the course of negotiations with the union during this strike, the company, which was losing millions of dollars, offered to make improvements to the crib-room on the condition that the men went back to work. The offer was rejected.

On three separate occasions, the union even refused to comply with the recommendations of the Industrial Commission. When the final settlement was made, it involved an agreement between the company and the union on virtually the same improvements, all of which could have been achieved through the normal procedures.

However, the honourable member should not try to fool this House or the people with his claims of deficiencies in the Mining Act. He knows that the real issues behind the dispute were the pending elections for the AWU. He knows that a spokesman for the union has admitted that connection.

Now let us look at the costs to the Mount Isa community, to the company, to the State and to the nation. The irresponsible actions of the militant AWU members who organised the strike cost the Mount Isa workers more than \$2m in lost wages. If they want to be foolish enough to be so easily led, that is their concern, but that \$2m also affected the whole of the Mount Isa economy, including the shop-keepers and the many others in business who earn their living from the mining operations and workers' wages.

Then comes the cost of more than \$25m to the company, which is fighting hard to return to profitability in a depressed world metal market.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Once again, I ask honourable members to lower the level of their conversations. It is very difficult to hear. This is the third or fourth time this morning that I have had to make such a request.

Answer (continued)—

Of course, the markets lost by the strike just cannot be recovered.

Therefore, the message I give the House is not of any deficiencies in the safety standards of the Mining Act, but of the irresponsible policies of the left wing of the AWU, which the honourable member for Mount Isa appears so keen to defend.

4. Challenge to Tax Package Legislation

Sir WILLIAM KNOX asked the Premier and Treasurer—

Now that the Federal Government tax package changes have been published, will he have an examination made as to the possibility of challenging sections of that legislation on the basis that they may contravene section 114 of the Australian Constitution?

Answer—

The Government will investigate all available avenues of legal challenge to those provisions of the Commonwealth taxation package that could have an adverse impact on Queensland's financial position.

5. Confectionery Sold in School Tuck-shops

Sir WILLIAM KNOX asked the Minister for Education—

With reference to his answer to my question No. 11 on 3 December—

Is he prepared to withdraw the school tuck-shop and canteen ban on the sale of confectionery made in Australia so as to assist the Queensland sugar industry?

Answer—

No, I would not be prepared to remove the ban. I do not think it would be in the interests of children.

The Queensland sugar industry has a number of very good booklets that explain the nutritious value of sugar. However, if the ban were lifted, I would be concerned that children would divert funds given to them for the purchase of wholesome foods to the purchase of lollies and other confectionery. In the long run, I would see that as a disadvantage to the Queensland sugar industry, rather than a help.

The honourable member's interest in the sugar industry is commendable. I would be grateful if he would give his support to the Queensland Government in its efforts on behalf of cane-growers by making his Canberra-based Liberal colleagues aware of the Federal Government's responsibility in giving cane-growers real price support, and so have a united push against the derelict action currently being undertaken by the Federal Labor Government.

6. Tug-boat Harbour, Hay Point

Mr RANDELL asked the acting Minister for Water Resources and Maritime Services—

With reference to the building of the tug-boat harbour at Hay Point, near Sarina—

- (1) What stage has construction reached?
- (2) Is construction on schedule?
- (3) When will the total project be completed?

(4) What will be the advantages of this project to the State of Queensland, coal-owners and shipping companies?

Answer—

(1) The quarry is being developed and the anticipated large rock is being produced following the removal of overburden to spoil. A causeway has been constructed out to Half Tide Island to provide a low-level access. The actual breakwater construction will commence this week.

(2) Yes.

(3) The project is scheduled for completion in October 1986.

(4) Advantages to the State of Queensland: the harbour is being funded by the coal companies exporting through Hay Point via a levy per tonne of coal through the port, and ownership of the harbour will revert to the Harbours Corporation of Queensland free of cost upon completion; a public boat-ramp and parking area will be constructed for trailer boat access through the harbour; and public access to Half Tide Island and the breakwater will be encouraged, but access to the tug berths will be restricted.

Advantages to coal-owners: the harbour will provide a more secure and attractive port for shipping, with a competitive advantage over other areas; and there will be a closer control over port operations with tugs being local instead of remote from the site, removing the problem of prior warning for tugs.

Advantages to shipping companies: lower insurance, because of ready accessibility to tugs; lower tug-operating costs, because of steaming time being reduced to 10 to 15 minutes, in comparison with the present 1½ to 2 hours; also, tugs will be available more quickly for emergencies arising as a result of varying weather conditions.

7. Bridge, Mackenzie River

Mr RANDELL asked the Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing—

- (1) When will the construction of the bridge over the Mackenzie River on the Dingo-Mount Flora beef road be commenced?
- (2) When is it anticipated that the project will be completed?
- (3) Will he provide details of the timetable and cost for construction of the bridge?

Answer—

(1) Construction of the new high-level bridge over the Mackenzie River on the Dingo-Mount Flora section of the Fitzroy Developmental Road will commence in January 1986.

(2 & 3) The bridge and 1.5 km of approaches will be built by Roberts Construction (Queensland) Pty Ltd at a tender price of \$2,074,954. Precast girders, deck units and piles have been manufactured in Rockhampton at a cost of \$790,000 and are stockpiled on site. The contractor's program provides for the whole project to be completed by November 1986, and the total project cost is estimated at \$3.95m. The project fulfils an undertaking that I gave to the honourable member in 1984 to have the project completed within two years.

8. Payments to Small Business for Losses Caused by Electricity Industry Dispute

Mr PREST asked the Minister for Industry, Small Business and Technology—

- (1) How many proprietors of small businesses have applied for Government assistance for loss of revenue caused by the recent power dispute?
- (2) How many small businesses were assisted?
- (3) What was the range of payments made?
- (4) What was the total amount paid under the scheme?

Answer—

(1) The 1985 Industry and Small Business Relief Scheme did not provide assistance for loss of revenue that was due to the strike. In the case of small firms seriously affected by the strike that were unable to raise funds through normal financial services, the scheme provided funds towards the cost of repairing damaged equipment, the renting of generators, the replacement of damaged stock, etc. There were 491 applications for assistance received.

(2) Three hundred and forty seven applications were approved, but not all the offers have been taken up. One hundred and sixty five people have been paid the loans to date.

(3) Payments range from \$500 to \$10,000.

(4) The total amount of loans advanced to date is \$557,200.

9. Education Facilities, Maryborough

Mr ALISON asked the Minister for Education—

With reference to my previous representations and discussions with him and Mr Roy Wallace (Director of the Division of Technical and Further Education) and other senior officers regarding the Maryborough TAFE College and the Maryborough State High School—

(1) What are the details of the plan of development of the Wide Bay marine building, including costs, and when is it expected that this redevelopment project will be finished?

(2) What courses and number of students will be involved in the redeveloped Wide Bay marine building?

(3) How many students are attending the Maryborough State High School at present, what is the recommended minimum area required for a high school of that size and what is the actual area of land on which this high school is situated?

(4) What is the area of land on which the Maryborough TAFE College is situated, excluding King's Oval, and what is the recommended area of land for such a college?

(5) What is the area of the land set aside for educational purposes off Gayndah Road at Maryborough?

Answer—

(1) The Wide Bay marine property in Maryborough has been purchased for technical and further education purposes, and it is in use for some vocational courses at the moment. Planning is in hand to refurbish the building at a probable cost of about \$600,000 with a projected completion date of June 1986. It is proposed to continue to use the building as far as possible while the refurbishing is being carried out.

(2) These new premises will allow for about 700 students to attend courses each year, including motor mechanic apprentices, pre-vocational students in engineering/construction courses, continuing students in the pre-vocational progression courses, and students in shorter courses, such as link courses with schools and adult education programs.

(3) The Maryborough State High School has 1 019 students enrolled, who use some facilities on the adjoining TAFE college site; the school site is only 2.53 ha in area; the preferred size of site for a new high school would be 14 ha.

(4) The area of the TAFE college site, excluding the oval, is 4.13 ha; a college of this size would require a preferred area of 20 ha.

The honourable member will be aware that many colleges and schools throughout Australia are on smaller campuses, with considerable advantages to the students and the community. The honourable member will be aware that there are plans to redevelop the TAFE college at Maryborough to replace some facilities which are at the end of their useful lives, as well as to provide additional facilities for boiler-making, metal fabrication, and tourism and hospitality. This work cannot proceed until the Wide Bay marine building has been refurbished, when it will be possible to rearrange facilities vacated by shifting the automotive section to the building. This plan for redevelopment will take a number of years to complete, as funds are allocated from the continuing Capital Works Program for TAFE colleges throughout the State.

(5) The land is currently set aside for advanced education purposes.

10. Police Storage and Disposal of Drugs

Mr SHAW asked the Minister for Lands, Forestry and Police—

(1) Is he aware that quantities of illegal drugs, particularly marijuana, are stored for lengthy periods at various police stations in Queensland?

(2) In view of the obvious security risks involved and the possibility of misuse, will he issue instructions that, in future, all illegal drugs that come into the possession of police are to be immediately catalogued, sealed and placed under the control of a senior officer, who will accept responsibility for their care and control until such time as the drugs can be destroyed?

(3) What is the current police procedure for supervision of the disposal of drugs and is there any mandatory period after which drugs in police possession, not required for evidence, must be destroyed?

Answer—

(1 to 3) The commissioner and I are conscious of the need for security in the handling of dangerous drugs, and general instructions have been issued to police officers in this regard.

All exhibits are entered in a register, and a member—usually the officer in charge of a station—is appointed as control officer. He is responsible for the labelling, security, etc., of such exhibits.

To offset the holding of large quantities of marijuana plants pending court hearings, recent procedures allow for the majority of the crop to be destroyed under supervision of a Government analyst or health inspector. His evidence, plus other documentary evidence, is then used for court purposes.

In the case of other drugs, in most instances they are examined by the Government analyst and he retains possession and produces them in court.

Where drugs are forfeited to the Crown and police arrange disposal, it is the practice, as soon as possible, to have the drugs destroyed under the supervision of the Government analyst or health inspector, depending on the location and nature of drugs. Appropriate receipts are obtained in all cases. Drugs seized and not the subject of court action may be retained for 12 months.

11. Buses, Special Schools

Mr SHAW asked the Minister for Education—

(1) Is he aware of an incident recently in which a five-year-old intellectually handicapped girl was molested by an older child while returning home on a special

school bus and of other instances of child molestation among special school children in similar circumstances?

(2) As it is obvious that a bus driver cannot adequately care for up to 15 handicapped children and concentrate on driving, without assistance, will he give consideration to arranging for a teacher or an aide to accompany these special children to and from school?

(3) Will he confer with the Minister for Transport on the possibility of making seat belts, or other suitable safety restraints, compulsory on buses used to transport handicapped children to and from school?

Answer—

(1) I was not aware of this incident, nor had it been reported to any of my senior officers.

(2) When it is considered necessary owing to the handicapping conditions of a student, contracts for transport are let on the basis of support being provided. It is not appropriate to provide adult assistance on all transport services utilised by handicapped children, as this is not in accord with the policy of developing students for independent travel.

(3) Child restraints are specified in contracts where they are considered necessary.

12. Rural Research Trusts Funds

Mr McPHIE asked the Minister for Primary Industries—

With reference to a recent statement by the Federal Minister for Primary Industry (Mr Kerin) that about \$68m would be contributed by Government and industry during 1985-86 on a dollar-for-dollar basis to the Rural Research Trusts Funds and that new arrangements had been developed to improve administration and management of these funds—

(1) Is he happy with these new arrangements?

(2) Which Queensland rural research projects have received grants under the current program?

(3) Does a reasonable share of this funding come to Queensland for rural research or is it channelled off by the socialist Federal Government to help prop up the southern ALP States?

Answer—

(1) The new arrangements are not yet in operation. It is difficult to comment until the new councils and committees have been appointed and their methods of operation assessed.

(2) The Queensland Department of Primary Industries at present receives rural industry research funds for projects on wheat, barley, tobacco, oil-seeds, cotton, wool, meat and livestock, dairy, fisheries, honey, pigs and poultry.

(3) In 1985-86, my department has received over \$3.5m from those funds, which are competed for by State departments, universities, the CSIRO and some other research institutions. I will closely monitor the new arrangements to ensure that Queensland is not disadvantaged by the recent Federal Government proposal.

13. School Tuck-shops

Mr LICKISS asked the Minister for Works and Housing—

(1) When will the existing unhygienic and substandard tuck-shop at the Kenmore State School be replaced?

(2) In view of the present unsatisfactory condition of tuck-shop facilities at the school and as the plans and specifications of the project have been available for some

years and the project listed in previous Works Department programs, what is the reason for the continued delay in implementing the project?

(3) How many school tuck-shops have been constructed or upgraded in the last 10 years?

Answer—

(1 to 3) The availability of funds for educational purposes are generally insufficient to meet all requirements. When allocating such funds, priority must first be given to the provision of essential class-room accommodation throughout the State. The funds available for the construction of new and replacement tuck-shops are allocated on a priority basis, with due consideration being given to the number of enrolments and the inclusion of such projects in new schools on new sites. As the Budget for 1985-86 is in place, it is not possible to indicate, at this time, when this project could proceed.

Over the past 10 years, approximately 113 tuck-shops have been provided, and would include those in new schools on new sites.

14. Roadworks, Western Suburbs

Mr LICKISS asked the Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing—

With reference to proposed roadworks in Brisbane's western suburbs—

(1) When is the Kenmore bypass road due to be (a) commenced and (b) completed?

(2) When is the major road from the Brisbane River via Pullenvale to connect with the Kenmore bypass road at Moggill Road due to be (a) commenced and (b) completed?

(3) Where is the proposed cross-river bridge in the upper reaches of the Brisbane River to be located?

Answer—

(1) Studies of road needs in the area indicate that the Kenmore bypass will be required as an added link to the network in the early 1990s. Its construction will be dependent on the availability of funds and relative priority at that time. No allowance has been made for a start on the project in the tentative planning programs up to the 1989-90 financial year.

(2) The proposed major road is seen as a future need as further development in the Moggill area occurs. Consequently, it is not intended that construction of the road be undertaken until development in the area justifies the need.

(3) As it is difficult to describe in words the location of a bridge, I have arranged for a suitable drawing showing the current proposal to be prepared from the planning layouts for the route and forwarded to the honourable member.

15. Neighbourhood Watch Program, Gold Coast

Mr BORBIDGE asked the Minister for Lands, Forestry and Police—

With reference to submissions by the member for Southport and myself—

What progress has been made towards establishing a pilot neighbourhood watch program on the Gold Coast?

Answer—

The Commissioner of Police has approved of a pilot neighbourhood watch scheme for the Gold Coast involving approximately 2 225 homes. However, certain formalities have to be followed and, at this stage, it is hoped that the scheme will be operational in about April 1986. The worth of the scheme will be evaluated after 12 months' trial.

16. Railway Industry Council

Mr JENNINGS asked the Minister for Transport—

- (1) Is he aware of a Commonwealth proposal to establish a railway industry council?
- (2) If he is aware of this proposal, what are the ramifications of this proposal?

Answer—

(1) Yes.

(2) The Commonwealth Government proposed the establishment of a railway industry council over a year ago, and has been consulting with the ACTU for over 12 months to finalise the details of the operations of this council.

The Commonwealth proposals were received last Thursday on the eve of the meeting of the Australian Transport Advisory Council in Hobart and, quite obviously, insufficient time was available for proper consideration to be given to the latest proposal.

However, it is evident that the proposal in its present form would be unacceptable to Queensland. A council of 17 is proposed, comprising a chairman, one from the Federal Department of Transport, seven from the various railways systems and the State Transport Authority of South Australia, one from the ACTU and seven representing the rail unions and State Labor Councils.

Mr Comben: Hear, hear!

Mr LANE: The honourable member favours that, does he?

Mr Comben: Yes.

Mr LANE: Is that the official Labor Party policy?

Mr Comben: Yes.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr LANE: I just wanted to know where the honourable member stood, that is all. It is now on record that that is the official Labor Party policy.

Mr McPhie: We know where they stand.

Mr LANE: It is nice to have it on the record, though, isn't it?

Answer (continued)—

With eight members of the council directly representing the unions, it would take only one other member from a Labor-led Government to give the unions the necessary numbers to take control of the railways in this country. It is a classic example of the Federal Labor Government's stealthy attempts to give greater powers to the ACTU.

Although it had been recommended previously that the council's role would be advisory only, it is now expected that Governments and managements would agree to implement the decisions and recommendations of the council—that is, those that participate fully in the council, of course, not necessarily Queensland. The various States are expected to pay for the travel and accommodation costs of the union representatives. That is an interesting one, Mr Speaker.

I consider that these proposals, if implemented, would erode the role of elected members of Parliament and increase the role of the ACTU and unions in the management of a State authority. They show scant respect for the traditional railway executive or public servant charged with relevant management responsibilities.

Mr McElligott interjected.

Mr LANE: Has the honourable member not heard about it before?

Mr McElligott interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Townsville.

Mr R. J. Gibbs interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Wolston.

Answer (continued)—

The matter has been adjourned for further discussion at the next meeting of ATAC.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Annual Report of Director, Department of Children's Services

Mr WARBURTON: I direct a question to the Minister for Welfare Services, Youth and Ethnic Affairs. This morning, I listened with interest to his ministerial statement. Consequently, I refer to matters arising from the annual report of the Director, Department of Children's Services, and, in particular, from reports in today's media, in which the Minister indicated that he has instructed internal auditors to carry out a detailed audit of operations and priorities on funding to see which areas, including child protection, could be concentrated on. I ask: When was that instruction given and when will the detailed audit be available?

Mr MUNTZ: The instruction was given at 9 o'clock yesterday morning. The report will be prepared for me. It is an internal report, and it will come to me in due course. As soon as the inspection is finalised, the report will be made available to me.

Annual Report of Director, Department of Children's Services

Mr WARBURTON: In the absence of the Premier and Treasurer, I direct a question to the Deputy Premier and Minister Assisting the Treasurer. I refer to the latest annual report of the Director, Department of Children's Services, which states that the Government can no longer meet its statutory obligations to protect children. I ask: In view of the seriousness of the situation, is it correct that the Government has refused to provide additional funds for child-protection measures and particularly more funds for additional staff? How can the Minister, on the basis of shortage of funds, justify his Government's callous indifference to its statutory obligations to protect vulnerable children when the latest Auditor-General's report shows that the Government left unspent \$58.8m of the funds meant to be used to provide such services to Queenslanders?

Mr GUNN: I thought that the Minister answered the question very well this morning.

Mr Warburton: Which Minister?

Mr GUNN: The Minister for Welfare Services, Youth and Ethnic Affairs (Mr Muntz). He answered the question very well this morning in the newspaper. His allocation was 10.2 per cent above the figure for last year. That was a meteoric rise. The Premier and Treasurer has already made the point—

Mr Warburton: Answer the question.

Mr GUNN: I will answer the question.

Parents have an obligation in this area, and they should fulfil it; there is no earthly doubt about that. The Government cannot be responsible for every parent who has failed.

It was interesting to listen to the statements of the mother of the child who was killed recently. She said that, at six years of age, the child was uncontrollable. I very much doubt that. I have reared children, as have many Opposition members. It would be a rare case in which a child of six years of age was uncontrollable. All children need is a little old-fashioned love and attention.

An Honourable Member interjected.

Mr GUNN: Well, I do not know what they are, but the parents are failing in that area.

Mr Warburton: What about the \$58.8m that was left unspent?

Mr GUNN: On all occasions, the honourable member has a tendency to pick from the air figures that do not exist. Some time ago, he talked about money in the loan account that was unspent when the Government had a \$600m program over 2½ years under way. Of course, money in the loan fund for that project would be unspent. How stupid can he be? The honourable member is not with it, and that is all there is to it.

Mr Warburton: I said consolidated revenue; I did not say loan account.

Mr GUNN: On the last occasion, the honourable member did say that.

Mr Warburton: No, I did not.

Mr GUNN: The honourable member did. I suggest to him that he sit down and read the Auditor-General's report once more because, apparently, he does not understand it. If he would like one of my officers to sit down with him to help him—and he needs a lot of help— I will make an officer available.

Maturation Period for Rum, Whisky and Brandy

Mr NEAL: I ask the Minister for Health: Is he aware of moves by the Federal Government to override Queensland's food legislation in relation to the two-year maturation period for rum, brandy and whisky?

Mr AUSTIN: I hope that honourable members will be interested in my answer to the honourable member's question, because the Government is trying to protect this Queensland industry. In September 1977, the Industries Assistance Commission was asked by the Federal Government to consider the question of assistance in the production of goods falling within customs tariff items 22.08 and 22.09, which cover potable spirits and allied products, and industrial alcohols.

In June 1979, the IAC released a report that did not make any recommendations on the subject of maturation. It only—

“suggests that the existing legislation should be amended to ensure that the standard of maturation achieved during the statutory period is uniform and, as far as possible, is non-discriminatory between imported and domestic goods and between domestic spirits of all types.”

Although, in 1979, the Federal Government did not accept the IAC recommendations, it was apparently decided that suggestions should be considered in the light of what benefits they may convey. As a result, the Food Standards Committee of the National Health and Medical Research Council and a Commonwealth Government interdepartmental committee were requested to review the existing standards for wine, spirits and liqueurs following Cabinet decisions on the IAC report on spirits, spirituous beverages, and wines and grapes.

The National Health and Medical Research Council Food Standards Committee established a working party to undertake the detailed work involved in the health aspects of this review. The 1982 report of the working party recommended initially that the requirement of maturation of rum be deleted. That report was circulated to the industry for comment.

A review of that report and industry comments was undertaken at a meeting of the Food Standards Committee in August 1982. That meeting was addressed by a representative of the Bundaberg Sugar Company Pty Limited, which has 60 per cent of total rum sales and 75 per cent of total rum production in Australia. That address had considerable impact on members of the Food Standards Committee, and they elected

not to interfere with the Model Food Standard for rum and to retain the maturation requirement as a mandatory provision.

The alternative viewpoint was considered at the meeting of the Food Standards Committee in February 1983. The final recommendation was that the two-year maturation period for rum, brandy and whisky be retained, and this has been incorporated in the Model Food Standards Regulations and the Queensland legislation.

Mr McElligott: This is time-wasting.

Mr AUSTIN: No, it is not. This is an extremely important issue. If the honourable member is patient, he will find out what it is all about. The Queensland sugar industry is already in great difficulty.

Mr Shaw interjected.

Mr AUSTIN: I would have done it anyway because, as I understand it, Tommy Burns likes Bundaberg Rum, as I do.

The Bundaberg Sugar Company remains the major Australian producer, with a 60 per cent share of the Australian market. The remaining Australian distillers, namely, Beenleigh Rum Distillers (Queensland), CSR (New South Wales) and Continental Distillers (New South Wales) share 16 per cent of the market. The importing countries are Mexico (21 per cent) and the Caribbean nations (3 per cent). The international position is that the major producing, exporting countries require a two-year maturation of rum, while the importing countries generally do not.

A form of rum can be manufactured more cheaply by the mixture of ethyl alcohol, flavourings and essences, which, at present, has been excluded by the Commonwealth Spirits Act and the Queensland Food Standards Regulations. The Queensland Department of Health has been informed that the matter is to be reopened, probably at the behest of the producers other than the Bundaberg Sugar Company, and that the Commonwealth will consider the removal from the Spirits Act of the requirement of the two-year maturation period.

That would lead to the possibility of the sale of cheaper rum—if it can be called rum—from Australia and overseas. It is believed that that would seriously challenge both the market position and the investment in Bundaberg rum. The enforcement of the Queensland legislation would become impossible, as the sale of cheaper rum in other States would be uncontrolled and no testing method exists to determine which rum has been made by the traditional method of two-year maturation and which has been made by blending.

The Queensland Government firmly believes that the Commonwealth Government intends to remove the two-year maturation period not only on rum but also on whisky and brandy. That will have a devastating effect on a Queensland industry, which, as everyone knows, is associated with the sugar industry. I urge every member of this House to come forward and protest at the possible actions of the Federal Government.

I point out an American example to the House. Everyone knows that the United States of America is famous for its Kentucky bourbon. There is no way in the world that the Americans will allow the importation of bourbon into America unless it has a two-year maturation period. I believe that it is in the interests of every member of this Assembly and every person in this State to try to support the great Queensland industry that produces Bundaberg rum.

Ear, Nose and Throat Specialist, Rockhampton Base Hospital

Mr YEWDAL: In asking a question of the Minister for Health, I draw his attention to a recent statement by Dr Foxwell of Rockhampton which indicated that he would retire from his practice as an ear, nose and throat specialist. I understand that for some time Dr Foxwell has been providing specialist services at the Rockhampton Base Hospital. One can only assume from his statement that his specialist services will no longer be

available. I now ask: Will the Minister confirm that the Rockhampton Base Hospital will lose Dr Foxwell's services? If that is the case, has any action been initiated to obtain the services of a specialist for the hospital? If not, will he initiate moves to obtain such a service?

Mr AUSTIN: It is true that Dr Peter Foxwell, who has been the visiting ear, nose and throat specialist at the Rockhampton Base Hospital since 1960, has decided to retire. No doubt the honourable member for Rockhampton North joins with me in wishing Dr Foxwell all the best in his retirement. He has been the only ear, nose and throat specialist resident in central Queensland.

For two or three years, the Rockhampton Base Hospital has been advertising both in Australia and overseas, without success, for an ear, nose and throat surgeon. The board is continuing to advertise at regular intervals.

I have been advised that it is extremely difficult to attract ear, nose and throat surgeons to practice full time in country areas in Queensland. Maryborough and Bundaberg are visited by a specialist from Brisbane, and Mount Isa is visited from Cairns.

Honourable members will recall that recently the Government approved that the right of private practice for full-time specialists would be introduced within the Queensland hospitals system. It is hoped that, using that proposal, the board will be able to attract suitable applicants.

Bus Services, Rockhampton City Council

Mr YEWDAL: In asking a question of the Minister for Transport, I refer to the Rockhampton City Council's bus services, which have been servicing the community for several years. I ask: Has the Rockhampton City Council requested an increase in the State subsidy payable? If so, has any decision been made in respect of such subsidy? In the light of increasing running costs of services, is the Minister contemplating any increase in the subsidy and, if not, why not?

Mr LANE: Yes, the Rockhampton City Council, which conducts the bus service in that city, has approached the Government on several occasions seeking an increase in subsidy. It has been advised that such an increase would be considered only on the basis of an increase in the frequency of services, which, of course, would result in an increase in the cost of operation.

I point out to honourable members that, since 1976, the Rockhampton bus service has received financial assistance from the Queensland Government of something like \$750,000 towards its services. That council is in a rather unusual position, in that it owns the buses. The service lacks the modern buses and facilities that should be associated with the operation of the service. The council is in an extremely difficult position, but the Government has laid down firm guide-lines as to when and how it will pay subsidies and how bus-operators must qualify. The Rockhampton City Council has yet to meet those guide-lines in terms that would warrant an increase in subsidy.

Since the passing of the Urban Passenger Service Proprietors Assistance Act, the Government has paid subsidies of about \$22m to private bus operators throughout the State. That is a fair degree of subsidy. In addition, subsidies are paid in terms of interest payments to private bus-operators who wish to purchase new equipment. That subsidy would be available to the Rockhampton City Council if it wished to upgrade its fleet.

Inclusion of Areas of Queensland on World Heritage List

Mr FITZGERALD: I ask the Minister for Tourism, National Parks, Sport and The Arts: Is he aware of attempts to have areas of Queensland included on the world heritage list without the approval of the State Government? Is that the usual practice or not?

Mr McKECHNIE: I am aware of moves by certain conservation groups, supported by some members of this House, to put certain areas of Queensland on the world heritage list. That highlights the division within the Opposition in this House and its relationship

with Canberra. The attack by the honourable member for Windsor (Mr Comben) on the Federal Minister for Arts, Heritage and Environment (the Honourable Barry Cohen) is well known. Mr Cohen stated categorically that the Federal Government will not move to endeavour to put parts of Queensland on the world heritage list without the approval of the State Government. That brought a vitriolic attack on the Federal Minister by the honourable member for Windsor.

Last week, in this House, the honourable member for Cairns (Mr De Lacy) purported to protect the jobs of timber workers in north Queensland. That is an example of more division between the honourable member for Cairns, who purports to want to allow the continued logging of rain forests, and the honourable member for Windsor, who is trying to stop it. Unless the agreement of the State Government is first obtained, there is no likelihood that any area of Queensland will be put on the world heritage list.

It is time that, instead of wanting to hand over sovereignty of this State to some unelected body that meets in France, members of the Opposition supported the Government in standing up for State rights. It is time that Opposition members stood up for the jobs of forestry workers in north Queensland, which were adequately defended by my colleague the Minister for Lands, Forestry and Police (Mr Glasson) week in and week out. I am tired of the attacks, particularly those by the honourable member for Windsor, who consistently advocates that State rights should be thrown out in favour of some unelected foreign body that not even the Federal Government can control.

Mr Comben interjected.

Mr McKECHNIE: The honourable member for Windsor is interjecting. Honourable members know that he was a party to dressing up people in fancy dress costumes. That is the sort of airy-fairy nonsense that he goes on with.

Mr Tenni: He's in a fancy dress all the time.

Mr McKECHNIE: I would not say that he is in a fancy dress all the time; I think that he is in dream-land all the time.

I was side-tracked. I must return to the point that I raised. There is serious division within the ALP. During the Cape Tribulation issue, the honourable member for Cairns said very little. He left it to the southern members of the ALP to do the running to satisfy the socialist Left. None of Queensland will be placed on the world heritage list without the agreement of the State Government.

Inspection of Mines Department by Opposition Mines and Energy Spokesman

Mr VAUGHAN: I ask the Minister for Mines and Energy: Notwithstanding his previous rejection of a request from me, as Opposition Mines and Energy spokesman, to inspect the Mines Department so that I can familiarise myself with the operations of that very important Government department, and as that department and the Queensland Electricity Commission are now located in the same building, will he now allow me to inspect both those departments early in the new year and, if not, why not?

Mr I. J. GIBBS: I advise the honourable member that my portfolio functions very well without his help, and that at no stage do I need his help.

Crown Industrial Estates

Mr LITTLEPROUD: I ask the Minister for Industry, Small Business and Technology: Will he consider making land on Government industrial estates in country towns available for service industry workshops if a shortage of land in the appropriate local government zoning exists?

Mr AHERN: Under the Industrial Development Act, power is given to me to develop lands for manufacturing industry on Crown industrial estates. Substantial incentives are offered to manufacturing industry, the idea being that if tax-payers' funds are used for manufacturing industry purposes, there will be a substantial multiplier effect

on employment in the community. It is thought that for every manufacturing job, two and a half other jobs are created in the service industry sector.

The Act is quite specific. The only powers that I have relate to manufacturing industry. However, in remote areas, particularly those in which the Government has had land for a long period, I am empowered, under the Act, to dispose of the land that is surplus to the requirements of the department. Therefore, where a need exists in remote locations and where a substantial bank of land is available, I have made land available for service industry. However, because the legislative power is not there, strict guide-lines are laid down. I am not empowered by the legislature to make available land for service industry.

From time to time, I am under pressure from local authorities who want land made available for service industry because of problems under town plans. It is the responsibility of the local authority to develop land for that particular purpose and to provide opportunities for people to relocate service industry onto it.

Incentives do not apply in those areas. The land must be purchased at full market price, and it will be provided only in a few remote locations. The major thrust of my department is towards manufacturing industry, and that is the way it must remain.

Microcomputers in Schools

Mr LITTLEPROUD: I ask the Minister for Education: Has his attention been drawn to a two-page article on page 41 of today's *Australian*, written by Pierre Cochrane and stating—

“There can be no doubt that Queensland is leading the growth area of computing in schools and will be far ahead of NSW and other Australian States by the end of the 1990s.”?

Mr Davis interjected.

Mr POWELL: I thank the honourable member for Condamine for his question. I wonder whether the honourable member for Brisbane Central can read, let alone read *The Australian*. The honourable member would be well advised to read that newspaper. Today's edition of *The Australian* contains some congratulatory words for the Queensland Government. I suppose that would be anathema to the honourable member for Brisbane Central.

Mr De Lacy: What would you expect from *The Australian*?

Mr POWELL: The honourable member for Cairns also shows his bias and lack of knowledge about what is going on in Australia today. I suspect that he is questioning the veracity of *The Australian*. I will let that newspaper deal with him.

The two-page article referred to by the honourable member for Condamine follows the by-line, “By Pierre Cochrane”. The article is all about computers, and it states—

“There can be no doubt that Queensland is leading the growth area of computing in schools and will be far ahead of NSW and other Australian States by the end of the 1990s.”

I am proud to be part of a Government that, in the last two financial years, has spent \$7m on the introduction of microcomputers into Queensland secondary schools. It has been a deliberate policy of this Government to ensure that Queensland children are up with technology and the use of it and are able to manipulate, I suppose is the word, it to their advantage.

Other States of Australia are well and truly behind Queensland in this particular field. The article further states that on 2 December, the New South Wales Government announced its contract for computers and that in 1985 that Government would be spending something like \$500,000 on computers in schools. The exact figure escapes me just at the moment. However, it is an indication that this Government has put its money where its mouth is.

I am delighted to be able to point out that teachers in Queensland schools have responded very positively to that investment. The State's teachers are well renowned for their innovation and initiative. The programs that they have devised are in demand not just Australia-wide, but world-wide. The computing division within the department is very highly regarded indeed.

Those members of Parliament who accepted my invitation to attend a function at the Bardon Professional Development Centre in March would have seen the technology that is available in our schools. If, since that time, they have visited the schools in their electorates, they would have seen that technology being put into practice. Last week, again at Bardon, I opened a seminar through which teachers are being trained in a new subject to be introduced as a trial next year into Year 11 in 30 schools. The subject is on computing and the way in which to use computers, and follows on from the computer literacy program. In any pre-school, primary school, secondary—

Mr Davis interjected.

Mr POWELL: The more the member for Brisbane Central does that, the more I will talk. The story on computers in education in Queensland is such a good one that he hates hearing it. If he were to visit any pre-school, primary school, secondary school, special school or TAFE college in Queensland, he would see a greater use of computers in education than he would in any other State of Australia. I am proud of that. It is a story that needs to be told. The Mount Gravatt College of TAFE, for example, has the most advanced technology in computerated design and computerated manufacturing to be found in any industry in Australia.

Finally, it is fair to say that Queensland is the only State in Australia to have hired one of the transponders on Aussat, which, in 1986, will be used for educational purposes. The article in today's *Australian* is to be commended to all honourable members. I hope that they read it with interest.

Queensland Council for Civil Liberties

Mr COOPER: I ask the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General: Does he consider the Queensland Council for Civil Liberties to be a serious objector to State Government laws or a knocker of the State Government, regardless of the legislation that it passes?

Mr HARPER: It seems to me that the Queensland Council for Civil Liberties is perhaps a sincere but certainly a misguided group, whose views are often bigoted, politically motivated and unbalanced.

An Opposition Member: Are you talking about the National Party?

Mr HARPER: I am talking about some of the honourable member's comrades.

The group refuses to recognise the validity of any viewpoint that does not coincide exactly with its own. As an example—it seemed to be more interested in the rights of strikers who were viciously harassing SEQEB workers than it was in the workers who were maintaining an essential service to which the community had a clear historical right—workers who were exercising their traditional right to work.

Mr Comben interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Windsor.

Mr Lane: There is obviously a brawl going on over there.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I will soon settle the brawl.

Mr HARPER: I trust that honourable members opposite will sort out their ideological differences outside the House.

Mr Comben interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I warn the honourable member for Windsor. That is his last warning.

Mr HARPER: The Queensland Council for Civil Liberties has not, to my knowledge, taken to the streets to oppose the Federal Labor Government's Bill of Rights, which, if it becomes law in its present form, will effectively wipe out the common-law rights that are so basic to our democratic society. I invite the honourable member for Windsor to comment on that.

Members of the Council for Civil Liberties fail to understand that the framing of legislation to protect the civil rights of the community as a whole is seldom as simple as they try to make it appear in their well-publicised statements. I see the Queensland Council for Civil Liberties as an organisation which, unfortunately, is so geared to knocking the Government that it can never bring itself not to do so in some form or other.

Illegal Sales of Wheat

Mr COOPER: I ask the Minister for Primary Industries: Will the Government offer the State Wheat Board its fullest support to prevent the illegal sale of wheat, so that honest grain-growers trading through the board do not suffer? What is the extent of black-marketing in wheat and other grains in Queensland?

Mr TURNER: I am aware of the concern felt by the honourable member for Roma and the concern expressed by the State Wheat Board. Unfortunately, illegal trading in grains outside the operations of the board is increasing, which breaks down the system of orderly marketing.

A permit system of sales has been introduced through the operations of the State Wheat Board, and last year 93 000 tonnes of grain were sold. The system works for the benefit of the grower and the user of the end product, and I believe that it is of benefit to the whole industry. If illegal selling continues, the permit system will be placed in jeopardy, which would be unfortunate for the industry as a whole.

Internal Audit Report, Department of Children's Services

Mr FOURAS: In directing a question to the Minister for Welfare Services, Youth and Ethnic Affairs, I refer to the Minister's reply to a question by the Leader of the Opposition. The Minister stated that yesterday he had instructed internal auditors to carry out a detailed audit of the operations of the Department of Children's Services. This morning, in his ministerial statement, the Minister said that the staff assigned to child protection would be redeployed following receipt of the report. I now ask: Is the Minister not misleading the House because he has already received an audit of the internal operations of the department and he knows the results?

I have the audit, and I wish to read the conclusion. The audit was a case study by the Internal Operational Audit Service, dated October 1985, and the conclusion reads as follows—

“The auditors were asked their advice regarding whether efficiency gains could be made by moving some staff to the offices which were harder pressed. The firm advice was that there would be little gain from this as all offices were under strain.”

I repeat—“The firm advice was that there would be little gain from this as all offices were under strain.” I ask the Minister whether he is not misleading the House, because he knows the result and because he knows that staff cannot be found. What is the Minister going to do about it?

Mr MUNTZ: I said that yesterday I had instructed the internal operations auditors to report to me on the prioritising of staffing and funding within my department. Obviously, the honourable member is in possession of a document. Either he has stolen it or it has been stolen and handed to the honourable member. The document does not address the problem being investigated by the Internal Audit Operational Service, which will eventually report back to me.

However, for the information of the honourable member, I point out that there has been a 30 per cent redeployment of staff to child-care within my department. I expect that increases in staff will continue in the future. As I said earlier this morning, finance and manpower will not necessarily solve the problems. The problems require a community effort, and particular emphasis is placed on the responsibilities associated with parenthood. That is the matter being investigated by the Internal Audit Operational Service section, and when its report is available, I will give consideration to the matters raised by that report.

Staff Requirements, Department of Children's Services

Mr FOURAS: In directing a further question to the Minister for Welfare Services, Youth and Ethnic Affairs, I refer to the Minister's statement made this morning. The Minister stated that the solution to the problem of child abuse does not necessarily lie in increased staff numbers. I ask: Is he aware that, since 1979, staff numbers in the Department of Children's Services have increased by 3.9 per cent, whereas the population has increased by approximately 15 per cent; that cases involving child protection measures have doubled, as has the need for emergency relief; that there has been an increase in the number of court cases involving juveniles; and, that right across the board, mammoth increases have occurred in the need for child-protection services?

Is the Minister not concerned that, during the last 12 months, SCAN has reported an increase of 65 per cent in cases of child abuse, and is presently over-loaded; that the Juvenile Aid Bureau is presently unable to fully investigate matters and one in four investigations results in a finding of "uncertain"; and that, similarly, child-care officers are unable to follow up inquiries because of insufficient staff, the result being that referrals are repeated and children are being subjected to recurrent abuse because the Minister is too miserable——

Government Members interjected.

Mr FOURAS: I have asked a number of questions.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I ask the honourable member for South Brisbane to put his question.

Mr FOURAS: Very well. Will the Minister support requests made by his department for an increase in staffing numbers and an increase in resources to meet statutory obligations? If not, the Minister should resign, resign, resign.

Mr MUNTZ: Of course I support my department's request for increased staff; but, as I have said a number of times this morning, that will be considered as part of the Government's overall policy on staffing, whether it be for police, nurses or child-care officers. One of the reasons for the increase in child neglect and child abuse is, very simply, the policies of the honourable member's party—the same policies that are pursued by his colleagues in Canberra. As I said this morning, there is no doubt in my mind that the Labor Party does have an anti-family policy.

Mr R. J. Gibbs: You're a liar.

Mr MUNTZ: Many individuals on the Opposition side of the Chamber are shrinking behind their seats simply because they know that——

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Wolston will retract the statement that he just made across the Chamber. If he does not do so——

Mr R. J. GIBBS: Mr Speaker——

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I am still on my feet.

Mr R. J. GIBBS: You asked me——

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr R. J. GIBBS: I will withdraw my statement that the Minister is a liar, with the proviso, of course, that he withdraws his statement that my party is anti-family.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr Goss interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I warn the honourable member for Salisbury. I have asked the member for Wolston to withdraw the statement that he made across the Chamber. If he does not do so, I will warn him under Standing Order No. 123A.

Mr R. J. GIBBS: Of course, I have the ultimate respect for you, Mr Speaker, so I will withdraw the statement. I now take a point of order and say that I find highly offensive the statement by the Minister that my party is anti-family. I ask that that comment be withdrawn.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Wolston finds some of the Minister's words offensive—I am not too sure what they are—and I must ask him to withdraw them gracefully.

Mr MUNTZ: Mr Speaker, with respect I did not refer to the member personally; I referred to his party in general terms. It was not meant to be personal, and never was personal; it was referring to party policy only. I cannot withdraw.

Product Recall Legislation

Mr NEWTON: I ask the Minister for Employment and Industrial Affairs: Does he have any plans to introduce a law to compel businesses to recall defective products? Will he discuss such a proposal with industry and consumer groups to ensure that the proper legislation can be drafted?

Mr LESTER: No, I have no plans, nor does the Queensland Government, to introduce further legislation that will place more demands on and further knock small business. The Consumer Affairs Bureau has always done remarkably well when a problem relative to defective goods has arisen. It has approached the business concerned, and the business has responded. An example of that co-operation occurred when problems arose with defective swimming-pool filtration plants. The machinery was accessible, and if a child sat on the filter there were some very nasty consequences. The bureau approached the manufacturers, and they fixed the problem.

The bureau has never had a problem relative to defective products, so I cannot see any point in introducing product recall legislation. If ever the situation changed in the future and the bureau was not receiving co-operation, then, of course, the Government would have to consider such legislation.

It is clear that the Queensland Government's relationship with small business is far superior to that of the New South Wales Government and other State Governments that are contemplating the introduction of product recall legislation. Those Governments do not have the same sort of liaison that the Queensland Government has with the small-business community, which provides such excellent service to the community and employs so many people.

Mowing of Commissioner for Transport's Lawn by Government Employees

Mr DAVIS: I ask the Minister for Transport: What section of any Act or regulation allows the Commissioner for Transport to have his lawn mowed by Government employees using Government mowers, wheelbarrows, whipper-snippers and vehicles during normal working hours? Was the Minister aware of that practice, and what disciplinary action has he taken, or is he contemplating taking, against the Commissioner for Transport following the revelation on the current affairs program *State Affair*, last Friday night, that it had occurred?

Mr LANE: I have been informed that, on 6 December 1985, a Brisbane television station telecast a segment showing grass being mown at the residence of the Commissioner

for Transport (Mr Neal Kent). It was alleged that the workmen involved were employees of the Transport Department. At the time, Mr Kent and I were attending a meeting of the Australian Transport Advisory Council in Hobart.

Subsequently, I asked the commissioner to make inquiries concerning the matter. He advised that, several days ago, he asked the engineer of the Transport Department, who was responsible for the overall supervision of casual labourers employed by the department on car-park maintenance, to collect approximately half a metre of gravel at his residence when he was next in the Corinda area and use it in maintenance work or dispose of it at some convenient time.

This minor task was carried out on Friday, 6 December, and, as a result of a spontaneous decision by a well-meaning foreman, the labourers present mowed Mr Kent's yard and deposited the grass at the local refuse dump. The mowing equipment used is permanently carried on the vehicles involved. Neither Mr Kent nor the supervising engineer was present in Brisbane on that day. Mr Kent was unaware of the action being taken.

I am told that Mr Kent has resided at that residence for a period of about 20 years and that, during that time, the maintenance of his lawns and gardens has been carried out exclusively by him or members of his family. He has no intention of changing that system. In fact, his son intended to mow the grass on Saturday, 7 December.

Since then, Mr Kent has given clear and concise instructions to prevent a recurrence of the event. I assure honourable members that his residence is not in the car-park maintenance schedule of the department.

Mr Kent is a very fine officer who has the confidence of me and of the Government.

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

SUNCORP INSURANCE AND FINANCE BILL

Suspension of Standing Orders

Hon. W. A. M. GUNN (Somerset—Deputy Premier and Minister Assisting the Treasurer), by leave, without notice: I move—

“That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as would otherwise prevent the immediate presentation to the House of a Bill to provide for the constitution of Suncorp Insurance and Finance to authorize that Corporation to carry on the general business of insurance and investment and other activities; to transfer to and provide for the carrying on by that Corporation of all business of insurance and other business being carried on by the State Government Insurance Office (Queensland) and for related purposes; the passing of such Bill through all its stages this day; and that the following times be allotted for the remaining stages of the Bill unless those stages be concluded sooner on this day's sitting:—(a) conclusion of second-reading debate by 3.30 p.m.; (b) report from the Committee and third reading by 4 p.m. If the debate on any stage of the Bill be not concluded by the time so specified, Mr Speaker, or the Chairman, as the case may be, shall forthwith put the remaining questions on that Bill without any further amendment or debate.”

Question put; and the House divided—

AYES, 45		NOES, 28	
Ahern	Lester	Braddy	Wilson
Alison	Lickiss	Burns	Yewdale
Austin	Lingard	Campbell	
Bailey	Littleproud	Comben	
Booth	McKechnie	De Lacy	
Cahill	McPhie	Eaton	
Chapman	Menzel	Fouras	
Clauson	Miller	Gibbs, R. J.	
Cooper	Newton	Goss	
Elliott	Powell	Hamill	
FitzGerald	Randell	Kruger	
Gibbs, I. J.	Row	Mackenroth	
Glasson	Simpson	McElligott	
Gunn	Stephan	McLean	
Gygar	Stoneman	Milliner	
Harper	Tenni	Palaszczuk	
Harvey	Turner	Price	
Henderson	Wharton	Scott	
Hinze	White	Shaw	
Jennings		Underwood	
Katter		Vaughan	
Knox	<i>Tellers:</i>	Veivers	<i>Tellers:</i>
Lane	Kaus	Warburton	Davis
Lee	Neal	Warner, A. M.	Prest

Resolved in the affirmative.

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) (12.38 p.m.): I move—

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

Honourable members will recall that, during his Budget speech, the Premier and Treasurer announced Government plans to make significant changes to the nature and operation of the State Government Insurance Office.

Since the office was established in 1916, it has performed a vital role in the insurance industry in this State. However, nobody would dispute that the sophistication and complexity of the insurance and finance markets in 1985 are vastly greater than was the case in 1916. Obviously, institutions formed so long ago must be subjected to constant review to ensure that they remain tuned to contemporary needs and standards of performance. This review process has been evident throughout the life of the State Government Insurance Office.

The first major change occurred in 1960, when the office was constituted as a body corporate, with a structure more closely resembling that of its private sector competitors. This led to the growth of its investment functions, which has enabled the marshalling of resources to be directed towards the development of this State. The investment portfolio of the office presently exceeds \$1,000m.

Now, 25 years later, it is time for the office to undergo yet another major change along this evolutionary path. The factors dictating this change are the business opportunities opened up by deregulation within the finance industry and the increasingly competitive nature of the insurance business. For any enterprise to survive in this environment, let alone grow in strength and improved performance, it must be able to compete in a purely commercial market on an equal footing with its competitors. The changes proposed are designed to—

- widen the powers of the corporation;
- give the board full management responsibility; and

remove public service constraints.

The operating base of the corporation has been broadened from the traditional role to empower it to carry out activities related to insurance, finance and business. The existing SGIO interests cover a wide spectrum of business activity other than insurance, through its building society and ownership of Permanent Finance and major interest in the Bank of Queensland. Suncorp, with its expanded powers, will have the capacity to take on a much larger role in the finance and investment markets for the benefit of policy-holders and the Queensland economy generally. This will vest it with powers comparable to those held by its major competitors.

Provision has been made for continuity of existing funds, contracts, claims, etc. in the new corporation. To enable Suncorp to be more vigorous and to enhance its effectiveness in competing with similar institutions in the market, the structure has been changed to give the board full management responsibility for the operation of the undertaking.

The board has been increased in size from six to eight directors, who, it is proposed, will be drawn from people with a strong commercial and business background, together with one Government representative and the chief executive officer of the corporation. Existing board members, who have been chosen on the basis of this commercial skill and expertise, will form the nucleus of the new board.

The tenure of directors has been increased from the present three years to five years.

The Bill gives the Governor in Council the power to appoint all directors of the board and to remove them from office where such action is warranted.

A clear distinction has been drawn between the existing situation and Suncorp with respect to the responsibility of the board for the operation of the corporation. The new board will be responsible in much the same way as the board of a private enterprise undertaking with the chief executive officer having responsibility for the day-to-day management of the corporation.

These measures will give the corporation a private enterprise flavour. However, to compete on an equal footing with its competitors, it is also necessary to remove the existing public service constraints on staffing and other administrative matters.

The Bill therefore provides for Suncorp to have the power to engage staff on exactly the same basis as that of its competitors, without any public service controls. This means that it will have the capacity to attract the best possible staff, on commercial arrangements, designed to provide incentives for performance.

In accordance with the undertaking that the conditions of service of existing public servants who transfer to the new corporation will be protected, the Bill contains a number of measures honouring this undertaking. In summary, they are the—

- protection of salary level;
- carrying over of leave entitlements and long-service leave accrual;
- provision of an option to retain the equivalent of State Service Superannuation benefits; and
- guaranteeing of security of tenure equivalent to that applying to them as public servants.

The Government has taken care to ensure that, in the establishment of Suncorp, every opportunity has been given to the existing staff to remain with Suncorp. It is the Government's wish that the great majority of SGIO employees will recognise the opportunities and rewarding challenges offered by Suncorp. However, for those staff who wish to transfer to the public service, adequate provision has been made.

The timetable allows two months from a date to be declared, which is designated as the "appointed day", at the end of which present public service employees in the SGIO have to indicate formally whether they wish to remain in the public service.

The corporation established under this legislation will be more commercial and competitive, more accountable and more dynamic than the existing structure. Although it is the Government's wish to make Suncorp as competitive and private oriented as its commercial counterparts, it is still necessary to maintain the public authority status of the SGIO in order that the full benefits of its operations will accrue to policy-holders and Queensland as a whole.

Consequently, Suncorp has retained Crown privileges and immunities. The public authority nature of Suncorp is also emphasised through Government input into its policy decisions, Government control over appointments of directors and chief executive officer, and a provision that it pay to consolidated revenue all taxes for which any private insurer would be liable under both State and Commonwealth laws. It will also perform certain functions that are public as distinct from commercial in nature.

The Bill also recognises that recent Commonwealth legislation on insurance agents and brokers and insurance contracts has application in Queensland, except insofar as State insurance is involved. The Bill adopts the relevant provisions of this Commonwealth legislation so that Suncorp can be seen as competing on equal terms with other insurers.

I am confident that the new-look Suncorp will play an increasingly important role in Queensland's development in the years ahead. It has a structure that gives it all the commerciality and vigour of its private enterprise counterparts while retaining a public authority role, which will ensure that the successful operations of the corporation will benefit all Queenslanders.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Mr WARBURTON (Sandgate—Leader of the Opposition) (12.45 p.m.): Today, two Bills of major importance to this State are to be debated. They are the Suncorp Insurance and Finance Bill and the Queensland Industry Development Corporation Bill. It is incredible that even this Government, renowned for its arrogance and incompetence, would have the gall to force these Bills through the House at such short notice.

I found it deplorable that, a short time ago, when a division was called over the short notice given in respect of this major Bill, the Liberal Party decided to vote with the Government. That is absolutely deplorable.

By way of this legislation, "Suncorp" is to be the new name for the State Government Insurance Office. Suncorp will be a statutory authority and, as such, an agency of the Crown with, for example, insurance policies and contracts being guaranteed by the State and any liability being met from the Consolidated Revenue Fund.

There is to be one Act—the Suncorp Insurance and Finance Act 1985. It will repeal, in whole or in part, six Acts that presently cover SGIO operations and obligations.

A further decimation of the Queensland Public Service will occur with, it would seem, a similar outcome to that which occurred when the Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation came into being. In fact, when one examines the Bill, one does not take long to realise that the changes contemplated are in many ways a facade—they are cosmetic—and are apparently designed to appease those in the National Party who have seen the SGIO as a socialist enterprise but who have been loath to bite the hand that feeds them.

If privatisation of the SGIO occurred, as was mooted by some sections of the National Party, the enterprise would be sold or disposed of to the public through the share market.

No doubt honourable members will recall that the National Party State conference, recently held in Brisbane, moved to have the party investigate the privatisation of the State Government Insurance Office and there is no doubt that privatisation remains foremost in the minds of many prominent members of the National Party, especially those in the Sparkes camp.

So, although Queensland has the State Government Insurance Office today and a statutory authority called "Suncorp" tomorrow, while Queensland is under the control of a National Party there could easily be privatisation of Suncorp in the future.

Suncorp will be successful because it is simply the State Government Insurance Office by another name, but the State Government Insurance Office certainly is not privatised by virtue of this proposed legislation. The public should not be hoodwinked if, in the future, the Premier or any of his Ministers claims the success of Suncorp as a result of privatisation. It has not been privatised.

The State Government Insurance Office has been a success story as far as State enterprises go. It was set up by the Ryan Labor Government in 1916, and it has gone from strength to strength. Today, it is one of this State's largest corporations.

The Premier stated in his Budget speech that he wanted to free up the operations of the State Government Insurance Office to enable it to respond in a flexible way to rapid changes in the market-place. I would like to know what presently restricts the SGIO from responding flexibly to the market-place. I know of no such impediments, and I do not see how making the SGIO a statutory authority will make it more flexible.

The flexibility of arrangements surely must be dependent largely upon the board and its decisions. The role of Suncorp as outlined in the Bill that is now before us makes it very clear indeed that its powers will be tremendous.

The Premier and Treasurer said also that he wanted to move the State Government Insurance Office away from Government controls to subject it to the full competitive forces of the industry. What are those Government controls? Does he mean the aims and objectives of the SGIO as expressed by its charter? The aims and objectives which guide the SGIO seem to me to be extremely flexible.

The first aim is to offer a comprehensive range of general insurance covers at competitive rates to the ultimate benefit of all Queenslanders. Secondly, the SGIO aims to maximise the bonuses payable to life and superannuation policy-holders. Thirdly, it aims to produce a reasonable yield on investment for the benefit of policy-holders and to support, through its investment activities, Queensland enterprise and State development. Lastly, its aim is to provide a high level of customer service.

I ask: Are not those aims and objectives being met in the current arrangements? Or is it a fact that the implementation of those aims and objectives of the corporation have become somewhat of an embarrassment because the Government has milked the SGIO contrary to the benefit of its policy-holders? One has only to think of the Evans Deakin Industry shares fiasco to understand how the third aim is not being met. One could hardly argue that such a poor investment as happened in the case of EDI, which was made after political interference, could benefit policy-holders and maximise bonuses payable.

All honourable members recall that the SGIO and other white knights rushed in to purchase EDI shares when EDI was the subject of a sudden take-over. That rush on the market by the SGIO and the Public Trustee sent the cost of EDI shares through the roof, to about \$3 a share. After they withdrew from the market, the price of EDI shares collapsed. The shares are now approximately \$1.40 on the market, so the SGIO has lost about \$6m on its EDI holdings. I would hardly call that prudent management of shareholders' funds. I understand that the State Government Insurance Office undertook that venture as a result of interference and intervention by the National Party Government in this State. The EDI share bungle was one of the classic examples of incompetence by this National Party Government.

Associated with the EDI deal, Australian National Industries, which was one of the raiders, sold its shares to the Government at a \$1m profit, which ANI promptly used to buy up another Queensland company, Bundaberg Engineering. If this legislation prevents a repeat of such a fiasco, it will have achieved something positive. It remains to be seen whether State Government intrusion into Suncorp remains live and well.

From my brief glance at the legislation, it would seem that the Government will still be able to intrude into the affairs of Suncorp.

I for one do not believe that the legislation will change the policy of Suncorp in practice. Because the Government will remain the owner of the corporation, Suncorp will still be subject to Government influence. The Under Treasurer will still be on the board representing the Government position, and I am sure that the board itself would take cognisance of any wish of the Government. Therefore, I cannot see how this new status for the SGIO as a statutory authority will change anything in practice to any significant extent.

However, I refer for a moment to the reasons for which the SGIO was set up. It was set up with two main aims—

- (1) to give immediate benefits to the public by reducing premiums by at least 15 per cent below the uniform tariff adopted by the private insurance companies;
- (2) to return investment funds to the State for developmental work within the State.

With these two aims in mind, in 1918 the SGIO was able to offer house insurance cover at one-third below the rates of the private companies, and fire and other insurance was offered at 20 per cent below.

In commenting on the success of the SGIO, Bernays, in his *Queensland—Our Seventh Political Decade, 1920-1930* wrote—

“As a State enterprise, who shall dispute the remarkable success of this venture?

. . . .

There is no hesitation whatever in giving credit to the Labor Government for having conceived such an institution, and for having allowed it to be managed on such up-to-date principles without any undue interference and apart altogether from political considerations.”

As I have indicated, times have changed. Unfortunately one can barely recognise the first of those aims in the existing policies of the SGIO. No longer does the SGIO aim to provide insurance at the lowest possible cost. SGIO premiums are, in the main, similar to those of any other insurance company. In fact, when I compared some of the premiums on a range of policies, I found that the SGIO premiums were often considerably above those of other insurance companies. I ask the Minister why that aim of the SGIO has apparently been abandoned.

On the second aim, which is to maximise investment and development opportunities in Queensland, I can only say that the board has a very flexible interpretation. If one looks through the investment portfolio, one finds that there are numerous companies that have nothing to do with Queensland. In 1983-84, \$197m was invested by the insurance office. Many existing facilities were purchased, and I cannot understand why existing operations were purchased when the SGIO had the option or the opportunity to develop new facilities, in the interests of Queensland share-holders and Queenslanders generally.

Honourable members will recall that the SGIO bought the Crest Hotel when it was in financial trouble. The SGIO bought Lizard Island, and the merry-go-round of arrangements in that particular case certainly makes very interesting reading indeed. The SGIO also bought Pacific Village in Coolangatta. All its purchases were of established operations. I understand that it bought a large, 1 300 ha property, Anchor Field, on the Darling Downs. This last purchase must be particularly worrying for the National Party— to have a socialist State enterprise and socialisation of farms in Queensland. As one National Party member was heard to say, Anchor Field sounds like the first SGIO commune in the State of Queensland.

To my mind, the Suncorp board should thoroughly review its investment strategy. It should concentrate on new developments rather than on purchasing old ones, and it

certainly should not become involved, as it did in the past, with propping up shaky Queensland companies simply because those companies are friends of the Government. No private enterprise company could operate under such conditions.

The legislation also provides for the transfer of existing staff from the public service to the corporation. I believe that the present staff will be given the option, either to transfer eventually to other public service departments or to stay with the corporation. But I certainly do trust that the existing entitlements of staff will be totally preserved under the new corporation and not watered down at some future date. For many staff in the corporation, the decision to transfer from the public service to a new industrial way of life with the corporation is a profound one.

Sitting suspended from 1 to 2.15 p.m.

Mr WARBURTON: There must be a firm commitment from the Government that, in negotiating the terms of a new corporation award, existing conditions and provisions will not be eroded and that those officers remaining with the corporation will enjoy conditions totally comparable with those of their former public service colleagues. Employees must be assured of job security, and that assurance should be announced by the Government in the debate today.

One provision in the Bill offers a system of review of a promotional or disciplinary decision at the request of an aggrieved officer, and another offers a guarantee of security of tenure for officers of the corporation who formerly were officers of the public service.

Although the intent of these clauses is laudable, they can in no way purport to replace the definitive and impartial mechanisms contained in the Public Service Act and Regulations for the protection of the interests of officers in promotional and disciplinary matters.

In the interests of officers of Suncorp, and in the public interest, the Government should publicly reiterate in this debate its resolve towards the preservation of every condition of service currently enjoyed by those officers of the SGIO who become officers of Suncorp. The Government should assure those officers that no future interpretation of statute, no future amending legislation and no future administrative action will operate to the detriment of their existing conditions of service. I trust that the Minister will give such assurances here today.

The SGIO has always made an important contribution to State Government finances. In 1983-84, it contributed \$22.8m to the Queensland Government. That was made up by \$8.8m in lieu of income tax, \$11.5m in stamp duties, \$1.5m in pay-roll tax and \$800,000 in land tax. Over the past five years, \$95m has been paid to the Government.

I am unsure as to what will be the effect by the change to Suncorp; however, I presume that payments will remain much the same. It seems that the ordinary insured will not see any noticeable difference when the change-over takes place. However, certain assurances need to be given today by the Minister.

For example the Government informs us that third-party compulsory motor vehicle insurance is highly unprofitable. Does that mean that Suncorp will be able to abandon that area if it so desires? The people ought to be told that. Will it be able to place very restrictive conditions on other insurance policies according to their perceived profitability?

Honourable members will no doubt recall the Brisbane floods and the great many problems that were caused because, at that time, housing insurance excluded flood damage. The outcome was that the SGIO became one of the few insurance companies that were prepared to insure against flood damage. Will that commitment now be dropped? That is something else that the public ought to be told.

The Premier and Treasurer said in his Budget speech that the new corporation will take on a much larger role in the finance and investment markets, to the benefit of policy-holders and the Queensland economy. What does that mean, and how is the SGIO presently restricted?

Does it mean that the new Suncorp will act more like a merchant bank, or perhaps have a much closer association with the Bank of Queensland than it does at the present time? Does it mean that the new corporation will be able to enter into an arrangement with a foreign bank and diversify into a larger banking structure? What specific initiatives are exercising the minds of the real advocates of Suncorp—that small group of people who have put these legislative proposals together? What specific initiative or development that is presently restricted is the Government thinking about?

I noticed in recent press reports that the Queensland Corporate Affairs Commissioner has called on the SGIO to explain its failure to report an increase in its Kern Corporation stake. I understand that the SGIO should have reported its increased stake within two days, but that it failed to do so. However, more importantly, it seems that the SGIO appeared to increase its stake in Kern in order to keep out Murphyores. Is that an indication of how Suncorp will operate in the future, as a protector of favoured local companies?

A number of questions need to be answered, and that is one of the reasons why the Opposition says that the hurried manner in which the Government is pushing this Bill through the Assembly is improper. The questions that are being asked by the public and the Opposition require proper answers.

Is Suncorp going to become more of a corporate raider? That is something that we should know. Is it going to abandon many of its traditional areas of investment in preference for the corporate take-over game?

Most observers have absolutely no idea what this legislation will do in practice, other than tart up the image of the SGIO and give it a new logo and, of course, further decimate, as I said, the State public service. We cannot judge the provisions affecting staff, but it appears that unions would be well advised to look at the provisions very carefully indeed.

It is most unfortunate for the people of Queensland and for the policy-holders of the SGIO that many of the fundamental principles that were laid down at the time the SGIO was set up have largely been forgotten or ignored. Quite frankly, the Government needs to be condemned for allowing the SGIO to forget about its obligations to provide the cheapest possible insurance for Queenslanders. That principle was thrown out the window some time ago.

The Government needs to be condemned for milking the SGIO and for getting it to bail out political friends to the detriment of the SGIO policy-holders. The Government needs to be condemned for getting the SGIO to carry the can on all sorts of weird and wonderful promotional activities, simply because other companies have not played a sufficient role.

In the past, the SGIO has done a wonderful job for Queensland. It is a prime example of the way in which a Labor Government is prepared to legislate to help Queenslanders. Needless to say, Labor established the SGIO in the face of very strong opposition in the tory Legislative Council of the time.

The SGIO has contributed greatly to this State, and I trust that when the new corporation, Suncorp, is established, it not only sees itself as another corporate player but also operates first and foremost in the interest of its policy-holders and in the interests of the people of Queensland.

In summary, a perusal of the powers and authorities of the corporation suggests virtually unlimited powers for the new Suncorp group. It represents deregulation in total. At first glance, there seems to be nothing that Suncorp will not be empowered to do. The haste with which this legislation is being pushed through is highly improper.

The point should be made that with this deregulation comes the need for increased accountability to the public. The section dealing with its relationship to the Crown makes it quite clear that Suncorp is very much a Queensland Government financial

insitution and, as such, should make full disclosure of its operations and activities to Queenslanders who fund it.

The previous annual reports of the SGIO were not notable for disclosure, and business always found it difficult to ascertain the extent of the insurance office's investments and general thrust of operations.

Even the timing of annual reports will allow Suncorp to issue its statements "as soon as practicable" after the completion of each financial year. Companies generally are under tight scrutiny on their reporting requirements and can be dealt with severely for late reporting.

The Bill should make specific provision for the accounts of Suncorp to be issued, at the very worst, at the end of the first quarter after the end of the financial year. I repeat: with deregulation must come more accountability, and that seems to have been forgotten in this legislation.

With particular reference to powers and authorities—the Bill will enable Suncorp to undertake the business of insurance, to become an investor, financier, underwriter, and money-market dealer, to engage in share-dealing, property joint ventures, and deposit-taking, and generally to do anything else the board deems appropriate to its future.

The current SGIO operation is one of the largest property-owners in Queensland, if not the largest. It owns shopping centres, buildings and tourist centres. Not much is known about the returns on these investments, and it is generally accepted that State Treasury runs an unders and overs tin in world money markets to help manage the cash flow of the State Government Insurance Office. The public should know more about that.

The new legislation will make Suncorp an extremely powerful and influential conglomerate. Together with the new Queensland Industry Development Corporation, Suncorp will give the Queensland Government a massive financial empire. I question the Government's plans in this respect. Nothing was revealed earlier today in the second-reading speech by the Deputy Premier and Minister Assisting the Treasurer. In fact, it was one of the shortest second-reading speeches on an important Bill such as this that I have ever heard. Is the Government's plan to have a State bank, or does it plan to move into the "arm's length" type of financial emporium evident with Suncorp Insurance and Finance?

Suncorp is essentially window-dressing. Two things will happen: the name will change, and extensive deregulation will be undertaken. I repeat: with deregulation should come more accountability, and I cannot see evidence of that accountability, to the extent that there should be, in this legislation.

Questions need to be answered. Firstly, why is the name to be changed? That change will no doubt be accompanied by an extremely expensive advertising campaign at the State's expense. Will the advertising be like so many Queensland Government advertising campaigns, that is, designed to promote the Government and particular Ministers instead of operations that are important to the community?

How much will the advertising cost? My understanding is that there will not be much change out of \$1m, and that the cost could exceed \$1m. One of the reasons why this Bill is being raced through the House at this late stage of the sittings is that the advertising has been put in place. The Government does not want to upset the advertising agencies and the principals of Suncorp who have gone ahead and prepared the campaigns by not pushing the Bill through the House.

It can probably be argued that the current SGIO operation needed review and restructuring in the light of changes to the financial system generally. I concede that that is a reasonable attitude. However, it could have been done with minimum expense to the public and without an extensive change of name and accompanying propaganda for the Queensland Government. As I have said, my information is that more than \$1m will be expended. The Minister can tell the House whether I am wrong.

My main concern is accountability. Because Suncorp will be a Queensland Government operation, the various activities that it undertakes should be the subject of individual annual reports to Parliament. I stress that point. Queenslanders should, and must, be able to judge the performance of the whole by the results of the parts that make up Suncorp. Most major companies report in that way to their share-holders. Suncorp should do the same. Reports should be tabled concerning its operations in property, insurance, the money market and underwriting, etc. That should be the pay-off for deregulation. Accountability should be increased.

I turn to discuss the other elements of Suncorp. The Bill is notable for its total lack of reference to the other elements of its new corporate structure—Suncorp Building Society and Suncorp Finance Company, formerly Permanent Finance Corporation. It may be that the latter will just be part of Suncorp and not separated from it in any way.

The building society will, however, continue to be run as a building society and be registered under the Building Societies Act 1985. Currently, the SGIO Building Society rides in the slipstream of the insurance office, without having to pay its way in any shape or form. The society has the use of insurance office staff and offices, and benefits from overall SGIO advertising in its operations.

With the change to Suncorp, the State Government should introduce a fee for service for the building society so that it pays its share of Suncorp's costs, many of which benefit the society. This fee for service could be met largely by trimming back the extravagant advertising and promotional budgets now evident with the SGIO Building Society. The society would be among the major spenders on television, press and radio advertising and appears to spend proportionately more than its major bank and building society competitors.

It is noted with interest that the building society has recently increased its home loan interest rates by 0.75 per cent and has also recently changed, to a stepped basis, the method of calculating interest on its savings accounts. That simply means that the SGIO Building Society is now paying differing rates of interest on savings accounts depending on the amount in those accounts and the rates are not the rate paid on the total sum in all accounts. That change was introduced on 12 November last. Needless to say, the SGIO Building Society management has not spent any of its advertising dollars on print or television advertising to inform its customers or potential customers of this change, which is not to the benefit of customers. The change is worth millions of extra dollars a year in operating margin. The Government should be collecting its share for services rendered under the Suncorp father-and-son relationship of the insurance office and the building society. If the building society does not advertise them, I ask the news media to take particular note of the changed interest rate structure and to publish details. The building society should tell its customers the truth about the recent changes.

With the definite attachment of the building society to Suncorp, which removes any suggestion of a name change and the establishment of separate corporate identity away from the insurance office, it is to be hoped that the general management and efficiency of the building society will be improved.

Judging by its advertising and promotional excesses, more cost consciousness is needed. In the past, it has been very noticeable that the general manager of the society (Mr Goldsworthy) has spared no expense in using of the SGIO Building Society to promote his personal profile. His photograph has appeared extensively in the building society's press advertising and he has a reputation among the news media for overdoing press conferences and what he likes to call "breakfast briefings".

Another aspect of his management that should be looked into is his extensive overseas travel. I would be interested to hear a report on how many overseas trips he has taken since becoming manager of the building society. What reports has he furnished to his directors on the results of those trips? What are the all-up costs? I sincerely hope that his new chairman (Mr Peel) will look closely at what I see as excesses.

Suncorp would also do well to watch Mr Goldsworthy's industry activities. The Parliament has already been told of his interference in the proposed merger of two other societies—the Ipswich and West Moreton and Metropolitan Permanent Building Societies. I can only assume that that was to protect his own society's position. He made public comments that were obviously designed to damage the merger prospects. In fact, one of his staff in Townsville wrote to *The Queensland Times* attacking the arrangements. I put it to honourable members that that is not the action of a responsible person holding a senior office in a corporation controlled by the Queensland Government.

The procedure to change the name of the SGIO Building Society has already been publicised in a public notice advising that a meeting of members will be held on 19 December to consider the necessary special resolutions. It is an incredible piece of literature.

The ultimate definition of democracy, National Party style, in Queensland is evident at the end of the special resolution on rule 117 on the name change, which says, in conclusion—

“and all members attending such a meeting and having the right to vote thereat shall vote in favour of the resolution changing the name of the society and any such member voting against such resolution shall be deemed not to have cast a valid vote in respect of such resolution.”

I wish I had control of rules such as that in organisations of which I am a member. Surely that proposed provision in itself demands an explanation from the Deputy Premier and Minister Assisting the Treasurer. If members desire to peruse the advertisement, I could table it for their benefit.

Finally, it must be recorded that neither the people of Queensland nor non-Government members in this place have had sufficient time to assess properly the proposed changes. The public has had no chance to comment on the Bill. That is of tremendous concern to any thinking member of this Assembly. The Bill was hastily conceived and is deficient. There seems no doubt that, like the Mortgages (Secondary Market) Bill, which was jackbooted through this House about 12 months ago, the Suncorp Insurance and Finance Act will be back in this Chamber for considerable amendment in the not-too-distant future.

The Government has moved with disgusting haste in an effort to force through this House the Suncorp Insurance and Finance Bill and one other Bill that will be introduced at a later stage. That action typifies the arrogance and incompetence of this National Party Government and its leaders.

For the reasons that I have outlined, I foreshadow that the parliamentary Labor Party will be definitely opposing the second reading of the Bill.

Hon. W. D. LICKISS (Mount Coot-tha) (2.38 p.m.): The Liberal Party was very interested to see the contents of this legislation. Today, the Deputy Premier and Minister Assisting the Treasurer, in his second-reading speech, said—

“Honourable members will recall that, during his Budget speech, the Premier and Treasurer announced Government plans to make significant changes to the nature and operation of the State Government Insurance Office.”

Therefore, it was with some feeling of expectation that members of the Liberal Party were interested to see the contents of the Bill that has now been printed and placed before them. We regret the way in which the Bill has been introduced and the speed with which this House has to consider some of its wide-ranging provisions.

Although we were waiting with bated breath for the contents of this novel legislation, one can see on a quick examination of it that it is probably merely a scissors and paste job. If one reads this legislation and previous legislation, one can see that in many instances the wording is identical. Therefore, it is a question of the way in which the Bill has been put together and how it can and will affect the operations of the State Government Insurance Office. To me, it seems that it is a rose by any other name,

because the Bill will operate in the same way as earlier legislation; the corporation will continue to be a Government instrumentality; and appointment to the board will still be directly controlled by the Government.

The Deputy Premier said that the changes proposed are designed to widen the powers of the corporation, give the board full management responsibility and remove public service constraints. One could also comment on some of those points. Although it might widen the powers of the corporation, those powers will still be wielded largely at the direction of Government, and the whole operation seems to me to involve a greater Treasury participation than before.

In regard to the Board having full management responsibility—one must consider the appointment of the Board. The provision allows for the appointment of two additional directors. However, those directors will also be appointed by the Governor in Council.

As to the removal of public service constraints—it seems to me that those officers of the public service presently working for the State Government Insurance Office will have their positions preserved and, from a quick reading of the Bill, it appears that within two months they will be given the option of deciding whether they want to stay in the public service or remain with Suncorp.

As has been stated, the operating base of the corporation has been broadened from the traditional role to empower it to carry out activities relating to insurance, finance and business. The Minister went on to say—

“The existing SGIO interests cover a wide spectrum of business activity other than insurance through its building society and ownership of permanent finance and major interest in the Bank of Queensland. Suncorp with its expanded powers will have the capacity to take on a much larger role in the finance and investment markets for the benefit of policy-holders and the Queensland economy generally.”

It seems to me that those ingredients are also the basic ingredients for the establishment of a State bank. Who knows; that may be something for the future.

I take the Minister at his word when he says that the Bill will widen the powers of the corporation and give the Board full management responsibility. If one were able to believe that, it would necessarily follow that the new board, by virtue of its nature and wider powers, should become more accountable to the Parliament.

Section 20 of the present legislation constituting the State Government Insurance Office deals with the annual balance sheet.

Sub-section (1) states—

“As soon as practicable after the completion of each financial year the Board shall prepare and transmit to the Minister a balance sheet and statements of accounts and shall therein set forth a true statement of the financial position of each fund required by this Act to be kept and of the transactions of the Office for the last preceding financial year certified by the Auditor-General.”

The next very interesting paragraph, which is omitted from the proposed legislation, states—

“A copy of such balance sheet and each statement of account shall be laid before the Legislative Assembly as soon as practicable.”

It is noticeable that that paragraph has been omitted from the Bill, and it is the intention of the Liberal Party to have that inserted in the proposed legislation by way of amendment at the Committee stage.

Section 21 deals with surplus profits. Subsection (3) states—

“Report to be presented to Parliament. The aforesaid report of the Board and opinion, if any, of the actuary shall be presented to Parliament.”

That, of course, has also been omitted from the proposed legislation.

From a brief perusal of the proposed legislation, it will be argued that provision is made for the Auditor-General, under certain circumstances, to report to his Minister

and also to include any reference to Suncorp and its accounts and operation in his, the Auditor-General's, report to Parliament.

From a quick reading of the Bill, it appears that provision is to be made to enable the Auditor-General, at any stage or at any time, to make a special report to Parliament in relation to the operation of Suncorp Insurance and Finance. These are matters to which attention was properly drawn by the Leader of the Opposition.

The matter of accountability seems to have been varied considerably. The Liberal Party would prefer to have accountability reinforced by having it covered by the legislation. However, because of the way in which the legislation has been drafted, it would be very difficult indeed, in the time allotted to us, to frame suitable amendments to provide for a full report to Parliament. I emphasise that, had time permitted, that would have been our intention. In the Committee stage, the Liberal Party will be moving an amendment to include the paragraph to which I have referred, which imposes the requirement that when it becomes available, the information that ought to be reported to Parliament will be reported to Parliament.

Various other matters of moment will become known only after the corporation begins to operate under its new terms of reference and its new board of management. However, it seems to me that the State Government Insurance Office will continue to operate as it has operated in the past. It will still be a Government instrumentality shackled to the Government by virtue of the appointment of its board and executive officers. Apparently, that is necessary because any losses will continue to be met by the Government through the Consolidated Revenue Fund. Although that is unlikely, the provision remains. I would prefer to see deregulation taken further, but it appears that the extent of the legislation is as far as the Government is prepared to go. I trust that a successful operation ensues that will make it possible for further deregulation in the future.

Mr HENDERSON (Mount Gravatt) (2.47 p.m.): It gives me a great deal of pleasure indeed to support the Bill. My participation in the debate will be primarily directed at two aspects of the Bill: firstly, the widening of the corporation's powers and, secondly, the giving of full management responsibility to the board. As an illustration of those matters, I canvass the redevelopment of the K mart Plaza at Sunnybank so that honourable members and Queenslanders generally are aware of how the SGIO approaches a redevelopment. In my opinion, the story is an interesting one indeed.

It has been pointed out that the Bill creates an extremely powerful financial institution. I am concerned that such an institution should respect the rights of citizens who live in the area of any redevelopment. I am not at all reassured, following what happened at Sunnybank, that that will be so. I use the opportunity of today's debate to outline to the House precisely what has occurred and to reiterate two points made in the Minister's second-reading speech: the widening of the powers of the corporation and the giving of full management responsibility to the board.

In my electorate, the SGIO has a considerable investment in the K mart Plaza at Sunnybank. The SGIO felt that that shopping centre was losing its economic viability and that, to restore the viability of the enterprise, it was necessary to extend it. To do that, it was necessary to close Huelin Street, making it possible to extend the floor area of the Coles supermarket by one third. I am led to believe that the SGIO originally applied to the Brisbane City Council for redevelopment approval, but did not succeed. A ministerial rezoning was then applied for. The SGIO adopted a sneaky approach. In the first place, it simply sought permission to close Huelin Street without revealing the reason for the closure. Naturally, it attracted objections from residents. It was only later that it was learned that the real reason for the closure of Huelin Street was that the State Government Insurance Office wanted to extend the shopping centre across the street. When that was discovered, it was decided that the redevelopment should be fought. We decided to fight it on three fronts. First of all, we decided that we would object to the closure of Huelin Street.

Mr Comben: Who are "we"?

Mr HENDERSON: The local residents and I.

Mr Comben: Who closed it?

Mr HENDERSON: It is not closed.

Mr Comben: I thought you were talking about the National Party.

Mr HENDERSON: If the honourable member will just listen to the story, he will get it straight.

The second thing that was noticed was that the rezoning proposals for the land north of Huelin Street involved the destruction of three lovely houses and the creation of a traffic plan that I personally regard as horrifying. I have a background in environmental geography, and I was appalled when I saw the plan for car-parks in Huelin Street.

The residents objected to the development and lodged with the Department of Local Government numerous objections on aesthetic grounds and on the grounds that the development would destroy the amenity of the neighbourhood and so on.

Mr Comben: They are not legitimate grounds on which to appeal in Queensland.

Mr HENDERSON: That is the way we looked at it. The residents and I viewed the proposal and decided that we could do better, and we actually submitted alternative plans to the Department of Main Roads. The Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing (Mr Hinze) invited us to present a submission about the proposal. A number of people lodged objections.

The third thing I wish to say is that I do not care where one goes in the world, whether it be to the United Kingdom, the United States, New South Wales or Victoria, wherever redevelopment is proposed, I bet my bottom dollar that the people who are in the know encourage their friends and relatives to speculate in real estate in that area. That seems to be a pattern that occurs in many redevelopment areas. Because the residents of the area were aware of that fact, they decided to look into the matter further. We went back and searched all the property records to find out which land had been sold, to whom it had been sold, and when it had been sold.

It was interesting to note that a number of land sales took place before the redevelopment was even proposed. We started tracing the people involved, some of whom were sheltered behind company names. Records held by the Commissioner for Corporate Affairs were checked and names were compared with those of people in the SGIO who were associated with that particular project. We wanted to find out whether any of the people who were involved in speculating in land were in any way related to or associated with people in the SGIO. What we found out was very interesting. At this stage, I do not propose to tell the House what was found.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row): Order! In the interests of consistency, I remind the honourable member for Mount Gravatt that nothing that he has said so far relates directly to the subject-matter of the Bill. If the honourable member does not discuss the Bill, I will not be able to allow him to continue his speech. During my term as Chairman of Committees and Deputy Speaker, I have insisted on relevancy and, in that respect, I must be consistent.

Mr HENDERSON: Mr Deputy Speaker, the example I have related will be relevant.

The aim of the Bill is to widen the powers of the corporation, as was previously stated. What concerns me about the provisions of the Bill is that the right of a Government Minister will be retained so that that Minister will have the final say or right to peruse what is occurring in the SGIO. The example I have been quoting is a very good example of how a Minister can be given that control over the SGIO and can make suggestions about what that corporation can, should or should not be doing.

If the board is given management responsibility, the Government and the Parliament will have no say over its actions, and that is a matter of grave concern to me. It has been my experience, as a result of what occurred at Sunnybank, that the SGIO does not care very much about residents. The Bill refers to giving the Board full management responsibilities. It is my concern—my grave concern—that the Government, through the appropriate Minister, should be able to exercise control or influence over the board and activities of the SGIO. If that principle is lost, I am sorry to say that, based on my experience—and I have become somewhat cynical after my experience with the SGIO in Sunnybank—

Mr Vaughan: Have you discussed this with the Premier?

Mr HENDERSON: Yes.

The fact of the matter is that I do not think that that would be a very progressive step at all. If we again look at this Bill and assess its likely impact on the community, I believe that one of the things that we would really have to insist upon in the future is some sort of full public participation in, or public review of, new developments or the redevelopments that perhaps Suncorp is about to undertake. I am sorry for being so cynical. However, I am absolutely reassured by the positive comments of the Deputy Premier and the Minister for Lands relative to my problem. It does concern me that, when people faced with a massive and powerful body such as Suncorp want to object to redevelopment, that process could involve considerable amounts of money, and the sheer financial power resident within that body is such that residents may find themselves fighting a losing battle.

Coming back to my example—I am persuaded that the SGIO did not act honourably or responsibly in this episode, and I am concerned that Mr Bernard Rowley, the general manager of the SGIO, could then pursue the matter and look at every possible loophole to overcome the objections of residents.

Despite what I have said, I do support the Bill. I wish Suncorp all the best in the future. I am certain that it will have a considerable impact on Queensland and I certainly hope that it is a good impact. Queenslanders who want to learn something should come and look at what we have learned at Sunnybank Plaza. I fear that the end of that story has not been told. However, if it is told, it will be a very interesting story indeed.

Mr CAMPBELL (Bundaberg) (2.57 p.m.): One of the great achievements of the T. J. Ryan Government, as part of its industrial platform, was the introduction of a Government insurance office. It is interesting to note that, since the National Party has taken over the reins of Government, it has done nothing but butcher the SGIO. The State Government Insurance Office used to serve the people; it provided benefits for the people. However, it is now used only to manipulate the people and gain their funds so that they can be used by the Government.

As I said, it was the great achievement of the industrial platform of the T. J. Ryan Government. There were three great parts to that platform: the creation of an industrial arbitration court, the introduction of workers' compensation and the creation of a Government insurance office. They all provided great benefits to the people.

The State Government Insurance Office, after surviving a Privy Council challenge, became one of the immediate successes for the Government. It was conducted efficiently, and it charged lower rates for workers' compensation insurance than the private companies had before 1916. It made higher payments for injuries and was, in all ways, a successful social institution, which removed the major problem of loss of earnings through injuries. That, along with unemployment, was the greatest fear that workmen and their families experienced. Following its early success, the State Government Insurance Office was broadened to cover all insurance, but at rates that competed heavily with private insurance offices. By 1918, it was offering house insurance at 33⅓ per cent below the rates of the private companies and offering fire and other insurance at 20 per cent below their rates. In 1918, it was empowered to transact business outside Queensland and establish agencies outside the State.

That Government organisation provided services and insurance that benefited the people. That is where the SGIO has gone off the track. It is not now the leader in providing low premiums and extra services. It has now joined with the rest of the Government's cronies and provided services similar to them that do not really benefit the people. It is time that the role of the SGIO was looked at to ensure that it becomes not a money-making machine but an organisation that caters for the needs of the people.

The second aspect that I want to raise relates to that part of the Minister's second-reading speech in which he said—

“The Bill also recognises that recent Commonwealth legislation on insurance agents and brokers and insurance contracts has application to Queensland except insofar as State insurance is involved.

It has a structure which gives it all the commerciality, accountability and vigour of its private enterprise counterparts while retaining a public authority role. . . .”

It says that it will come under the new Commonwealth insurance legislation; yet it does not. I ask the Minister to clarify under which sections of the Act the new Suncorp will come. If Suncorp comes fully under the umbrella of the insurance legislation, it will have a greater level of recording and responsibility not only to the State Government but also to the Federal Government. That will result in additional costs.

I look at one of the aspects of recording and accountability by insurance companies under the Commonwealth insurance legislation. Under that legislation, insurance companies will have to make quarterly returns within six weeks of the end of the period, and annual returns within four months of the end of the period. There will be penalties of up to \$20,000. Will Suncorp have to follow those recording and accountability procedures? If it does not follow those procedures, it will not be fulfilling the role that the Minister said it would. He said that Suncorp will be treated like any other private enterprise company.

At present, the SGIO has trouble in accounting to the Treasurer on time. If the SGIO has trouble in accounting to the Treasurer, how will Suncorp be able to meet the new requirements under the Commonwealth insurance legislation? If the SGIO cannot get its act together now, how will Suncorp be able to get its act together in the future when it will be accountable not only to the State Government but also to the Federal Government?

The other question concerns staff. Some will remain as public servants and others will move into the private enterprise field. What will happen if a sizeable proportion of the experienced personnel in Suncorp decide to remain in the public service? From where will Suncorp get experienced personnel to run the organisation efficiently and effectively? I do not believe that that matter has been fully investigated. If a sizeable proportion of staff leave Suncorp, from where will the replacements come? If they are to come from private enterprise, Suncorp will probably have to provide financial incentives to attract them.

To comply with the new Commonwealth insurance legislation, extra funds will be required to cover the duties of disclosure of the different insurance contracts that will be signed in the future and also the additional litigation that will arise from the new contracts under the Federal legislation. Because it is new legislation, many of its interpretations will be given only in the Federal Court. With all the new accountability procedures, it will be interesting to see whether Suncorp enters into litigation.

Today, it is important that honourable members understand where Suncorp will stand. Will it enjoy all the exemptions that the State Government Insurance Office enjoys or, as a statutory authority, will it have to be more accountable to the Federal Government? That question is important because it could involve a great deal of money.

To summarise—the SGIO has lost its way. In the beginning, it was able to reduce insurance premiums to give benefits to the people. Now, it is being used as a tool for manipulating the people.

Mr BOOTH (Warwick) (3.5 p.m.): I will take up where the member for Bundaberg left off in claiming that the State Government Insurance Office is being used to manipulate people. I do not think that that is correct. Indeed, I pay a tribute to the SGIO, because during the time that it has been in business, it has served the people well. One can always obtain a competitive quote from the SGIO, even though one might prefer to do business elsewhere. What I like about the SGIO is that it has not gone into liquidation—nor is it likely to—as some insurance companies have done when the pressure is on.

Mr Davis: We call it democratic socialism; you people call it something else.

Mr BOOTH: The honourable member can call it what he likes. In this case, level-headed people who have been entrusted with responsibility have successfully managed the SGIO. In the other States, insurance groups that are tied to the Government are, despite some small differences, very similar to the SGIO. In fact, I worry a little about the decision to change the name to Suncorp. I would have preferred to see the name left as it is. However, because it was claimed that the SGIO does not compete on equal terms, it was decided to make some changes, and the new name has been selected.

It has been said by previous speakers, including the Leader of the Opposition, that Suncorp will be extremely powerful. No-one could deny that. Because of the work that has been put into it over the years, the SGIO has become powerful. I guess that no honourable member likes to see any company get too powerful, but if an organisation is working well and running smoothly, it is always possible that that will happen.

The Leader of the Opposition referred to the window-dressing that will be used to notify the people of the change in name. Because the SGIO is so successful, money must be spent to let people know that the name is to be changed. Although some people will become aware of the change quickly, others will not, and for that reason it is necessary that a fairly substantial advertising campaign be undertaken.

I am pleased that the staff of the SGIO have been given the opportunity to move from the State Government Insurance Office, and that they have two months before a date is declared. To my way of thinking, that is sufficient time and I believe that the Bill gives them adequate protection. However, if I were an employee of the SGIO with skill in the insurance industry, I would not change to the public service. I would stay in the field in which I had skills, expertise or know-how, and I would stay with the successful company.

The SGIO is the most decentralised insurance company in Queensland, and that is appreciated by country people. On occasions when they have an argument or difference of opinion, they like to be able to talk straight across the counter in the nearest office. They have been able to do that with the SGIO, and that is a great advantage. One wish I have is that the new company will continue to be decentralised.

The member for Bundaberg spent some time on ancient history and made reference to the time when the SGIO handled workers' compensation. The SGIO handled that operation well, but that does not mean to say that the Workers Compensation Board has not handled it equally as well.

In my opinion, organisations such as the SGIO, or Suncorp, are needed in the insurance industry to keep the so-and-so's honest, if that is the right term.

Mr Neal: Don Chipp uses that.

Mr BOOTH: No, they are not quite the words that Don Chipp uses.

Because organisations such as the SGIO are of great benefit to the community and cause the market to be stable, they should remain. It may be that insurance cover can be purchased from other organisations more cheaply, and a person is entitled to buy that insurance.

It is great for an insured person to know that the company he is with is solid and that if he suffers the misfortune of having to make a major claim and requires an

assessment—I have never suffered the misfortune of having a fire or anything like that—the company is secure. I have always insured with the State Government Insurance Office and I have always felt secure. If any person has the misfortune of having to call on his insurance company or agent, stability is what he is really looking for.

Mr Warburton: It is guaranteed. All liabilities are paid out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund.

Mr BOOTH: Yes, when a person makes a claim, it will be all right.

People pay good, hard money for insurance, which nowadays is very expensive. If one looks at the budgets of the ordinary house-holders, the small farmers and the small-businessmen, one is amazed at how much they have to pay out in insurance premiums. Therefore, it is absolutely essential that, if problems do arise, their claims are paid. Sometimes I worry a little about insurance companies that run to loss-assessors at the drop of a hat and try to have claims reduced. I simply hope that Suncorp will not fall into some of those traps; I hope that it will stick by the old SGIO stable assessments and that it will pay unless there is some good and proper reason for not doing so. I do not see any reason why anyone who insures in good faith should have his claim whittled down through some frivolous assessment such as that the property had been run down a little since the last valuation.

I wish Suncorp well. With the people involved, it will go on to greater strength, but it will have to be good to beat the old SGIO. On that note, I wish it well.

Mr BAILEY (Toowong) (3.12 p.m.): I rise in support, as other Government members have done, of the Suncorp Insurance and Finance Bill.

Mr Davis interjected.

Mr BAILEY: Once again, the member for Brisbane Central has mumbled through the first part of my speech. It is very hard to cope with an interjection when one has not said anything.

Mr Davis interjected.

Mr BAILEY: How does one answer an interjection that is based on irrelevance? I am surprised that the member for Brisbane Central manages to interject when somebody says “hello”. A speech has to be a little further down the track before an interjection can be taken. One has to say something more than “good morning” before being able to take an interjection. I feel terribly sorry for the member for Brisbane Central. I ask him to give Government members a little time to say something before he interjects. It is no good the honourable member interjecting on me on the basis of what somebody else said. He should get into them at the time and wait until I have said something before he interjects. One of the most extraordinary things about the member for Brisbane Central is that he never shuts up. He must have been inoculated by a gramophone needle at a very early age—and it must have been a very rusty one.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row): Order! I ask the honourable member for Toowong to address the Chair.

Mr BAILEY: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. Because those comments seemed relevant at the time, I thought I should make them.

In supporting the Bill, I highlight a couple of aspects of interest to the community—that is, the operations of building societies in general. A proposal to merge the Metropolitan Permanent Building Society and the Ipswich and West Moreton Permanent Benefit Building and Investment Society was stopped, through the ruthless and callous manipulation of building society members and for personal and political advancement, by a chap named John Robert Brannock, who is a town-planner with the Ipswich City Council. Mr Brannock formed a protest group called Save Our Society (SOS) and deliberately issued misleading statements on proposals so that he could gain control of the society, which as at 30 June this year had assets of \$72m. There is certainly no

doubt that the Ipswich business community generally supported that merger. The Chamber of Commerce refused a request by Brannock to support his actions.

I am also disturbed that a senior member of the SGIO Building Society—in fact, the general manager (Mr Ashley Goldsworthy), who is also vice-president of the Liberal Party—actively aided and abetted Mr Brannock in this campaign. I am concerned that Mr Goldsworthy endeavoured to use undue duress through the SGIO Building Society to stop the merger. Many people would agree that he has been using the building society to create his own public image for what appears to be political reasons. To me, that is a unity ticket of the unholy and the ungodly.

I am sure that the Deputy Premier and Treasurer is aware that those actions do not reflect on the capacity or the ability of Mr Goldsworthy to hold a senior executive position in the new Suncorp organisation. I hope that from now on the Deputy Premier and Treasurer will be keeping a wary eye on the advertising——

Mr Lickiss: His main failing is that he is a Liberal, isn't it?

Mr BAILEY: His main failing is that he became involved in an exercise that was a promotion purely and simply for himself, and possibly for Suncorp. No-one objects to Liberals; in fact, I have some very good friends who are Liberal Party supporters. Many of my constituents are former Liberals, and they are very good friends of mine. I hope that, now that they have seen the light, they will remain that way. There is no doubt that they will.

Mr Gygar: We have a lot of people in our electorates who were former National Party supporters.

Mr BAILEY: I dispute that. I have been taken off the line by one of the manipulators in the Liberal Party. Like most people, I get sucked in very briefly. However, one does not stay there.

The situation to which I referred reflects on the ability, competence and integrity of Mr John Robert Brannock, who is the town-planner of the Ipswich City Council, which is a Labor council. It probably had its eyes on taking control of the Ipswich and West Moreton Permanent Benefit Building and Investment Society.

It is interesting that recently the honourable member for Wolston questioned the competence of a member of the Greyhound Racing Control Board because of a minor offence when the board member was a teenager. Mr Brannock is a town-planning officer with the Ipswich City Council, which is in the Wolston electorate, and is a member of the Labor Party. He has a significant history of far-from-minor offences.

In 1971, when Mr Brannock was 24—he certainly was not a teenager then—he was put on probation on five charges of false pretences and was described by District Court Judge Moynahan as suffering from some sort of mental upset or illness. At that time, Mr Brannock pleaded guilty to several charges of false pretences.

I draw the attention of honourable members to some other information and background on Mr Brannock. Whether he is still suffering from that illness or not, I do not know. As I said, he is 39 years of age. He is a town-planner with the Ipswich City Council. He is a major property-owner in Ipswich and other areas, including—believe it or not—the oldest building in Ipswich now operating as a restaurant, Ginn Cottage. Brannock purchased that property in 1980 and converted it into a restaurant. There was considerable talk then about his ability to arrange a quick rezoning to achieve that. He made no parking arrangements and is said not to have contributed funds to the council in lieu. In an identical situation, a nearby restaurateur had to pay \$32,000 to the council. Brannock's property has subsequently been leased to other parties.

I understand that Brannock has contacted the mayor of at least one other major provincial city—I believe that it is Cairns—to request the waiving of council regulations relative to property developments in that area. He is said to have acquired certain properties just prior to the rezoning of those areas, taking advantage of increased values

that resulted. A number of developers and business people have complained to the Ipswich City Council about the town-planning department and the stringent conditions placed on projects that they have put forward.

I submit that, on the evidence that I have put forward, Mr Brannock has consistently and cold-bloodedly abused his position as town-planner in a single-minded operation to become a millionaire socialist member of Parliament.

Hon. W. A. M. GUNN (Somerset—Deputy Premier and Minister Assisting the Treasurer) (3.19 p.m.), in reply: I would like to point out some inaccuracies in the arguments presented by the Leader of the Opposition. They can be answered quite simply.

He said that share-holding by the SGIO is not in the interests of Queensland. That is not true. The share-holdings are primarily in Queensland companies or companies that have a role in the Queensland economy.

He stated also that SGIO rates are not competitive. Again, that is not true. The SGIO remains very competitive in household and motor insurance. The wide public acceptance of the SGIO is clearly indicated by the \$50m pay-out that the SGIO made after the Brisbane floods that followed a major storm in January. On that occasion, the SGIO did a marvellous job.

In regard to the SGIO Building Society—the society does in fact pay to the SGIO a fee for services, and will pay a fee to Suncorp for services that are similarly provided. I again stress that both Suncorp and the society will be run on a strictly commercial basis. There is no earthly doubt about that.

The SGIO handles approximately two-thirds of compulsory third-party insurance and Suncorp will continue to offer that great insurance service to the people of Queensland. As honourable members will recall, when third-party insurance was first introduced, about 60 companies handled it. Currently, only two companies do. As I have stated, the bulk of that business is handled by the SGIO. As honourable members will also recall, the SGIO was a heavy loser in third-party insurance.

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr Warburton) and the honourable member for Mount Coot-tha (Mr Lickiss) stressed the need for greater accountability. The Bill does provide for strict accountability to the Government and to the Minister. I assure honourable members, particularly the honourable member for Mount Coot-tha, that the reports and financial statements of Suncorp will be tabled in Parliament. There is no doubt about that.

The honourable member for Mount Gravatt (Mr Henderson) referred to the K mart shopping centre development at Sunnybank. I am happy to have this opportunity to place on record that the further development proposal of this centre by the SGIO was done in an open and public way, and that the local residents were aware of the proposal. The purpose of this expansion project was to update the centre and assist the tenants, the majority of whom are sole traders. To assist the traffic flow into the area, a number of options were also investigated.

Question—That the Bill be now read a second time (Mr Gunn's motion)—put; and the House divided—

AYES, 45		NOES, 28	
Alison	Lee	Braddy	Wilson
Austin	Lester	Burns	Yewdale
Bailey	Lickiss	Campbell	
Bjelke-Petersen	Lingard	Comben	
Booth	Littleproud	De Lacy	
Borbidge	McKechnie	Eaton	
Cahill	McPhie	Fouras	
Chapman	Menzel	Gibbs, R. J.	
Clauson	Miller	Goss	
Cooper	Muntz	Kruger	
Elliott	Newton	Mackenroth	
FitzGerald	Powell	McElligott	
Gibbs, I. J.	Randell	McLean	
Glasson	Simpson	Milliner	
Gunn	Stephan	Palaszczyk	
Gygar	Tenni	Prest	
Harper	Turner	Price	
Harvey	Wharton	Scott	
Henderson	White	Shaw	
Hinze		Underwood	
Jennings		Vaughan	
Katter	<i>Tellers:</i>	Veivers	<i>Tellers:</i>
Knox	Kaus	Warburton	Davis
Lane	Neal	Warner, A. M.	Hamill

Resolved in the affirmative.

Committee

Mr Booth (Warwick) in the chair; Hon. W. A. M. Gunn (Somerset—Deputy Premier and Minister Assisting the Treasurer) in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 15, as read, agreed to.

Clause 16—Rights of officers previously employed in the Public Service—

Mr WARBURTON (3.30 p.m.): I refer particularly to clause 16 as it relates to provisions of the Public Service Act, with all necessary adaptations applying in relation to the dismissal or suspension from duty of any person. I think it is appreciated generally that approximately 1 400 officers of the State Public Service are employed in the State Government Insurance Office. I hope that the incentives of the proposal are such that those employees will remain with Suncorp and that the officers who have acquired expertise are not forced to take the option of remaining with the public service. If that were to happen, the scenario would be incredible, inasmuch as—

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! The Committee will come to order. The Leader of the Opposition is making a fairly fine point, and I am sure that the Deputy Premier and Minister Assisting the Treasurer (Mr Gunn) wishes to listen. I ask the Committee to come to order.

Mr WARBURTON: The point I make is important because it concerns the guarantee of continuity of employment, and I would think that even members of the National Party would feel some concern about that.

As I indicated, the intent of clause 16 (3), as I understand from discussions that I have had with officers of the Queensland State Service Union, is that a guarantee of continuity of employment similar to that presently applying to public servants would apply. I also understand that that guarantee will apply to employees who choose to remain with Suncorp rather than new employees. However, the terms of clause 16 (3) do not make the original intention of the provision clear. I ask the Minister to give assurances that clause 16 (3) in fact meets the obligations that were outlined in meetings held with the Queensland State Service Union.

Mr GUNN: The purpose of the clause is to protect the rights of officers who have previously been employees of the public service. The provision preserves leave and other entitlements, such as the continuity of superannuation arrangements, and sets out the means by which employees may elect to remain public servants or become employees of the corporation. The clause provides that current employees of the SGIO may transfer to Suncorp and maintain security of tenure equivalent to their respective public service appointments.

Clause 16, as read, agreed to.

Clause 17—Right of election as to superannuation by persons other than officers of the Public Service who are contributors to State Service Superannuation Fund—

Mr WARBURTON (3.34 p.m.): I understand that discussions have taken place about the establishment of a superannuation scheme. The Deputy Premier and Minister Assisting the Treasurer may be in a position to advise whether or not a scheme that is acceptable to the Government has been devised, and whether or not the scheme is at least equal to that operating in the public service sector.

I want to know when the scheme will be available for scrutiny because, after all, the last thing that anyone would want is a scheme that is unreasonable or one that does not offer incentive for public servants to transfer to Suncorp.

Mr GUNN: This clause involves the right of election as to superannuation entitlements. Officers who are currently members of the State Service Superannuation Fund would cease to be members of that fund. If they become employees of Suncorp, they would have a right to join a superannuation scheme operated by the corporation. They have an option of State Service Superannuation Fund benefits or a new scale for future employees of the corporation.

Mr Warburton: Is that scheme—

Mr GUNN: Equal to.

Clause 17, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 18 to 39, as read, agreed to.

Clause 40—Annual balance sheet and statements of account—

Mr LICKISS (3.35 p.m.): The State Government Insurance Office (Queensland) Act contains a section that is similar to clause 40. It states—

“20. Annual balance sheet. (1) As soon as practicable after the completion of each financial year the board shall prepare and transmit to the Minister a balance sheet and statements of accounts and shall therein set forth a true statement of the financial position of each fund required by this Act to be kept and of the transactions of the Office for the last preceding financial year certified by the Auditor-General.

A copy of such balance sheet and each statement of account shall be laid before the Legislative Assembly as soon as practicable.”

Honourable members will note that the heading to clause 40 is slightly different in that the words “and statements of account” have been added. The rest of the clause is similar down to the words “Auditor-General”. The paragraph that requires that the balance sheet and statement of account be laid before the Legislative Assembly as soon as practicable has been omitted.

The Liberal Party believes that the accountability to Parliament of a corporation such as this is essential, and we are somewhat at a loss to know why this legislation does not continue that practice.

Honourable members will notice that the question of accounting to Parliament is dealt with in clause 41, but in a rather vague fashion. I will deal with that further when clause 41 is discussed. To have the corporation report to Parliament, the clause would have to be recast. To assist the Committee relative to the accountability that we believe

is essential to the proper functioning of this body, I foreshadow an amendment in the terms of the circulated document.

Mr Lee interjected.

Mr LICKISS: We already have the Minister's assurance that that will happen. It appeared in the previous legislation. As I said before, the Bill is the result of a scissors and paste job using the previous legislation. This clause omits the paragraph, to which I have referred, from the cut and paste job. Because of custom and practice, the Minister assures us that the circulated amendment is not necessary. However, those words did appear in the previous legislation. I therefore move the following amendment—

“At page 18, after line 28, insert the words—

‘A copy of such Balance Sheet and each Statement of Account together with such other relevant information shall be laid before the Legislative Assembly as soon as practicable.’”

Mr WARBURTON: That is a clear indication of what I said earlier. In principle, I support the proposition put by the member for Mount Coot-tha. It shows that the Bill is deficient already.

Earlier, I said that the Act would be back in 1986 for further amendment. There is no excuse for that type of provision being excluded from the Bill. The committee is talking about accountability, and that must be to the fore in this type of legislation. It is not good enough for the Minister to stand up and say that a report will be laid on the table of the Parliament. The legislation must contain a provision requiring that to be done, as all legislation of this type has done in the past.

There has been an omission, and that has occurred because the Bill is being rushed through in the interests of the National Party, certainly not in the interests of good legislation or the public.

I repeat: together with deregulation of the type provided in this Bill must go more accountability. That is one of the reasons why for some time the Opposition, and, I believe, the Liberal Party, have been pushing for the establishment of a public accounts committee. As I said earlier, companies generally are under tight scrutiny relative to their reporting requirements. There should be a specific provision for accounts to be issued, at the very worst, at the end of the first quarter following the end of the financial year.

Clause 40 provides that the annual balance sheet and statements of account will be furnished “as soon as practicable after the completion of each financial year of the corporation”. That is not good enough; nor is it good enough that the amendment moved by the member for Mount Coot-tha should insert the words “as soon as practicable” at the end.

The principle is right, and I support it. The Government must be more accountable; it must be prepared to be more accountable. The Labor Party will support the amendment.

Mr GUNN: The amendment is unnecessary. The Bill requires the board to prepare annual accounts and furnish them to the Minister.

Both the Leader of the Opposition and the honourable member for Mount Coot-tha stressed the need for greater accountability. That is fair enough. The Bill does provide for strict accountability to the Government. I assure the Committee that the reports and financial statements of Suncorp will be tabled in the Parliament.

Mr WARBURTON: I remind the Minister that the Financial Administration and Audit Act, as amended, provides that statutory authorities shall report to Ministers. The member for Mount Coot-tha correctly pointed out that the principle in the amendment that he has moved is already contained in the legislation covering the SGIO.

It is wrong for the Minister simply to stand up in this place and state, so that it is recorded in *Hansard*, that the report will be tabled in the Parliament. That requirement must be provided in the legislation.

Mr LICKISS: Nothing in the Bill makes it mandatory for the annual balance sheet and statements of account to be presented to the Parliament. What we have today is an act of grace by the Minister, who said that he will ensure that they are tabled. However, the legislation contains the requirements of the law. Once this Bill becomes law, there is nothing in it to require, as a matter of law, the tabling of an annual balance sheet and statements of account.

As I said earlier, members of the Liberal Party would like the legislation to go further. We would like a report from Suncorp Insurance and Finance to come to Parliament; but because of the difficulty in revamping the construction of the succeeding clauses, it would be difficult, without a reasonable amount of time, to recast that by way of amendment. Therefore, to indicate quite clearly that the law should compel and demand the tabling of the annual balance sheets and statements of account together with relevant information, this amendment has been moved.

In the past, these accounts have been tabled in the Parliament because the law said that they should be tabled. I will quote from section 20 of the State Government Insurance Office (Queensland) Act, under the heading "Annual balance sheet", the following paragraph that the Liberal Party has moved, by way of amendment, be inserted into this Bill—

"A copy of such balance sheet and each statement of account shall be laid before the Legislative Assembly as soon as practicable."

Without that clause in the Bill, there is no requirement on Suncorp Insurance and Finance or the Government to provide for the tabling of a report in the Parliament.

More importantly, not only is it not required by law, it is at the Auditor-General's discretion whether a report is presented. Clause 41—strictly, I should wait until it is called before commenting on it—contains two provisos for the reporting to Parliament. Firstly, the clause provides that—

"The Auditor-General shall include in his annual report to Parliament such matters with respect to the financial transactions of the Corporation as he thinks fit."

If he does not think fit, no report will be tabled. Secondly it states—

"Notwithstanding this subsection, the Auditor-General, where in his opinion the circumstances so warrant, may make at any time to Parliament an additional or special report."

It is only in certain circumstances, and at his discretion, that the Auditor-General reports to Parliament.

The Liberal Party does not seek the assurance of the Minister. As has been shown—and as I should know—Ministers come and go, and the law should stand on its own feet. It should say clearly and unequivocally that there shall be a report to Parliament. The only way in which that can be done at this stage is by the acceptance of the amendment that I have proposed.

Question—That the words proposed to be inserted in clause 40 (Mr Lickiss's amendment) be so inserted—put; and the Committee divided—

AYES, 32		NOES, 40	
Braddy	Shaw	Alison	Lester
Burns	Underwood	Austin	Lingard
Campbell	Vaughan	Bailey	Littleproud
De Lacy	Veivers	Bjelke-Petersen	McKechnie
Eaton	Warburton	Borbidge	McPhie
Fouras	Warner, A. M.	Cahill	Menzel
Gibbs, R. J.	White	Chapman	Miller
Goss	Wilson	Clauson	Muntz
Gygar	Yewdale	Cooper	Newton
Hamill		Elliott	Powell
Knox		FitzGerald	Randell
Kruger		Gibbs, I. J.	Row
Lee		Glasson	Simpson
Lickiss		Gunn	Stephan
Mackenroth		Harper	Tenni
McElligott		Harvey	Turner
McLean		Henderson	Wharton
Milliner		Hinze	
Palaszczuk	<i>Tellers:</i>	Jennings	<i>Tellers:</i>
Prest	Davis	Katter	Kaus
Price	Comben	Lane	Neal

Resolved in the negative.

Clause 40, as read, agreed to.

Clause 41—Audit of accounts—

Mr LICKISS (3.57 p.m.): Clause 41 deals with the audit of accounts. It states—

“The Auditor-General shall include in his annual report to Parliament such matters with respect to the financial transactions of the Corporation as he thinks fit.”

In other words, in his annual report, he might, if he sees fit, report on certain aspects of the accounts of Suncorp Insurance and Finance—but only if he thinks fit. Again, there is nothing mandatory about that.

The clause continues—

“Notwithstanding this subsection, the Auditor-General, where in his opinion—”

again, nothing concrete, just “in his opinion”—

“the circumstances so warrant, may make at any time to Parliament an additional or special report.”

The very intent of this legislation is that if something goes wrong, the Auditor-General should—one might say that he falls short of having a commission—report those matters to the Parliament. It is left to his discretion.

It is no good looking at what has already passed. I reinforce what I said earlier; the Bill contains nothing that requires a report to the Parliament by virtue of a clause in the Bill. That will be regretted. Although I respect the Minister’s statement that, as far as he is concerned, a report will be made to Parliament, there is nothing in the Bill that makes that mandatory.

Mr GUNN: I think that I have dealt with the principal points raised by the honourable member. Generally, the main issue of accountability is provided for fully in the Bill, irrespective of tabling of the annual report. The Government has given the assurance that the report will be tabled. That was always the intention of the Government.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr Booth): Order! The time for debate on the clauses has now expired.

Clauses 41 to 52, and schedule, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

Third Reading

Bill, on motion of Mr Gunn, read a third time.

QUEENSLAND INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION BILL**Suspension of Standing Orders**

Hon. W. A. M. GUNN (Somerset—Deputy Premier and Minister Assisting the Treasurer), by leave, without notice: I move—

“That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as would otherwise prevent the immediate presentation to the House of a Bill to provide for the constitution, objectives, functions and powers of the Queensland Industry Development Corporation, and for related purposes; the passing of such Bill through all its stages this day; and that the following times be allotted for the remaining stages of the Bill unless those stages be concluded sooner on this day’s sitting:—(a) conclusion of second-reading debate by 5.15 p.m.; (b) report from the Committee and third reading by 5.45 p.m. If the debate on any stage of the Bill be not concluded by the time so specified, Mr Speaker, or the Chairman, as the case may be, shall forthwith put the remaining questions on that Bill without any further amendment or debate.”

Question put; and the House divided—

AYES, 45		NOES, 27	
Alison	Lee	Braddy	Yewdale
Austin	Lester	Burns	
Bailey	Lickiss	Campbell	
Bjelke-Petersen	Lingard	Comben	
Booth	Littleproud	De Lacy	
Borbidge	McKechnie	Eaton	
Cahill	McPhie	Fouras	
Chapman	Menzel	Gibbs, R. J.	
Clauson	Miller	Goss	
Cooper	Muntz	Kruger	
Elliott	Newton	Mackenroth	
FitzGerald	Powell	McElligott	
Gibbs, I. J.	Randell	McLean	
Glasson	Simpson	Milliner	
Gunn	Stephan	Palaszczuk	
Gygar	Tenni	Prest	
Harper	Turner	Price	
Harvey	Wharton	Shaw	
Henderson	White	Underwood	
Hinze		Vaughan	
Jennings		Veivers	
Katter	<i>Tellers:</i>	Warburton	<i>Tellers:</i>
Knox	Kaus	Warner, A. M.	Davis
Lane	Neal	Wilson	Hamill

Resolved in the affirmative.

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) (4.9 p.m.): I move—

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

As members will recall, in the Budget speech to the House on 5 September, the Government announced its decision to establish a new financing body to be called the Queensland Industry Development Corporation, to provide funds for the development and expansion of industry in Queensland. The Bill now before the House gives effect to that decision.

Background

The establishment of a development corporation was one of the major recommendations of the task force on employment in Queensland, which presented its report in April this year. The report stated that the objectives of the proposed corporation should include—

“Evaluation of and investment in industry development and technology related projects and programs

Provision of export finance assistance

Financing of feasibility and marketing studies of potential bankable projects.”

It was envisaged by the task force that the proposed corporation would contribute to increased economic growth and employment opportunities in Queensland by facilitating increased economic activity in the State's existing industries, and by assisting in the expansion of the State's economic base.

The establishment of the corporation also fulfils a commitment which I made in the Government's 1983 policy speech, as follows—

“As a major initiative, my Government will establish a Queensland Rural industry development corporation.

Its role will be to assist in the provision of additional finance to the rural industry, small business and pioneer industries.

It will bring under one roof all the rural industry financial functions undertaken by the Agricultural Bank, the Rural Reconstruction Board and the Department of Lands as well as financial functions presently undertaken by the Small Business Corporation and the Industries Assistance Board.”

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row): Order! There is far too much audible conversation in the Chamber. I ask all honourable members to come to order.

Mr GUNN: The 1983 policy speech further states—

“The Corporation will also assume responsibility for funding other existing rural industry assistance schemes including drought and natural disaster relief, farm water and soil conservation assistance, the rural reconstruction scheme, carry-on assistance to fishermen, beef and wool-growers assistance and the marginal dairy reconstruction scheme.

The Corporation will increase the level of funds available to assist these industries. It will provide an additional source of funds for Borrowers at commercial interest rates and approve applications for concessional finance funded from consolidated revenue.”

Objectives

The objectives of the corporation will be to facilitate, encourage and promote the development and expansion of primary, secondary and tertiary industries in Queensland, with a view to enhancing economic growth and employment opportunities in the State.

Functions

In the pursuit of its basic objectives, the functions of the corporation will be—

- (a) to provide, or assist in the provision of, financial resources or other services to business undertakings, including small and medium-sized business undertakings, and primary producers;
- (b) to administer such schemes of structural adjustment, debt reconstruction or other financial support for rural and other industries, as may be directed from time to time by the Government;
- (c) to make recommendations in relation to the granting of guarantees to industry by the Queensland Government;
- (d) to engage or participate in the establishment and/or expansion of economic activity either alone or with any business undertaking;
- (e) to bring together or co-ordinate financial resources for private investment and to increase the availability of capital and export finance to business undertakings;
- (f) to promote Queensland ownership of business undertakings engaging or intending to engage in economic activity;
- (g) to increase the opportunities for Queenslanders to invest and participate in the development of economic activity; and

(h) to operate as a commercial business undertaking and to generate profits.

Role

The corporation will be established as a financial intermediary, with its role akin to that of a development banking institution.

In this regard, the corporation will act as a wholesale banker rather than a retail banker. Accordingly, it will not provide cheque account facilities, but will accept deposits. Its clients will include farmers, manufacturers, tourist developers, small-businessmen, exporters and other entrepreneurs.

The corporation will be engaged in the business of borrowing or raising money, and making loans, guarantees, investments and other financial arrangements. The scope of the corporation's financing activities will not be limited, but will encompass all industries and sectors of the Queensland economy.

The corporation will play a central role in shaping Queensland's future economic structure. It will seek to broaden the State's economic base by encouraging innovative or technologically oriented investments in industries in which Queensland has particular skills, products or advantages to exploit.

To fully exploit new opportunities and technologies and to improve competitiveness and business and marketing performance, new financing sources and arrangements are necessary. The present private financing and investment system is largely oriented towards security-based lending, and is generally reluctant to support innovative or technologically oriented investments.

Accordingly, the corporation will provide equity and loan finance, export finance—for example, export pre-shipment finance—and working capital to new and established businesses in Queensland, with particular preference being given to businesses that display the best prospects for growth.

Given the nature and structure of industry in Queensland, it is likely that funding will be directed primarily towards small to medium-sized businesses rather than larger-scale businesses, which, in any case, generally have access to adequate sources of finance.

However, this will not preclude larger-scale businesses or projects from obtaining funding, especially where there are likely to be significant benefits to the Queensland economy.

The role of the corporation will be to fill a commercial market gap by providing a competitive presence and financial services not adequately met from other sources.

Finance provided will normally be an alternative avenue of funding for businesses that are unable or choose not to obtain equity capital or loans from conventional sources such as public markets or institutional lenders.

In that regard, the corporation will aim to strike a balance between traditional forms of finance offered by banks—for example, security-back loans—and more innovative forms of financing of industry, including rural industry, such as the provision of venture capital and finance for projects involving a higher degree of risk than is normally considered to be acceptable.

Although there may be some overlap with the role of existing financial institutions such as trading banks, the corporation's position in the market will extend beyond the traditional banking role into more developmental or innovative areas where it can make a positive contribution to the development of industry and the expansion of the economic base of Queensland.

It will therefore seek to provide finance for those projects or proposals that do not meet normal banking criteria but are, nevertheless, potentially viable.

In that regard, emphasis will be placed on those projects that are consistent with the State's development objectives and offer the best prospects for increased growth and

employment—for example, through the development of new products or processes, expansion into new markets and so on.

Above all, the corporation will be expected to operate on commercial principles, and to generate a profit which represents a reasonable return on the funds invested by the Government.

Although it will be wholly owned by the Queensland Government, it will have a private sector orientation, with its day-to-day operations being independent of Government.

That means that the corporation's decisions on particular transactions will be independent of Government direction, influence or review. However, the corporation will be required to have regard to the broad thrust of Government policy, and to consult with the Government from time to time on its general policies for economic growth and development; and for adjustment, reconstruction and financial support for specific industries and sectors, such as the rural sector.

The corporation will absorb the general industry functions of the Industries Assistance Board, and will assume the responsibilities and activities of the Agricultural Bank, the Rural Reconstruction Board and other rural finance schemes.

In effect, the corporation will become a one-stop shop for rural finance, by co-ordinating under the one body the diverse range of schemes and forms of finance that are currently available but are administered by a variety of bodies. The current situation has led to some confusion as to which forms of assistance are available and which body to approach for assistance.

The corporation will be required to administer schemes of structural adjustment, debt reconstruction or other financial assistance as directed by the Government, subject to appropriate safeguards for the corporation.

Those safeguards will ensure that the corporation is adequately compensated for the financial risks involved, and for its administrative costs associated with the schemes.

In effect, for such schemes, the corporation will be acting as an agent of the Crown, and this role will be kept entirely separate from, or quarantined from, the commercial role of the corporation.

Officers of the corporation

The management of the corporation will be headed by a chief executive officer appointed by the Governor in Council.

Subject to the legislation and to the policies, control and direction of the board, the chief executive officer will administer, conduct the business of, and manage and control the corporation.

A search is currently in progress to ensure that a person with outstanding ability and a successful track record in the private sector is chosen for this position.

The Government expects to be in a position to make an appointment within the next month or so.

Given the commercial orientation of the corporation, officers will not be employed under the Public Service Act. Rather, officers will be employed under terms and conditions determined by the corporation, subject to any applicable industrial awards or agreements.

It is expected that senior officers will be employed under contractual arrangements.

Public servants in the Agricultural Bank, the Rural Reconstruction Board and relevant departments will be automatically transferred to the corporation when it commences operation.

Those officers will then be given a 6-month period in which to decide whether to remain with the corporation or to exercise an option to return to the public service.

Where officers desire to return to the public service, they will be progressively relocated in departments by the Public Service Board as appropriate vacancies arise.

Pending the resolution of such arrangements, officers will continue to act as public servants on secondment to the corporation.

The terms and conditions of employment of those public servants who choose to remain with the corporation will be preserved. This will encompass leave provisions, superannuation, initial salary and security of tenure.

This will broadly mirror the industrial provisions and arrangements for the transfer of staff from the SGIO to Suncorp.

The board

A board of directors will be responsible for determining the overall policy of the corporation, consistent with the Government's development objectives. The composition of the board will be as follows—

- (a) no fewer than six nor more than eight persons with experience in industry, trade, or commerce, one of whom will be appointed as chairman and one of whom will specifically have rural qualifications and experience; and
- (b) an officer of the Treasury, nominated by the Premier, who shall be deputy chairman of the board.

Directors will be appointed by the Governor in Council for terms of office of up to five years and may be eligible for reappointment. They will continue to hold office subject to the pleasure of the Governor in Council.

To achieve the objectives that have been set for the corporation, it is essential that the board have a strong private sector orientation.

Accordingly, the Government will be appointing, as directors, eminent Queensland entrepreneurs and businessmen, with an emphasis on proven ability and successful performance in various fields of industry, commerce, banking and merchant banking.

We are interested in achievers—those who, through their own natural instincts, are able to choose viable projects in which to invest and who, through their own experience, will be able to shape the direction and thrust of the corporation.

Although it will not be embodied in the legislation, the Government has decided to establish a subsidiary board to advise the corporation on adjustment issues in the rural sector. This board, to be known as the Rural Adjustment Advisory Board, will be funded by the Government and will be broadly similar in composition and role to the current Rural Reconstruction Board.

Subject to the overall control of the main board, it will be responsible for evaluating, and deciding upon, all applications for financial assistance from rural adjustment or reconstruction schemes. This will ensure that such applications, which are often very complex, will be considered by a group of people with a clear understanding of rural industry and its particular problems.

Financial provisions

The corporation will be owned by the Government and will have an authorised capital of \$50m. The Government will provide initial capital of \$25m, and the remaining \$25m will be provided in amounts of no greater than \$10m, subject to a maximum of 12 months' notice by the corporation.

In addition to its equity base, the corporation will on-lend funds secured primarily from the domestic market, but also, to a degree, internationally.

Apart from funds raised for concessional schemes, the corporation will have a maximum debt-equity gearing ratio of 15 to 1, thereby enabling maximum funding of about \$260m after allowing for outstanding advances of the Agricultural Bank and the Rural Reconstruction Board.

The financial provisions embodied in the Bill give the corporation wide-ranging powers to make loans, guarantees, investments and other financial arrangements on such terms and conditions as it thinks fit, subject to prudent financial limitations.

In addition, the Treasurer will be empowered to provide a guarantee or an indemnity to a business undertaking, after considering a report and recommendation from the corporation.

As already noted, the corporation will be expected at all times to act on commercial principles and to earn a commercial rate of return. It will pay, out of the profits of each financial year, a dividend to the Government, which the Treasurer, in consultation with the board, deems to be appropriate.

The corporation will be subject to normal State taxes, including stamp duties and pay-roll tax, and will pay to the Government a sum determined by the Treasurer having regard to the equivalent amount that the corporation would have been liable to pay as taxes under any Act of the Commonwealth.

Conclusion

In summary—the Queensland Industry Development Corporation is an exciting Government initiative. The corporation has no precedent in Queensland Government or industry. It will play a pivotal role in the future development and expansion of our economic base. It will be a catalyst that will further boost our industrial performance and our economic growth.

It will play an active part in wealth creation—

- to seek out and help entrepreneurs to create more jobs;
- to assist Queensland industry to export more products; and
- to bring more wealth and prosperity into the community.

To achieve these aims, the corporation will have a strong private sector orientation. It will be given broad financial independence and flexibility, and it will be required to operate on a commercial basis. Like the businesses it backs, it will be expected to make a profit.

It will be directed by a board composed almost entirely of businessmen and entrepreneurs—men who know how to make a profit.

It will be staffed by officers who will be accountable and responsible for their actions, and who will be responsive to the needs and problems of their clients—the small businessmen, the farmers, the innovators, and the industrialists, who are the life-blood of our economic system.

The establishment of the corporation reflects our long-standing view that the role of the Government is to facilitate economic development, that is, to ensure that the least possible constraints are placed upon, and the maximum possible encouragement is given to, private sector expansion of the economy.

Ultimately, the only real means of generating long-term sustainable economic growth and an expansion of employment opportunities is through the private sector.

It is, therefore, essential to create an environment in which businesses and profits can flourish. This will be the corporation's charter, and the yardstick by which its performance will be measured.

I am confident that the corporation will make a significant contribution to the future strength and dynamism of the Queensland economy.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Mr WARBURTON (Sandgate—Leader of the Opposition) (4.25 p.m.): Yet again, the Assembly sees a Bill that has been put together hurriedly and jackbooted through the House by the National Party Government. This Bill has deficiencies, as did the Suncorp Insurance and Finance Bill, and it also does not contain a provision for reporting to Parliament. According to the Deputy Premier and Minister Assisting the Treasurer, the Government's definition of "accountability" is that as long as the corporations or statutory authorities report to the relevant Ministers and to the Government, that is

sufficient. It is not sufficient for the Opposition and, by virtue of the amendment moved to the Suncorp legislation, it not sufficient for the Liberal Party; neither should it be. I believe that it was an omission and that it was only pigheadedness on the part of the Minister that prevented that provision being inserted in that legislation, and will prevent it being inserted in this Bill.

Putting that aside, the Opposition welcomes the Bill in principle and congratulates the Government on acceptance of the fact—

Mr Gunn: That is the most sensible thing that you have said today.

Mr WARBURTON: I ask the Minister to listen.

I congratulate the Government on recognising true socialist enterprises, because that is exactly what the Queensland Industry Development Corporation is. I congratulate the Government on its acceptance of the fact that corporations such as this have a very vital and effective role to play in the development of the State and in the provision of assistance to private enterprise.

The Queensland Industry Development Corporation follows in the tradition of Labor-inspired corporations such as the State Government Insurance Office. Many of those corporations have had a powerful influence on the Queensland economy and for many decades have contributed greatly to Queensland's economic development. Earlier, I mentioned the great contribution made by the SGIO to Queensland's economic development. It was brought into being by a Labor Government under T. J. Ryan, despite strong opposition from the Upper House, which was controlled by the tories. That Labor Government is to be commended for its foresight.

The proposed Queensland Industry Development Corporation is taken straight out of Labor policy. At the last election, the ALP promised to establish a State development corporation for the purpose of providing equity, investment and guaranteed loans to the private sector. The aims of such a corporation would be to provide for a higher level of Queensland ownership and control of the State's resources; a greater development of secondary processing industries in Queensland; the encouragement of fully integrated resource and manufacturing development; and the provision of more effective financial assistance to the rural sector.

The need for such a corporation has been felt for some considerable time. Many conservative businessmen, including Sir Roderick Carnegie of CRA, have extolled the virtues of such corporations. Recently, when speaking on an Australian Broadcasting Corporation program about uncontrolled foreign investment, Sir Roderick said—

“People don't realise the cost. If you got \$2 in 1979 from overseas invested in equities, those owners want \$1 a year from 1990 onwards forever.

What I am saying is this—that is a very high price because they see the \$2 coming in today, but in 10, 11 years' time, \$1 going out is an enormous price to pay.

That is an easy way, but in the long term I don't think it is going to create the kind of jobs for young Australians which I want for my kids.”

That is exactly what the Australian Labor Party has been saying for years.

Foreign capital is certainly necessary for Australia's development, but the nation has become far more reliant upon it and I believe that the corporation will go some way towards redressing the imbalance. It will go some way towards promoting development of all sorts in Queensland and it will go some way towards retaining not only ownership and control of Australian interests by Australians but also the income from those investments for Australians and for Queenslanders. I am very pleased indeed that the Government and the employment task force, which formally proposed this move, have adopted fully a long-standing part of the Australian Labor Party policy for this State.

It goes without saying that similar corporations have been in existence in many of the Labor States for some time. The Victorian Economic Development Corporation has

been a great success over the last few years. Under the Burke Labor Government, Western Australia also has an Economic Development Corporation. Queensland now joins the ranks of those Labor States.

The House has been told that the corporation will subsume the operations of the Agricultural Bank, the Industries Assistance Board and the Rural Reconstruction Board. I will have more to say about that matter later. Suffice it to say that I trust that the Government will not use this opportunity, through the abolition of those boards and agencies to which I have referred, to reduce assistance to those sectors of the Queensland economy.

A great number of the provisions of this legislation are similar to those of the new Suncorp legislation. Public servants will be given six months to either ship in to the new corporation or ship out to the public service. I understand that all existing entitlements of serving officers will be maintained if they do transfer to the corporation. However, I find it disturbing that this Bill, like the Suncorp Insurance and Finance Bill, will affect the careers of many public servants without those concerned being given adequate time to peruse the legislation and to look into their future.

It is a very difficult thing for people who have been in the Queensland Public Service for many, many years to have this thrust upon them, even though there are guarantees in the legislation and guarantees being given by the Government. It is a change, however—a change of employer. The same thing happened with the establishment of the Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation. I am not sure that the discontent that occurred at that time is over and done with. Certainly, problems occurred in the corporation over a period. I hope that those responsible for this move, and those responsible for the Suncorp legislation, have looked to the experience of the Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation in this respect. I would go as far as saying that this rushed legislation and the provisions concerning employees are really an example of some contempt by this Government for the basic rights and well-being of its own employees.

Many of the other provisions of the Bill are similar to those that apply to other statutory authorities. There will be a board on which the Treasury will have a nominee. The Bill gives the board wide discretionary powers. The functions of the corporation will be very wide, as was the case with the Suncorp proposals. The Bill allows the corporation to invest in, and make loans with respect to, virtually any commercial or economic undertaking in Queensland. The existing responsibilities and commitments of the Agricultural Bank, the Industries Assistance Board and the Rural Reconstruction Board will be taken over.

The board will have to report to the Minister and, as I said earlier, I trust that it will have to report to Parliament on all aspects of its operations.

The corporation will be able to make loans, provide guarantees and make investments in any way that it deems fit. The only constraint placed upon the corporation appears to be a limitation of 15 to one on its debt equity ratio.

On authorised equity of \$50m, the corporation would eventually be able to borrow up to \$750m. So the potential for beneficial action is therefore quite substantial.

It will not be the legislation, however, that will determine the success or otherwise of the corporation; it will be the policies developed and implemented by the board, and the Government itself through its nominee.

Instances in other States emphasise the necessity of tying in a development corporation with a specific Government economic strategy. That is very important. It is no good having such a corporation unless the Government shows the way and has a strategy to which the development corporation can tie itself. It is inadequate just to set up a corporation and say, "Go to it." It is also inadequate for the development corporation to provide just another source of finance. That is not good enough. It is inadequate if the corporation just puts its paddle into the existing pool of finance.

For the Queensland Industry Development Corporation to be effective, it will have to assess fully the competitive strengths of the Queensland economy, identify those sectors that have potential, and target those industries and firms, in whichever field, that have the capacity or the potential capacity to capitalise on those strengths and expand with assistance from the corporation. In other words, the benefits of this corporation will not be maximised unless the Government develops a clear economic plan for Queensland. The Government's advisers have emphasised the importance of this, but I do not believe that it has the capacity or the inclination to take any notice.

A study on decentralisation, which was commissioned by the then Department of Commercial and Industrial Development, was undertaken by Professor C. P. Harris, who concluded—

“The Queensland Government has no explicit decentralisation policy or set of policy measures designed to favour the establishment or expansion of industries in non-metropolitan parts of the State.

Most of the so-called development programs have had no clear overall industry development or regional development direction.

There has been little or no inter-departmental integration of objectives, policies and programs.

It is therefore reasonable to claim that in terms of State Government initiatives, no economic development strategy exists, or has existed in the past in Queensland except on a limited, fragmented, ill-directed and ad hoc basis.”

That is a damning indictment of the Queensland Government. This lack of direction and lack of strategy is the reason that the Queensland economy faces its present problems.

If the Government does not like those comments of its own consultant, I refer it to the more subtle but equally strong comments in the report on Queensland's economic performance which was commissioned by it, and from which the Premier and Treasurer (Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen) quoted last week. It relates directly to the corporation. Unless the corporation's activities are tied in with an economic strategy devised by the Government, the Government is wasting its time.

A report carried out by the National Institute of Economic and Industry Research, which surveyed the period to 1983-84, stated—

“The data presented would assist in the formulation of economic policies of State Governments and State public authorities.”

It also stated—

“... it is highly recommended that the Queensland Treasury consider further extensive State forecasting research undertaken within the N.I.E.I.R. to enhance its ability to monitor and understand the current and anticipated performance of the economy and the implications that has on the budgetary position of the Queensland Government and economic policy formation.”

That suggestion cannot be over-emphasised. In other words, what it is saying is that the Queensland Government does not know in any detail what is happening to the Queensland economy.

The National Institute of Economic and Industry Research suggests that it should undertake that study on an ongoing basis, and that that study is essential for the development of economic policy formation. Without such a study, it is very difficult indeed for the Government to develop strategies that are appropriate for the short, medium and long-term development of this State. Such comments concur fully with the blunter comments of Professor Harris, in which he states that having no economic strategy is just not good enough for this Government or, indeed, for any Government of Queensland.

Without a clear economic strategy, a clear direction for the State of Queensland and a clear understanding of the opportunities that exist, the Queensland Industry

Development Corporation will not be able to play its role and be as effective as it could be. The Victorian Government and the Western Australian Government, in particular, have identified clearly those areas of potential, those areas of strength, in their own State economies.

Victoria's industrial skills base, financial expertise, scientific research capabilities, resources such as brown coal and oil, strong horticultural base, etc., have been identified in great detail. The Victorian Economic Development Corporation is the Government's principal agency for the provision of targeted loan and equity funds in accordance with a strategy developed for Victoria.

Western Australia has adopted a similar approach with its corporation, taking a close interest in, for instance, the submarine project.

Presumably in Queensland, the Minister for Industry, Small Business and Technology (Mr Ahern), in pursuing his efforts to get a slice of the submarine action, could encourage the corporation to invest or provide loans if it was found that that program was essential for or important to Queensland's future development. I would be very interested to hear whether the Minister, as part of his package, will provide or arrange for the provision of loans or Government guarantees of the corporation for the submarine program, and, if so, to what extent.

Apart from ensuring that the corporation complies with the guide-lines of an overall strategy, provisions of the Bill provide for the corporation to at least try to make a profit and pay a dividend to the Government.

The corporation is to act on a purely commercial basis, but I wonder how that will be interpreted. Does it mean that the terms and conditions of the loans and guarantees will be similar to those applying to all other major financial institutions and determined by current market rates, or will there be substantial concessional aspects of loans and guarantees? That is not made clear in the Bill. Will the corporation be more or less a last resort for firms and businesses seeking funds, and how will the corporation interpret those investment guide-lines?

Quite frankly, past experience makes me very concerned about the policy the board is likely to adopt. The track record of the Premier and the development issues he has pushed in the past makes me extremely concerned about Government influence. I believe that the public should share that concern. The Premier has shown himself to be very prone to the influence of international criminals, weirdos, crackpots and misfits. If I am accused today of going too far with my descriptions, in which category do honourable members place people such as Milan Brych, Shrian Oskar and Wiley Fancher? These are people whom the Premier has embraced; obviously, the Government has also embraced them. One would hope that that influence will not extend to the new Queensland Industry Development Corporation. One hopes that the corporation will not be financially backing another hydrogen car. Will it pour public money into a new anti-cancer technology, à la Milan Brych?

What weird and wonderful idea will the Premier throw his support behind? I hope that the Premier is kept out of it. If the Government is allowed to have a presence in and an influence on the corporation, it is to be hoped that the people from the private sector who are to be appointed will overcome such influences. It is to be hoped that the members of the corporation itself will not be prone to such influences and that their business decisions will be made on standard criteria, while at all times promoting those projects which have the most potential.

Government pressure in the past on the State Government Insurance Office and other statutory authorities has led to some spectacular public investment flops and failures. For instance, we have been waiting for four years at least—and will probably wait another four years—for the public to receive its money back, if ever it does, on the EDI shares. That was \$6m down the drain.

I sincerely hope that the board of the corporation will not show itself to be prone to following some of the Premier's wilder suggestions. I also hope that the board does

not become prone to financing those projects pushed by prominent National Party identities. In the past, the Premier has shown himself to be fully adept at politicising statutory corporations.

Like the corporations in other States, the Queensland Industry Development Corporation will be required not only to pay taxes to the Government, but also to pay a dividend. I cannot see anything wrong with that. In fact, the Government is entitled to be paid a dividend, as it is the Government that is putting up much of the money. The public is entitled to a return on its funds. Naturally, we will have to wait and see how profitable it will be.

Finally, I trust that the Government will not use the corporation primarily as a vehicle of profit for the Government. Initially, I indicated that the Opposition still has grave doubts about the contents of the Bill. I know that it contains discrepancies. I hope that, as much as I think it will, the Bill does not come back for amendment in 1986. Certainly, the Bill is deficient in that, like the Suncorp Insurance and Finance Bill, it does not provide for mandatory reporting on the corporation's activities to the Parliament. The amendment to incorporate that provision in the Suncorp Bill ought to have been acceded to by the Minister. All in all, the Opposition supports this Bill in principle.

Mr LITTLEPROUD (Condamine) (4.48 p.m.): I support the Bill, which provides for the Queensland Industry Development Corporation. When I first heard about it in the Budget speech delivered by the Premier and Treasurer, I immediately thought of some uses for it. Today it is my intention to refer to an established industry that could be assisted by the QIDC. I refer to the grain industry. The Queensland Graingrowers Association has proposed a multi-risk crop insurance policy.

Mr Milliner: Not another subsidy!

Mr LITTLEPROUD: No, it is not a subsidy at all. If the member for Everton were to listen, he would follow my explanation.

Such an insurance policy would fit very well into the concept of the QIDC. In his second-reading speech, the Minister said—

“The corporation will play a central role in shaping Queensland's future economic structure. It will seek to broaden the State's economic base by encouraging innovative or technologically oriented investments in industries in which Queensland has particular skills, products or advantages to exploit.”

The grain industry fits into that category. Later, the Minister said—

“Accordingly, the corporation will provide equity and loan finance, export finance . . . and working capital—”

and I emphasise “working capital”—

“to new and established businesses in Queensland with particular preference being given to businesses that display the best prospects for growth.”

The grain industry has the prospect of growth. Only last week, members of the Opposition spoke about the potential of the Bowen basin, in the Mackay hinterland. The grain industry plays a major part in the economy of this State.

I believe that the Queensland Industry Development Corporation could provide the necessary funds in the short term to get the multi-risk crop insurance off the ground. Already, discussions are taking place between grain industry insurance leaders and Treasury officials. I understand that a deputation has met the Deputy Premier and Minister Assisting the Treasurer (Mr Gunn), but I am not certain of the stage that has been reached in the discussions. However, investigations are being carried out into the feasibility of the project, and I should like to make some comments on the proposals.

Insurance schemes already cover crops damaged by hail. The legislation presently before the House goes much further, because it offers insurance against flood, hail, drought and fire. The Bill represents an innovation in Queensland that is not new to

places round the world. Similar schemes already operate in Canada, the United States of America and South Africa, and I am informed that they operate very successfully.

Some years ago, the Queensland Graingrowers Association went to the trouble of inviting an expert from the USA to investigate the feasibility of implementing a similar scheme in Queensland. The person to whom I refer spent a number of months examining the operations of agricultural industries and the way in which the economy of the State works. It was his recommendation that such a scheme should work. His final conclusion, however, was that the only way to test the feasibility of the scheme was to undertake a pilot scheme. The Queensland Graingrowers Association proposed a pilot scheme involving 50 farmers. Fifty volunteer farmers in the Darling Downs region were initially involved, and it is expected that, over a five-year period, the scheme can be fine-tuned and expanded so that, at the end of the period, if the scheme proves successful, a scheme covering all farmers could be implemented.

The actuarial and mathematical calculations indicate that, when all the farmers participate in the scheme, it will be self-funding. However, until that time comes, financial guarantees are required to make sure that the farmers in the pilot scheme are provided with coverage that would normally be expected from such an insurance scheme in return for the payment of a premium. The farmers in the pilot scheme will be paid the premium that will be expected to be part of the scheme when it is implemented.

I understand that the scheme will offer to the farmer at least 60 per cent of the cost of production at a premium of approximately 7 or 8 per cent of the value of the crop. Highly trained field officers who will be employed in QGGA insurance work would visit individual properties to test the soil for the level of nutrients present in the soil and the amount of moisture that can be stored. The scheme can apply only to a crop that has reached seedling stage, and, to ensure that the stand has the potential to produce a certain crop, the field officers would take into account the crop density and the history of the farm in question, as well as the history of crop production in the district. The field officers would take those factors into account when making their calculations, and would also be mindful of the value of the end product.

The procedure that I have described would be carried out when the crop is insured at the initial stage, when the crop itself has reached seedling stage. If damage should occur because of flood, hail, drought or fire, or because of other conditions stated in the insurance policy, the same field officers would return to the property and assess the damage. The field officers would again examine the soil for moisture content to establish the extent of the potential that remained in the soil, which will be a loss in terms of the crop that was likely to be produced, the condition of the crop, the value of the crop, and the degree of damage that had been suffered.

As I mentioned previously, to assess the feasibility of the scheme, the volunteer farmers involved in the pilot scheme would have to be guaranteed the compensation that a fully operational scheme would offer. Moreover, the farmers would have to pay the premiums associated with a fully operational scheme, and the role played by the QIDC would be to offer the necessary guarantee to the QGGA in the short term. The guarantee would provide that anyone who participated in the scheme would be paid out as if the scheme were fully operational, until such time as all the farmers in the grain industry could take up insurance. At that stage, the size of the monetary pool would be such that the scheme would prove to be self-funding.

There are distinct advantages in the establishment of such a scheme. Firstly, the scheme provides more stability for the farmers because they know that they can insure against the loss of a total crop. Secondly, the farmers can even out their incomes from year to year, which will make budgeting much easier. Thirdly, the scheme will make things much easier for bank-managers. I say that because the well-being of rural communities depends very much on the well-being of individual farmers. So there are obvious advantages for farmers and their communities. There is also an obvious advantage for the Queensland Government and, therefore, the people of Queensland, in that it would free the Queensland Government of any likelihood of the grain industry calling

upon the Government for disaster relief funding. All members would realise the importance of that advantage.

In closing, I mention that the scheme is up and running in the United States of America, South Africa and Canada. It has been proven. The stage has been reached at which Treasury and the Queensland Graingrowers Association are having negotiations. The overseas experience shows how the QIDC can operate to provide funding to an important industry. It has a growth capability and is extremely important to all Queenslanders.

Hon. W. D. LICKISS (Mount Coot-tha) (4.55 p.m.): The Liberal Party welcomes this legislation and agrees in general with the principles enunciated by the Minister. It believes that, in practice, it will be beneficial to Queenslanders. Naturally, we would have liked a little more time to examine the Bill in detail, but that is not to be. Nevertheless, on our examination, it seems to be straightforward. This Bill also appears to be rather a scissors and paste operation. The only fault that I find with the Bill again relates to lack of accountability. Why this Government is stepping away from accountability to Parliament beats me. I would have thought that that would have been of paramount importance to the Government. In a moment, I will show where I believe the Government has deliberately stepped back from the issue of reporting to Parliament.

No doubt, the implementation of the legislation will have a profound effect on Queensland in terms of growth, development and stability. The success of the legislation will depend on the wise development of policies to work out precisely where private sector banking will fit in with the Queensland Industry Development Corporation because, of course, the well of money will not be bottomless and there will have to be careful husbanding of the corporation's funds. To that extent, I believe that those who will constitute the board should be wisely selected from a wide range of people of proven experience and capacity. It should be ensured that there will be a minimum of political influence and a maximum of economic common sense involved in the decisions made by the board.

Although the Bill might be heralded as another step towards deregulation and the promotion of private enterprise, the corporation will still be a Government instrumentality, and again I return to the requirement that a Government instrumentality report to the Parliament of this State. I refer again to the State Government Insurance Office (Queensland) Act, from which I quoted in a previous debate and from which I again intend to quote.

Section 20 deals with the annual balance sheet. Although I cannot quote chapter and verse, clause 51 of this Bill refers to an "Annual balance sheet and statements of account". The clause appears to be an almost direct steal from a clause in the Bill debated earlier this afternoon and from the State Government Insurance Office (Queensland) Act. In this instance, as I said in the previous debate, one notices that everything seems to run smoothly as to the sentiments expressed in the original legislation, with the exception of the paragraph—

"A copy of such balance sheet and each statement of account shall be laid before the Legislative Assembly as soon as practicable."

In view of the amount of money involved and the policy determinations that obviously will flow from the deliberations and workings of the corporation, they are the very minimum requirements for accountability to the Parliament. I would like to see a full report to the Parliament from a Government instrumentality such as this corporation.

Because of the lack of opportunity to draft a more comprehensive amendment, at the Committee stage the Liberal Party proposes to move an amendment similar to that which it moved in a previous debate, calling for accountability. At the appropriate time, the Liberal Party will seek to add to clause 51 a paragraph stating—

"A copy of such Balance Sheet and each Statement of Account together with such other relevant information shall be laid before the Legislative Assembly as soon as practicable."

The Liberal Party commends the legislation. It regrets the haste with which the Bill is passing through the Chamber. Nevertheless, it is confident that the formation of the Queensland Industry Development Corporation will be a forward step for Queensland.

Hon. W. A. M. GUNN (Somerset—Deputy Premier and Minister Assisting the Treasurer) (5.1 p.m.), in reply: At the outset, I thank honourable members who participated in this debate for their involvement.

I am encouraged that both the Liberal Party and the Labor Party have expressed their support for this important Government initiative. It is perhaps an indication of enlightened thinking on their part.

I was somewhat bemused, however, to hear the Leader of the Opposition (Mr Warburton) claim that the Government is stealing his policy. It is indeed a revelation to hear that the Labor Party does have positive policies.

It is, of course, also nonsense to claim that the Queensland Industry Development Corporation has been modelled on the Western Australian Development Corporation or any other State development corporation. The WADC has been set up as a deliberate instrument of interventionist policy by a socialist Government. It is a vehicle by which that Government is seeking to expand public-sector control over the economy of the State.

The QIDC also differs markedly from the Victorian Economic Development Corporation, which has been placed in a socialist straight-jacket by its legislation. It has been burdened by what are euphemistically termed "quantitative targets". In reality, they are orders from the Government about where the corporation should direct its financing activities. They limit the corporation's independence and flexibility, and restrict its capacity to operate on a fully commercial basis.

The QIDC will be different from other State development corporations, most of which rely, at least in part, on Government funding, even for their supposedly commercial activities.

In its general commercial role, the QIDC will have greater financing flexibility and independence than any other development corporation. It will succeed or fail on the strength of its own judgments.

Finally, the Opposition has also claimed that the QIDC is being established to bolster a sagging economy. Of course, such a curious claim flies in the face of the facts concerning the Queensland economy.

It is indeed fascinating that the Leader of the Opposition regards himself as more of an expert in economic analysis and forecasting than the National Institute of Economic and Industry Research—a body which, incidentally, is retained by both the New South Wales and Victorian Governments for advice on their State economies.

Let me repeat what the national institute had to say about the recent and expected performance of the Queensland economy—

"The Queensland leading indicator rose in February 1985 and then declined continuously until August 1985 before increasing again in September to November. This suggests a substantial slowing of growth in the Queensland economy between April and September 1985 from very high levels to just above trend. The more recent rise in the index is broadly based, with all components increasing, indicating a return to strong growth in Queensland during the balance of 1985 and early 1986."

The spectacular economic growth that Queensland has recorded in recent years has enabled this State to achieve a high base of economic activity.

It is now appropriate to look at ways of consolidating and strengthening that base, by a further broadening of economic activity. The establishment of the QIDC is a tangible way in which the Government can facilitate private sector expansion in the context of the growth phase we are now entering.

Let me conclude by reiterating the major features of the QIDC. It is a financial corporation of vital importance to the future economic and business development of the State. Its role will be to provide funds for the development and expansion of industry in Queensland.

The corporation will fill a gap in existing capital markets by directing finance to those projects that are potentially viable but lack the necessary capital or security to meet normal banking criteria. The corporation will seek to encourage innovative or technologically oriented investments in industries in which Queensland has particular skills, products or advantages to exploit.

In addition, the corporation will assume the responsibilities and activities of the Agricultural Bank, the Rural Reconstruction Board and other rural finance schemes, as well as the activities of the Industries Assistance Board. This amalgamation is intended to achieve a better co-ordinated and more effective administration in these areas.

Overall, the corporation will be expected to operate on a commercial basis. It will be run as a business, and for business. It will be in the business of creating greater profits and wealth in the private sector, thereby increasing economic growth and employment prospects throughout the economy.

I look forward to the corporation's becoming an active partner in the future progress and prosperity of Queensland. Again, I thank all honourable members who contributed to this debate.

Motion (Mr Gunn) agreed to.

Committee

Mr Menzel (Mulgrave) in the chair; Hon. W. A. M. Gunn (Somerset—Deputy Premier and Minister Assisting the Treasurer) in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 50, as read, agreed to.

Clause 51—Annual balance sheet and statements of account—

Sir WILLIAM KNOX (5.7 p.m.): As my colleague pointed out, this legislation creates a very substantial corporation. By its creation, it reduces the number of statutory bodies, although, as the Minister stated, another advisory body, which is not mentioned in the legislation, will be created. One would have hoped that that could have been avoided and that the corporation might have been able to create a sub-body of itself to look at the sort of matters to which the Minister referred, particularly rural matters. Nevertheless, by creating this new corporation, the number of statutory bodies will be reduced.

Because of the vastness of the corporation and its ramifications, it seems appropriate that it should report to Parliament. It is not good enough for the Minister to simply say that it will report of its own free will. That is one of the reasons why, in the last year or so, difficulties have arisen when reports have not been presented to the Parliament, including reports that are obliged to come to the Parliament within a particular time. If there is no co-operation when the law says that reports must be presented, what chance is there that, in the passage of time, reports that are not obliged to be presented will be placed before the Parliament?

It is not enough for the Auditor-General to look at the accounts and make a report that appears in his report on the Miscellaneous Departmental Accounts and the Accounts of Statutory Bodies and Local Authorities. That is not the reason why the Liberal Party wants a report to Parliament. One would assume that if the Auditor-General did not audit the accounts, an auditor of standing would, and the accounts would be available publicly, anyway, in some form or other. The reason for reporting to Parliament is for the accounting of the objectives of the corporation in relation to its legislation, the policies that the corporation is following and the ramifications of the corporation. That is why Liberal members want a report presented to the Parliament. We do not want to see the arithmetics of the accounts and a report from Auditor-General that he is satisfied.

If he is not satisfied at any time, he can take action to see that things are corrected without any need to come to Parliament.

It is important for Parliament to know the direction that these bodies are taking and what they are doing. That can be done only with a comprehensive report to Parliament. A number of statutory bodies produce reports that do not come to Parliament. Some reports have come to Parliament only because of the sensitivity and the good sense of the Minister concerned in seeing that the reports are tabled in Parliament, even though they are not ordered by Parliament to be printed. That practice has been adopted on a number of occasions. For two years since it was set up, one statutory body has not yet produced a report.

The question of the reporting to Parliament of the activities of a statutory body is not a matter to be taken lightly. Queensland has approximately 1 050 statutory bodies and committees set up by various pieces of legislation. Not all of them report to their Minister; certainly, a minimum number of them report to Parliament. However, one as vast and as comprehensive as this corporation should be obliged by law to report to Parliament within a reasonable time after the end of the financial year.

I move the following amendment—

“At page 25, after line 27, insert the words—

‘A copy of such Balance Sheet and each Statement of Account together with such other relevant information shall be laid before the Legislative Assembly as soon as practicable.’ ”

Mr WARBURTON: Two points have to be made on this clause. The one made by the honourable member for Nundah (Sir William Knox) is valid. As I indicated earlier, it is only pigheadedness on the part of the Government that this suggestion was not welcomed relative to the Suncorp legislation. I would think that it certainly will not be accepted on this occasion.

My second point is that the clause contains the words “as soon as practicable”. In other words, as soon as practicable after the completion of each financial year, the board shall prepare and furnish to the Minister a balance sheet and statements of account. As I said before, that is not good enough. The member for Nundah used the same words. He said that it was not good enough. So there is unanimous opinion among non-Government members that the legislation should be altered in the interests of good government. The clause is a direct take from the Suncorp legislation.

There is argument over this issue, and time is running out. In my opinion, there should be a specific provision for the accounts to be issued, at the very worst, at the end of the first quarter after the end of each financial year. In respect of the other legislation—if the Government is to introduce legislation of this kind that brings about deregulation, it has to introduce more accountability. The failure of the Government to insert a provision into the legislation that makes it mandatory upon the Minister to table a report is pure evidence of the fact that the Government does not believe in accountability to the Parliament.

Mr GUNN: I do not want to enlarge on what I said on the Suncorp legislation. The amendment is absolutely unnecessary. Assurances have been given by me. That is fair enough. I do not intend to enlarge upon that.

Question—That the words proposed to be inserted in clause 51 (Sir William Knox’s amendment) be so inserted—put; and the Committee divided—

AYES, 30		NOES, 39	
Braddy	Underwood	Ahern	Lane
Burns	Vaughan	Alison	Lester
Campbell	Veivers	Austin	Lingard
Comben	Warburton	Bailey	Littleproud
De Lacy	Warner, A. M.	Booth	McKechnie
Eaton	White	Borbidge	McPhie
Fouras	Yewdale	Cahill	Miller
Gibbs, R. J.		Chapman	Muntz
Goss		Clauson	Newton
Hamill		Cooper	Randell
Knox		Elliott	Row
Kruger		FitzGerald	Simpson
Lee		Gibbs, I. J.	Stephan
Mackenroth		Glasson	Tenni
McElligott		Gunn	Turner
McLean		Harper	Wharton
Milliner		Harvey	
Palaszczuk		Henderson	
Prest	<i>Tellers:</i>	Hinze	<i>Tellers:</i>
Price	Davis	Jennings	Kaus
Shaw	Gygar	Katter	Neal

Resolved in the negative.

Clause 51, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 52 to 56, as read, agreed to.

Clause 57—Review of Act—

Sir WILLIAM KNOX (5.25 p.m.): Clause 57 should not be allowed to pass without comment. It is a rare provision in Queensland's legislation and one that I would like to see more of. All honourable members would probably welcome it, particularly in legislation creating statutory authorities. Although it is not, strictly speaking, a sunset clause, it does provide the opportunity for the Minister to demand by law that the whole Act be reviewed after a 10-year interval.

Although the Minister rejected the request to have put into law that reports be made to Parliament on the annual activities of the corporation, it will be noted that clause 57 provides for the report of the review of the Act to be laid on the table of the Parliament. I commend that provision. However, it would be rather sad if a review were to be tabled in 10 years' time and the annual reports for the intervening period could not be found. I acknowledge that the Minister will do as he says, but some other Minister might feel that it is not appropriate to table the annual reports in Parliament.

I commend the Minister for having a review of the Act provided in the legislation. It is a provision that ought to be considered for all statutory authorities, when the relevant legislation comes before the Parliament for review. Sunset clauses of this type, or even stronger, should appear in the legislation relating to statutory authorities.

Clause 57, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

Third Reading

Bill, on motion of Mr Gunn, read a third time.

STOCK ROUTES AND RURAL LANDS PROTECTION BOARD VALIDATION BILL

Hon. W. H. GLASSON (Gregory—Minister for Lands, Forestry and Police), by leave, without notice: I move—

“That leave be given to bring in a Bill to make provision for the commencement and repeal of an Act and to validate an appointment.”

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

Bill presented and, on motion of Mr Glasson, read a first time.

Second Reading

Hon. W. H. GLASSON (Gregory—Minister for Lands, Forestry and Police) (5.28 p.m.): I move—

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

During 1981, representations were made to the Government to appoint a nominee of the Committee of Direction of Fruit Marketing to the Stock Routes and Rural Lands Protection Board. Cabinet decided that approval be given for the introduction of a Bill to so include a representative of that committee in the membership of the board. Subsequently, the relevant Bill was presented and passed by Parliament, receiving Royal assent on 11 December 1981.

Section 2 of the 1981 amending Act reads—

“Commencement. (1) This section and section (1) shall commence on the day on which this Act is assented to for and on behalf of Her Majesty.

(2) Except as provided by subsection (1), this Act shall commence on a day appointed by Proclamation.”

An Executive minute was passed on 11 February 1982 appointing Mr James Alfred Dobson to that position. Unfortunately, no proclamation effecting the commencement of the Act, other than sections 1 and 2, was ever made.

The Rural Lands Protection Act of 1985 was passed by Parliament in August and, as the amending Act of 1981 had not been proclaimed into force, it was not repealed along with the Stock Routes and Rural Lands Protection Act of 1944 and other subsequent amendment Acts. So that the position would be clarified, Cabinet approved the preparation of a Bill deeming the Stock Routes and Rural Lands Protection Act of 1981 to have commenced on 1 January 1982, and validating the appointment of the nominee of the Committee of Direction of Fruit Marketing as a member of the Stock Routes and Rural Lands Protection Board, with the repeal of the said Act of 1981 on the commencement of the Rural Lands Protection Act of 1985, other than sections 1 and 2. The Bill has been prepared, and is now before the House as the Stock Routes and Rural Lands Protection Board Validation Bill.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Mackenroth, adjourned.

DRUGS MISUSE BILL

Hon. W. H. GLASSON (Gregory—Minister for Lands, Forestry and Police), by leave, without notice: I move—

“That leave be given to bring in a Bill to consolidate and amend the law relating to the misuse of drugs and to make further provision for the prevention of the misuse of drugs.”

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

Bill presented and, on motion of Mr Glasson, read a first time.

Second Reading

Hon. W. H. GLASSON (Gregory—Minister for Lands, Forestry and Police) (5.32 p.m.): I move—

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

On 15 August 1983, Cabinet, by way of Decision No. 41041, gave approval in principle for the preparation of a suitable Bill to deal with the misuse of illegal drugs in this State. This Bill is to be known as the Drugs Misuse Bill. During the preparation of the Bill, ongoing discussions have been taking place with officers of the Department of Justice, Department of Health and Treasury Department.

This Bill brings to fruition a 1983 election promise made by the honourable the Premier and Treasurer of Queensland (Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen) to introduce tough new measures to combat drug-trafficking in this State. In many ways, it represents a new approach to the ever-increasing problem of drug-trafficking in this State. The present provisions contained in the Health Act 1937 are totally inadequate to deal with the drug problems of today's society.

The introduction of this legislation has been the goal of the present Government for some time, and represents a further step in combating this insidious menace to society brought upon us by unscrupulous persons who have in mind only one thing, namely, the enrichment of themselves, without regard for the harm they cause to members of society. The preliminary preparation has been detailed and thorough, and has involved, among other things, an in depth study of legislation pertaining to this subject from other States and overseas countries, and the applicability of these legislative precedents to Queensland.

Quite contrary to what some media commentators have stated and printed over the last week, the principal thrust of the Bill is not aimed at actual users of drugs. Unfortunately, after some details of the Bill were leaked to the media last Wednesday, it was claimed by some people that the Government was aiming at throwing youngsters of 17 or 18 years of age, who might be foolish enough to experiment with drugs, into gaol for life. Nothing could be further from the truth.

The Bill is aimed at protecting our young people from the greed of those who live off the drug habits that their unfortunate victims develop. Drug-traffickers in this filthy trade—and I do not care who they might be—are nothing but parasites on today's young people and society in general, extracting millions of dollars from those who are addicted. These are the people that this Bill is intended to catch, not their victims. Drug-traffickers are forcing youngsters into lives of crime and prostitution to sustain their habits, which for some heroin addicts are known to cost more than \$400,000 a year.

People who have written and stated in the media that the Government is going to grab innocent youngsters and throw them into gaol for life for having in their possession as little as two grams of heroin or other hard drugs for their own need are duping the public. These people, including the Queensland Council for Civil Liberties vice-president (Terry O'Gorman), are either totally naive about the real situation in the hard-drug scene or are blatantly trying to mislead the general public.

For instance, they could not realise that two grams of pure heroin, when broken down for sale in the street, is worth about \$8,000. Two grams of cocaine, similarly cut for street sale, is worth about \$9,000, and .002 grams of LSD at street level is worth between \$8,000 and \$10,000. As for marijuana, the 100 gram minimum stated in the Bill, depending on where it is grown and whether it contains the flowering tops, can be sold for between \$1,000 and \$2,000 at street level. They must agree that these amounts are not quite in the week-end pocket-money range of experimenters.

No innocent youngster, or someone experimenting with any drug, could realistically be expected to have drugs of that value on him, unless he was in fact into trafficking.

As I have said, one would have to be naive in the extreme to know the truth of the situation on this point, and still maintain any objection to the Bill.

As to the physical drug weights adopted in this Bill—they are exactly the same as the Federal Government has accepted for a number of years as trafficable quantities. They are identical to the weights that the Federal Government has included as trafficable quantities in its Customs Act.

Mr Mackenroth: What page are you on?

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr Mackenroth: We've got the wrong speech.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! If the honourable member for Chatsworth wishes to take a point of order, he should get to his feet and do so instead of interjecting.

Mr Mackenroth: Which page are you on?

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr MACKENROTH: I rise to a point of order. Can the Minister tell me which page he is on?

Mr GLASSON: I have condensed the speech that I had originally intended to present. The remainder will be incorporated in *Hansard*, in its original form, under Standing Order No. 241.

Mr MACKENROTH: I rise to a point of order. The Minister cannot have the original speech incorporated in *Hansard* unless he asks leave of the House to do so.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I believe that that will be done.

Mr GLASSON: I will do so accordingly.

Mr MACKENROTH: I rise to a point of order. The Minister said that he intends to read one speech and have another speech incorporated in *Hansard*. That cannot be done unless the Minister seeks and obtains leave of the House to have the other speech incorporated and, if that is done, both speeches must be incorporated. What the Minister is saying now is what the *Hansard* reporters are recording. We are trying to follow what he is saying. He just cannot change it.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr Mackenroth: Bill, you didn't tell us you were going to do this. We are trying to follow your speech.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Chatsworth has made a point. I refer him to Standing Order No. 241 (c), which states—

“During or after such explanatory speech, additional information to assist in the understanding of the Bill may be Tabled for incorporation in ‘Hansard’.”

I believe that arrangements have been made with the table staff, and that that is exactly what will happen.

Mr GLASSON: That is true; arrangements have been made.

Complaints about the weights must surely appear suspect to the general public—or can they be used by the Federal authorities without criticism but suddenly become cause for major concern when used by the Queensland Government using exactly the same criteria?

I thank editorial writers and commentators who have strongly supported the overall thrust of the Bill, and I hope that I have now adequately addressed their major stated concerns. However, by allowing the Bill to lie on the table from now until Parliament resumes in February, the Government is allowing 10 weeks for input from appropriate outside bodies, such as the Bar Association of Queensland and the Queensland Law Society.

This legislation, with its mandatory life gaol sentences for those convicted under it for trafficking in drugs, or producing or financing drug-trafficking enterprises, will become the toughest in Australia today. For that reason, the Government is not rushing this legislation into law. It wants Queensland to have the best and most comprehensive, yet

strongest and most effective anti-drug-trafficking legislation possible. In moving towards the achievement of this aim, I believe that this Government has the backing of every thinking parent and, indeed, a large proportion of our young people. There is no room in Queensland for those who deal in drugs—the merchants of death, who profiteer from human tragedy, who scavenge on the minds and bodies of our young people.

Mr Speaker, the major points of this legislation are directed towards—

- (i) prohibiting trafficking in dangerous drugs;
- (ii) prohibiting unlawful supply of dangerous drugs;
- (iii) prohibiting unlawful possession of dangerous drugs;
- (iv) forfeiture of assets acquired from trafficking in dangerous drugs;
- (v) stopping places being used for the purpose of trafficking in dangerous drugs;
- (vi) providing police officers with adequate powers to carry out investigations into such offences properly;
- (vii) providing for the forfeiture of assets and vehicles, etc., that have been acquired in connection with drug-trafficking; and
- (viii) providing within the legislation the mechanisms necessary for establishing an inquiry tribunal to inquire into drug-trafficking.

Mr Speaker, under Standing Order No. 241 (c) to which you have referred, I table, for incorporation in *Hansard*, further information to assist honourable members' understanding of the Drugs Misuse Bill.

Whereupon the honourable gentleman laid on the table the following document—

It must be clearly understood there is no intention on the part of this Government to in any way legalise the personal use of marihuana. About 80 percent of heroin addicts are estimated to start their drug experience with marihuana. These statistics show that society is at risk, especially our young people—already misdirected through peer pressure towards tobacco and alcohol abuse.

Studies have shown that the most likely marihuana user is a young person. The potential is there for the adulteration of the product with additives including narcotic drugs, resulting in young persons becoming dependant on hard drugs. Involvement in heroin, L.S.D. and cocaine is very often a one way trip leading to death.

There is no doubt that the Queensland trade in drugs is showing an ever increasing growth. This is clearly indicated by random sampling of just a few Queensland areas between 1 January 1982 and 7 March 1983. In this period, dealing only with plantations where there were in excess of 1 000 plants, 14 plantations containing some 59 000 plants were found. At a value of between \$500 to \$1 000 per plant monetary value was between 29½ and 59 million dollars. Twelve persons were arrested. One plantation had some 27 000 plants.

With regard to the latest seizures in Queensland, on 6 November 1985. Police raided a property near Charleville and found about 5 acres of marihuana plants under cultivation. There were more than 15 000 plants between five and six feet tall. Several bags of harvested plants were also found. Several vehicles, tractors and a \$30 000 irrigation system was found. Estimated street value was about \$30 million dollars. Six men have been charged. The following day a further crop with an estimated value of over \$1 million dollars was found near Gympie.

With regard to the whole of Australia the Australian Bureau of Criminal Intelligence provided the following figures for the period 1974 to April 1985 with regard to known (to ABCI) seizures of marihuana where the plantations had in excess of 500 plants each—

Total: 150 plantations—

Projected Value—	1.62 billion dollars
Average annual seizure rate—	117.5 million dollars
Estimated average seizure rate—	20%
Estimated value of detected and undetected marihuana nationally i.e. 100%—	587.5 million dollars (annual)
Value of undetected marihuana 80%—	470 million dollars (annual)

Even the newspapers are estimating profits on drug trafficking at around \$727 million dollars a year and it is interesting to note how this estimated value of marihuana compares with some latest annual figures for wheat and sugar. Latest annual figures for wheat show a gross figure of 3625.9 million dollars and sugar of 516.7 million. With a projected figure of 587.5 million dollars for marihuana it can be seen as being Australia's second biggest agricultural crop.

By the introduction of this Bill it is intended to make Queensland a most unpopular place—in fact hopefully the most unpopular place in Australia—for hard drug dealers or traffickers. If they intend to operate in this State, they must be prepared to stay here as guests of Her Majesty. It is interesting to note that recently a survey in Western Australia came out strongly in favour of the reintroduction of the death penalty for traffickers in dangerous drugs. A survey in Queensland by Channel 7 in July of this year produced a 94.8% vote for much tougher drug trafficking penalties.

Civil liberties activists and similar disproportionately loud—for the size of the membership—groups will not tell the real story; instead they campaign against the new legislation without waiting to see what is actually in the Bill. These groups will not tell the public how bad things really are in the drug scene for the many people in our society who have been affected by these drugs.

For example an official survey of addicts in custody, shows that some addicts have been known to spend up to \$400.000 a year maintaining their drug supplies. The worst feature of this is that almost all this money—an average of around \$2.000 a week for heroin addicts interviewed—is obtained through offences against property. In the main, breaking and entering offences.

Most of the rest came from young people prostituting themselves. Very few of those interviewed could afford to maintain their habits by lawful means.

For instance a group of 54 inmates of New South Wales prisons admitted that between them they had committed 5 319 break and enter offences to feed their drug habits. In Queensland this trade in drugs has now forced addicts into a deeper and more serious level of crime—that of armed hold ups.

In this drug trade it has been found that in many instances pushers initially provide drugs free to their victims as an initial stage towards getting young people hooked on drugs.

Evidence is now clearly available that young persons once hooked on drugs are stood over by their pushers or suppliers who let them get into debt and then demand payment or suffer the consequences. These consequences vary from seizure of personal belongings to severe bashings and murder.

The addiction to these dangerous drugs leaves behind a pitiful trail of broken minds, broken homes and broken families and in the worst cases turning human beings into virtual vegetables, followed all too frequently by death.

That the present drug laws are lacking in suitable penalties as a deterrent is borne out by the remarks of Toowoomba Magistrate, Mr Fairweather who is reported in the Courier Mail of 20 November 1985 as saying. "Drug Penalties were 'powder puff punishment'." He went on to say that "drug arrests" have risen by 500 percent in the past two years despite the penalties imposed by this Court. The Magistrate made these remarks when sentencing three men to six months jail after they had been found growing about 160 marihuana plants near Ravensbourne National Park.

As I said earlier, this Bill intends to make things tough for drug traffickers in this State.

Turning to the Bill itself, the Act will be known as the Drugs Misuse Act and as is usual with Acts of this nature will be broken up into parts, Divisions and Sections. The first three sections are introductory machinery clauses followed by an interpretation clause. Clause 4 which spells out the meanings that are to be given to various words that are used consistently throughout the Act.

Whilst there are a number of such words defined attention is drawn to a particular few. These are the terms—

"associate" which is defined so as to enable the forfeiture provisions to have the best possible application having regard to the need for justice in such provisions.

"produce" which includes all acts from the bringing of dangerous drugs into existence through to the necessary acts prior to actual supply.

“unlawfully” is defined as being without any lawful authorization, justification or excuse. Matters of excuse include not only the usual matters contained in the “Criminal Code” but also includes special excuses contained in clauses 40, 41, 42, 43, and 44.

The Act will contain five schedules. The Fifth Schedule will specify the amendments to the “Health Act”. The other four schedules apply to the Act itself. The first Schedule lists the drugs which will attract the harshest penalties under the Act. These are heroin, cocaine, phencyclidine and lysergide. The Second Schedule lists those other drugs which will be the subject of the Act. The Third Schedule will contain a list of drugs in conjunction with a certain weight. These weights are consistent with those contained in the “Customs Act” of the Commonwealth. Producing and possessing drugs in a quantity equal to or in excess of this weight renders the offender liable to a greater punishment. The Fourth Schedule lists those drugs which are subject to a special defence provision. This will be addressed later.

The first major offence is that of drug trafficking, that is, carrying on the business of unlawfully producing or supplying dangerous drugs or getting involved in such trafficking by financing such acts. This renders the offender liable to imprisonment for life. If the drug involved is one of those in the First Schedule the punishment cannot be mitigated or varied by a court.

The offence dealt with in Clause 6 is that of supplying dangerous drugs. If the drug supplied is one listed in the First Schedule the punishment is imprisonment for life, which cannot be mitigated or varied by a court if an adult supplies the drug to a child.

The lesser offence in Clause 6 is that of supplying Second Schedule drugs which attracts 15 years jail, or, in the case of an adult supplying a child, life imprisonment.

Clause 7 is aimed at making less attractive the benefits of the drug trade. The section proscribes the receiving or possession of property obtained from the commission of offences defined in clauses 5 and 6. The offence is punishable with life imprisonment which cannot be mitigated or varied in the case of proceeds from the dealing in First Schedule drugs.

Clause 8 prohibits the production of dangerous drugs. If the drug is a First Schedule drug, the penalty is life imprisonment, and this penalty cannot be mitigated or varied if the amount equals or exceeds that in the Third Schedule. Producing Second Schedule drugs is punishable with life imprisonment.

Possession of dangerous drugs is prohibited by clause 9. Again the penalties are dependant on the type and amount of drug.

Clause 10 prohibits the possession of those things used to produce, supply and consume dangerous drugs.

Clause 11 prohibits a person from permitting a place of which he is the occupier to be used for the purpose of producing, supplying and consuming dangerous drugs. In other words this covers the person who permits his place to be used for the purpose of manufacturing dangerous drugs or cultivating cannabis etc. The penalty is to be 15 years imprisonment with hard labour.

Clause 12 permits certain offences to be dealt with by a stipendiary magistrate. These offences are producing Second Schedule drugs and possession of non-traffickable quantities of dangerous drugs.

Whilst it is intended that these matters of personal possession will normally be dealt with in a Magistrates Court, the magistrate will, as provided for in clause 37, have an overriding discretion to either deal with the matter or to commit the person for trial or sentence as for an offence of drug trafficking. This overriding discretion currently exists in the present Health Act.

Clause 13 is the first of a few clauses providing for police powers of searching for and seizure of dangerous drugs. In the present Health Act, section 130M, provides powers to detain, search, seize and arrest. In dealing with problems associated with the dangerous drug trade it is most essential that police have adequate powers if they are to cope with the drug traffickers.

This clause will provide that where a police officer reasonably suspects that any vehicle or any thing in it may afford evidence of the commission of an offence under Part II of this Act he may stop, search and seize the same.

The clause will also provide that where a member of the police force detains a thing he may remove it to any place he thinks fit or in the case of searching a vehicle, aircraft or vessel if need be, can remove it to some other place where the search can better be carried out.

Clause 14 provides that where a police officer reasonably suspects a person to be in possession of any thing that will afford evidence as to the commission of an offence under Part II he may detain and search such person. There will be times when it will be more desirable to take a person to a place of privacy to carry out the search and the section provides for this to be done.

This clause has a number of safeguards built into it. Firstly, the person of the person, as well as the clothing being worn by the person, can only be searched by a person of the same sex as the person being searched. If it is necessary to remove any clothing in order to seize and retain it, the person shall be left with suitable replacement clothing. A further safeguard is provided for in the provision requiring all searches under Clause 14, to be entered into a register, which shall be available for inspection.

Clause 15 sets out who may conduct searches of persons and how they are to be conducted. For example a search of a female may only be carried out by a female or a medical practitioner. If a person cannot be searched at a particular place in accordance with the requirements, then the member of the police force detaining the person may, by virtue of Clause 14 (3), take the person to a place where the search can be carried out in accordance with the requirements of the Act. A person shall not be detained longer or conveyed further than is reasonable under the circumstances in order to carry out the search.

Section 16 provides for body cavity searches or internal searches which must only be carried out by a medical practitioner. The prerequisite for such an intrusive action on the part of the police is that the secreted drug must be such that it may endanger life or cause serious injury to health.

The search can only be requested by a police officer of or above the rank of Inspector. However, a police officer may conduct a search of a person's mouth for the purposes of this Act. This particular provision is necessary because drug offenders have been known to conceal drugs in their mouth or try to swallow same to prevent detection by police.

Clause 17 provides for the issue by a justice of a search warrant to search a place where a member of the police force has reasonable grounds for believing that there is in any place a thing that contravenes Part II of this Act.

The warrant will provide for the entry or re-entry to the place named in the warrant, and the seizing, detention and removal of any thing found in the place if such thing will afford evidence.

For the purpose of obtaining a search warrant under this section, the application, any information concerning the application, and administration of the oath may be administered in part or in whole by telephone, telex, radio or similar facility.

The issue of a warrant by use of telephone or radio facilities is in force in other States, such as New South Wales, and the Northern Territory. New South Wales in particular makes use of such warrants in the case of domestic violence situations. Having in mind the size of Queensland it is desirable that there is access to similar provisions.

The clause also provides for certain safeguards with regard to the issue of telephone warrants. A member of the police force who obtains such a warrant must comply with certain requirements concerning the application for, the completion of the warrant, execution of same and listing and describing of things seized.

No doubt there will be an outcry from civil liberties groups that the introduction of the concept of obtaining warrants by telephone is a breach of their civil liberties. However, one must remember the type of offender that we are dealing with and the havoc that a drug trafficker can cause among young people.

Clause 17 also contains power for searches in cases of an emergency, without warrant. This type of power has been recommended by the national draft legislation on drug trafficking which recognizes the need for immediate searches of places as long as the police can show they reasonably believed the thing to be seized would have been concealed or destroyed unless the place was entered immediately.

Clause 18 is to aid police investigations into major drug raids. Once a person is arrested the normal procedure is that a person must be taken before a justice. However, this clause allows that a person, may with his written consent and within a period of 48 hours after his arrest and before he is taken before a justice, be taken to one or more places for the purpose of furthering an investigation into the commission of offences under this Act.

Clause 19 is a normal name and address provision and is similar to provisions contained in other Acts. The authority for a police officer to require a person to supply his name and address is a very necessary provision needed to assist in the effective enforcement of the Act.

Many recent Acts of Parliament contain provisions for the taking of fingerprints, photographs, etc., of persons arrested. Clause 20 of this Act makes a similar provision and also allows for the destruction of those prints etc., where the person is found not guilty or is not proceeded against.

Clause 21 authorises a police officer who suspects on reasonable grounds that a drug trafficking offence is taking place and that the dangerous drug is in or on anything that is moveable or that a person involved in the offence may be in or on that thing, or vehicle to place a tracking device on that thing or vehicle.

Police can then track the thing or vehicle to its destination.

Where a tracking device is used the member of the police force using same must furnish a report to the Commissioner on the use of the tracking device. The Commissioner in turn shall bring the report to the notice of the Minister.

Clause 22 makes provision for the use of listening devices. Similar provisions have existed in the "Invasion of Privacy Act" for some time. It is to be made quite clear that nothing in this Act has any application to telephone tapping. The interception of telephone calls is a matter solely within the province of the Federal Government constitutionally. Only if that Government permits such conduct by State police will this Parliament be called upon to address the issue.

Before a member of the police force sets out to use a listening device, he must have the authority of an interception warrant issued under the hand of a Judge of the Supreme Court of Queensland.

An application for an interception warrant may only be made by a police officer of or above the rank of Inspector. With the application for interception warrants a specified format must be followed and the Judge, when considering the application, must have regard to the gravity of the matters being investigated, the extent to which the privacy of a person is likely to be interfered with if the application is granted and the extent to which the prevention or detection of the offence is likely to be assisted if the application is granted.

The Judge also has the right to impose conditions, limitations or restrictions as are necessary in the public interest.

Clause 23, as indicated by the head-note, provides for the issue of emergency permits by the Judge of the Supreme Court to intercept private communications. These emergency permits shall be in force for a period of 48 hours or such time as the Judge directs and will expire at the end of that period.

Clause 24 is a machinery section necessary to prevent conflict between the Drugs Misuse Act and the Invasion of Privacy Act with regard to listening devices.

Clause 25 is the first clause relating to the establishing of a Drugs Misuse Tribunal within the framework of this Act. The Tribunal will only operate in connection with major drug trafficking offences when all normal avenues of investigation have been exhausted. It is not directed towards the personal user as is indicated by the fact that the conduct being investigated must be punishable by life imprisonment. The concept of establishing within the framework of this Act a Drugs Misuse Tribunal originated from legislation in use in the United States of America namely the Organised Crime Control Act and the R.I.C.O. Statute (Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations).

The 'R.I.C.O.' Statute in the United States has allowed the addition of a significant weapon against white collar and organized criminals . . . the attack on the organization, the enterprise, or the pattern of criminal activity which is at the core of the effort of these individuals to acquire power and profit. Simply put, this Statute gives the means to deal with professional and organized crime by monetary means. The idea of a Drugs Misuse Tribunal in this Act was based on the concept of the United States legislation.

The Clause provides that where an investigation into a trafficking offence has failed to discover all the evidence relating to the acts of a suspect or to establish the identity of any person involved in drug trafficking the Commissioner of Police may furnish a report on the circumstances to the Attorney-General.

The Attorney-General is then required to consider the report and he may then forward it to the Governor-in-Council with his recommendations as to whether he considers an investigation by the Drugs Misuse Tribunal will bring the case to a successful conclusion.

The Governor-in-Council may then authorise the establishment of the Tribunal headed by a suitably qualified person.

Clause 26 provides that a Tribunal established under this Act shall be deemed a Commission of Inquiry with certain parts of the "Commission of Inquiry" applying.

Clause 27 sets out the various powers the Tribunal may use concerning its investigations. The Tribunal will have power to summon and examine witnesses.

Clause 28 makes provision for a court to order the forfeiture of any dangerous drug the subject of a charge under the Act. The clause also provides for the forfeiture, by order of the court, of other personal property, such as pipes, syringes, packaging, scales and vehicles used in the commission of the offence and apparently owned by the offender or any other person apparently a party to the offence.

Clause 29 empowers a Supreme Court Judge to forfeit any real property, such as a farm, used in the commission of an offence and apparently owned by the offender or any other person apparently a party to the offence.

In either case, if the property belonged to a person other than the offender, and it is claimed the other person was not a party to the offence, such person is not barred from civil recovery by the provisions of Clause 30.

Clause 31 is also concerned with protecting the rights of third parties such as mortgagees. The rights of these people are protected, so long as they are not parties to the offence.

By Clause 32 a court may order the forfeiture of the assets of drug traffickers and their associates so long as there is some connexion with an offence defined in Part II of the Act. This provision is similar to that in the draft Federal drug law.

Clause 33 empowers all property forfeited to be disposed of in accordance with the Minister's directions.

Clause 34 provides the machinery by which an order, prohibiting the dealing in property liable to be forfeited, may be obtained.

By Clause 35 all the associates of a drug trafficker become parties to the forfeiture proceedings.

Clause 36 is a machinery provision indicating that the Criminal Code is to be read in conjunction with this Act with due alteration of details as appropriate.

Clause 37 spells out how proceedings for offences under this Act are to be conducted, it should be noted that proceedings for summary convictions can only be dealt with by a Stipendiary Magistrate.

Clause 38 empowers a court in a similar way to that already existing in regard to certain sexual offences, to prohibit publication of details of proceedings before it. This clause does not make such proceedings closed to the public, or "in camera". It only prohibits publicity surrounding a case for such time, and in such manner, having regard to the safety of any person, the extent to which detection of offences of a like nature may be affected and the need to guarantee the confidentiality of information given by an informer.

Clause 39 is a machinery section to make it clear that people convicted of drug related crimes be treated as such.

Clause 40 is a defence for police officers called upon to engage in otherwise illegal conduct in order to bring to justice those engaged in unlawful drug dealing.

Similarly, Clause 41 provides a defence for other people involved in the judicial process who are required to possess the drugs and other things seized by police as exhibits.

Clauses 42 and 43 are a direct result of the Government's concern that justice can be properly done in all cases involving those who come into contact with drugs.

Clause 42 provides a defence on a possession charge for a person who finds drugs and related things. To avail himself of the defence, the person must establish that the drug was recently found, that this was the only time he possessed it and that he was taking it straight to a police station.

Clause 43 relates to those drugs listed in the Fourth Schedule and provides a defence for a person charged with supplying drugs if he proves it was a drug prescribed for him, that it was supplied to a person whom he believed to be suffering from the same or a similar condition, that the supply was not for gain, that the dosage was a single, prescribed dose and that it was immediately consumed. The creation of this defence was to ensure that the benefits of the new laws did not get confused in the relatively minor abuses which sometimes occur with prescription drugs.

Clause 44 is a machinery provision to ensure that large plantations can be destroyed without the need to harvest the crop.

Clause 45 permits police officers to use assistants, animals, vehicles and equipment to effect the purposes of the Act. This power authorizes the use of drug sniffer dogs for example. This clause also authorizes the use of force so long as a warning is given first.

Clause 46 provides protection for informers. Although it might be distasteful to some people, the use of informers is vitally necessary in assisting in the detection of drug offences. Clause 46 provides protection to informers against the possibility of their identity becoming publicly known. This clause is necessary to prevent if possible any likelihood of death or injury to informants as a result of their supplying information to police. That there is always such a risk, and more so where trafficking in drugs is concerned, is clearly indicated by the deaths of Douglas and Isabel Wilson in connection with information they revealed about the Mr. Asia Syndicate.

This clause provides that the identity of an informer should at all times be kept confidential.

Should any person disclose the name of an informer he will be liable to a penalty of up to 5 years imprisonment.

Clause 47 provides that in proceedings for offences against the Act the prosecutor, any witness for the prosecution or a member of the police force who appears as a witness for the defence shall not be compelled to reveal his source of information. Section 157 of the present Health Act has the same provision.

Clause 48 provides a pecuniary penalty for offences under the Act.

Clause 49 simply states that no costs shall be awarded to either the prosecution or defence with respect to any proceedings brought pursuant to this Act. This section puts the crimes in this Act, when dealt with summarily in the same position as would exist if they were dealt with on indictment.

Clause 50 is a machinery provision relating to the production of analysts' certificates and the use to which they can be put insofar as court proceedings are concerned. These certificates will give the result of the analysts examination of dangerous drugs.

Clause 51 is also a machinery provision designed to facilitate the operation of the Act. It will not be necessary to particularize the dangerous drug used in an offence. Proof that a dangerous drug was at the material time in a place occupied by the person charged will be evidence that the drug was in his possession.

Clause 52 is a machinery provision which will permit a jury to bring in a special verdict in cases of receiving the profits of drug trafficking even if it is not possible to say which part of the property received was the actual proceeds.

Such a provision is needed because cases have been lost where the prosecution cannot identify what funds in the account of a trafficker came from drug trafficking.

Clause 53 provides authority to make regulations if required.

Clause 54 is required because as a result of the introduction of this Legislation it is necessary to amend the Health Act in certain particulars. At present provisions relating to drug offences are contained in the Health Act starting with section 130. Treatment of drug dependant persons will remain within the provisions of the Health Act with a slight amendment making reference to a drug dependant person. These amendments are set out in the Fifth Schedule.

The Bill will be allowed to lie on the table of the House until sittings resume next year.

Mr GLASSON: I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Mackenroth, adjourned.

SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT

Hon. C. A. WHARTON (Burnett—Leader of the House): I move—

“That the House, at its rising, do adjourn until Tuesday, 18 February 1986.”

VALEDICTORY

Hon. Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN (Barambah—Premier and Treasurer) (5.42 p.m.): Once again, we have reached that time of the year when the House rises for the Christmas recess. I am sure that I speak for all members when I say that the parliamentary

session this year has been a most demanding one. However, I am sure that much has been accomplished for the greater benefit of Queensland and its people.

I express my thanks to all of the people who have assisted me during the year. To my Cabinet colleagues and to the members of the Government party, I say a special "Thank you" for the work that they have done. I wish all members of the Legislative Assembly a very happy Christmas.

To you also, Mr Speaker, I say a special "Thank you". Many demands are made of the Speaker of a Parliament. Although you have endeavoured to be fair to all members at all times, on occasions, Mr Speaker, you have found that your rulings have been challenged. You have certainly endeavoured to be fair to all members of this House. I repeat the remarks that I made recently. You have the full support of the Government.

The Chairman of Committees (Mr Ted Row) has carried out his duties, as usual, in a very effective manner, as have the Government Whips, Don Neal and Bill Kaus.

The Leader of the House (Mr Claude Wharton) deserves the thanks of all of us.

An Opposition Member interjected.

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: He has done a very special job. I know just what demands are made on him by my colleagues in organising the daily business of the House. He carries out his duties very well and deserves our special thanks for a job well done. As some members may recall, I did that job for many years until the system was changed and a special Minister was appointed to take charge of the business of the House. Mr Claude Wharton has had that job for some time and he has done an excellent job.

I express our thanks to the Clerk of the Parliament (Mr Alan Woodward). On previous occasions, I have said how hard he works. He carries out his duties very efficiently. We appreciate everything that he does for members. I say "Thank you" to him.

I also thank the Deputy Clerks of the Parliament (Robert Doyle and Len Smyth), the other table staff (Peter Byrnes and Ian Thompson), the Sergeant-at-Arms (Doug Randle), the Chief Reporter (Bevan Battersby), the Clerk-Assistant (Bob Fick) and all of their staff. Every one of them has given each and every member considerable assistance during the year. We could not manage without them.

Mr Davis: Did you mention me?

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: I will leave it to the honourable member's colleague to thank him, if he thinks that he deserves special mention.

To Nick Bannenberg, Don Rogers and all the library staff, I say "Thank you" for a wonderful job.

The staff of the refreshment rooms, under the guidance of Mrs Brenda Milton, have again been of great help during 1985, and I thank them. I think all honourable members appreciate the smart way in which they carry out their work, especially in their new uniforms.

Mr Fouras: They have done a good job.

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: Yes, they have done a good job, and we appreciate what they have done.

I express our appreciation to the Chief Parliamentary Attendant (Jack Montgomery) and all of the attendants. They have done a wonderful job, as have the secretarial staff, the telephonists, and the gardeners, who make the grounds attractive. To each and every one of them goes our appreciation.

Des Richards, a very hard-working man behind the scenes, deserves our special thanks for his valued help, as does John Vote. They both look after the requirements of Ministers.

Mr Don Duncanson, the Government Services Co-ordinator, has also done a wonderful job, and we express our thanks to him.

The legislative program seems to be getting heavier each year. I am told that in 1985 this Parliament has considered 124 Bills. The Parliamentary Counsel (Leo Murray) and his staff carry an enormous burden in drafting the legislation and, at times, I am sure, the demands that are made on them to draft complicated legislation, sometimes at short notice, are far from reasonable. I am sure that most members do not realise how much work and how many long hours are involved in the drafting of legislation. To them particularly, as Premier, I extend my thanks. I know that they have worked day and night for many long weeks. I want Leo and his staff to know how much we appreciate what they accomplish.

Similarly, my thanks go out to the Government Printer (Sid Hampson) and his staff, for without their assistance the Parliament could not function as efficiently as it does. The work that they do behind the scenes is both effective and efficient.

To my permanent heads—the Co-ordinator-General (Sir Sydney Schubert), the Under Treasurer (Mr Leo Hielscher) and the Chairman of the Public Service Board (Dr Col Brennan)—and to all of their staff, I express my thanks for the work that they have performed during 1985.

I thank my personal staff—John Walsh, Peter Anemaat and Ken Crooke—for all their help to me during the year. I express my deep appreciation to Miss Beryl Young, the Government Pilot, who is in charge of the Ministerial Air Unit. I thank also my research assistant (Wendy Armstrong), and all of the girls who work in my office, for their help and assistance during 1985.

I also thank our electorate secretaries. They carry a particularly heavy burden when Parliament is in session and members are absent from their electorates. I am sure that I speak on behalf of all honourable members when I say to all of the electorate secretaries, “Thank you very much”.

I also say “Thank you” to my wife Flo for the wonderful work that she does to assist me. She is known in my electorate as the local member—I am just the Premier. Right throughout the length and breadth of the State and across Australia, she does tremendous work on behalf of the National Party and the Government, trying to serve the people of this State and this nation. I extend special thanks to her, because it has made life for her very strenuous and busy. I am sure that I could say the same about the wives of all honourable members.

In conclusion—it is my fervent wish that everyone will have a very happy and a blessed Christmas, and may 1986 be a prosperous year for all.

Mr WARBURTON (Sandgate—Leader of the Opposition) (5.49 p.m.): As the Premier indicated, the end of the session is traditionally a time to give thanks to all those people who have helped us in our capacity as members of Parliament.

My own staff, including my electorate secretary, the staff of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and the electorate secretaries of all members of this House do a tremendous job. I sometimes think that their work is overlooked. As the years have gone by, their dealings with the public have become more demanding. The public is somewhat demanding, as is its right. All honourable members have to put up front the people to deal with those problems. We certainly expect a great deal of them. So, to my staff, the staff of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and the electorate secretaries of all members, I pay my respects, and I know that each and every member in this House does the same.

I join with the Premier in thanking a number of people very much. I will not list them as the Premier did, but I refer to people such as the Hansard staff led by Mr Bevan Battersby, the dining-room people, the attendants, the security officers and the staff of the library, who have to put up with a great deal when Parliament sits. Certainly, honourable members are very demanding of their services. I personally thank them on

behalf of the Opposition for the way in which they act towards us. They are considerate of members' approaches, and each and every member of this House thinks a great deal of them.

I thank particularly those Ministers who give recognition to the Opposition shadow Ministers. That makes their work a little easier. It is difficult enough and when Ministers recognise that there is an Opposition and recognise that shadow Ministers are there to play a very important part in the parliamentary debate, it makes life much easier. So, to those Ministers who give that recognition, I give my thanks.

I join with the Premier in wishing each and every member of the House all the very best for Christmas. I sincerely hope that the work that has been done in this Parliament will go some way towards reducing the number of accidents and deaths on the roads. That is foremost in all our minds. We do not want a repetition of what has occurred in past years. We should all be cognisant of that fact and work very hard towards minimising the road toll, particularly in this very busy period.

On behalf of the Opposition, I wish each and every other member and those associated with Parliament House the very best for Christmas. I hope that they are all safe, well and ready to get back to tackling the work-load that this Parliament expects in 1986.

Hon. Sir WILLIAM KNOX (Nundah) (5.53 p.m.): I join with the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition in this valedictory address. I thank the Premier, Ministers and the Leader of the Opposition for the courtesies that they have extended to me and my colleagues during the year. Mr Speaker, to you and your staff, I record our appreciation of the consideration given to us. I know we are small in number, but you respect the role of every member of this House, regardless of the size of the party or its status. We appreciate that consideration. I also address those remarks to the Chairman of Committees.

To the clerks at the table and to the Hansard reporters, I say that we appreciate the co-operation that has been given to all of us. I particularly mention the library and those associated with it, including Mr Rogers, with his recordings of all that goes on in the world. I also extend my appreciation to Brenda Milton and the staff of the refreshment rooms. Without those people, it would not be possible for the Parliament to function at all. In spite of the good intentions of members, Parliament would not function unless all those people behind the scenes made it happen.

The attendants not only in this Chamber but also in the precincts of the House make it possible for us to look after our guests, visitors and people on deputations. In no small manner they make for the smooth working of this Parliament.

I would like particularly to record appreciation for the work done by the Leader of the House, which is an extraordinarily difficult position, particularly as it is not possible to accommodate everybody all the time and to everyone's satisfaction. I think that a tribute to the efficient operations of the Leader of the House and the Whips has been the record number of members who participated in the Budget debate. That was possible only through close co-operation between the Whips and the Leader of the House. I think that it worked very well indeed. A record number of members contributed to the Budget debate. No-one was denied the opportunity of speaking. Although, in some previous years, members have not been given that chance simply because it was not organised as well as it was this year, that is one opportunity to speak that should not be missed. The credit must go to the Leader of the House and the Whips. That was another plus for the year.

A record number of Bills—I think that it was about 120—passed through the House this year. As the Premier and Treasurer rightly pointed out, that involves an enormous amount of work behind the scenes. It is often forgotten that most Bills go through this House unanimously. Some people in the media gain the impression that there is a great deal of dissent and diversity in the Parliament. That is not so. It is only on comparatively rare occasions that there is a difference of opinion with Bills going through this Parliament.

Well over 95 per cent of Bills go through the Parliament with complete accord. Even though there is room for debate, sometimes animated, that is not to be denied.

In regard to the amount of work that has gone through the House—it has been a very successful year. Although the Queensland Parliament is sometimes accused of sitting for fewer days than other Parliaments, the records show that, as far as State Parliaments are concerned, the Queensland Parliament has for many years had the highest number of sitting days. If one looks at the legislative work, one will also find that that is very impressive. It is not as great as that in the Federal Parliament, and I do not claim for one moment that it is.

On behalf of the Liberal Party, I extend to you, Mr Speaker, to the members of the House, and to everybody else, the very best wishes for the festive season.

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I am sure that all of you are looking forward to a happy Christmas with your families and friends, and I wish you all a very happy Christmas and extend my best wishes for a very happy new year.

There is no denying that 1985 has been a trying year in many respects—especially for me—but 1985 is almost behind us, and we must now look forward to making 1986 not only a better year but a happier one for all. The tremendous support and friendship that I have received not only from honourable members but also from the staff at Parliament House has been greatly appreciated. This support from the many friends whom I have in this place has made the road I travel a much easier one, and I thank everyone for that support.

I wish particularly to thank Alan Woodward, Robert Doyle, Peter, Doug and Ian for their untiring support.

Very few honourable members would know of the enormous job carried out by my secretary, Joan Smerdon. Her untiring help at all times has my deepest gratitude.

No better Speaker's aide and driver could be had than Tom and Damien. I extend my personal thanks to both of them.

Len Smyth, together with Bob Fick and the staff of the administration section, are charged with the responsibility of making this place run like clockwork, and this they do. Thank you, Len and all members of your staff.

Mrs Milton, without a doubt, with her managerial skills and with the assistance of our three very professional chefs headed by John O'Gorman, has provided a standard of catering equal to anything in the State, and I am sure that I speak on behalf of everyone when I say a great big thank you to Mrs Milton and her Parliamentary Refreshment Rooms staff.

Honourable members, for the first time in many years the administration has been able to report tremendous progress, which is how it should be. If honourable members recognise that, they are recognising the great progress that has been made by them.

It would be remiss of me not to report to honourable members the greater use being made of the Parliamentary Library by all honourable members and the high standard of services provided by all sections of the library staff under the guidance of our Parliamentary Librarian (Nick Bannenberg) and his deputy (Helga Alemson). Also included in this section, of course, is Don Rogers. I thank them, one and all.

Bevan Battersby, the Chief Hansard Reporter, aided by his deputy, Bob Gustavson, and the Hansard staff of reporters and typists carry out one of the most important functions of this Parliament, and they do so so efficiently that honourable members are sometimes unaware of the enormous job that they do. I thank them for their efforts.

Without any fuss or bother, Joan Turner and her team of stenographers have carried out their duties in a busy year with the utmost proficiency. I thank also Margaret Hughes and her switchboard operators for their courteous and efficient service.

Jack Montgomery, Chief Parliamentary Attendant, and his deputy, Alan Clayton, together with the very fine staff of parliamentary attendants have excelled themselves

this year. I thank them for their dedication to their duties, which, at times, have not been easy.

I again say a very special thank you to Ted Row, the Chairman of Committees, and his panel of Temporary Chairmen—Des Booth, Max Menzel, Jim Randell, Jim Fouras and Keith De Lacy. I thank them, particularly Ted Row, for their untiring support.

I pay a special tribute to Don Duncanson, our services co-ordinator, and his staff of security officers, cleaners and maintenance men. Theirs is a tremendously big undertaking and I am sure that all honourable members would agree that they do their work well. I thank them, one and all.

I thank the Whips of the House. They have been untiring in their efforts.

Last, but certainly not least, I thank John Pullman and his gardening staff for their expert tending to the lawns, which I hope will improve in the future, and gardens surrounding Parliament House. Thank you, John.

I thank the Premier especially and the Leader of the House (Mr Wharton) for their support.

To everyone again—a very happy Christmas to you and to yours. I hope that we meet again and, as I have said, ensure that the new year is a better one. Thank you.

Motion (Mr Wharton) agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. C. A. WHARTON (Burnett—Leader of the House): I move—

“That the House do now adjourn.”

Crib-room Dispute, Mount Isa Mines

Mr PRICE (Mount Isa) (6.3 p.m.): Last Thursday, in this House, I directed to the Minister for Mines and Energy (Mr I. J. Gibbs) a question concerning the recent protracted strike by miners in Mount Isa.

I suggested that the recognised primary concern of the miners was a safety one, and intimated that, had certain deficiencies in the Mining Act regulations been addressed either at the conception of the Act or since, the costly turmoil might have been avoided and the workers might not have been driven to passing a motion of no confidence in the Government's senior safety officer.

In the inimitable fashion of his Government, the Minister acted predictably by haranguing the miners and their union and advising me to carry out further investigations to see “where the weakness really is”—obviously an allusion to the current union elections and the union internal battles.

I have carried out those investigations. I refer the Minister to page 72 of the regulations, Part VIII, under the heading “Sanitation and Hygiene”.

It refers to crib-rooms. For your information, Mr Speaker, crib-rooms are places in which miners eat their meals or spend their meal break underground, generally in an enlarged tunnel, well lit with plenty of room and adequate facilities. The scene is one of miners coming in from their work-place rather tired or under stress, sometimes soaking wet. The crib-room is a place in which miners can relax.

Of course, these crib-rooms require definition. I suggest that the Act does not define the crib-room. However, regulation 157, in dealing with crib places, states—

“(1) When required by the inspector one or more places shall be set aside on the surface of the mine and underground in the most comfortable positions available at which men may eat their food. Such places shall be provided with tables and seats and be maintained in a clean state and water for washing shall be made

available within 50 feet of each such place. The inspector may also require that means for heating water shall be provided in such places.

(2) (a) At every crib-place an impervious metal receptacle with a well fitting cover shall be provided in which all waste food, paper and other rubbish shall be placed.

(b) Any person wilfully neglecting to use the receptacle or throwing food or rubbish about the mine shall be guilty of an offence.

(c) The contents of the receptacle shall be sent to the surface and the receptacle shall be thoroughly cleaned not less frequently than once every two days."

I refer now to the Metalliferous Mining Regulations 1985. Those relating to "crib places" provide—

"8.6.1. Crib rooms or places at which employees may eat their food shall be provided on the surface and underground at every mine.

8.6.2. Each crib room or place shall be provided with—

(a) clean tables and seats;

(b) clean water for washing either in the crib place or within a distance of 15 metres; and

(c) a water heating appliance, if required by the inspector where he considers it to be necessary for the personal hygiene of the employees."

Two further paragraphs describe what can happen in a crib-room. Both references specifically detail crib-room regulations.

Notwithstanding the Minister's attitude in attempting to answer a question he obviously knew nothing about, the concern of the Mount Isa miners revolved round their own safety, based on standards set by Mount Isa Mines over many years in the industry.

The Minister will note that no dimensions are set for what constitutes an approved crib-room, as might be expected. That matter is considered in the Factories and Shops Act. Page 9 of the rules refers to "the size of an approved meal place" by calculating it on the basis of the maximum number of employees using it at any one time. Rule 12 (2) provides that, for up to 12 persons, the area ought to be 11 square metres; for each additional employee up to 25, an additional .92 square metres; and for each additional employee thereafter, an additional .75 square metres.

Relevant passages from that Act might well be transferable, for the Minister's obvious need for guidance in this matter. While he is at it—the addition of a mandatory 8 ft, or its metric equivalent, for crib-room ceilings might be all the extras required.

The cry for the Government to remain aloof from this dispute was the call of the wise, for, had the Minister's ineptitude been publicly displayed, as it was in attempting to answer a simple question in the House last Thursday and again this morning, a bleak Christmas indeed might have been the order of the day for my constituents. The Minister's safety officer received a motion of no confidence from the workers he is supposed to protect.

Time expired.

The Diet Circle

Mr HENDERSON (Mount Gravatt) (6.8 p.m.): Towards the end of July, two of my constituents received a circular letter from The Diet Circle, 37 Swanston Street, Melbourne. The circular advertises a weight-loss tablet and impressed my constituents to such an extent that they filled out an order form for two lots at \$19.65 each. On 3 August 1985, they forwarded a cheque made payable to The Diet Circle in Melbourne for \$39.30. The cheque was cleared on 6 August 1985; so presumably the money was paid into the account of The Diet Circle.

By the end of September, my constituents had heard nothing whatsoever from the company, so they began telephoning the number that is shown on the front of the circular, that is, (03) 63 8430. Every time they telephoned, they received the engaged signal. That continued for some days. Eventually, they reported to Telecom that the telephone must have been faulty. Telecom informed them that it would take 24 hours in which to correct any fault. They waited for three days before telephoning again. Once more they continually received the engaged signal.

Becoming concerned, they contacted a Melbourne relative, whose husband visited the address, 37 Swanston Street. The company was located in a poky little office at the top of a flight of steps. It was staffed by a rather young girl. Unfortunately, she had no information whatever on the company and was unable to supply any information relating to how the company operated, the product marketed or anything else.

I take up the time of the House so that the documents can be examined. To assist honourable members, I table a set of the documents that are being sent to people in the mail.

Whereupon the honourable member laid the documents on the table.

One of the documents states—

“Thrilling Japanese Super Pill
Guarantees Rapid Weight-Loss!”

It then makes this fantastic claim—

“There now exists for the first time, an all natural bio-active weight loss compound so powerful, so effective, so relentless in its awesome attack on bulging fatty deposits, that it has virtually eliminated the need to diet. News of this super pill from Japan, is sweeping the world. The product is called ‘Alga-S-1901’ and it is dynamite.

In fact thousands of people are now trying Alga-S-1901 and losing weight faster than ever before.

Some people have reported losses of up to 1 lb per day.”

The document advertises the particular product, and a signature appears under “Director”, which is totally unreadable.

The documents also contain a number of letters that are purported to have been written by a number of happy clients, and include a number of offers for some goodies. For example, if a person were to order within 14 days he would receive a ladies or gents watch free of charge. The document goes on to make this claim—

“Watches of this quality and style are on sale in shops for upwards of \$30.”

I took the document to K mart, where I found that watches of that kind are for sale at K mart, Sunnybank Plaza, for \$4.50. So much for that claim! Furthermore, the document claims that the purchaser will receive a free stress-tester.

I have concluded that this offer is an unmitigated and undisguised rip-off. Copies of the pamphlets that I have tabled have been sent throughout the length and breadth of Australia, but the only weight that people are losing is the weight of their wallets. I therefore call upon the Queensland Fraud Squad to investigate this particular company. I believe that the Fraud Squad has contact with its Victorian counterpart, and I also ask that the Victorian Fraud Squad investigate the company named The Diet Circle.

In addition to that, I will be forwarding all of the documents in my possession to the Department of Health, because I believe that illegal claims may have been made in the documents relating to the therapeutic value of the tablets. I will also be approaching Telecom with a view to having the telephone number checked. I ask members of the media to be particularly alert to the activities of this company, because I believe that it now advertises in the daily press.

What must be the ultimate insult is that my constituents, having made so many inquiries about not having received the tablets, finally received a second set of circulars in the mail last week requesting them to participate in the scheme yet again.

I put it to the House that the scheme is a massive and gigantic rip-off that requires the attention of the Fraud Squad in this State, Victoria and other States. I thank honourable members for their attention.

Staffing Levels, Department of Children's Services

Mr FOURAS (South Brisbane) (6.13 p.m.): On Thursday, the annual report of the of the Director, Department of Children's Services, was tabled in the House. It stated quite clearly that the Government was not able to meet its statutory obligations to protect children. That report followed the 1984 report, which—although not quite as blunt—was nevertheless scathing in its criticism of the inability of the Government to meet the additional demands that have been placed on the Department of Children's Services. As a matter of fact, the 1984 report stated that there had been a doubling of cases involving the need for child protection, a doubling in emergency relief cases, an increase in juvenile justice cases, and a trebling of cases involving sexual abuse. The report also pointed out that each section of the Department of Children's Services was strained to the limit.

That report was followed by a response from the Premier and Treasurer (Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen) in which he reprimanded the Director of the Department of Children's Services (Mr G. J. Zerk) for doing his job, which is set out as his statutory obligations under the Children's Services Act. The Premier and Treasurer was more concerned about reprimanding the director than about taking note of the inability of the Government to meet its statutory obligations in respect of children.

Moreover, the Minister for Welfare Services, Youth and Ethnic Affairs (Mr Muntz) stated in the media yesterday that he would set up a study to be conducted by the Internal Operational Audit Services Section that would result in redeployment of staff from sections involved with the protection of children. It is absolutely ludicrous that the Minister should today mislead the people of Queensland and the Queensland Parliament by saying, in response to a question asked by the Leader of the Opposition, that the results of the internal audit would be that staff could be redeployed.

I have here an internal operational audit report dated October 1985. It states quite clearly that there is no gain to be made by transferring members of any section of the Department of Children's Services, because they are all under strain, and that the only solution to the problem is the appointment of additional staff.

Although the Minister is pretending that he will support the submission for additional staff, everybody knows that no additional staff will be forthcoming. It is to the eternal shame of this Government that it will not provide the basic resources to help protect our children—something that it has a statutory obligation to do.

If one looks at the different areas of child abuse such as referrals and investigations, psychological assessment or therapy, supporting families, community education and community support, one sees that this Government is failing to provide the necessary resources.

SCAN teams are overworked following a 61 per cent increase in referrals last year. Those people are being burnt out, yet they will receive no increase in staff. The findings of one in four investigations carried out recently by the Juvenile Aid Bureau are "uncertain", meaning that the bureau really does not know whether abuse took place. That is an unacceptably high figure. The inability of child care officers, who are so hard pressed that they cannot carry out follow-up work, to prevent neglect and abuse from recurring is a major scandal.

Because he has abdicated his responsibility to protect the children of this State, the Minister should resign. He does not have the intestinal fortitude or capacity to stand up to a Premier who does not give a damn about the plight of vulnerable children and

will not find the resources to help them. If he was fair dinkum, he would stop crying poor.

Queensland has the lowest per capita spending on child welfare in this nation. Every other Government has set up task forces on child protection. They have carried out wide community consultation and submitted reports. The other States are finding many additional resources to fight this very serious problem. However, to the eternal shame of Government members, Queenslanders hear nothing more than pious platitudes that parents ought to look after their children and, like Pontius Pilate, Government members wash their hands of the problem. It is to the eternal shame of members of the National Party, the Minister and the Premier that in this State the Government's statutory obligation to protect children has not been met as it ought to be. In Queensland, one sees one of the worst cases of neglect of responsibility and one of the most shocking examples of couldn't-care-less in this nation, because this Government is interested only in finding money for race-tracks, building railway lines to the Gold Coast, pork-barrelling National Party electorates and providing community centres so that the member for Greenslopes can be assured of re-election.

Time expired.

Action of Australian Democrats in Senate

Mr NEAL (Balonne) (6.18 p.m.): I want to talk tonight about a rort being perpetrated on the Australian voting public by those cream-puff politicians, those gravy-trainers—the Australian Democrats. They are the so-called saviours of sanity in Government who went to the people at the last election asking to be elected to office to “keep the bastards honest”. They have proved that all they can do is bend with the wind. They have not even been honest with themselves, let alone the electors of Australia who supported them.

I turn to their track record. It was the Democrats who assisted in passing through the Senate the anti-Queensland legislation specifically designed to speed up the process through which unions would normally have to go in order to obtain Federal registration, thus bringing themselves under the jurisdiction of the Federal Arbitration and Conciliation Commission. It was a poorly disguised attempt to remove the ETU from State award coverage and hence State control. Had that attempt been successful, all legislation recently passed by this Assembly to restore responsibility and accountability to unions would have been negated. So it can clearly be seen that the Democrats are the champions of union thuggery. I hope that the electors of Queensland remember them at the appropriate time.

Let us look at some of the other things that the Democrats have done. They supported the recent tax package, which resulted in the emasculation of the entertainment and hospitality industry. That has destroyed thousands of jobs not only in Queensland but throughout Australia.

The Democrats supported the removal of tax benefits for company cars, thus forcing the cancellation of orders for thousands of cars. That has destroyed more jobs.

The Democrats supported the tax on accommodation provided to employees to encourage them to live and work in the remote areas of this State. The mining towns are a classic example of that. Mining companies have provided accommodation to encourage employees to go to those remote areas and work. Likewise, in the rural industries, station hands and others have enjoyed the benefits of station housing, including free milk and meat.

The Democrats have supported the ALP in taxing benefits that are given to people. That will result in the loss of jobs in those areas. It is not the employee who has to pay the tax; it is the employer who is already providing the benefit to encourage people to live and work in those remote areas. He has to pay double. He has to pay tax on the benefit that he is providing to his employees.

The Democrats also are the champions of the infamous Bill of Rights. Under that Bill of Rights, they are talking about one vote, one value to bring Queensland to heel with its electoral laws. The Democrats enjoy 7 per cent of the total vote in Australia, and they are dictating to an elected Government. I am afraid that I cannot say that that is democratic.

The Democrats have the gall to criticise the Queensland Government on its redistribution. Senator Macklin talks about one vote, one value. His election to the Senate is a classic example of electoral weightage. New South Wales elects 12 senators, and each of those senators requires a quota of 281 409. Tasmania elects 12 senators, each of whom requires a quota of only 24 415. Queensland also elects 12 senators, each of whom requires a quota of 176 095.

Senator Macklin himself is enjoying an electoral weightage about which he screams so loudly and which he says is no good. He did not even get a quota himself. He received 129 636 first-preference votes. He had to rely on weightage to be elected as a senator for the State of Queensland. If the Bill of Rights becomes law and the principle of one vote, one value is introduced, Senator Macklin will be one of the first casualties. He will lose his seat because he does not receive a quota.

Time expired.

Road Toll

Mr PREST (Port Curtis) (6.23 p.m.): In another 10 minutes, the Parliament will rise for the Christmas recess. I think back to what the Government has done to solve some of the problems on our roads. In 1985, the total number of fatalities on Queensland roads is expected to be in excess of 500.

Members have been extending the compliments of the season to one another, but they should think of the Christmas that will be enjoyed by the families of those 500 people who will have been killed on Queensland roads.

In addition to those 500 people, many thousands have been seriously injured. Some will be paraplegics for the rest of their lives.

What has the Government done? Although the Commissioner of Police and the Police Union have asked for hundreds of additional police, the Minister for Lands, Forestry and Police has allowed their call to fall on deaf ears. During 1985, the Government has taken no positive action to try to solve the problems on our roads.

No more police officers have been appointed, the Highway Patrol is virtually a Clayton's patrol, and the Minister for Police is more intent on introducing Bills relating to drugs. The police force has said that it is no use bringing in more legislation if there is not the manpower to handle it. The Minister said during the year that many breaking and entering offences are committed by young people who are taking drugs. If he is aware that that is the problem, why does the Government not give the police force additional staff to combat crime and, particularly, to reduce the number of road fatalities?

This issue should be of concern not only to the Minister for Police but also to the Minister for Transport (Mr Lane). He has done nothing about introducing random breath-testing, even though a version of it does exist. The police only pick on the motorists they want to pick on, and allow those people who are supporters of and known to the National Party to get away with drink-driving. It is known that in relation to particular functions, certain people drink and then drive home but nothing is done about it. The trouble within the Transport Department is that time is spent mowing the lawn and fixing up the fence at the commissioner's home.

The Minister for Justice and Attorney-General (Mr Harper) has a role to play concerning underage drinking. Instead of tightening the liquor laws, the Government has extended the trading hours, and young people who should not be in hotels or partaking of drink are virtually being allowed to kill themselves. The Government is taking no action to combat that problem.

The Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing (Mr Hinze) has a part to play, too, because the roads in Queensland are inadequate, and nothing is done about many danger spots. Every year, at the same spot on the Gin Gin-Miriam Vale section of the road in the electorate of the Minister for Works and Housing (Mr Wharton), dozens of accidents occur. Yet very little is done about that dangerous section of road.

Mr Wharton: That is because they can't drive.

Mr PREST: If that is the case, it is the responsibility of the Minister for Transport. He should introduce driver-training.

The Government must take responsibility; the Ministers cannot pass the buck forever. It is known that that particular road has a number of dangerous sections, but nothing has been done about them.

Time expired.

Child Abuse

Mrs HARVEY (Greenslopes) (6.28 p.m.): I rise to make some rational comments on the issue of child abuse. Of late, so many screaming headlines have appeared in the papers and put this issue entirely out of perspective that I thought it was about time, in the last speech of the last day of this session, to put things back into perspective.

Opposition members have been very emotional—they have been yelling from the roof-tops—in claiming that more staff will solve all the child-abuse problems in Queensland. The magical figure is 136. I am here to tell Opposition members that it would not matter whether 3 336 additional staff were put on, all the problems of children in Queensland would not be solved. As has been stated capably by the Minister for Welfare Services, Youth and Ethnic Affairs (Mr Muntz), we are all responsible for this problem. It does not involve just the Government. Parents and families, including the wider family—grandparents, uncles, aunts, distant cousins—are also responsible. Churches are responsible for their parishioners, and the community has a role to play. The Government does have some responsibility, but it is not entirely alone in that responsibility.

There is no magical solution to the problem. The prevention of child abuse has to come from the whole community, commencing with the parent. That message has to be driven home. The publicity surrounding the death of a youth in the last 24 hours has been used to emotionally highlight the problem. However, young people die every day in our community. Many of them are on a downward slide into bad company, crime, prostitution and drugs that eventually leads to death. That is what is happening out there.

We have bothered to go and find out. We have bothered to ask the questions. I do not speak only of my little one-off visit to the Valley, which is only a small part that much has been made of, I am speaking about the behind-the-scenes planning that the Minister and his department have done for those young people. That planning organised the Year of the Family, the Child Abuse Research and Education (CARE) committee, of which I am in charge, and the deployment of staff to consider the whole issue and arrive at a solution. It is not an easy problem, and it will not be solved overnight.

I suspect that those who are jumping up and down, criticising and making a lot of noise are doing so purely for their own aggrandisement, not out of interest for the young people involved. As I have noted, the member for South Brisbane (Mr Fouras), who has been the most vocal on this issue, is in jeopardy in retaining his endorsement for his electorate. He gains very good mileage out of the articles he has placed in to the local south side papers—newspapers that are distributed in my electorate. He does that to improve his own image. I find it rather ghoulish that on the ABC today he used the death of a young boy to try to bolster his own stocks within his party.

If honourable members opposite are sincere in their approach to the problem, why do they not set up a Labor Party committee of some sort and get out there in the community and do something instead of merely standing here criticising? While they

are wasting the time of Government members in having their questions answered and in engaging in the thrust and parry of politics here in the Chamber, my committee could be conducting meetings trying to solve the problems. Since last June, the CARE committee has met once every two weeks. It is tackling the problem as best it can. All that comes from the other side of the House is criticism. A little bit of co-operation occasionally would not hurt. The whole answer to the problem is prevention. There is no other way; one has to start at the beginning.

There is no point in pouring limitless funds into any areas without having a strategy. In this case, that strategy is prevention through education. The CARE committee has already put together a book, which is in its third draft and which will be released in January. When teachers arrive back at school for the commencement of the school year, it will be on their desks. That book will consider the whole issue of prevention. Teachers are with children for a very great amount of their time. The book will put the teachers in a position, when they are faced with a case of suspected child abuse, to better understand what is facing them, how to report it, how to deal with it generally and what will happen to that child.

That is a starting-point; admittedly it is only one starting-point. Many other plans are in the pipeline for next year—plans to deal with homeless youths and parent-training. Many other programs are being plotted and planned. Until things are properly planned, members of the committee are not in a position to stand in the House and talk about everything that will happen within the next 12 months.

I wish to assure the House that a great deal is going on in this area. If members opposite were the least bit interested, they would ask questions of the Minister. I have already asked the Minister which members of the Opposition have bothered to ask questions of him. Not one has done so.

Time expired.

Motion (Mr Wharton) agreed to.

The House adjourned at 6.34 p.m.