

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 25 FEBRUARY 1986

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

APPLICATION OF SUB JUDICE RULE

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I advise all honourable members that I have been informed that criminal proceedings have been commenced in respect of certain matters relating to Mr Allen Callaghan, former under secretary, Department of The Arts, National Parks and Sport, and as a consequence of this, in accordance with the recommendations of the Select Committee of Privileges and the practice followed by the House, discussion on such matters will be regarded as sub judice.

PETITIONS

The Clerk announced the receipt of the following petitions—

Establishment of Undesirable Businesses

From Mr Warburton (1 130 signatories) praying that the Parliament of Queensland will take action to prevent the establishment of undesirable businesses in the community such as that at the corner of Stanworth and Sandgate Roads, Boondall.

One Vote, One Value Legislation

From Mr Warburton (3 977 signatories) praying that the Parliament of Queensland will revoke present legislation on electoral boundaries and replace it with legislation based on one vote, one value.

Third-party Insurance Premiums

From Mr Warburton (547 signatories) praying that the Parliament of Queensland will revoke recent increases in third-party insurance and ensure future increases are determined after public hearing.

Petitions received.

PAPERS

The following papers were laid on the table—

Orders in Council under—

Forestry Act 1959-1984

Harbours Act 1955-1982

Harbours Acts, 1955 to 1968

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

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

Canals Act 1958-1984

Regulations under—

Firearms and Offensive Weapons Act 1979-1985

Hide, Skin and Wool Dealers Act of 1958

Pawnbrokers Act 1984-1985

Second-hand Dealers and Collectors Act 1984-1985

Hawkers Act 1984-1985

By-laws under—

Railways Act 1914-1985

Harbours Act 1955-1982.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Main Line Electrification, Brisbane-Rockhampton-Emerald

Hon. D. F. LANE (Merthyr—Minister for Transport) (11.4 a.m.), by leave: It is incumbent on me, as Transport Minister, to inform Parliament of any major changes or initiatives occurring within my portfolio. I should like to place on parliamentary record details of the announcement made by the Premier and Treasurer and myself yesterday regarding stage 4 of main line rail electrification in this State.

Work is to begin almost immediately on the electrification of 475 route kilometres of track from Caboolture to Gladstone, so that by September 1989 it will be possible to travel by electric rail from Brisbane to Rockhampton and west to Emerald. It also means that the coal and grain railways of central Queensland and the commercial and primary industry freight traffic on the north coast line between Brisbane and Rockhampton will become part of the one electrified system, creating substantial cost and operational benefits. I am intrigued by the lack of interest shown by Opposition members, who are chattering.

This project will cost \$307m, but it is estimated that, within 12 to 15 years, the electrification will generate sufficient benefits to exceed the cost of capital interest and redemption payments on the project. It will create 300 000 man-weeks of employment for Queenslanders and, by next year, more than 2 500 people will be employed on the job.

The project also will involve the construction of 20 110-tonne main line electric locomotives and eight two-car inter-urban air-conditioned electric multiple units for passenger use, the construction of which is expected to be completed by Queensland labour. Savings made by electrification of the route include about 28 million litres of diesel fuel in the first full year of electric operation, which, in dollar terms, amounts to approximately \$9.75m. The trip time from Brisbane to Rockhampton for passengers will be reduced from 14 hours 10 minutes to only 8½ hours.

The Government's decision to continue its main line electrification projects along the eastern seaboard is an indication of its initiative and good management, and a positive illustration of how it is competently directing Queensland's progress towards the year 2000.

LEAVE TO MOVE MOTION WITHOUT NOTICE

Mr R. J. GIBBS (Wolston): I seek leave to move a motion without notice, in relation to the proposed sale of Lindeman Island, that this Government has lost the confidence of the people of Queensland for the following reasons—

- (1) its underhanded dealings in secret negotiations to sell off prized national park area without advice to the people or the elected Parliament of Queensland;
- (2) its failure to reveal in detail the financial arrangements in such negotiated deal;
- (3) the detrimental effect that such development would have on both fauna and botanical species on the island;
- (4) the failure of Minister McKechnie in designating only 1.98 per cent of total land in Queensland for national park purposes.

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

AYES, 36		NOES, 42	
Braddy	Price	Ahern	Lester
Campbell	Scott	Alison	Lingard
Casey	Shaw	Austin	Littleproud
Comben	Smith	Bailey	McKechnie
D'Arcy	Underwood	Bjelke-Petersen	McPhie
De Lacy	Vaughan	Booth	Menzel
Eaton	Veivers	Borbidge	Miller
Fouras	Warburton	Cahill	Muntz
Gibbs, R. J.	Warner, A. M.	Chapman	Newton
Goss	White	Clauson	Powell
Gygar	Wilson	Cooper	Randell
Hamill	Yewdale	Elliott	Row
Innes		FitzGerald	Simpson
Knox		Gibbs, I. J.	Stephan
Kruger		Glasson	Stoneman
Lee		Gunn	Tenni
Lickiss		Harper	Turner
Mackenroth		Harvey	Wharton
McElligott		Henderson	
McLean	<i>Tellers:</i>	Jennings	<i>Tellers:</i>
Milliner	Prest	Katter	Kaus
Palaszczuk	Davis	Lane	Neal

Resolved in the negative.

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT FUEL-PRICING DECISION

Hon. Sir WILLIAM KNOX (Nundah) (11.15 a.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

“That this House condemns the Federal Government for its inadequate decision regarding fuel pricing on the following grounds—

1. The decision is a complete betrayal of firm promises which the Prime Minister has repeatedly made to the Australian people.
2. It implements a new onerous and unjust Commonwealth tax on the long-suffering Australian motorist.
3. It will make Australian goods even more uncompetitive in world markets and lead to a further decline in the balance of payments and increase in the national debt, seriously damage the prospects of long-term economic recovery, and lead to an increase in unemployment.
4. It demonstrates a complete failure on the part of the Hawke Government to control Commonwealth Government spending and a lack of commitment to tackle the real cause of the majority of this country's economic difficulties.”

The fuel-pricing decision taken by the Federal Government is contrary to the policies that it has enunciated in recent months. It has failed to acknowledge the formula that would have resulted in a reduction of 10.6c a litre in the price of fuel. That policy was laid down in the era of the Fraser Government on the basis that, when world market fuel prices rose, the domestic price in Australia would rise. Conversely, it was expected that, when world market prices fell, the domestic price would fall.

Mr LANE: I rise to a point of order. Could honourable members be provided with a copy of the motion so that, as they enter the debate, they may understand its details?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Are copies available?

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: Yes.

Mr SPEAKER: I ask the honourable member for Nundah to have them distributed.

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: That policy, with which Australians have lived for some years, was clearly understood. It is true that it is a policy and that very limited law

exists on the subject. However, under the guide-lines of the Petrol Pricing Authority, its implementation requires the co-operation of the States. As a result of that policy, it could have been expected that a reduction of 10.6c a litre in the price of fuel would be passed on to the community of Australia. It has not been.

Mr De Lacy: Do you live in fairyland?

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: No, I am not living in fairyland. Opposition members support the present Federal Government policy. Opposition members want to screw the nation. They want to redistribute incomes and wealth, and the abuse of the fuel-pricing policy is one of the ways in which they can do it.

When the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries made its decision to let oil prices float, it was inevitable that the price of oil would drop. For several weeks, the Federal Government, expecting that that price would drop, has been fiddling with the prospect of reducing the cost of fuel. A fortnight ago, a Cabinet meeting was lined up to make the decision that would reduce the price of fuel, but the Federal Government cancelled that Cabinet meeting.

I note that the Premier and Treasurer (Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen) has said that the Government has taken legal advice and that it can challenge the Federal Government on this matter. Previously, I have raised the matter in the House by way of questions, so I hope that the Premier and Treasurer will now challenge the Federal Government for not having implemented a policy of reducing the price of fuel. Because it is a serious matter, and because in this instance the Federal Government has cheated on the Australian people, an opportunity has been presented to mount that challenge.

It is true that the Federal Government has promised tax cuts in the August Budget; it also is true that if a reduction in income derived from the excise on fuel occurs, the Federal Government will have difficulty in meeting that commitment. However, that is a risk that the Federal Government must take, because that is the sort of possibility and contingency that can arise. The people of Australia are entitled to the benefits of a tax package that has already been put in place across the nation, which will take the form of a reduction in taxation on personal income and a full reduction in the price of fuel.

It is true that the Federal Government's policy on fuel pricing has succeeded in encouraging the search for oil. However, even those who are engaged in the search for oil and who invest capital in high-risk ventures have always understood that there was a possibility of a drop in the world price for oil because of the effect of the establishment of an artificial price level by the OPEC cartel. Oil exploration companies are now faced with problems that are yet to be resolved. However, they always knew about the possibility of a reduction in world prices; it was always on the cards.

I ask the Premier and Treasurer to pursue this matter further because the people of Australia are entitled to a greater reduction in the price of fuel. Perhaps this is another occasion on which Queensland can lead the way in opening doors for the people to obtain just entitlements. After all, the Premier and Treasurer was strong enough in making representations about the cost of fertiliser in Western Australia and, as a result of the stand that was taken, the whole of Australia's rural community benefited from a reduction in price. This is another opportunity for conservative Government to take the initiative and stop the socialists from implementing a socialistic policy.

Let me examine the benefits that could flow from taking such action. First, a substantial reduction could be obtained in the level of inflation. I point out that the level of inflation in Australia is nearly three times that in Japan, which is Australia's principal trading partner, and that the level of inflation in Australia is one of the highest in the nations examined by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. A reduction in the level of inflation in this country would represent a giant increase in real income for wage-earners, without the need for increases in wages through Consumer Price Index adjustments to compensate for inflation. Of itself, that would be a major contribution to improving the economy of this nation.

It is not good enough for the Federal Government to say that fuel is less expensive in Australia than it is in other countries. The price of fuel per litre is not the important factor; rather, it is the cost of fuel in the overall costs of a journey. Farmers have to transport their produce to market, and in some cases the distance is great. Similarly, sources of supply are located great distances from farms, and the transportation costs involved in a journey should be taken into account rather than the price of a litre of fuel.

Mr Vaughan: Why didn't you think of this debate in the 1970s, when the policy of world parity pricing was first introduced?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The House will come to order, and honourable members will be quiet, please.

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: There is nothing wrong with equating the price of fuel with world parity prices. The Liberal Party has never argued about that. However, the Federal Government is now defying that policy.

Mr Gunn: It is blatant dishonesty.

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: It is indeed. The Federal Government is defying the very policy it claims to have implemented.

If the Federal Government wants to put real money back into wages, it should reduce the level of inflation. That can be done dramatically by decreasing the price of fuel by the full 10.6c a litre. The effects of such a cut would be obvious to producers and house-holders; it would lead to more consumer spending on durables. I am saying not that the money would be saved, but that it would be spent in other ways. A substantial reduction in fuel prices would bring tangible benefits for the family. The cost of fuel runs into millions of dollars for some industries. Following a decrease in the price of fuel, costs of production should decline very quickly.

Mr Davis: You criticise people for cutting the price of petrol.

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: The honourable member cut the price of petrol to destroy people who were providing a service for the community. The cuts in fuel prices to which I am referring would keep people in business.

Many farmers and businessmen are facing poverty because of high costs of production. In Australia, the price of fuel is artificially controlled. We in the Liberal Party have no quarrel with the artificial control, but we do quarrel when the policy that was laid down, and was accepted by all parties, is not being implemented on this occasion.

Mr Comben: It has been.

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: It has not been, and the honourable member knows perfectly well that it has not been.

An Opposition Member interjected.

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: If the Federal Government is stuck with the parity price, why has it not reduced the price of fuel by 10.6c a litre, instead of by 5c? When a policy is adopted, it should be put into practice at all times.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I have asked for quiet in the Chamber. If I do not get quiet, I will have to direct the attention of honourable members to my requirements individually.

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: I moved this motion today because there is not a great deal on the Business Paper. It is a contemporary matter about which, no doubt, all honourable members have had reactions from their electorates. It is a matter to which important priority attaches. I am sure that honourable members want to debate it. I am very happy that the House accepted the motion, because it is the sort of motion that we should be debating at this time.

Mr INNES (Sherwood) (11.28 a.m.): I second the motion moved by the honourable member for Nundah, and, in doing so, I shall concentrate on a part of Federal Government policy that is not highlighted and demonstrates the increasing removal of the Federal Labor Party and its policies from those people whom it pretends traditionally to support.

The Liberal Party welcomes without reservation the reduction in the price of diesel fuel for people in primary industry. It welcomes the benefits that will flow to the primary producers through the reduction of 10.6c a litre on diesel fuel in restricted areas of supply. However, the members of the Liberal Party wish to highlight that the reduction does not extend to all people in Australia, to all people who are entitled to benefit from the full reduction.

Members of the Labor Party pretend to represent the blue-collar workers. They pretend to look after the people in the manufacturing areas. That demonstrates the inconsistency and hypocrisy of the Labor Party. How will those workers benefit under this policy? In talking to the people who Labor members pretend to represent, that is, the workers of Australia, one gets consistent reports, namely, that they are worse off today, that they are struggling to maintain the standard of living their families formerly enjoyed, and that they are finding they can no longer meet the bills and the essential costs of living today in the same way as they did four or five years ago.

Certainly, other people have been favoured by Labor policy. They include people on welfare, who do not, by their work, contribute towards the building of this nation but are responsible for an extension of the public service and quangos to deal with all manner of peripheral matters. I am looking at the working people of Australia whose industry and sweat contribute to the production of goods and the provision of services upon which many other people depend. The margins for skill and the difference between being employed and not being employed have diminished. People are now making the decision not to work, because, with the full panoply of welfare payments, they are better off not working than working. It is in that way that we see the hands of modern, sophisticated socialism.

Where is the support for our embattled manufacturing industries? Those industries, together with the primary producers and miners of Australia, are of enormous importance. From time to time the Labor Party says, "We must look to those traditional areas of major employment, extensive employment. We must get away from the capital-intensive areas. We must get back to the production line, to the factory where large groups of people are employed."

Senator Button and other prominent publicity-seekers in the Federal Labor Party constantly call for the Australian manufacturing sector to smarten up and become competitive. How can it become competitive if significant elements of major expenditure, such as overheads and the ongoing costs of organisations, are twice those of rivals or of people who that sector of industry is trying to displace in the world markets?

Mr Fouras: Where would you find the \$1.2 billion more required in the Budget?

Mr INNES: Why has \$1.2 billion to be found? Why was not the garment cut according to the cloth? That was the promise. The promise was that the formula would be observed and that the decreases, as well as the increases, in the world price would be used. What was the famous jingle that the Labor Party had? It was, "Every petrol bowser is a tax-collection agency." That was the way in which the Labor Party attacked the former Federal coalition Government.

People can measure the actual amount involved in the Labor Party's taxation exercise. It is 10.6c for every litre. That is the money that the Labor Party is taking and should be returned to the people of Australia. The majority of people do not use their vehicles for joy-rides. That 10.6c a litre could help Australian business—manufacturing business and small business—to attempt to compete in producing goods and providing services at the lowest possible cost.

We have to look at that 10.6c a litre in the context of the essential cost of modern living for the average Australian in suburbia. Where have the lower-income-earners gone to live? They have had to go to outer suburbia. Because of the policies of the Labor Party, no significant residential growth occurred in the city of Brisbane for 10 years or longer. Everybody had to find a home in the Albert, Moreton or Pine Rivers shires. However, in the main, people still have to work in the centre of the city of Brisbane.

In the modern world, the average worker has to have two cars to survive. The amount of money that he spends on his cars is equivalent to the cost of repaying a loan on a house. The cost of petrol is a major imposition on the livelihood and the quality of life of the average Australian. It is a major imposition on the competitiveness, productiveness and ability to survive of every Australian small-businessman. The Labor Party pretends to represent those people, but it has totally deserted them. Nowhere is that more dramatically underlined than in its failure to reduce the price of petrol or diesel by the full 10.6c a litre. Diesel trucks, which thunder up and down the roads of this nation, are the life-blood and the life-lines of rural Australia.

Mr Price: How do you explain that Australia has the second cheapest fuel in the world?

Mr INNES: Australia does not have the second cheapest fuel in the world. The richest nation on earth is the United States of America. It is one of Australia's competitors and one of Australia's major trading partners. It is a country against which Australia's quality and style of life is matched. It has cheaper petrol, although Australia has a smaller population, which is scattered more thinly over a vast continent. More people in Australia have to travel to their markets and move their goods to their markets. They have been the basis of decentralisation. For example, the Toowoomba foundry manufactures goods that have to be transported 1 000 or 2 000 km to Australian markets and greater distances to overseas markets.

Honourable Members interjected.

Mr INNES: One of the members interjecting is the honourable member for Mount Isa (Mr Price).

Sir William Knox: He is a transport operator.

Mr INNES: The honourable member is a former transport operator. If anybody should be upset about this decision, it is the man whose trucks used to operate on diesel fuel and who will not get the benefit of the 10.6c reduction.

Mr Price: Freight is a State issue.

Mr INNES: Before the honourable member for Mount Isa interjects, he should think of all the residents of Mount Isa who have to add 10.6c a litre to the cost of transporting their vegetables and produce, and everything else they need in life to survive. It is the resident of Mount Isa, who suffers the imposition of being remote from major population centres and major centres of supply, about whom I am talking.

Mr PRICE: I rise to a point of order. I would like to correct the honourable member for Sherwood. The extra cost of fuel in Mount Isa results from the cost of freight, and freight is a State issue.

Honourable Members interjected.

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

Mr INNES: One might well ask, "What price?" The price is 10.6c a litre.

The point is that the Federal Government, thank God, has listened to at least the militant voice of part of the Australian community—rural Australia—and provided this sop of a reduction of 10.6c a litre in the on-farm situation. The Queensland Liberal

Party welcomes it and has no reservation about it. However, let honourable members not be misled. Let them look at the people who are left bearing the burden that comes with not reducing the price in the other areas.

The Federal Labor Government condemned the previous Federal Liberal Government for implementing a low petrol price policy. The Federal Labor Government promised in the past that its policy would be to follow strictly the parity price of Saudi Arabian light crude, which is the bench-mark for world petrol prices. Let the Federal Government be then condemned by its failure to honour its commitment and its policies, and let honourable members not be distracted.

Honourable members should look at the people on whom falls the burden of the failure of the Federal Government's policy to follow its own commitment. They are the people in the manufacturing industry, the people in the urban areas and the lower-income-earners whom the Federal Government pretends to represent, but whom it no longer represents. It represents, instead, the people in the welfare areas and the people who inhabit and are employed in areas such as the Human Rights Commission. It represents, increasingly, the people in the peripheral parts of Australia and it wants dependants, people on social services and mendicants. The Federal Government does not want to support and will not support the people whose industry and wealth generate the capital from which everybody else's prosperity emanates.

Hon. Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN (Barambah—Premier and Treasurer) (11.39 a.m.): I move the following amendment to the motion—

“After the word ‘difficulties’ add the following words—

‘and

5. This Parliament calls on the Opposition in Federal Parliament to press for a full flow on of the reduction in the world price of fuel to the Australian consumer with no qualifications or hidden taxes.’ ”

I have moved the amendment because Mr Howard and other members of the Opposition in Canberra must be stronger—very much stronger—on this issue. Mr Speaker, you will recall that the Government of Queensland took the lead—

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: Mr Speaker, may I indicate to the Premier and Treasurer that we accept the amendment?

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: I thank the honourable member for Nundah. He is very kind.

The Government took the lead, as every honourable member in this Chamber knows, in this real fight against the possible increase in fuel prices. The Government initiated action to prepare for the taking of legal action, it has done a considerable amount of work on that. The responsible Minister and I have been involved heavily in working out a procedure and a line of action that the Government would take. That was done in the full knowledge that the Federal Government probably would revert to some underhand method to bypass the legal threat with which the Queensland Government confronted it. The Queensland Government still does not rule out the possibility of taking legal action. If the Government is given half an opportunity, it will move. If the Federal Government had not acted in an underhand way, the Queensland Government would have moved today.

The Federal Government has tried to sidestep the legal action threatened by the Queensland Government, but it must be held to account. It cannot escape responsibility for its actions. Even though, on the surface, it may appear to give limited relief, there is no real relief for farmers. What about the enormously high interest rates that Federal Government policies have forced upon primary producers—22, 23 and more per cent? What about the 40 tax concessions and budgetary items that it has taken from the primary producers?

Mr McElligott: Cut power charges to primary producers.

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: Did the honourable member support the Federal Government in that action? Of course he did! He supported the Federal Government in the elimination of 40 tax concessions and budgetary items.

The Queensland Government wants to make the Federal Government keep the promise that it made to reduce petrol prices in line with world parity pricing. Once again, Australians find that they have a Government in Canberra whose word is not worth anything. Like honourable members opposite, who say one thing and do another, the Federal Government has been caught out repeatedly. Some honourable members opposite still have stickers on their cars saying, "3c a litre discount will be granted by the Federal Government". They have had those stickers on their cars since the very first election campaign of the Hawke Government when, in an endeavour to gain votes, it promised a reduction of a 3c a litre in the price of petrol. Of course, the Federal Government and the Labor Opposition in Queensland have been caught out.

The ALP has used this opportunity to introduce a new tax. The amazing thing is that the ALP makes out that it is giving some concession when, in reality, it has introduced a new tax. That is yet another broken promise. It is giving with one hand and taking with the other. It has displayed tremendous deceit. Australians were due for a decrease of 10.6c a litre in the price of petrol. They have received half the reduction to which they were entitled but have had an entirely new tax imposed upon them. Honourable members opposite obviously support the Federal Government in the introduction of the new tax of 5c a litre on petroleum products, which will be increased every six months. That will cancel out any supposed decrease in prices now. If that is not blatant cheating and defrauding of the public, I do not know what is. If honourable members opposite had any decency in them, they would support this amendment to the motion and thereby say to the people in Canberra that the nation must not be treated in this fashion.

Incidentally, excise has jumped from 6c a litre when the ALP came to power to 16c. The Federal Government's actions might be described as using petrol bowsers as a tax-collecting agency. That is exactly what Mr Hawke said about Mr Fraser—that he was using the petrol bowsers as a tax-collecting agency. Now Mr Hawke has been caught out with his own words. He is using the public as a milking cow so that he can garner enormous sums of money to squander in the way in which he has been squandering them to this time. In addition, through the Budget and outside the scrutiny of Parliament, the Federal Government has enshrined the six-monthly tax increases.

If Australia is not competitive, it will be confronted with many problems. Problems will be experienced not only with high petrol prices but also with interest rates, the deficit and high taxes. As has been said, the Federal Government's decision is blatant dishonesty. Today, Australia lacks union control in a system of big government and overseas has lost its credibility. That is evident to everyone. The Queensland Government highlights the issue and reminds the people in Canberra that we are alert to their antics and efforts to deceive the people. It is just not on. I moved the amendment to seek greater support from Opposition members.

Hon. V. P. LESTER (Peak Downs—Minister for Employment and Industrial Affairs) (11.45 a.m.): In seconding this amendment—

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr LESTER: I make it very clear that the Opposition has no choice other than to support the motion. Queensland is being discriminated against because of an increase in fuel prices across the board. Because Queensland is the most decentralised State in Australia, goods must be transported over great distances. A great deal of Queensland's revenue depends on export income. Members of the Opposition are squirming because they do not know which way to go. They do know that they have an obligation to the people of Queensland, and they know that the benefits of the present world parity pricing

should be passed on to each and every Australian. When the Commonwealth reduces the cost of fuel in line with world parity pricing, why should it be allowed to introduce another hidden, indexed tax? The only decent and fair way to go about that would be to go before the people and to introduce legislation. However, I understand that the Federal Government will not do that; behind closed doors, it will amend the indexed tax by regulation. That is being deceitful. The Federal Government is not prepared to face the Senate or the people. The Federal Government has found a way of milking the motorist dry. Enough is enough.

The cost of fuel oil in Australia has recently gone down by approximately 50 per cent. However, since the Hawke Government gained power, the cost of fuel has increased by approximately 30 per cent. Therefore, the difference is about 80 per cent.

I ask each and every Queenslander: How on earth can our primary producers, our manufacturers or anyone else compete with other people throughout the world who are selling goods in competition with Australia either domestically or on the international market? It is very clear that, when put to the test, the Opposition is not sure which way to go. It is selling out Queensland. Opposition members do not allow for the fact that Queensland is being discriminated against. If they do not support what the Queensland Government is doing, they stand condemned.

It must be remembered that the Federal Government was prepared to accept the windfall profits, which, it said, would not be used for taxation purposes. That money should have been banked, because it would attract a high rate of interest. The situation was reversed and the Federal Government found that it would not receive the benefits of world parity pricing. It wanted to give up the game. The Federal Government is like a small boy playing a game of marbles. The little boy wins a few marbles and puts them in his pocket, but the moment that his opponent wins a few marbles, he wants to put his remaining marbles in his pocket and go home. That is wrong. If the Federal Government is not prepared to stick to the rules of the game, it should get out of world parity pricing altogether and let the market regulate itself. Although it says that it wants to pass on the benefits, it wants to take back the taxation revenue the best way it can by this hidden type of legislation.

It is almost certain that the price of fuel will increase in the not-too-distant future. When that happens, will the Federal Government scrap the excise that it has imposed? No! That tax will be in force for ever and a day—yet another bleeding, yet another milking of the Australian public. And fuel plays such an important part in everything that people do!

It is understandable that some members of the Opposition in Queensland would not understand that because a number of them live in the city and drive four-cylinder motor cars. They do not know what it is like to try to run a business, pay for the cost of transport and remain viable. Many members of the Opposition have never been in business and do not understand what it is all about.

After all, it is the business people who employ people, who provide jobs for others, who enable a number of people to go to university and be Rhodes scholars and many other things. I do not condemn people for that. There must be a few Rhodes scholars round the place. However, the Rhodes scholars do not really know what the big job of creating employment and expanding business is all about. They are academics. They simply do not understand what is going on.

There is no doubt that the Queensland Government has received great credit from the people of Queensland, because it was this Government's threat of legal action that made the Commonwealth Government at least pass on some benefits to the farmers and manufacturers.

Whilst I am on the subject of people in business, was it not Mr Hawke who was in charge of ACTU-Solo? What happened? It went broke.

I do not believe that the Opposition in this State is in any position to criticise the Queensland Government. The Opposition should support the people of Queensland, as this Government is trying to do here today.

This benefit has been passed on to the farmers as a result of the Queensland Government not merely mouthing off but being prepared to take legal action; not merely saying that it will take legal action but by sending two letters. So legal action has proceeded. The Federal Government knew that the Queensland Government was fair dinkum.

I might add that the benefits passed on to the farmers are not quite as good as one would imagine at the outset, because that benefit has not been passed on to the users of petrol. As many honourable members are aware, many of the little farmers have not been able to convert to the type of machinery that operates on diesel oil. Many little farmers are using petrol-driven machinery. The little people will be discriminated against.

All I can say is: shame on the Federal Government and shame on the Opposition because it did not foresee this and did not allow for it. Of course, most of the academics in Canberra have never been on a cane-farm, a cotton farm, a grain farm or any other farm, and primary producers provide approximately 96 per cent of this nation's food. That is one matter that the Federal Government could look into. The Federal Government should at least be fair and not discriminate against the little people, who, over the years, have found it increasingly difficult to remain viable.

The Federal Government has not allowed relief for the transporters of goods, either. They still have to pay the new tax that has been imposed. It is discriminatory, because it means that the further away one lives from a capital city, the more one will have to pay. It affects each and every person in Australia, because the more it costs the primary producer to produce goods, the more the people in the city will have to pay for those goods.

Mr Scott interjected.

Mr LESTER: Honourable members such as the honourable member for Cook must be in a terrible mess today, because they live in far-flung areas of the State. They know what transport is all about. Perhaps, at some time, there might be a split in the Labor ranks. The honourable member for Cook might at least support the motion.

I turn to what has happened since the Hawke Government came to power. I can understand why the honourable member for Archerfield (Mr Palaszczuk) is probably having difficulty understanding what the motion is all about. As from 1 January 1983—before the Labor Government came to office—the excise on diesel and petrol was 6.15c a litre. Under Labor, several adjustments have been made to the excise duty. On 1 July 1983, it was lifted by 1c a litre to 7.55c a litre. On 23 August 1983—only one month later—it was lifted to 9.027c a litre. A number of reasons were given as to why that should happen.

On 2 February 1984, excise rose to 9.39c a litre. On 1 August 1984, owing to the downward movement of the CPI, no change occurred in the amount of excise imposed. That was the only occasion on which there was no change. In February 1985, excise was increased to 9.641c a litre. Then, in August 1985, a further increase was imposed to bring it to 10.27c a litre. If the new amount announced yesterday is added, excise will now be in excess of 15c a litre. It is absolutely criminal that, in the short time since 1 January 1983, excise duty has increased from 6.155c a litre to more than 15c a litre. People talk about the effects of inflation. The enormity of that rise is absolutely unreal. What effect will that have on our rate of inflation?

I now turn to a few more actions of the Federal Labor Government. On 16 February 1983, in his election policy speech, Mr Hawke said—

“ . . . Labor will reduce the price of petrol by cancelling the January 1 oil price increase of \$3.23 per barrel. This will have the effect of reducing the price of petrol by the order of three cents a litre.”

He had not even warmed his chair of office before bringing in new methods of taxation based on indexation. Not content with that, he further knocked country people by removing the freight subsidy that they formerly enjoyed. Further, he imposed a 20 per cent tax on lubricating oils. The process has gone on and on, with the price of petroleum rising continually. The Federal Government has blatantly disregarded any promise that it made. It is expected, after all, that parties, when assuming power as Governments, at least attempt to adhere to promises made. On that matter, the Federal Labor Government should take a leaf out of the Queensland Government's book.

Yesterday's announcement by the Federal Government represents the highest level of fraud. It has attempted to deceive the public by implementing the parity pricing policy and, at the same time, imposing a different form of tax, which will remain for ever and a day. The result is that farmers receive only half the benefit. I might add that farmers and small-businessmen have suffered from 40 new taxes imposed by the Hawke Government. The benefits of the world slump in oil prices were to be the first relief they would receive from the Hawke Government. I emphasise that, apart from being a taxation relief, it is merely their entitlement. If world parity pricing is not passed on, our farmers will not be able to compete on the world market. All of those other facets of community life that have a bearing on the cost of our produce overseas—the cost of transport and many others—will suffer the new impost, which will result in increases that will place our producers at a disadvantage on the world market and result in our trading position being even more desperate.

I am pleased to second the amendment moved by the Premier and Treasurer. It is to be hoped that it is widely noted.

Mr WARBURTON (Sandgate—Leader of the Opposition) (11.58 a.m.): One would have thought that such a very important matter would have encouraged rational debate instead of the sort of ratbag nonsense that has just been heard from the National Party's industrial relations disaster.

Mr Lester: Are you suggesting that the members in the country—the people in the country—are ratbags?

Mr WARBURTON: No. I am saying to the Minister that he is an industrial relations disaster.

Mr LESTER: I rise to a point of order. I find that remark very offensive. During recent months, as shown by the statistician, Queensland's industrial relations record has been better than that in any other State in Australia. I could quote all of the figures if the Leader of the Opposition wanted me to.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I believe that the Minister has identified——

Mr WARBURTON: Mr Speaker, I withdraw those words. Previously, I called the Minister an industrial relations dunce, and he was not offended at all.

Mr LESTER: Mr Speaker, I find that remark offensive, too.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Again, whilst I am on my feet, the Minister for Employment and Industrial Affairs has asked for a withdrawal of the second statement as well.

Mr WARBURTON: I withdraw.

Having heard the contributions made to this debate, particularly those made by members of the National Party Government, I ask: Is it any wonder that the economy of this State suffers at the hands of these economic dunces? It is no wonder that the Government faces a scandal over public funds and no wonder that this State lags behind every other State in terms of national economic recovery.

The supporters of this motion have, today, displayed their irresponsible attitude and economic stupidity, and have shown that they are prepared to play politics without

any recognition of the need to keep the nation's economic performance on line or of the need to keep the principles of the Hawke Government trilogy in mind.

The motion moved by the Leader of the Liberal Party (Sir William Knox) smacks of hypocrisy. It was the Fraser Government that introduced the oil parity pricing scheme yet, today, the leader of the Liberal Party has urged the Queensland Government to take legal action against the Hawke Government. Once again, the honourable member has shown his lack of knowledge in matters of importance to the State of Queensland. Surely it is obvious to all thinking people, or all people who understand the laws of this State, that the decision made by the Federal Government to increase the excise duty, but at the same time apply a full reduction of 10.6c per litre, has had the effect of pulling the rug from under the feet of the Queensland Government. I would have thought that the leader of the Liberal Party would have had enough ingenuity to understand that.

The first point to make is that what I suggested before is correct, that is, that the debate on this important matter should be rational. As political leaders in the State of Queensland, all honourable members ought to apply themselves to the real problems and understand why the Federal Government has made the decision it has; all honourable members ought to argue rationally about what has occurred, and decide whether or not the decision made by the Federal Government will be reasonable in the end result.

During the last month or so, the world price of oil has collapsed. The direction of the change was certainly expected, but the magnitude and timing took everybody by surprise—even the National Party Government, which purports to be knowledgeable and able to understand all things. The reasons for the change are evident in terms of the decision made by the Saudis, for reasons of their own, to increase production. Because that increase has not been accompanied by any escalation in demand round the world, because of a scramble to maintain market shares, and because there is no sign of a cut-back in oil production, the world is awash with oil, and the price of oil has responded accordingly.

The second point I wish to make is that the market is extremely volatile at present. Nobody can, or is prepared to, predict with any great confidence whether prices will go up or down over the next few days or weeks. The present situation has produced substantial problems for Governments throughout the world, and it is correct to say that the Australian Government, in common with Governments everywhere else in the world, has been wrestling with those problems. It has been conscious of all the different factors that have to be taken into account in making a final decision. Those factors include the implications of a price drop for the future of oil exploration and the implications for other energy commodities, particularly coal. Obviously, other factors include implications relative to Government revenue and overall economic management.

At the moment, prices of fuel in Australia are not high by international standards. In common with the United States and Canada, Australia has the lowest fuel prices of the industrialised countries of the world. That is because Australians enjoy the lowest level of product taxation at the pump.

It should be understood that the budgetary implications of the developments that we are witnessing are huge. They are much greater than those that have followed any previous downward adjustment under the import parity pricing system. Since early 1983, the import parity price has been considered for adjustment on 10 occasions. On four occasions, the price increased; on one occasion, there was no change; but on five occasions, the import parity price decreased, which meant a decrease in price for the consumers.

Much has been said about the nominal increase of 10c in the price of petrol during the life of the Hawke Government; but, in real terms, the increase in petrol prices for the past three and a-bit years has been only 2c a litre.

The possible change in the import parity price that we are discussing today is much greater than any of the past changes. That is what makes this occasion much more difficult for the Labor Government to handle. If the price of petrol fell to \$15—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Ministers will resume their seats.

Mr WARBURTON: We are used to the rabble over there, Mr Speaker.

If the price of oil fell to \$US15 a barrel, we would be talking about a \$1.8 billion budgetary implication in a full year. Members of the National Party and the Liberal Party discount the importance of that implication to our national economy. If the price of oil fell to \$US10, a barrel, it would mean a budgetary implication of \$2.5 billion. No Government of any persuasion has the flexibility to accommodate an assault of that nature on Government revenue.

The motion shows once and for all how members of the Liberal Party and the National Party in this place are devoid of all nous in economic affairs. They have demonstrated clearly their complete irresponsibility.

The alternative to cutting outlays in line with the projected budgetary implications that I have referred to is to let the deficit blow out. If National Party and Liberal Party members want the deficit to blow out, they can resort to the proposition they are advancing.

Mr Katter: Stop wasting money! Spend less!

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr WARBURTON: Mr Speaker, I can well understand fellow-members of your political party wanting to interrupt me. They have copped a hell of a battle over the last week. I suppose they see this as an opportunity to try to get square; but we have plenty more to come, irrespective of the ruling that you made today, Mr Speaker.

As I said, the alternative to cutting outlays on such a large scale is to allow the deficit to blow out. It was John Howard, the leader of the Liberal Party and Federal leader of the group who have moved and seconded this motion today, who increased oil revenue by 700 per cent between 1977-78 and 1982-83. When John Howard came to office, the excise on crude oil and liquified petroleum gas constituted 1.4 per cent of Government revenue. He left office after having taken the proportion of oil taxation up to 9 per cent of total taxation revenue.

That was his performance as Treasurer. That is the position that the Australian Labor Party has sought to reverse with long-term scenarios. It has reduced the reliance on oil taxation from 9 per cent under Howard to 6.8 per cent of total revenue.

The Fraser Government spent irresponsibly on the assumption that oil revenue would continue to increase at the rate that it was being poured into the Government's coffers. Because of the lack of discipline associated with the previous Government's approach to oil taxation, when the magic pudding dried up, the Government's budgetary problems were resolved by having a massive deficit, which blew out to \$9.6 billion by the time the Australian Labor Party took office.

The Hawke Government's record on the price of petrol is on the board—and that is despite what members of the Government and the Liberal Party have said today. Under the Fraser Government, the following annual increases in the price of petrol occurred: in 1978-79, 27 per cent; in 1979-80, 40 per cent; in 1980-81, 25 per cent; in 1981-82, 9 per cent; and in 1982-83, 16 per cent. Under the Hawke Government the rises have been 8 per cent in 1983-84 and 6 per cent in 1984-85.

The Queensland Government, in its usual style, has threatened legal action against the Commonwealth, but the State Government's record on the price of electricity and the cost of third-party insurance and motor vehicle registration is absolutely deplorable. If the Queensland Government really wants to do something for the Queensland motorist

and the person in the rural sector whom it purports to represent, why has it not come into this Chamber and justified those massive increases in third-party insurance that it recently imposed on every motorist in this State? Why has it not come into this Chamber and attempted to justify having the highest vehicle registration costs in the nation? Why has not the Queensland Government come into this Chamber and attempted to justify this petrol-pump madness that occurs in the State every fortnight, which puts its small-business friends to the wall? Why does it not be honest with the people of Queensland and tell them that it has full control over the retail price of petrol?

It is unfortunate that this motion was moved today with all the hypocrisy that the Liberal Party leader could muster.

I was interested to read the editorial in today's *Daily Sun*. That newspaper is not renowned as being a friend of the Labor Party. It is significant that it has adopted a more refined, sensible and responsible approach to the decision that the Federal Government has made. It stated—

“The so-called rural revolt has scored a significant point, one which will improve the finances of many farmers and the government's stocks in country areas.”

I would think that that would hurt both the Liberal Party and the National Party.

The editorial continues—

“The difference between rural and metropolitan fuel savings should not be the basis for a split within the Australian community.

It should instead be seen as a rationalisation which in the long term will benefit the entire nation.

Metropolitan petrol users will still achieve savings but will be further aided by a healthier primary industry.”

Having had an opportunity to make a reasonable assessment of what has occurred and to look at the moves that the Hawke Government has made, and having realised what any other decision, which would have given more benefit to petrol consumers, would have done to the national economy, the Opposition believes that the decision that has been made by the Hawke Government is reasonable and responsible. It will keep the trilogy well in place. It will ensure that national economic recovery continues.

Mr JENNINGS (Southport) (12.15 p.m.): The Leader of the Opposition (Mr Warburton) has just spoken about a disaster and dunces, but he did not mention one word about the Prime Minister's (Mr Hawke's) promises during the last election campaign. On 16 March 1983, during the last election campaign, Mr Hawke said—

“Labor will reduce the price of petrol by cancelling the January 1 oil price increase of \$3.23 a barrel. This will have the effect of reducing the price of petrol by the order of three cents a litre.”

Then, on 19 July 1985, Mr Hawke said—

“In the preparation of the 1985 Budget, we will prepare a package which will significantly reduce the cost impact on farmers. . . .”

Nothing has been done by the Federal Government. Prices have increased.

The Leader of the Opposition and honourable members opposite are suffering because they have jitters in their own electorates over the price of petrol at the moment. The Leader of the Opposition spoke about the policy. Originally, the policy was to reduce the price of petrol when the price on the international scene came down.

The Leader of the Opposition did not speak about Mr Hawke's broken promises; he said, “The world is awash with oil.” He spoke about the price of oil in the United States being US38c a gallon and said that Australia is wrestling with the problem. The Federal Government is wrestling with the problem. Mr Keating is not only wrestling with the problem; he is wrestling with people over the telephone and with everyone else

because he cannot stand the pressure. He did not know how to reduce the price of oil, and he had to get someone else to help him. Mr Keating would rather have punch-ups in the Parliament, which is disgraceful conduct by the Federal Treasurer. He is under threat from the left wing of the Federal Labor Party, which did not want a reduction in the oil price. The Federal Government did not know how to handle it.

The Leader of the Opposition completely misled this House. He said that Australia has the lowest product taxes at the pump in the world—56c a litre.

Mr Borbidge: The Leader of the Opposition is always misleading the House.

Mr JENNINGS: That is right. The Leader of the Opposition is trying to double-cross the public. Instead of a reduction in petrol price of 10c, in real terms it is only 6c.

Mr Fouras interjected.

Mr JENNINGS: I would like the honourable member for South Brisbane (Mr Fouras) to go out and tell the man in the street that he is getting a 10c reduction in petrol price and see what reaction he gets.

The Leader of the Opposition said that if the Federal Government reduced the price of petrol to the US price, it would create an additional deficit of \$1.5 billion. Obviously, there are a lot of con men in Canberra. In Alberta, Canada, there is an allowance in the Budget for a buffer when the price comes down. The con men in Canberra have no such buffer. They have been relying on dragging the revenue out of the motorist, the farmer, the air lines, the passengers on air lines—dragging it out of people throughout the country.

The Leader of the Opposition did not mention one word about agreeing with the price reduction; in other words, the Opposition does not want the fuel price reduced. The Leader of the Opposition said that Bob Hawke and Mr Keating were irresponsible because they reduced the price of petrol. The Opposition has no idea what incentive a reduction in fuel price will provide for country people. He did not mention Mr Hawke's promises at all.

The Leader of the Opposition said that the motion was unfortunate. The motion moved by the honourable member for Nundah (Sir William Knox) was supported by the Government because it is interested in the public. The Government looks forward to Mr Howard and the shadow minister making strong statements on this decision, as was the case with the proposed capital gains tax.

Of course, Mr Hawke made those statements many years ago. What did the Federal Treasurer, Mr Keating, say? On 4 February 1980, he said—

“A Labor Government will freeze the price of Australian oil. We'll say, thus far, and no further, on the collection of this tax without mandate . . .”

That is what Mr Keating said.

Mr Borbidge: That was before he was Treasurer.

Mr JENNINGS: That is right.

He also told that to the National Press Club. He said that import parity pricing was a tax policy, not an energy policy, and that a Labor Government would put an end to it. He said, “We will put an end to it.” I do not know what has happened. He must have become lost along the way. He is trying to put an end to Wilson Tuckey, he is trying to put an end to John Howard, he is trying to put an end to the Opposition and he is trying to put an end to people over the telephone, but he will not put an end to the policy of import parity pricing. What he is doing is reefing money off the public right round Australia and trying to get away with it.

All honourable members know that the maximum cut should have been 10.6c a litre, but what has the Federal Government given—5.3c! How did it do that? It reduced

the price and increased the excise. In Canberra, they are real double-headers; they cannot be trusted one iota.

Over the same period, the world price has decreased by 56 per cent, but the Australian price has increased by 20 per cent. After the announced decrease comes into effect, the Australian Government will still be cheating motorists by \$2.50 per week. That does not take into account what it is ripping off airline passengers. This country was not built by Governments—no way—it was built by people who were prepared to go out, face up to a challenge and work hard in the big inland areas—the mining and grazing areas. They are the sort of people who built this country. I remember, when I was flying a plane over Mount Surprise, that the cost of fuel was about 40c per gallon. Today, with the cost of fuel up there, people cannot afford to fly planes.

Mr Vaughan: That is absolute rubbish.

Mr JENNINGS: It may be rubbish to the honourable member. Sure, it is rubbish to those fellows who live down here in the city. They have never been up there to see what it is like. That is the same as their thinking on this one vote, one value rubbish. They do not even know what it is like up in the bush. They do not know what it is like to have to get drums of fuel out from Cairns in order to survive during the wet. They do not know what it is like to sit out there in a cyclone for two weeks and wait for tucker. They do not know what it is like to have to use a plane to get supplies. Those things are affected by fuel prices, which also affect the cost of rail freight.

Mr Vaughan: More farmers have planes than cars.

Mr JENNINGS: The honourable member has no idea.

I will now give the House an example of how crazy the Hawke Government in Canberra is. The Leader of the Opposition claimed that, if the Hawke Government gave the maximum reduction in fuel prices, it would create a deficit, but he does not think of the incentives that a reduced fuel price would create. Incentives are what Governments are all about. That is what the Queensland Government is about and that is why it is doing so well. It gives people the incentive to invest.

If the Federal Government reduced the price of fuel by 10.6c a litre, it would create much more economic activity and, because more jobs would be created, it would get the money back in income tax. However, the Government in Canberra is not at all interested in providing more jobs. Honourable members opposite are not interested in that, either. Members of the ALP are all misleaders; they are untruthful people. They are saying that they want to create more jobs, but they will not do so. A reduction in the price of fuel would be the greatest single economic impact and encouragement to people that any Government has had the opportunity of presenting for years and years.

I remember, back in the 1950s, when Australia did not produce any oil. In those days, the talk was that if only Australia could strike oil it would be like America and that the discovery of oil would be a terrific fillip to this country. When it was discovered, it was a terrific fillip to this country and made a big difference. However, now the discovery of oil in Australia is being used by the Federal Government as a straight-out tax rip-off. It will not cut its cloth; it will not alter things. The dead-wood thinking in Canberra is that the Government has to get money from the people. If only it would reduce the price of fuel, it would put many more people into so many more jobs.

Australia is unique. If any country should have cheap fuel, it is Australia. Oil is taken from Bass Strait to Western Port and then straight into tankers to go round the country.

Mr Vaughan interjected.

Mr JENNINGS: America has about 60 head of population per square mile, Japan has about 800 and Australia has only five or six. The price of fuel is a very important factor in all countries; it affects every man, woman and child.

Whoever speaks on behalf of the Opposition should state clearly whether or not he supports a reduction of a maximum of 10.6c a litre in the price of fuel. I hope that the debate is not terminated before Opposition members state their position, because Government members want to know where they stand on that issue. The people of Queensland also want to know the stand taken by the Opposition. The motion is about being fair dinkum and about honesty in Government. Promises were made. The Queensland Government says that those promises must be honoured. The Federal Government has not honoured those promises. The Opposition is trying to double-cross the public. The Leader of the Opposition did not support the motion. Opposition members are trying to make out that their position is one of total responsibility and that the Queensland Government is being completely irrational.

I support the motion and the amendment, and I condemn the Opposition for not giving its support.

Mr D'ARCY (Woodridge) (12.25 p.m.): The motion is really about responsible economic policy. The fact of life is that the motion moved by the Liberal Party, to which an amendment was moved by the Government, shows just what Queensland has in economic ability—very, very little! The Queensland Government does not understand Federal economic problems or where Queensland should be going. In contrast with all other Governments, the Queensland Government is taking us on a rocky road in the wrong direction. In Queensland, one has to ask the question: What is the real price of fuel? When my constituents and I go down the street, we see that the price of petrol is 42.7c a litre.

Mr Vaughan: 42.1c.

Mr D'ARCY: In this jungle of prices, it is slightly better in the honourable member's electorate. Despite that, most service stations in this State still charge 55.9c a litre.

The service station operators tell us that, at the moment, they are expected to pay 46-point-something cents a litre for fuel. How could that possibly occur? It happens because the oil companies give rebates. The Queensland Government has the regulations and the legislative ability, passed by this House, to control fuel prices.

Mr Elliott: What about New South Wales under Wran? They've got a State tax on it as well.

Mr D'ARCY: The honourable member is not worth answering.

Mr Elliott: Why not? You don't like the truth, do you? You don't like what happens in New South Wales.

Mr D'ARCY: The point is that, at present, the Queensland Government will not do anything about the oil companies regulating the prices in this State, to the disadvantage of Queensland motorists, consumers, industry, and the State's long-term economic viability.

The Hawke Government has taken a positive step to reduce significantly the price of fuel. I must now ask: What advantage will that be to the average motorist and the average Queenslander? Will the price reduction be passed on? Who will make sure that it is? The Queensland Government has the ability to make sure that those advantages are passed on and that the oil companies are brought to heel, because the legislation exists in the statute-book at this State level. The Queensland Government cannot tell the average Queenslander what he should be paying and what price he is currently paying. The Opposition wants a guarantee that the price reduction will be passed on.

An article on the second page of today's *Telegraph* carries a story about fuel prices. It states that a spokesman for TAA said that he did not think a price reduction would affect prices. Mr Neil Pitt, from the Brisbane Market, at Rocklea, is quoted as saying—

“Prices in this industry are not set by the costs of production but by supply and demand.”

Will the average Queenslander receive any advantage from a real drop in fuel prices, which is occurring at Federal level? I am amazed that the policy of world parity pricing of fuel that was introduced by Malcolm Fraser has not been attacked more frequently by the Labor Government in Canberra. For years, the Fraser Government lived off the Whitlam Government's image. The Federal Government should have made capital of the image that Fraser left in this country. Through fuel prices, the Fraser Government taxed fuel to such an extent that, as the Leader of the Opposition pointed out, no Government today could, with the present crazy situation in the world, expect to find \$1.2 billion in taxation in another direction. It is obvious that the Australian public would have to be taxed in another direction. The fuel price reduction is sensible. It is a constructive step towards implementing the responsible economic policies of the Federal Government.

At present in Australia, because of the fall in the value of the Australian dollar, it is important that Australia's balance of payments deficit be reduced. That is occurring slowly. Last month, the stage was finally reached at which exports actually exceeded imports. That is tremendously important. Yet the farmers who are complaining are still buying huge quantities of fertiliser from overseas companies, a great deal of farm equipment, and many foreign aeroplanes and cars. The farmers are not helping to promote the Buy Australian Made campaign and reduce the balance of payments deficit, which is absolutely necessary before the standard of living in this country can again stabilise and, in fact, increase.

The Queensland Government is totally hypocritical. It has always disadvantaged the people of Queensland. Not very long ago, at a local government conference, the Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing (Mr Hinze) suggested a 2c a litre tax on fuel in Queensland to pay for additional roads.

The Queensland Government has always disadvantaged Queensland people through its rail freight policies. It makes the people of western and central Queensland pay between 2c and 6c a litre more than necessary. The Government cannot justify that policy. I repeat that it forces the people of central and western Queensland, who already are disadvantaged geographically, to pay more for fuel, which is a necessity of life in those regions. That is the policy of this State Government.

As I said, the legacy of the Fraser Government to Australia, through its taxation policies, was the worst and most distorted tax system in the whole world. It encouraged dishonesty, stifled industry and initiative and made farming unproductive. It was top-heavy with costs. Fuel pricing was a bulwark of Liberal Party policy.

If it were in Government in Canberra today, the Liberal Party would be on the defensive, because there is no way in the world that a Liberal Government would have reduced the price of fuel at all. Parity pricing was a bulwark of its taxation policy, and the Liberal Party must still stand condemned for introducing that policy, for forcing up interest rates and for forcing up inflation in this country.

The economic policies of the Queensland Government have been disastrous. It has overtaxed on fuel through rail freights. It has used regulation to advantage rail over road. The Government has failed to use its legislative and regulatory powers to force the oil companies to maintain their trading practices in this State.

The failure of the Queensland Government to implement sound economic policies, especially in relation to fuel, has forced industry out of this State. No other State in Australia has a higher rate of bankruptcy than Queensland; no other State has lost more manufacturing jobs. The Queensland Government has actually discouraged manufacturing industry in this State. No other State has a higher incidence of take-overs of industries and companies. I cite the examples of Castlemaine, Bulimba Breweries, NACO, N. B. Appleton, Queensland Plastics, Provincial Traders, T. C. Beirne, McDonnell & East and so on—the longest list of any State in Australia. All of that occurred under the economic stewardship of this Government.

Manufacturing industry has a future in Australia, as the Federal Government is proving. The southern States are presently taking advantage of Australia's financial position by using their manufacturing base. They are thus improving Australia's economic position. However, this Government refuses to take any part in the economic recovery.

One of the reasons for the cargo cult mentality in Queensland is Government action such as the giving away of national park on Lindeman Island in the hope that that will provide more jobs. What absolute rot! The only way to promote employment in this State is to rebuild a sound manufacturing base.

The Government ought to live up to the economic possibilities of Queensland. This State, which has the greatest potential of any State in Australia, has the lowest wages in Australia but the highest taxes and the worst future. Queensland is a great State with a great future, but its Government is dragging us economically through the mire. Queensland needs an economic policy that will match those in the rest of Australia, will improve our balance of payments and will encourage Queenslanders and other Australians to buy Australian-made goods. That is not presently happening in Queensland.

Australia has lower fuel prices than other countries, reasonable wage levels and a dollar that is comparable with other world currencies, yet the Queensland Government blatantly refuses to encourage the type of manufacturing base that could lead Queensland into a period of great prosperity. In my opinion the Government is frightened of having labour in Queensland and is frightened——

Mr LESTER: I rise to a point of order. Mr Deputy Speaker, I ask about the subject of this debate.

Honourable Members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row): Order! I do not need assistance from either side of the Chamber in dealing with a point of order. There is so much noise in the Chamber that I missed the point of order. I ask the Minister to restate it.

Mr LESTER: The motion before the House relates to the price of fuel. The honourable member for Woodridge is talking about many other, unrelated matters.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I ask honourable members on both sides of the House, in order to facilitate the conduct of the debate, to maintain relevance to the motion.

Mr D'ARCY: The price of fuel in Australia is tremendously important in this country's total economic policies. The reduction in price is part of the policy that will lead to Australia's economic recovery. The Federal Government is encouraging State Governments to become involved in Australia's economic recovery, but the Queensland Government is failing to do so. It is failing Queenslanders. It is failing Australians. The Federal Government's total economic package will take time, but a recovery is already on the way. Interest rates will fall. Inflation will fall. The correct policies have been set in train. Australia's balance of payments is improving and will continue to improve.

The Queensland Government is dragging the chain. It is paying for its past sins and past developments and is not matching the economic growth in the rest of the country. Take-overs are occurring in Queensland on a more massive scale than elsewhere in Australia. Foreign borrowings in Queensland are increasing, even in the private sector. That is having a direct effect on Australia's balance of payments and its economic recovery. It is time that the Queensland Government put its act together and supported Australia's economic recovery. We would then see a more economically viable State—a place in which we could all be proud to live.

Mr STEPHAN (Gympie) (12.38 p.m.): It gives me much pleasure to join the debate in order to highlight the inadequacies of the Federal Labor Government's handling of the——

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The Chamber will come to order. There is far too much audible conversation and there are far too many honourable members on their feet. I ask them to resume their seats.

Mr STEPHAN: I wish to highlight the Federal Government's handling of the economy, and particularly its fuel-pricing policy. The member for Woodridge referred to the efforts by the Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing (Mr Hinze) to improve Queensland's road system through the fuel levy of 2c a litre. I point out that not all of that amount is being passed on by the Federal Government to the States. To a large extent, it has been cut back, with the balance flowing to the Federal Government's coffers. Why is that not being passed on? It is all very well to refer to figures, but the fact remains that all the funds collected through that special levy are not being passed on to be used in the way in which the levy was designed, that is, for the bicentennial roads project. If that 2c a litre levy was being utilised for road construction, many more road development projects could be expected, because many more are required.

Mr Lester: The Federal Government wants to sack all the railway workers.

Mr STEPHAN: That would be right, too. Transportation matters are not of any great relevance to the Federal Government, and railway employees are looking for other areas of employment at present.

The honourable member for Southport (Mr Jennings) referred to a campaign speech made by the Prime Minister (Mr Hawke) in 1983, which set out the Federal Government's policy on fuel at that time. For the edification of Opposition members, I repeat that campaign promise made on 16 February 1983, which states as follows—

“Labor will reduce the price of petrol by cancelling the January 1 oil price increase of \$3.23 per barrel. This will have the effect of reducing the price of petrol in the order of three cents per litre.”

Approximately 26 months after taking office, in May 1985, the Labor Government increased the price of fuel by 10c a litre, which is a far cry from a reduction of 3c a litre that was suggested.

Mr De Lacy interjected.

Mr STEPHAN: I will turn my attention to the problems faced by Queensland farmers later on. The honourable member for Cairns should know what the Queensland farmers are going through at present.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Would all honourable members who are standing either leave the Chamber or resume their seats?

Mr STEPHAN: I wish to examine the revenue that has been collected by the Federal Government since 1977. In 1977-78, \$1,339m was collected; in 1979-80, \$3,029m was collected; in the year 1982-83—the year in which the Hawke Government took office—\$4,867m was collected. Then occurred an increase of the order of \$1,500m, and in 1984-85, \$6,295m was collected. The question must be asked about the purpose for which the revenue was collected, and I suggest that the funds were not being applied towards the cost of road construction to meet the demands of road-users; rather, the revenue is being used to prop up other Government instrumentalities and pet projects of the Federal Labor Government.

A tremendous amount of revenue has been collected from fuel prices, and they have been used as a milch cow by the Federal Labor Government. That has imposed a burden on the people of Australia, especially those who live in Queensland. Because of the vast distances travelled in Queensland and the amount of revenue collected from

the sale of fuel, either petroleum or diesel, a large proportion of the revenue that is in the hands of the Federal Government emanates from Queensland.

During the debate on this motion, mention has been made of the price of fuel per litre or per gallon and of the revenue that has been obtained from road-users generally. Taking an historical view, I mention that in 1955, the price of fuel was 7.75c a litre, taking into account the necessary conversion from Imperial to metric measures.

Mr Randell: The Federal Government's policy has no doubt been influenced by the Australian Council of Trade Unions.

Mr STEPHAN: I believe that the Federal Government's policy on fuel was created by the ACTU. The ACTU said that it was able to compete in the market for selling petroleum, and its attempt, by launching Solo Oil Australia Pty Ltd, is a very interesting example of the way in which that organisation entered into private enterprise—it went broke!

Mr Davis interjected.

Mr STEPHAN: It went broke in much the same way as the honourable member for Brisbane Central did—and the way in which anyone else would if he was not propped up by the Federal Government.

Mr DAVIS: I rise to a point of order. The honourable member for Gympie is misleading the House. He said that Solo Oil Australia Pty Ltd is broke. In fact, there are about 40-odd stations throughout Queensland.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Booth): Order! No point of order has been made out.

Mr STEPHAN: My remarks have obviously struck a weak point in the honourable member's armour. I can remember when he conducted a service station and was involved in the taxi-cab business. Perhaps he was not operating under a support scheme. Apparently Solo Oil Australia Pty Ltd was not operating under the same scheme as the honourable member; perhaps in that organisation there is a place for the honourable member.

In 1982, prior to the Hawke Government's taking office, the price of petrol per litre was 39c. Although I am not denying that at that stage an increase occurred, since that time the price of fuel has increased a great deal, and that is the point I wish to make.

Mr Davis: Where is the Minister for Mines and Energy? He has not the guts to be in the Chamber.

Mr Vaughan: Where is Gibbs?

Mr STEPHAN: I am not sure why the honourable members ask me about the Minister for Mines and Energy. The point I make is that, since 1982, the price of fuel has increased drastically. Prices vary greatly, but the real price of petrol is 54.9c a litre. That represents an increase of 14c a litre.

Statistics reveal a 7 per cent increase between 1955 and 1960, and an increase of 71 per cent in the past five years. No-one could be proud of that record.

Mr Davis: Aren't you happy with what they gave to the farmers?

Mr STEPHAN: It took a long while for it to be given to the farmers. What was taken away from the farmers before they were given the 10c a litre reduction in the price of diesel fuel? What was taken away from farmers firstly by Mr Whitlam and secondly by Mr Hawke when Labor came to power? You have been milking the farmers in far more ways—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member will address the Chair.

Mr STEPHAN: I am sorry, Mr Deputy Speaker. Will you pass on to the member for Brisbane Central that the farmers have been milked far worse than other sections of the community in fuel prices, all other prices that they have to pay and loss of fertiliser subsidies. Farmers lost the benefit of the freight equalisation scheme.

Mr Davis: Tax deductible, too; don't forget about that.

Mr STEPHAN: The fuel used in primary production would need to be tax deductible. An enormous loss of tax deductibility has been suffered by all others in industry as well as those in primary industry.

Farmers were crucified by Whitlam and Hawke through attacks on freight equalisation. In the mid-1960s, a freight equalisation scheme was introduced by the Federal Government. It was introduced to minimise freight charges that country people away from coastal ports had to pay as a result of actual freight costs.

Mr R. J. Gibbs: It's called putting your money where you win seats.

Mr STEPHAN: It is taking money from places that contribute a good deal of revenue and placing it in the Federal coffers.

The freight equalisation scheme continued until 1974 when the then Federal Government, under Whitlam—perhaps Labor members remember him—abolished the system. Following the 1977 Federal election, the system was reintroduced and implemented on the basis of any freight costs above .5c a litre being subsidised by the scheme. Subsequently, the base figure of .5c was increased to 1.2c a litre.

In the 1985 mini-Budget, the base figure was further increased to 5.2c a litre. The effect is that country consumers, be they owners of retail stores, primary producers or manufacturers must pay, in addition to the normal price of the fuels they use, any freight costs up to a total of 5.2c a litre before any subsidy on freight costs applies. That adds enormously to costs in country areas. In these days, it seems that the idea of the Federal Government is to chop at the primary producer or hit him as hard as possible. That has happened time and time again with scant regard for what the primary producer has been doing for the economy of the nation.

The National Farmers Federation issued a statement on 23 April 1985 indicating that the diesel price increase at that stage would cost the primary producers \$70m in a full year. I am sure that Opposition members do not realise how much fuel is being used by those in primary industry, by those on whom the rest of Australia depends.

Mr Vaughan: It is not all for farm production.

Mr STEPHAN: Very little fuel is used in rural areas other than for primary production.

Most honourable members who have been involved in primary production know that producers are very careful to ensure that fuel is not used for other than primary production or off-the-road purposes. Any fuel used for road transport is brought under control very quickly. It is very seldom that producers use farm fuel for on-road purposes.

Mr Vaughan interjected.

Mr STEPHAN: I know that the honourable member for Nudgee does not like to hear about these matters and that he is very upset when primary producers manage to keep their heads above water. The basic problem of primary producers is to keep their heads above water. The price of fuel is a major element in their overall costing.

The reduction of 10c a litre that has been offered by the Federal Government has been very slow in coming. Prior to taking that decision, the Federal Government had been constantly adding 4c and 2c to the cost of a litre of petrol. What it is returning to the motorist now was certainly taken away many times previously.

I have great pleasure in supporting the amendment that the Premier and Treasurer has moved. We should do everything we can to point out to the people of Queensland the inadequacy of the Federal Government's fuel policy.

Hon. W. D. LICKISS (Mount Coot-tha) (12.51 p.m.): I support the motion before the Chair, because very little has affected world economies more than the escalation in the price of oil in the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) over recent years. Quite frankly, the average motorist will find that, within the last 24 hours, he has had imposed upon him an extra 5.3c a litre in excise.

Subsequent to the obvious escalation in oil prices on the world market, the decision was made at the Federal level to adjust prices within the Australian economy for two reasons: firstly, to ensure continuity of supply to the nation; and, secondly, to assist local exploration and production in the development of a local oil industry in Australia. At the time, an assurance was given that, should the price escalation be reversed, a corresponding downward adjustment would be made.

Originally, the Labor Party, under Mr Hawke, went to the people with the policy that it would reduce the price of fuel by 3c a litre. The public believed that a responsible party going to the people would try to adhere to its policy. Since then, increases have occurred in the price of petrol to the Australian motorist.

Over a period of weeks, we have noticed the value of crude depreciate on the world market. Whilst it seems that the Federal Government can adjust fuel prices upwards without a great deal of delay, a rather sluggish attitude seems to be adopted to reducing prices as the price of crude falls overseas. After much procrastination, the Federal Government has acted. We are pleased that relief is being given to people in rural areas.

One of the major components in the increase in the rate of inflation in Australia was the increase in fuel prices. One of the great problems facing industry was the energy crisis and the effect of increased fuel prices in terms of production.

In the last 24 hours, the Federal Government had the opportunity to grant a reprieve—even if it was only temporary—to Australian industries to give them a chance to catch up. Of course, the result has been that the excise on petrol has been increased by 5.3c a litre.

Since the debate commenced, I have not been able to ascertain the actual amount of excise that the Federal Government receives on a litre of petrol, but I am sure that it is more than 20c.

Honourable members should take notice of the procrastinations of the Federal Government in deciding what it should do when the price of fuel comes down. If the action of adjustment upwards was equivalent to the way in which past upward adjustments have been made, they would see that, if the price of fuel returned to the price it was two days ago—that is, about 55c a litre in Brisbane—it would not take the Federal Government long to adjust the price. However, if it omits to take off the excise duty, which is separate from price adjustment, honourable members could be seeing a price of about 60c a litre, with fuel costing the same as it did 24 hours ago as far as Brisbane is concerned. The increase in the price of petrol would be reflected throughout Australia.

Is it any wonder that the public of Australia does not trust the present Federal Government's monetary undertakings? The public certainly does not trust the word of the Federal Labor Government, because it has broken its word.

Sir William Knox: There was not going to be a capital gains tax.

Mr LICKISS: That is just part of the pattern. The Federal Government has said that a number of things would not happen. The people of Australia seem to take that with a grain of salt, because the harsh medicine that the Federal Government stated would not be given has been dealt out in double doses. So, projecting what has happened

in the past into the future, honourable members must have a grave view of what the Federal Government will do when things move in the opposite direction.

The Liberal Party fully appreciates the problems arising from the fuel policy in Australia. The fuel policy was tackled by a previous Liberal-National Party Government in Canberra. The people of Australia were reluctant to accept the necessity of having to pay extra for fuel, but at least they had faith in that Government and believed that if, as promised, the trend went in the opposite direction, they could expect a corresponding decrease in fuel prices. One would have expected that any responsible Government that accepted that formula, as the Federal Government did, would act correspondingly if there was a downward trend in world fuel prices. That has not happened, and the Federal Government stands condemned for taking the people of Australia for a ride.

The outcome of the Federal Government's policy is that today the motorist has been hit with a 5.3c excise tax, which will adversely affect the motorists of Australia.

Hon. N. E. LEE (Yeronga) (12.58 p.m.): I support the motion moved by the leader of the Liberal Party (Sir William Knox), and I welcome the amendment moved by the Premier and Treasurer, as it certainly fits in with the original motion.

I am appalled at and absolutely astounded by the answer given by the Opposition. The answer was weak, poor and very ineffectual. The fact that only three Opposition members remain in the Chamber bears out that contention. Only three Opposition members remain because the other honourable members opposite do not want to hear the truth. As soon as it gets hot in the kitchen, out they go. All the honourable members on the Opposition front bench have left the Chamber.

Mr Lester: There are no members from the country here, either.

Mr LEE: That is right. All except three honourable members opposite have left the Chamber.

Ever since the Federal ALP came into office, it has been bringing these taxes and other taxes in by stealth.

Sitting suspended from 1 to 2.15 p.m.

Mr LEE: As I said before the luncheon recess, because the members of the ALP had so little interest in what their leader had to say and knew that he could not counter the motion in any way, only three of them were in the House. Perhaps, when they were unionists, they got used to knocking off for lunch five to 10 minutes early and that habit has crept into their activities in Parliament. They encourage workers to extend their lunch-hours.

I see that the member for Nudgee (Mr Vaughan) is in the House. I apologise to him for not realising that he was the next speaker and for jumping his place. One thing that he must learn in politics is to get out of the barrier quickly and get a good start. I beat him out of the barrier, so he cannot blame Mr Deputy Speaker for calling on me. I jumped miles before the member for Nudgee.

I note that the Opposition forces are now back to three. The same old three are back again to listen to the very poor contributions from the ALP side. They know darned well that they cannot defend the Federal Government's actions; they know darned well that every word of the motion moved by the Leader of the Liberal Party (Sir William Knox) is true. The Liberal Party was quite happy to welcome the amendment moved by the Premier and Treasurer and seconded by the Minister for Employment and Industrial Affairs.

As I said, the ALP has been doing those sorts of things for years. The ALP promised the world to get into Government, but, ever since, its every move has been to introduce taxation by stealth. The Federal Government did not announce this measure in the Budget; it kept the Budget to one side to make everything look rosy and happy. That

was so that it could go to the people and say, "Look what we are doing for you." The Federal Government brings in taxes through the back door. In doing that, it tries to be unnoticed.

I give credit to my leader for raising this matter in the House. What the Federal Government is doing to the people is shocking. It claimed that it would not introduce a capital gains tax, that Australia would not have that. It said also that it was all right for employees to have company cars and business lunches. Now the Government has taxed those things, but it is taxation that has crept in by stealth. Because employees on the coal-fields and out west cannot afford to build homes of their own, they have to be supplied with housing. The Federal Government will now tax employers for providing that housing. For the Federal Government to do those sorts of things is so wrong. Those taxes add to the costs of the manufacturing and rural industries.

Mr Davis: Come on!

Mr LEE: The Federal Government was very happy for the price of petrol to increase, and the member for Brisbane Central supported it in that. The honourable member and his Federal colleagues do not give a damn about the worker and do not give a damn about the people whom they say they represent. The Federal Government was quite happy to receive the additional revenue when the price of fuel was increasing; but as soon as the price began to decline, the Government would not keep its word and reduce the price of fuel. The Federal Government and the member for Brisbane Central will not keep their word. Now that the price of fuel has fallen, the Federal Government and the member for Brisbane Central say, "We really cannot remove this tax because we have promised the money in welfare." That is where most of the money is going—into welfare. The Federal Government knows that if it disburses sufficient welfare moneys, it has a possibility of remaining in power. However, it forgets about what is happening to the nation's deficit, which was supposed to be kept at \$10 billion.

Mr Vaughan: It was in 1983, under Howard.

Mr LEE: This year it will be something like \$14 or \$15 billion. I ask the honourable member for Nudgee to see whether I am right. That is why the Federal Government cannot reduce the price of petrol without imposing an additional excise.

That is something else that the Federal Government is doing by stealth. About 35 per cent of the price of petrol goes straight into the Federal Government's coffers. Would it not be marvelous to have such a cash flow? As the Premier and Treasurer said, every bowser in Australia is nothing more than a tax-collecting machine. Every time somebody pulls the handle of a poker machine in Sydney, the Wran Government collects a tax.

The rural industry has lost the most benefits. Every tax incentive has been taken from the rural industry. I own a property at Roma that is operated by my son. I follow its operations closely. My son is always saying to me, "The price of fuel is about 33 per cent more than it was 12 months ago." The price of avgas has increased from about 25c a litre to almost 70c a litre. The Federal Government thinks that everybody who uses a light aircraft uses it for pleasure. It forgets that many people require a light aircraft to operate their business. The ALP Government in Canberra is crippling business. It wants only to take, take and take and not to give anything in return.

The first time that the Federal Government was faced with having to give something back since it gained office was when overseas oil prices began to decrease. One of the Federal Government's main promises was to reduce the price of fuel. The first time it had to reduce the price of fuel, it squibbed on it. The Federal Government has welshed on its deal and failed to honour its promises. It will do that over and over again. The members of the Federal Government are born welshers. They do nothing but promise the world.

Mr Davis: You claim your avgas on your tax return.

Mr LEE: Why should a person not be allowed to do that?

Mr Vaughan: You want the subsidy and you also take the tax deduction.

Mr LEE: What a lot of rot! It just shows how narrow-minded the honourable member is. If his brains were dynamite, he could not blow his hat off.

Had it not been for the decline in the value of the Australian dollar, where would the rural industry be today? It would have been in the greatest chaotic mess one would have seen. Despite what the Federal Government is doing, the value of the dollar has decreased. Australia's exports have been boosted by the fall in the value of the dollar. Had it not been for that, the rural industry would have been on its knees. Of course, without the decline in the value of the dollar, the rural industry would have been out of business.

Very conveniently, every six months the Federal Government creeps in a fuel tax based on the Consumer Price Index.

Sir William Knox: And liquor.

Mr LEE: The honourable member is correct.

Yesterday or today, the price of the working man's drink—beer—increased by 90c a carton. No doubt Opposition members would have bought a few cartons before today.

Mr Innes: The rich man's drink, wine, is not taxed.

Mr LEE: As the honourable member says, wine is not being taxed—not that I want to see it taxed. The wine industry is very large.

The ALP is supposed to be looking after people who like their occasional beer. At times, I do not mind one myself. The Federal Government collects in excise about 70 per cent of the price of a pot of beer. The Federal Government is supposed to be called the working man's Government. However, it certainly is not. It just could not care less. It was interested only in gaining office.

For a long time, the Federal Government has been taking an extra 2c a litre from the price of petrol. The money was supposed to be put into a trust fund so that it could be used on roads. Although a large percentage is used for that purpose, approximately \$800m of that trust fund is being used to pay the welfare bill.

Mr Deputy Speaker, if you diddled a trust fund, you would go to gaol. Anybody would go to gaol for doing that. Yet the ALP Government in Canberra is fleecing a trust fund, and not a word is said. It is absolutely unbelievable that the Federal Government would do that.

Mr Price: Applaudable.

Mr LEE: The honourable member for Mount Isa says that it is applaudable that the Federal Government would cheat that fund of \$800,000 to put towards welfare payments. The honourable member for Mount Isa once owned a transport business, and is paying about 70c for avgas for his aeroplane. If he is quite happy to do that, he must be in the wrong party. There must be something wrong with the honourable member if he has that sort of mentality.

The 10.6c a litre reduction in the price of fuel will apply only to property use; it will not benefit the man who has to transport his cattle to market.

Sir William Knox: It's not for taking kids to school.

Mr LEE: That is right. It will not benefit people who have to take their kids to school. Many children have to travel literally miles and miles to get to school.

Mr Innes: Take the grain to the silo.

Mr Littleproud: Get the food in.

Mr LEE: That is right. Food must be taken in and out. Everything must be transported.

It is not fair. The farmers will receive only half the benefit that they are entitled to. The 10.6c a litre reduction in the price of fuel will apply only to machinery that is used on the property. The turnover of most of the people on the land is insufficient to enable them to fully utilise their tractors so that they can take advantage of the reduction in the price of fuel. The man on the land has had too rough a time because the ALP Federal Government has taken away all the incentive and all the tax benefits, and because he cannot write anything off. The stage has been reached at which a farmer has difficulty writing off repairs to his tractor.

The transporters of goods will get only a 5c a litre reduction—half of what it should be. What the Federal Government has done is nothing short of criminal. It is not as though it had not made a promise. If that Government had not made a promise, it could be excused. However, it made that promise over and over again.

This is a tax by stealth. It is a tax by deception. I repeat that it is a tax by deception. The ALP is a master at deception. Only three members of the Labor Party are present in the Chamber. The honourable member for Townsville South (Mr Wilson) is wandering in for the first time today.

Mr Vaughan: You weren't here all last week.

Mr LEE: If I was wrong about the honourable member for Townsville South not being in the Chamber, I am very sorry. What the honourable member for Nudgee says is completely untrue. He tells fibs. If I was wrong about the honourable member for Townsville South, I apologise to him. I can assure honourable members that I do not exaggerate.

The two Opposition speakers tried to justify the Federal Government's not giving people the full reduction in the excise on fuel. What about the workers that the ALP is supposed to be so concerned about? Opposition members must think that the workers do not have a motor car. Most working couples have two cars because, as my colleague the honourable member for Sherwood (Mr Innes) says, they have been forced out into the outer suburbs of the city and they need two motor cars so that they can get to work. Opposition members could not care less about the workers. The Labor Party just wants them to be taxed.

The excise on fuel is doing nothing but subsidise welfare. That is what it is doing. The 5.3c a litre that the Government is withholding is subsidising welfare. The 2c a litre increase resulting from the rise in the Consumer Price Index should have been placed in the trust fund. Instead, it has been used for welfare.

Mr Wilson: That's not true.

Mr LEE: It is true. The member for Townsville South knows that it is true. My case cannot be argued against. I am stating the facts.

Do members of the Opposition ever stop to think that, every time a semi-trailer fills its two fuel tanks, \$20 goes in tax to the Federal Government? Those trucks are transporting grain from the west, goods from the south or our cattle to the coast. That might not sound much, until one calculates the number of times each transport fills up and the number of trucks in Australia. Every time a D8 or D9 has to be filled, about \$80 goes in tax. Those machines suck a tankful every eight hours. To be used economically, they must be operated three shifts a day; so \$240 a day is paid out in tax to the Federal Government on each of those machines in Australia. That is an indication of how the Government is ripping the public off. Those taxes must be passed on to the consumer—the authority building the roads or the person developing the land. That is absolutely wrong.

A couple of years ago, I went to New Zealand on a fact-finding mission. On my arrival, I hired a car. When I pulled in at a garage, the attendant said, "How much do you want?" I said, "Fill it up." I was absolutely staggered when I discovered that the fuel was 50c a litre. I said, "You have to be joking. This is a crazy place to live. Come to Australia, where it is only 24c a litre. Come to Australia, where you can have a decent standard of living." What is the price of fuel in Australia today? Nearly 60c a litre in places.

Mr Littleproud: More than that in the west.

Mr LEE: Yes, it is certainly much more than that. It is well into the 60s.

Does the Opposition realise that every time a motorist with a 4-cylinder car fills his tank, at a cost of between \$25 and \$27, about \$10 goes in tax?

Mr Littleproud: \$13, \$14 or \$15.

Mr LEE: I have never been one to exaggerate. I have never tried to paint the worst picture. I will accept the interjection of the honourable member for Condamine. I realise that he knows the facts.

Does the Opposition realise that every time a person puts \$3 worth of petrol in his car, he is paying more than \$1 in tax? For every dollar, 35c, or over a third, goes in tax.

Mr Littleproud: Over half.

Mr LEE: No, I cannot accept that. It is 35 per cent.

Mr Prest: This is one of your better speeches.

Mr LEE: Yes, it is. At least I have brought into the House some of the members of the Australian Labor Party Opposition who might otherwise not have come in, and at least the House has filled into something resembling a majority of members, which is good to see.

Perhaps members of the Opposition want to hear the honourable member for Nudgee (Mr Vaughan) defend the Federal Government's policy better than the Leader of the Opposition or the honourable member for Woodridge (Mr D'Arcy) did, because they did not make a very good job of it. They spoke about everything except why this tax should be imposed.

In conclusion—a Government that collects all the revenue by virtue of a price increase and promises the world, and only gives back half of what it should when the price comes down ought to be condemned. I condemn the Federal Australian Labor Party Government because what it has done is wrong for Australia. Its policy on this issue will continuously hold back this nation because it will ensure that the rate of inflation increases.

Mr VAUGHAN (Nudgee) (2.35 p.m.): To listen to the speeches made by members of the Liberal Party, particularly the honourable member who preceded me, and to look at the contents of the resolution, one would think that the members of the Liberal Party are the lily-whites in this exercise. Let me remind the people of this State that it was a Federal Liberal-National Party coalition Government that introduced import parity pricing on Australian-produced crude oil. At that time, the price of petrol throughout the nation was less than 16c a litre. Since the mid-1970s, what has happened? The price of petrol has escalated. It is important to remember that, from 1975 to March 1983, a Liberal-National Party coalition Government was in power and it applied this "unjust Commonwealth tax." I agree with members of the Liberal Party who call it "an unjust Commonwealth tax", because that is exactly what it was.

I wish to trace the history of the introduction of import parity pricing on Australian-produced crude oil. In the mid-1970s, Australian-produced crude oil cost less than \$3 a

barrel. The then Prime Minister (Mr Fraser) got the bright idea of introducing "an unjust Commonwealth tax" and, since 1975, it has been exactly that. For eight years, from 1975 to 1983, the Federal Liberal-National Party coalition did not reap millions of dollars or hundreds of millions of dollars, but billions of dollars each year from the Australian motorist. For that eight-year period, the Liberal-National coalition Government collected over \$1 billion each year. How much of that was ever passed back to the motorist?

The price of petrol has risen from 16c a litre in 1975 to its present rate. It should be remembered that an Australian Labor Party Government did not win office until March 1983. According to my information, since the Labor Government took office, five reductions in the price of wholesale petrol have occurred, but not one has been passed on by the industry.

The proposed 5.3c a litre reduction, along with the other reductions in the price of petrol, is a reduction in the wholesale price, but the Commonwealth Government has no control at all over the fixing of the retail price. The important fact to be borne in mind is that there is no guarantee that the 5.3c a litre reduction will affect the current wholesale price of 49.5c a litre. In this morning's *Courier-Mail*, a statement by oil company representatives indicates that there is no guarantee that the 5.3c reduction will be passed on.

Let us examine the facts. Import parity pricing was introduced in Australia to encourage more exploration for oil. At the time of that introduction, it was felt that Australia needed to maintain its self-sufficiency in oil. Although, at that time, Australia imported 30 per cent of its crude oil requirements and was 70 per cent self-sufficient, the figures indicated that, over the next five years, that position would be reversed. Australia was facing a position of being 30 per cent self-sufficient and 70 per cent dependent on imported crude oil. A decision was made that something had to be done to encourage oil exploration, and I agree with that decision. Part of it was a response to the need for the conservation of fuel because, at that time, in Australia, fuel was being used up as though it was going out of fashion. The Australian people were using petrol as though that resource was renewable.

I will deal later with a statement made by a Minister about how he thought the petrol problem in Australia should be dealt with. The first priority was to encourage oil exploration, the second related to encouraging conservation and the third was related to using alternative sources of energy.

For the eight years that the Fraser Government imposed this iniquitous tax—that is the way in which it has been described in the motion moved by the Liberal Party—it collected the money and used it to pad out its Budget. Indeed, in 1983, when Labor came to power, it found that the deficit announced by the discredited Liberal Treasurer—the present Leader of the Liberals in the Federal sphere—as \$6 billion or \$7 billion, exceeded \$10 billion. That deficit was accumulated by the coalition Government in Canberra in spite of the fact that, for 8 years, it had been padding its Budget by over \$1 billion a year through that tax imposed by the Fraser Government.

The oil companies also did very well under the import parity pricing of Australian produced crude. While the Commonwealth Government was making more than \$1 billion a year, the oil companies got \$2 billion. The total income earned by import parity pricing from Australian produced crude oil was about \$3 billion a year, most of which was paid by the Australian motorists.

Honourable members should get their facts right when they say what should and should not be done. It is all very well for the Liberal "six-pack" to adopt a pious stand and talk about this unjust Commonwealth tax; but I venture to suggest that if the Liberals became part of a coalition Government tomorrow, they would agree with everything that has been done by the National Party Government in the way of ripping off the motorists, particularly in the country.

The honourable member for Yeronga referred to the Australian Bicentennial Road Development Trust Fund. In doing so, he made an untrue allegation—he cannot back it up—that the trust fund had been milked. There is no way in the world that the Commonwealth Auditor-General would allow a trust fund to be milked as he suggested. The honourable member knows that what he said is untrue.

The ABRD program is funded by a 2c a litre levy on fuel, which began as 1c a litre. That was proposed by the Queensland State Government. Quite a number of years ago, when the Liberals were in the coalition Government, the then Treasurer (Sir Llew Edwards) proposed that a 1c a litre levy be placed on the price of fuel to help pay for roads. That levy was imposed and has applied ever since.

The member for Yeronga said that the money was paid into a trust fund supposedly earmarked for main roads development and was taken out and used for welfare. The honourable member stands indicted for that untruth. How much money was collected, and how much money came to Queensland, through the 2c a litre levy? The State Government maintains that it does not believe in taxes. It wants somebody else to do the dirty work for it. It wants somebody else to collect the taxes, so that it can avoid the odour or stigma of collecting them, but it holds out its hand for part of the tax collected.

This year, \$440m is to be allocated from the ABRD funds. How much is coming to Queensland? Queensland will receive \$94.6m. Last week, the member for Balonne (Mr Neal) spoke in the Matters of Public Interest debate and cried about how bad the roads were in the west and how his area was not getting its fair share of the ABRD moneys. I will tell him and the people of Queensland why his area is not receiving its share of the ABRD funds. The State Government is spending the money in south-east Queensland. I am not complaining; much of the money is being spent in my electorate on the east-west arterial road from Nudgee Road across to Sandgate Road. That involves the expenditure of \$3m or \$4m. A roundabout, which is expected to cost \$3m or \$4m, is being built at Virginia. Toombul Road is being upgraded, which will involve the expenditure of another \$6m. As I say, I am not complaining, but the people in the country should be complaining. The State Government is not spending the ABRD funds in the areas in which they are supposed to be spent.

Previously, I have said that when I first drove along the Bruce Highway to Cairns in 1964, there was a large number of single-lane bridges. There is still a large number of single-lane bridges on that road, and they represent a significant hazard.

Those hypocrites who were in coalition government and the hypocrites on the Government side talk about the price of fuel. Until recently, the Federal Government operated a scheme known as the Petroleum Products Freight Subsidy Scheme. Under that scheme, hundreds of millions of dollars of tax-payers' money was used to subsidise the price of fuel to country people. The theory behind the scheme was that, because such a differential existed between the price of fuel in the city and the price of fuel in the country, the price of petrol in the country should be no more than 0.5c a litre above the price in the city. That scheme took hundreds of millions of dollars out of the Commonwealth revenue. What happened? The road transport people were claiming their freight subsidy, all right.

In my capacity as the Opposition spokesman on Mines and Energy, I travel round the coal-fields. I can remember three years ago paying 56c a litre for petrol in Dysart, which is in the electorate of the member for Mirani (Mr Randell). As I say, the whole idea behind the scheme was that the price of petrol in country areas should be no more than 0.5c a litre above the price in the city. What did the member for Mirani and other Government members who represent country areas do about it? Not one thing! They stood by and watched hundreds of millions of dollars of tax-payers' money being used to subsidise the price of fuel in country areas, the people in those areas getting one cent benefit. This morning, I was informed that at the time when the Petroleum Products

Freight Subsidy Scheme was suspended by the Commonwealth Government, \$117m had been spent to try to reduce the price of petrol to people in country areas.

Several years ago, after I visited country areas and saw what was going on, I came into this Chamber and directed a question to the Minister for Mines and Energy. Having regard to the fact that, under the Petroleum Products Freight Subsidy Scheme, the price of fuel to people in country areas was supposed to be no more than 0.5c a litre above the price in the city, I asked why the price of petrol was so high in country areas. The answer I received was that the subsidy applied only to the wholesale price and that a retailer could charge what he liked. The price of fuel landed in Boulia, Mount Isa, Longreach or any other country town should have been only 0.5c a litre more than the price in the city. But the price in those towns was 15c and 20c a litre more than the price in the city.

Honourable members opposite are now whining, screaming and crying about how unjust it is that the 10.6c a litre is not to be passed on to the motorists of this country. Honourable members opposite are crying about how much it is affecting the people in the country, the people on the farms, and the people on the stations. How much have those honourable members done to try to reduce the price of petrol to country people?

Last September, the Minister for Transport (Mr Lane) conducted an inquiry, which was called the Lane inquiry. That inquiry recommended that the monopoly on the cartage of fuel be taken away from the Railway Department. At present, there is a limit on the distance that fuel can be carried to places serviced by a railway. In this State, no fuel can be transported by road for more than 80 km if there is a railway in that area. Places such as Emerald, Taroom and Longreach have fuel carted to them by rail.

This morning, Lesley Daniell was speaking about this matter to Keith Wright on her radio program. The State Government says that the people in the country and the people in the west are being ripped off by the Federal Government. In this State, the cost of freight per litre of fuel carried to Emerald by rail is 4.2c. That is the cost landed at Emerald; of course, the retailer puts his margin on top of that. If that petrol were carried by road, it would be only 1.8c a litre.

Mr Lester: Do you want to sack all the railwaymen now?

Mr VAUGHAN: What has the Minister for Employment and Industrial Affairs done? The Minister, who can do so much about this, made a good deal of noise this morning about how the country people were being affected.

Mr Lane: What a load of rubbish! Where did you get those figures?

Mr VAUGHAN: This is the Minister for Transport's own inquiry.

Mr Lane: You are misquoting it.

Mr VAUGHAN: I have not finished with the Minister for Transport yet. If I am misquoting those figures, let the Minister take a point of order and make out that I am not telling the truth.

The honourable member for Peak Downs (Mr Lester), whose electorate covers Emerald and whose electorate office is in Emerald—or is his electorate office in Yeppoon now?

Mr Lester: Emu Park.

Mr VAUGHAN: The Minister for Employment and Industrial Affairs (Mr Lester) could do something about it, but what has he done? He has done absolutely nothing. He has helped to maintain this monopoly by the Railway Department when, in actual fact, he could have reduced the price of fuel to the people of Emerald by 3c a litre.

Mr Lester interjected.

Mr VAUGHAN: How many years has he been the member out there? How many years has he been the Minister?

Mr Lester interjected.

Mr VAUGHAN: The Minister has not bought any petrol out there whilst he has been the Minister. He has lived at Emu Park and has never bought fuel, so how would he know what the price of fuel is?

Mr LESTER: That remark is most offensive. It is untrue. All the service stations will tell you of the large amount of fuel that I buy, because I am in the electorate so much. I ask that that statement be withdrawn in total.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Booth): Order! The Minister makes the point that he buys fuel there and he asks that the honourable member for Nudgee withdraw that remark.

Mr VAUGHAN: I will withdraw the remark, but I know how the Minister buys his fuel. He buys his fuel by the 44-gallon drum. He gets it at a cheaper price and then he claims it off his tax.

Mr LESTER: I find that second remark offensive. That is not true, either. I ask that both of those remarks be withdrawn in total.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The remark that the Minister finds offensive relates to the 44-gallon drum. The Minister asks the honourable member for Nudgee to withdraw that. He says he does not do that.

Mr VAUGHAN: I will withdraw it, but I will bet that he cannot tell me the price of fuel in Emerald or the last price that he paid for fuel anywhere in his electorate. I will not say any more. I withdraw that statement. I know for a fact that he could not tell me the price of fuel because he would not know the price of fuel anywhere in his electorate.

It costs 8c a litre to land fuel in Taroom by rail. If fuel were taken by road, it would be 2c a litre, so people in Taroom and surrounding areas are paying 6c a litre more for their petrol than they should.

Why is that? Because this Government, which by this motion tries to condemn the Federal Government for not passing on the full 10.6c a litre price reduction, could tomorrow reduce the price of fuel in those country areas by up to 10c a litre! The cost of carting fuel to the Darling Downs is 3c to 4c a litre by rail and 1c to 2c a litre by road. With one stroke of the pen, this Government, which comprises the hypocrites who condemn the Federal Government——

Mr Lane: Do you support Hawke and Keating?

Mr VAUGHAN: The loud-mouthed Minister for Transport is trying to interject. He knows it hurts.

Mr Lane: That is what the people want to know.

Mr VAUGHAN: He knows he has been a party to the rip-off of country people.

Mr Lane: Why don't you answer the question?

Mr VAUGHAN: Members on the other side of the House sit back with their pious attitude and try to condemn the Federal Government.

Mr Lane interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The House will come to order.

Mr VAUGHAN: The "Don Lane inquiry" has decided that the railway monopoly will be phased out over two years, but has added the rider "depending on budgetary constraints". Even though the report of the Lane inquiry, which was brought down in September last year, said that the railway monopoly, which keeps up the price of fuel in country areas, must be eliminated within two years, it added the rider that, because of budgetary constraints, it may not be done away with. That means that in two years' time, this Government, which has the opportunity to act on the findings of an inquiry instituted by his good self the Minister for Transport, is not bound to do anything, because the findings are subject to budgetary constraints. What will happen at that time is that the Government will say that it cannot do anything about this problem, because it has a very tight budget and that it is those "terrible Federal people" who should be reducing the price of fuel. The hypocrites on the other side of the House have much to answer for. I will go on a bit further.

Mr Lane: Come on, do you support Hawke and Keating or don't you?

Mr VAUGHAN: There has been much discussion about how this policy is affecting motorists. Do honourable members know that I have not received one complaint in my electorate office from any of my constituents about the price of petrol?

Mr Lane: Why would they come to you to be insulted and abused?

Mr VAUGHAN: Mr Deputy Speaker, if the Minister for Transport had been interjecting like this last week and he had been a member on this side of the House, he would have been tossed out ages ago. Last week, members of the Opposition got only one bite of the cherry.

I have not received one complaint in my electorate office. I would say that not one city member of this House could honestly say that he has received any complaints. Of course, because country people have had cause to complain, country members have received complaints. Over the years that I have travelled the length and breadth of this State, they have complained to me about the high price of petrol in the country, which has been brought about by the failure of this Government to pass on the benefits of the Petroleum Products Freight Subsidy Scheme. Of course, I have received many complaints, both in my electorate office and in my office in this building, about the price of electricity in this State. The pious members on the other side of the House talk about passing on price reductions to the people. But what have they done about the price of electricity? I could go on about that for a long time, but I will not do so. I will save it for another time.

As the Government advocates that the whole of the 10.6c a litre price reduction should be passed on to the people, I ask it: Where does it want its Commonwealth Government funding to this State cut? The 1985-86 State Budget reveals that the Government expects a Commonwealth Government payment into the Consolidated Revenue Fund of \$2,228m. That money is to come from Commonwealth revenue. If the members of the Liberal Party and the National Party Government of this State want the full reduction of 10.6c a litre passed on to the public, let them tell the Federal Government where they want the cuts in State funding. All they have to do is nominate where they want the cuts from the Commonwealth Government funding of \$2.2 billion. If they did that, they would then scream that Queensland deserves more, as they always do. If there is anyone to blame, the Queensland Government always blames the Commonwealth.

Returning to the amount of money received from the Commonwealth for roads—part of the funding for roads comes from the motorist. In the 1985-86 financial year, \$163m was received by Queensland from the Australian Land Transport Program. Queensland receives road funding from two separate funds. As I said earlier, \$94.6m came from the Australian Bicentennial Road Development Trust Fund. The total amount received by Queensland was \$257.6m. If the Queensland Government wants the full saving of 10.6c a litre passed on, by how much does it want the total amount reduced?

If the Queensland Government wants to be one out and say, "We believe that the full 10.6c a litre should be passed on to Queensland motorists," I am sure that the Federal Government will accommodate it. It is a simple matter. The Queensland Government has only to say to the Federal Government where it wants the amount reduced.

Recently in Canberra, Mr Howard was screaming about the import parity pricing reduction not being passed on. During an interview, Mr Howard was asked, "What would you do?" That was a very fair question. When a person is in Opposition, it is no use his advocating something if he cannot say what he would do. Mr Howard said, "That is a matter for the Government of the day to determine." If Australia had a Liberal Government, there is no way in the world that it would have passed on to the motorist any of the 10.6c a litre. At least the Hawke Labor Government in Canberra has seen fit to pass on to the motorist 5.3c a litre. As I said, the wholesale price of 45.9c a litre will be reduced. There is no guarantee that the oil companies will pass on that saving.

The Liberals were a party to the people being ripped off with freights. The Queensland Government says that it wants to see the working people receive the full benefits of a reduction in this iniquitous tax. The Queensland Government imposes an export rail freight on coal that is railed to power stations for power generation in this State. Members of the Government are the last people who should be talking about anybody ripping off the little people. The electricity consumers throughout the length and breadth of this State are being ripped off by the Queensland Government's imposition of a tax on rail freights.

In his amendment, the Premier and Treasurer called on the Opposition in the Federal Parliament to press for a full flow-on of the reduction in the world price of fuel. He wants to see the Federal Opposition do the best it can to achieve a full flow-on.

Recently, I read about the Queensland Government joining a consortium that plans to build a power station in Turkey to help overcome the indebtedness of the Turkish Government. I always thought that the Queensland Government believed in the saying that charity begins at home. How many times have honourable members heard the Queensland Government refer to its foreign aid to Bangladesh? There was talk about who was going to build a sugar-mill. However, the State Government is joining a consortium and plans to spend \$75m. If the State Government believes that savings should be passed on to the motorist, why does it not pass on some savings to electricity consumers? After all, the total loan indebtedness of the Queensland electricity industry is \$3.4 billion. Why does the Government not do something about that?

The motion moved by the Liberals and the amendment moved by the National Party are examples of gross hypocrisy. It is time that the people of Queensland realised that it was a Federal Liberal-National Party coalition Government that introduced import parity pricing and that it was a Federal Liberal-National Party coalition Government that applied import parity pricing for eight years until a Labor Government was elected in 1983. In those eight years, the coalition Government did not pass back 1c to the motorists of this State and nation. If there was a Liberal-National Party coalition Government in Canberra tomorrow, it also would not pass back 1c to the motorist.

It is gross hypocrisy for Government members to criticise the Federal Labor Government, because they had the opportunity to do something about petrol prices in this State. The Minister for Employment and Industrial Affairs (Mr Lester) could do something about the price of petrol if he believed that it was too high in this State.

The retail price of petrol is supposed to be 54.9c a litre. This morning I bought petrol for 42.1c a litre. If the price can be reduced from 54.9c a litre to 42.1c a litre, why cannot it be done consistently? The Queensland Government has done nothing about it. The power is in the Government's hands.

The Queensland Government can take action to ensure that the full 5.3c a litre reduction that will be passed on to the motorist by the Federal Government is in fact

passed on to the motorist. As I said before, there is no guarantee that that 5.3c a litre reduction can be passed on. I repeat that the Queensland Government has the power to ensure that the full 5.3c a litre reduction is passed on to the motorists of this State.

I venture to say that honourable members will see a repetition of what has happened for so long in this State—that is, the State Government will blame everybody else for the problems facing the community but will not be prepared to do anything to solve them.

Hon. L. W. POWELL (Isis—Minister for Education) (3.6 p.m.): I have pleasure in supporting the amendment moved by the Premier and Treasurer (Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen) to the motion moved by the leader of the Liberal Party (Sir William Knox).

Honourable members have just heard an Opposition member speak about hypocrisy. I will examine a few of the figures and establish who is the hypocrite on this issue. The honourable member for Nudgee (Mr Vaughan) is completely correct in saying that a Liberal-National Party Government in Canberra introduced world parity pricing. At that time, the introduction of world parity pricing was quite vigorously opposed by a person who now holds the position of Federal Treasurer. In fact, that person was moved to say that import parity pricing is a tax by stealth, with a branch of the Taxation Office at every petrol bowser. That statement was made by the self-acclaimed world's best Treasurer.

Let us talk about world parity pricing, because the policy that was introduced by the Liberal-National Party Government was exactly that. The price of petrol was supposed to follow the world price of fuel.

What has happened? The price of petrol has been reduced by 10.6c a litre; the world price has been reduced by 10.6c a litre. Our friend the so-called world's greatest Treasurer, who claimed that there was a branch of the Taxation Office at every petrol bowser, will pass on only 5.3c a litre. One does not have to be very intelligent to work out what happens to the other 5.3c. It goes into Mr Keating's hip-pocket.

Mr Borbidge: It's in the form of an excise which is indexed.

Mr POWELL: The honourable member for Surfers Paradise reminds honourable members that it is in the form of an excise, which is then indexed.

Currently, the people of Australia are being hoodwinked into believing that Mr Keating and Mr Hawke are really doing them a great service by reducing the price of fuel by 5.3c a litre and, at the same time, are supporting the world parity pricing of fuel. In fact, they are not; they are using petrol as another means of collecting tax.

The honourable member for Nudgee said also——

Mr Vaughan interjected.

Mr POWELL: The honourable member for Nudgee said also that the Queensland Government should state where there should be a tax saving. That is beside the point.

Mr Vaughan: No, you should say where you want the cuts.

Mr POWELL: But there is no need for a cut. If the Federal Government supports world parity pricing, it has no option but to drop the price of petrol by 10.6c a litre.

Mr Vaughan interjected.

Mr POWELL: No; no tax cuts. No cuts in funding are required at all, because the percentage that is charged as an excise, a levy, is still there. We are still paying over 60 per cent straight into the coffers of the Federal Government, irrespective of world parity price.

The point I am attempting to make the member for Nudgee and other members opposite understand is that the Australian public is being robbed. The Federal Government is doing that robbing by lowering the price by 5.3c and increasing the tax by 5.3c a litre.

Mr Vaughan: Tell us where you would make cuts in spending.

Mr POWELL: If the member for Nudgee wants a cut, he could wipe out the Federal Department of Education, which is not needed. That would save the country millions of dollars each year.

I refer now to the price of transportation. On ABC radio this morning, I heard the Federal member for Capricornia (Mr Keith Wright), who was a member of the Queensland Parliament, make some absolutely scandalous claims, which have been repeated in the House by the honourable member for Nudgee. Mr Wright claimed that the price of transporting fuel by rail from Brisbane to Taroom—I do not know why he chose Taroom—was 8c a litre. He referred to figures for a number of other centres, including Mount Isa.

Mr Price: He didn't use Mount Isa, but——

Mr POWELL: What is it to Mount Isa?

Mr Price: It is now 7.3c.

Mr POWELL: The honourable member for Mount Isa informs the House that it costs 7.3c a litre to rail fuel from Brisbane to Mount Isa.

Mr Price: No, from Townsville to Mount Isa.

Mr POWELL: The figures I have from the Queensland Railways show that the cost to rail fuel from Roma Street, in Brisbane, to Mount Isa is .095c a litre. The cost to Emerald is .068c a litre.

Mr Price: That is after the Federal Government's subsidy.

Mr POWELL: The member for Mount Isa cannot have the argument both ways.

Mr Price: That money isn't passed on to the consumer.

Mr POWELL: Either it costs that amount or it does not.

Mr Price: That is all it costs the oil companies.

Mr POWELL: The Opposition has accused the Government of profiteering through transport. I am saying that that is not so. The plain fact of the matter is that it costs less than a cent a litre to rail fuel from Roma Street to Mount Isa. From Roma Street to Roma, the cost is .061c a litre and, to Townsville, it is .072c a litre. It is patently clear that the Queensland Government is not profiteering from the transportation of fuel.

Mr Vaughan: You are——

Mr POWELL: The honourable member for Nudgee and the honourable member for Mount Isa both want to tack on something else.

The honourable member for Nudgee said also that the Queensland Government should deregulate and allow road transport to cart fuel. The Government has done that. Over a period of two years, regulations on the carriage of fuel will disappear. That will not decrease the price. In fact, it will increase it. The Queensland railway unions, which are affiliated with the ALP, are diametrically opposed to deregulation. The honourable member for Nudgee rose in the Parliament and castigated the Government because there has not been deregulation, yet unions affiliated with his party are diametrically opposed to it.

The member for Nudgee mentioned the amount of money that goes to the Australian Bicentennial Road Development Trust Fund. I wonder whether the Parliament realises that, last year, the Queensland Railways paid out \$4.4m in diesel fuel levy for roads and \$15.8m in excise.

That demonstrates the hypocrisy in policies of the Australian Labor Party. On the one hand, members of that party argue vehemently in favour of world parity pricing plus 5.3c a litre, as at present, and, on the other hand, the Federal Treasurer (Mr Keating)—a person who in the past said that every fuel pump was a tax-gatherer—now will not agree to world parity pricing. World parity pricing does not operate in Australia any more.

For the information of honourable members, I point out that the price of fuel in the United States of America is \$A0.15 a litre.

Mr Vaughan: That is what the price was here in 1975 when Fraser came to power.

Mr POWELL: If the honourable member will wait, I will give him figures. I have them here.

It is perfectly clear that in Australia world parity pricing does not operate because the Federal Labor Government regards petrol as a great taxation agent. I wonder why that should be so. It is fairly clear to me that it is because of the people who support the Labor Party—those who live in the closely settled western suburbs of Sydney and Melbourne and, perhaps to a lesser degree, in some areas of Brisbane, and who enjoy a very good public transport system.

Mr Simpson: Which is subsidised.

Mr POWELL: As the honourable member for Cooroora correctly points out, it is subsidised very heavily by the tax-payer.

The honourable member for Nudgee (Mr Vaughan) again criticised the Queensland Government because of the disparity between the cost of fuel in the country and the cost in the city. When he says that prior to 1972, which was a significant year, there was a minimal gap between the price of fuel in the country and the price in the city, he is quite correct. At that time, the gap was approximately half a cent a litre; however, in some cases the gap is now 8c a litre.

What has happened since 1972? In 1972, Mr Whitlam came wandering along, and he removed that subsidy entirely.

Mr Vaughan: You are wrong.

Mr POWELL: The honourable member should wait, because I am not finished yet.

When Australia got rid of Mr Whitlam and elected Mr Fraser as Prime Minister, it was discovered—much to the disgust of members of the National Party in Queensland—that he would not reintroduce that subsidy fully. Instead, it was reintroduced only in part. The time mentioned by the honourable member—

Mr VAUGHAN: I rise to a point of order. The Petroleum Products Freight Subsidy Scheme was abolished recently. That scheme was based on the proposition that the price of fuel in country areas would be no more than .5c a litre higher than the price of fuel in the city. The Minister is not telling the truth.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row): Order! I remind all honourable members that unless remarks contain a personal reflection or contain a gross misleading of the House, a point of order cannot be accepted.

Mr VAUGHAN: The Minister is reflecting on what I said.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! On that basis, the Chair could go on all day accepting points of order.

Mr POWELL: Obviously, the honourable member for Nudgee is touchy about this issue, simply because he is wrong. Prior to 1972 and during the years of the Liberal-Country Party coalition Government, a subsidy was paid on fuel purchased in country areas. However, that scheme was abandoned and abolished by the Whitlam Government during the period 1972-75.

Mr Simpson: He is touchy because you are exposing his deceit.

Mr POWELL: The honourable member for Nudgee certainly is touchy, and it is certain that I have exposed his deceit.

Mr Vaughan: You do not know what you are talking about.

Mr POWELL: I do know what I am talking about, because at that time I lived in an area that was well and truly off the coast. I know that the price I paid for fuel was similar to the price paid in Brisbane. I know also that after Whitlam came to power, that subsidy scheme was abolished.

I am disgusted that Fraser would not reintroduce the subsidy scheme. That is why the amendment to the motion has been moved. Government members are sick and tired of the members of the Liberal-National Party Opposition in Canberra not getting off their tails and getting stuck into the Federal Treasurer (Mr Keating) and the Prime Minister (Mr Hawke) about fuel pricing.

In March 1983, during the campaign for the Federal election, the Australian Labor Party promised to cut petrol prices by 3c a litre. In his policy speech at the Sydney Opera House on 16 February 1983, Hawke said—

“... Labor will reduce the price of petrol by cancelling the January 1 oil price increase of \$3.23 per barrel. This will have the effect of reducing the price of petrol by the order of three cents a litre.”

That was part of the policy speech made by Mr Hawke.

Mr Borbidge: That was the day he said he would not introduce a capital gains tax.

Mr POWELL: Probably the same day.

By May 1985—

An Opposition Member interjected.

Mr POWELL: Opposition members want to change the subject by talking about deficits. It is clear that, in supporting the Hawke regime in Canberra, they do not want to face the issue that we do not have world parity pricing. We have world parity pricing plus all the taxes Keating is putting on petrol.

By May 1985, or after 26 months in office, Labor had increased the price of fuel by more than 10c a litre or, to put it into gallon terms, which many people understand better, more than 45c a gallon.

Honourable members recall that, in July 1985, a farm forum was held in Canberra. That was when the farmers went to Canberra to try to do something about the price of fuel.

Mr Vaughan: The graziers decided to go to Canberra and have a rally.

Mr POWELL: That is right.

At the July farm rally in Canberra, when Ian McLachlan, the president of the National Farmers Federation, would not let the Queensland Premier talk because he

wanted to make sure he kept on side with Mr Hawke—it did him a lot of good, didn't it—this is what Hawke had to say—

“In the preparation of the 1985-86 Budget we will prepare a package which will significantly reduce the cost impact on farmers . . . especially in the area of farm costs.”

Because he increased everything else, I suppose it is fair to say that the price of fuel did not have such a great impact.

What did Hawke do about the price of fuel in the August 1985 Budget and in the September 1985 tax-reform package? He gave absolutely no meaningful tax relief, especially for farm fuel.

Since coming to office in March 1983, the Federal Labor Government has consistently hit fuel prices. Hawke uses a great deal of rhetoric but has absolutely no performance. On every occasion that fuel prices are hit, major users of fuel, such as primary producers, are most severely affected.

Perhaps I should present the following brief summary of Labor's decisions affecting fuel prices. On 19 May 1983, a mini-Budget was presented. As the honourable member for Nudgee prattled on, the Labor Government, allegedly, found a major deficit. It then prepared a mini-Budget which increased, from 1c per litre to 1.1c per litre, as from 1 June 1983, the differential under which the petroleum products freight subsidy was payable, and indexed the differential in line with increases in the Consumer Price Index. The cost to rural consumers was estimated at \$10m in 1983-84. The Federal Labor Government also increased the excise on avgas and avtur by 2c a litre from 1 July 1983, at an estimated cost of \$15m in 1983-84. How many people regularly use aircraft? Are they the people who regularly look after the Labor Party, or are they the business people who regularly use aircraft? Alternatively, are they those people whose air fares are paid by the unions? The average person in the street cannot afford to use aircraft today because of the increases that the Federal Government keeps tacking onto fuel, navigation charges, and so on.

The 1983 mini-Budget abolished the special depreciation arrangements for petroleum storage on farms.

Mr Wilson: What are you talking about?

Mr POWELL: For the benefit of the honourable member for Townsville South, who may have just awakened, I point out that I am talking about the price of fuel. Quite clearly, he does not understand what the Federal Labor Government is doing.

On 23 August 1983, the Federal Budget further cut back the Petroleum Product Freight Subsidy Scheme by removing, from eligibility for subsidy, power kerosene in those locations where there was no retail site.

Mr Vaughan: When was that?

Mr POWELL: That was on 23 August 1983.

In the latter case, subsidy rates would be based on the rates at the nearest location with a retail site or, for locations at sea, at the port of loading. Once again, that was a hit against people who, traditionally, do not support Labor. It was a hit at the tourist industry. All the islands off the Queensland coast that do not have mainline power and depend on diesel power for generating electricity were hit to leg by that cost increase. The cost of keeping their tourist resorts going was increased immensely.

Now I move to 21 August 1984 and the presentation of the Federal Budget. It was announced that the excise on diesel for on-farm use would be indexed, but only from 1 February 1985. That was the great con trick by the Federal Treasurer to index fuel prices. We do not have world parity pricing any more; we have the indexation of the price of fuel. Every time the Consumer Price Index goes up, so, too, does the price of

fuel. The price of fuel is one of the major components of the costs facing country people. Therefore, as the price of fuel increases, the Consumer Price Index must increase. Where does the increase go? It is not related to the cost of the fuel coming from overseas or even the cost of fuel that is being obtained from Australian soil; rather, it is another taxation effort by the Federal Government.

It is quite clear that, in this exercise, the Federal Labor Government is doing its best to rob the people of Australia. It is not only the country people who are being robbed. Most reference is made to country people, but the people in provincial cities also are involved. Those people do not have a regular and reliable public transport system that is subsidised heavily by the tax-payer.

Mr Simpson: It loads the cost of every bit of freight.

Mr POWELL: As the honourable member for Cooroora says, it loads the cost of everything.

This Parliament needs to speak with one voice. I guess that Opposition members will not recognise the need to support those people in the community who have to use motor vehicles to go about their daily business or to earn their living, but will follow the left-wing attitude of the Federal Labor Government.

It is a shame that the people of Queensland do not rise up as one and go into the electorate offices of Opposition members. The member for Nudgee stood up and said that not one person has complained to him about the action of the Federal Government.

Mr Fouras: Nor to me.

Mr POWELL: The same thing has happened to the member for South Brisbane. I appeal to the people who live in the electorates of Nudgee and South Brisbane to get along to the electorate offices of those members and besiege them. It is about time that those members were made to realise what the grassroots people of Australia are thinking. The people in the electorate, who go along to vote every three years, must not be allowed to forget what the Labor Party in Canberra is doing with petrol-pricing. They must not be let forget what will happen if an accident occurs and the Labor Party is elected to office in Queensland.

Mr Scott interjected.

Mr POWELL: The honourable member for Cook interjects. I would like him to get up and say that he supports the petrol-pricing policy of the Federal Labor Government.

Mr Scott: I certainly do not go along with what you are saying.

Mr POWELL: I am glad that the honourable member does agree with what the Federal Labor Government is doing. The people of Cook would like to know that their representative in this Parliament is supporting Mr Keating's tax-gathering efforts.

Opposition members have been talking continually about the tax from fuel that is obtained by Federal and State Governments. I reiterate that the Queensland Government gets not one cent from taxing fuel. Some other State Governments impose a tax of 4c a litre on fuel; but the Queensland Government does not do so, and still it is able to balance its Budget.

It is quite clear that the Federal Government is using this excuse to try to gain more money for its Federal Treasury. What does the Federal Government spend its money on? That is a question that the people of Queensland need to ask very carefully. Most of the projects on which the Federal Government spends the money do not affect the average man in the street. They are projects for the Federal Government's own aggrandisement. It is about time that the people of Queensland and of Australia woke up to the fact that we do not have world parity pricing any more. In fact, the Federal Government is surreptitiously, sneakily, using petrol as a taxing agent so that it can obtain more money with which to do some of its funny things.

Mr Simpson: Taxation by deceit.

Mr POWELL: Of course it is.

It would be a good idea if the Federal Government revealed all the figures with regard to the price of fuel, so that people might have an opportunity to make up their own minds. The price of fuel should be much lower than it is at the moment. The United States, which has world parity pricing, has fuel available at pumps at \$A0.15 a litre.

Mr Borbidge: They have got an honourable Government.

Mr POWELL: Of course the Americans have an honourable Government. No Government in the United States would be game to do what the Federal Government is doing here. I hope that, as a result of this debate, the media of Queensland and throughout Australia will expose the sham that we have with the Federal Labor Government.

Mr PRICE (Mount Isa) (3.30 p.m.): I am grateful for the opportunity to join the debate, because I want to straighten out a few facts about fuel-pricing and, in particular, its effect on living costs and on western and country people, whom honourable members on the Government side of the House purport to represent. Obviously, Government members know so little about the effect that it is having on those people that their following is dwindling in western and country areas. That is evidenced by the fact that the Labor Party holds most of the provincial seats in Queensland. As the Government's support continues to dwindle, it will not be very long before the country areas come round to their traditional support for Labor again.

The Minister for Education (Mr Powell) epitomised the National Party's ignorance of the situation in two or three statements that he made. I congratulate the honourable member for Nudgee (Mr Vaughan) on his use of some of the figures that he compiled. They were certainly correct. To back him up, I point out that last year, \$117m was spent on subsidising petrol freights in Australia. A considerable amount of that money has gone through to the State Government, to oil companies and to Liberal followers in wholesale and retail businesses, and has been absorbed by those people without being passed on to the consumer.

The Minister for Education showed his ignorance by checking with the Railway Department to find out the freight costs on fuel being transported from Brisbane to places such as Emerald, Gladstone and Mount Isa. In fact, fuel is carried free into port. The wholesale price that is set by the Federal Government is the same into every port in Australia, whether it be Darwin, Townsville, Gladstone, Rockhampton, Brisbane or anywhere else. It is from there that the rail freight is added and the product goes to the country regions. Mount Isa, for instance, obtains its fuel from Townsville. Towards the end of last year, the fuel freight charged by the State Government was 7.32c a litre.

The Minister mentioned the freight subsidy to Emerald. What he failed to say was that the price that he was quoting was the actual price paid by oil companies to cart that fuel after the Federal Government subsidy is deducted. In the case of Mount Isa, the price is 7.32c a litre and the subsidy is still there. The Federal Government subsidy to Emerald is 4c a litre, and it is still there. That 4c a litre would have to be added to the figure that the Minister for Education gave.

To show further the ignorance of Government members of fuel-marketing in Queensland, I would like to quote from the *Hansard* report of a debate on the petroleum products subsidy in May 1978. The honourable member for Flinders (Mr Katter), whose electorate is next door to mine and who purports to represent country people, had this to say—

“I would like to reply to some comments of the member for Brisbane Central. He attacked the Anthony policy on petrol pricing. It is very interesting to observe

the way in which he interprets that policy. If he had any working knowledge whatsoever of the world energy crisis or of economics, he would realise that the Anthony policy is the only logical one to adopt. The only way we can continue to have what is a very rapidly dwindling resource such as petrol is to somehow get people to cut back on their usage of it—and the way to do that is to raise the price of the product.”

Mr Prest: That means to put the price of petrol beyond what the user can afford to pay.

Mr PRICE: As the member for Port Curtis points out, that puts the price of petrol beyond the reach of the consumer, which deters him from using the product.

Mr Prest: That was National Party policy.

Mr PRICE: Yes, that is correct.

That quotation indicates the ignorance of Government members about petrol-marketing. They do not really know what they are talking about. They do not fully realise that one of the highest cost components for people in the west is freight, which is actually attributable to the cost of cartage by a monopoly—the Queensland Railway Department. It carts the fuel, holds a monopoly over that cartage and charges what it feels is a fair price to itself which, under this free-enterprise Government, is based on the capacity of the consumer to pay.

In the case of Mount Isa, the freight charge on fuel is 7.32c a litre. Honourable members might recall the outrage of the Minister for Education over the removal by the Federal Government towards the end of last year of subsidy to country people. If anybody should complain about that reduction, it is the people of Mount Isa, who lost a subsidy of 4c a litre—the highest subsidy in Australia. The only other place that lost a similar amount was Alice Springs. The residents of Mount Isa lost that 4c a litre.

At the same time, the State Government, with its monopoly on rail transport, introduced to oil companies the idea of block trains. The concept brought together all of the fuel wholesalers so that all of their products could be carried on the one train. In return, the Railway Department considerably reduced the rail freight on the products. That happened at exactly the same time that the Federal Government removed part of its subsidy. A subsidy still remains on fuel that is carried away from a depot, having been delivered free into port. Mount Isa still receives a Federal Government subsidy of 2.35c a litre. However, at the moment, I am discussing the amount of subsidy that was removed by the Federal Government. At the same time that the Federal Government removed that 4c a litre subsidy the State Government, by the use of block trains, removed 4.35c a litre from the original freight charge of 7.32c a litre. That meant that the Railway Department freight was 2.97c a litre which, as the Minister for Education reminded the House, enabled the oil companies to be charged only .82c a litre for the cartage of fuel from Townsville to Mount Isa. I wish to clear up the misconception. The .82c that the Minister for Education is fond of quoting is really the price per litre of cartage to the oil companies. There was a saving of 2.97c a litres, which came in as a relief at the same time as the Federal Government removed part of its subsidy; that is, it removed 4c a litre subsidy. In reality, the price increase in Mount Isa, at that time, should have been only 1c a litre, but do honourable members think that it was passed on—not on your Nellie! The oil companies absorbed that 3c and, whether honourable members like to accept it or not, that is not the only price reduction that they have absorbed.

Through the pricing policy of the Federal Government, the price of petrol has been reduced approximately five times in the last two years. None of that reduction has been passed on to the consumer. I challenge the Government to ensure that the Federal Government's proposed reduction of 5.3c a litre in the wholesale price actually reaches the consumer.

This morning, I was surprised when the Liberal Party, of all parties, was first to introduce the motion to be debated. It sounded as though the members of the Liberal Party were trying to stand in a force 9 gale. When the honourable member for Nundah (Sir William Knox) moved his motion, the newspapers were full of accolades for the Federal Government for what it had done.

Today, in the *Telegraph*, an article states—

“The executive director of the Queensland Confederation of Industry, Mr Bruce Siebenhausen . . .”

How Liberal can one get? The article indicates that he has a rough idea of what the price of fuel is all about. The article continues—

“... said transport represented about 25 percent of the cost of manufacturing.”

Freight is a State responsibility. If any reduction in the price of fuel can be given to the west or to country people, it can be done through the State Government system. A considerable amount of money can be saved in that area. Do we see the Queensland Government doing that?

The Government talks about deregulation. Deregulation is a myth. Nothing is going to occur. Even if the Queensland Government gives a reduction, it will watch the market so closely that there will be a six-month period after a price change before it is brought in by the railways so that it can determine exactly what the market can carry and adjust its freight rates accordingly.

The article in the *Telegraph* further states—

“Mr Siebenhausen said the farming community should be quite ecstatic over the drop of 10.6 cents a litre in the price of diesel for off-road use.”

I bet that they are ecstatic! They have received better than 10c. None of the kerfuffle about road blockages round Australia has occurred. None of it would have eventuated; it was all wind. It was only a follow-on to give some credibility to members of the National Party so that they could shout out in Parliament about a blockade. I could imagine it.

Mr Vaughan: Not the National Party talking about a blockade; no!

Mr PRICE: The honourable member's point is taken.

Exactly what will be saved? I suppose that the Liberals would claim that their followers include the small-businessmen in Queensland and the business houses.

The article in the *Telegraph* states—

“Reduced fuel costs will not have any bearing on the cost of fruit and vegetables to the consumer . . .”

It must be remembered that 25 per cent of the cost of fuel is freight. However, with a reduction in the price of petrol, nothing will be reduced in price. The price of fruit and vegetables will not go down.

The article continues—

“The prices of meat, wheat, wool and sugar are influenced by international market prices—”

they have absolutely nothing to do with the price of fuel—

“and will not be affected by the fuel prices.”

In the past year, Qantas spent \$365m on fuel, an increase of \$80m, because of the decline in the value of the dollar. Will Qantas pass on savings from a reduction of 5.3c? Will it pass on the 6c a litre reduction in the price of aviation fuel? Air fares will not be reduced. The reduction will be absorbed by Qantas, TAA, Ansett and the small-businessman.

It must be remembered that the farmers are ecstatic. They will receive a little breather that they cannot get out of the world market situation. The Federal Government is sympathetic enough to note that, if it gives the farmers that reduction, at least they will have a slight improvement in their standard of living.

The Minister for Education (Mr Powell) brought out another misconception about the price of fuel. He said that the price of fuel in America was 15c a litre. I have a document that shows indicative international retail petrol prices at the end of last year. It qualifies the prices by stating—

“International retail prices quoted are based on latest information received from Australian overseas posts. Automotive gasoline prices are for the most commonly used grade of automotive gasoline in that country, at ‘full-service’ prices.

DRE estimate based on latest available CPI price data for eight capital cities, subsequent prices Surveillance Authority determinations, allowance for discounts, and advice from the Australian Automobile Chamber of Commerce.

The OECD countries not included in the table are Belgium, Denmark, Ireland, Luxembourg . . .

Prices have been converted for most countries at . . . 1985 exchange rates.”

That table quoted Australia as having a price, at the end of last year, of 48c a litre—in Australian cents, not US cents. The retail price in the United States was 51c a litre. That is the “15” quoted by the Minister for Education. He got it back to front. The price ranged from 52c a litre in Canada to 57c a litre in Turkey, 60c a litre in Greece, and right up to 91c a litre in Italy.

As the Leader of the Opposition (Mr Warburton) said this morning when he commenced the debate on the motion moved by the Liberal Party, it is important to appreciate that the Australian retail price has increased in real terms by only 5c a litre since 1980. At present, Australia has the lowest retail price of any OECD country.

In *The Courier-Mail* of 10 October 1985, an article reported that the following was said in the Federal Parliament—

“The average price of petrol in the United States was 51c a litre . . .”

That backs up what I read out from that authoritative document.

The article continued—

“The level of taxation on Australian automotive gasoline is the second lowest in OECD countries. Only New Zealand is lower.”

My, the people of Australia are being crippled by the taxation on fuel!

The honourable member for Sherwood (Mr Innes) took Mount Isa as a case in point. I point out to him that Mount Isa probably pays the highest retail price for petrol in Queensland. It is currently 65.9c a litre.

Mr Innes: That’s why you should get it down.

Mr PRICE: The price could be lowered if all of the price savings that have been effected by the Federal Government—including the one being debated today and any that the State Government might have brought in through the use of block trains or now, I hope, through deregulation—were passed on to the consumer.

What is happening is that all of the savings are not getting to the consumer. I cannot understand the point of view of the Liberal Party and its supporters, because they are the people who are actually absorbing the price savings passed on by Governments.

I turn to what happens in Brisbane. The same article in the *Telegraph* to which I referred earlier points out that the price of fuel in Brisbane is presently 42.1c a litre—7.49c a litre cheaper than the recommended wholesale price of 49.5c a litre. Will the 5.3c a litre reduction come off the 42.1 or the 49.5?

Mr Vaughan: Have a guess.

Mr PRICE: The Federal Government wants it to come off the 49.5. However, the people of Brisbane will not benefit at all, and the Liberal seats are in Brisbane. The Liberal Party should be seeking relief for its supporters in Brisbane. Members of the Liberal Party know nothing about what is happening in the country, where the relief would be felt. That is not happening. If the people of Brisbane are paying 42.1c a litre and the people of Mount Isa are paying 65.9c a litre, who knows what about the price of fuel?

I know that the National Party is fond of saying that the Federal Government forgets about people who live west of the Great Dividing Range. I will tell honourable members something about living in the west. Children have to attend school lessons in tin huts in 44 and 45 degree heat. High school students threaten to walk out. There are fire levy rip-offs. People who own sheds on which an insurance company's fuel levy amounting to about \$130 was payable ended up having to pay \$1,700. On two or three occasions, to my knowledge, the Minister (Mr Tenni) has stated that the fire levy would be reduced to something like \$288. The reason given for the reduction is that the new charge is closer to the premium charged by the insurance company. If that is so, based on a \$40,000 home and a \$1.30 per \$1,000 premium, every private house-holder in Queensland paying a \$48 levy should be charged only \$32 or \$33. If the Minister's statement is accurate, there is a blatant \$15 rip-off of fire levies from all private households in Queensland.

Mr LESTER: I rise to a point of order. The debate is about petrol pricing. The member for Mount Isa seems to have strayed a long way from that.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row): Order! I ask members to ensure that their remarks have some relevance to the subject-matter of the debate.

Mr PRICE: I am endeavouring to do that. However, Mr Deputy Speaker, I note that you have competition from the front bench. I was unaware that the Minister was in the chair. I repeat some of his brilliance this morning. He said, "The further you are away from the city, the more you have to pay." How brilliant! He knew all about that in the redistribution. He brought his electorate closer to the coast so that he would not have so far to travel. Such a statement indicates the mentality not only of him but also of his electorate.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member is making personal remarks. I suggest that he direct his remarks to the matter before the House.

Mr PRICE: The relevance of my remarks is that those on the Government side have absolutely no idea what it is like to live in the west.

In his speech, the Minister for Employment and Industrial Affairs said that some of the farmers in his electorate have not yet switched over to diesel from petrol operations. That switch-over has been going on for over 40 years. Is that really indicative of the way in which the people in his electorate carry on? I do not believe it.

Mr Booth: There are still some petrol trucks, particularly light trucks.

Mr De Lacy: On Mr Lester's farm.

Mr PRICE: Yes, on the Minister's farm they are still using Massey Ferguson one-tonners.

A Government Member: You don't understand. You don't know.

Mr PRICE: What the Government does not know is that the freight section of fuel costs is its responsibility, yet it is doing nothing to give any relief. When it gives relief, what happens? It gives relief to the Liberal voters, of all people.

Mr Lester: Why don't you pass on the fuel subsidy?

Mr PRICE: The Government does not pass it on at all. The subsidy does not get past the oil companies—the wholesalers and the retailers. If the Minister knows all about it, I ask him to explain to me why people in Mount Isa are paying 65.9c a litre.

This morning, the Premier declared that all members in the Labor Opposition are academics. What a way to go! That is tremendous. It should be shouted from the rooftops. The statement was that more than 20 members of the Opposition have a degree or a diploma. I would like to know what the record is on the Government side.

Mr Davis interjected.

Mr PRICE: As the member for Brisbane Central mentions, the National Party has the member for Redlands (Mr Clauson), but he has not even spoken yet. That is indicative of what an academic will do when he enters Parliament as a member of the Government party. The Government does not even give him a chance, even though he is probably the first chance the National Party has had to prove itself.

I put it on record that I have had 22 years in business, 10 of them in the fuel game. I came out of that quite nicely, thank you.

If the National Party is fair dinkum about dropping the price of fuel, why does it not follow up a few of the ideas of its members about equalising the cost of freight and give the people in the west a go? If the National Party does not want the people who live in the west to pay that cost, it should cut out the freight-cost component and equalise the cost of fuel throughout Queensland—in short, it should socialise the scheme. But, wait a minute; “socialise” is a dirty word, so I will take it back. The National Party Government tried to socialise electricity, but it had no idea how to handle it, and just look at the mess that has been made of it. That is a good example of socialism when it is handled by a National Party Government in this State. It is obvious that this Government cannot socialise large-scale schemes. In Queensland, the people pay the highest charges for electricity in any State in Australia and, despite deregulation, the people in Queensland will pay the highest prices for fuel in any State in Australia.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The motion concerns the price of fuel, and I ask the honourable member to direct his remarks to the price of fuel.

Mr PRICE: My thoughts and those of Government members were about to come together, Mr Deputy Speaker. Let me examine electricity and the mess the Queensland Government has made of that.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr PRICE: I think I have made my point on that, Mr Deputy Speaker.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I have already reminded the honourable member about the relevance of his remarks to the subject-matter of the debate. The matter under discussion is not an electricity Bill, so I ask the honourable member to return to the subject of fuel.

Mr PRICE: It is part of an energy crisis, but I take your point, Mr Deputy Speaker.

The effects of Federal Government policy on the oil exploration industry have not been mentioned so far by any Government member in this debate. I point out that this morning, in the *Daily Sun*, an article was published about the effect of the price cuts on the oil exploration industry, which reflects the other side of the coin. I wonder how many people read that article, and I wonder also what the Queensland Government will do about the effect to which it refers.

I believe that the Premier and Treasurer (Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen) will be affected directly by what will happen in this State if the price of fuel is reduced. I quote from

the article in the *Daily Sun* because it can express the situation a little better than I am able to. It states—

“Fuel price cuts announced yesterday were a ‘hammer blow’ to high cost-high risk oil exploration in Australia, it was claimed yesterday.”

The next part indicates the other side of the coin, to which I referred previously, and it reads—

“The Australian Petroleum Exploration Association (APEA) executive director Mr Keith Orchison said the \$16.77 drop in the crude oil price to \$27.50 a barrel was a massive fall and much higher than the association had expected.”

Imagine what would have happened if the Federal Government had given the whole reduction in price.

The article goes on—

“The association said exploration expenditure was likely to fall by more than 40 per cent if the new lower price was sustained through the rest of 1986.

APEA last week urged the Federal Government to adopt a six-month rolling average of the import parity pricing policy to produce a managed decline over an extended period.

. . .

Mr Orchison said expensive or marginal projects were now likely to be cut—the majority in the more productive offshore areas and remote onshore areas.”

What effect will that have on oil exploration in Queensland? I suggest that a few companies will begin to pack up their operations. It is certain that they will not engage in oil exploration again.

Mr Lester: Why doesn't the Federal Government put the excise tax into oil exploration? That is what it is all about.

Mr PRICE: Why doesn't the Queensland Government do something about it? Members of the Queensland National Party Government are so full of rhetoric. I suggest that if the Queensland Government really wants action taken, it should set the example. It should show people how to live in the west and, by making available the funds derived from freight subsidies, demonstrate how inexpensive it can be. Instead, the National Party Government prefers to say that the Federal Government will not provide the funds.

The Queensland National Party Government can provide the funds, and it should do so. It should be remembered that 25 per cent of the price of fuel is allocated to the costs associated with transportation. Because it controls the freight rates, the Queensland Government can provide the funds.

I ask the Minister for Employment and Industrial Affairs (Mr Lester) which side of the coin he will choose. How does the Queensland Government propose to assist oil exploration in remote areas of the State when it is not even able to help an ordinary consumer? The Queensland Government prides itself on the assistance it gives to the consumers relative to the price of petrol; but the reality is that it gives nothing. Any assistance that is provided is absorbed by oil companies, wholesalers and retailers, without any benefit to the individual consumer. The proof of the pudding is in the eating, and in Mount Isa, people pay 65.9c a litre for fuel. I would be willing to bet that the people who live in Emu Park do not pay that.

Mr Randell: We will see what happens to that 5.3c a litre.

Mr PRICE: That is right; we will see. I take the point made by the honourable member for Mirani, and it will be interesting to see whether or not the 5.3c a litre reduction is passed on to the consumer.

The intention of the Federal Government is that the reduction should be made to the wholesale price of fuel. Let us see whether that happens. The State Government's record indicates that that simply will not occur. It will be interesting to see how much the consumer in the west receives of that 5.3c reduction.

I am sorry that the Minister for Transport is not in the House. I was looking forward to a tete-a-tete, because he has given me a serve whenever I have made a speech. He is very fond of throwing his hat into the ring when I am on my feet. Unfortunately, on many occasions when he does that, his head goes with it.

The inquiry that was conducted under the auspices of the Minister for Transport last year received a report from the Australian Petroleum Agents and Distributors Association. In that report, the agents and distributors pointed out things that hurt them, the things that they found wrong with the fuel industry in Queensland. They were asked to do that under one of the terms of reference of the inquiry. Their response, partly, was in these terms—

“re Distribution of Petroleum Products Throughout the State of Queensland

The response to the above review is taken in the same order as the terms of reference questions were put . . .

1. (b) Issue of permits to be given to carrier of goods . . .”.

The honourable member for Nudgee pointed out that when fuel is carried by tanker from rail to destination, a permit has to be issued by the Railway Department. The cost of that permit to the carrier is based on the cost of the product being transported by rail from point to point. Whatever the transport cost per litre is, it has to be paid again by the carrier if he wants to cart the fuel. The 7.32c a litre cost from Townsville to Mount Isa would double to 14.64c a litre if anyone wanted to carry his own fuel from Townsville to Mount Isa.

For many years, the Minister for Transport has been promising deregulation. That would mean an end to the permits. Collinsville and Mount Isa are each good cases in point, in that some people have to pay for permits while others have to use the rail. The transport of goods to those areas is in such a mess that it is no wonder that the Minister for Transport cannot get his act together to get deregulation under way and give some relief.

Mr HENDERSON (Mount Gravatt) (4.3 p.m.): It gives me great pleasure to support the Premier's amendment.

I have listened with interest to the debate. The most significant statement was made by the honourable member for Mount Coot-tha, who pointed out that it was not until the oil price hikes of the 1970s that we realised the significant impact that petroleum could have on national economies. Following the oil bonanza of the 1970s for OPEC countries, a recession occurred in many other countries that was directly attributable to the rise in petroleum prices.

Many countries depend on the high use of energy. As soon as the price of petroleum went up, those countries found that their national economies were affected very badly. How could one ever overlook the plight of countries such as India, the Argentine, Chile, Egypt, New Zealand, Kenya and South Africa? Every one of those countries was caught in an escalating, spiralling debt crisis. As the price of petroleum increased, they found themselves unable to meet import costs. That was accompanied by a general world decline in many commodity prices, and countries dependent on agricultural exports found themselves with a growing massive foreign debt. The national debt of many countries can be traced to the escalating cost of petroleum.

There seemed to be two categories of countries in the world, that is, those that possessed petroleum resources, which included Nigeria, Mexico, Iraq, Iran, Venezuela and Indonesia, and, on the other hand, those such as India, the Argentine and Chile, which had no petroleum resources.

It almost seemed as though some countries had won a massive lotto. Money flowed into their national coffers at almost unheard-of levels. What really happened next is a sad indictment of human behaviour, because much of the windfall that came to nations was wasted on cosmetic projects of no significance to the people of those nations. It is almost as though, by winning the lotto, they engaged in an orgy of buying Rolls Royces, homes at the coast, fur coats, jewellery and so on, with none of the money being invested for the good and the welfare of the people.

We noticed undertakings that were nothing more than ego-trips by national leaders, and so on. At the same time, the rising price of petroleum precipitated a mad pursuit for cheap energy, and at that time we saw the growth of solar energy, nuclear energy, wind power and so on.

It is worth while pausing and looking at how Governments spent their windfall profits from petroleum. The first and perhaps most outstanding misuse of that money was by erecting massively inflated Government bureaucracies, and they were centralised in national capitals, such as Canberra, Washington and Ottawa.

The second growth occurred when Government power was extended into areas traditionally covered by the common law. We saw massive amounts of public money misspent on such things as civil rights, human rights, gay rights—all sorts of rights. We saw the erection of human rights tribunals, equal opportunity tribunals, affirmative action——

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row): Order! I cannot see how the speech that the honourable member for Mount Gravatt is making is in any way related to the matter under debate, which is the price of fuel, and I ask him to return to the subject.

Mr HENDERSON: We saw the extra taxation from fuel being used to build all of those instruments of Government.

The third way in which Governments used their massive windfall profits from fuel was to erect monuments, such as Parliament House in Canberra, which is perhaps the greatest misuse of public funds that one could find.

Vast amounts of money were flowing into national coffers through oil-tax profits, and here was an excellent opportunity to use that money to give tax cuts, which would have boosted the economy by providing incentives to people to involve themselves in free enterprise projects, and so on. That would have been a way of stimulating the economy, by redirecting the national resources to encourage excellence, achievement and so on.

What a sad picture it is to note that the billions of dollars that the Federal Government earned through oil taxation was not in any way used to build a sound economy in Australia and to make Australia a more economically sound nation. We saw the money being spent on ministerial empire-building. It is almost as though it was a period of ego-economics, when Ministers were more concerned with what they were doing.

The honourable member for Nudgee and other Opposition members have challenged us to say how we could save money by passing on the full 10.6c a litre fall in the price of petrol. I suggest to them that a way of doing it would be as follows: firstly, abolish the Commonwealth Department of Education, which has absolutely no constitutional legitimacy whatever. It is only duplicating resources and services provided by State Governments. By abolishing the Commonwealth Department of Education, the Federal Government could save several hundred million dollars each year.

Secondly, the Commonwealth Department of Health should be abolished. Once again money would be saved, which would allow a refund of the full petrol price fall to the Australian consumer. Again, there is no constitutional authority for the existence of the Commonwealth Department of Health.

Thirdly, I suggest that we should aim at abolishing the Human Rights Commission and the Family Court, which serve absolutely no purpose in this nation. The whole area of family law should be returned to the State Supreme Courts, and so on.

Fourthly, I suggest that, in the area of social welfare, a higher degree of social accountability is needed. For example, many people who are involved in divorces get away scot-free, and it is up to the community to assume responsibility.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I do not know how many times I have to remind honourable members in this Chamber that it is essential that their remarks have some relevance to the matter under discussion. I cannot see what the Family Court has to do with this debate, which is centred round the Federal Government's policy on fuel pricing. I remind the honourable member for Mount Gravatt of that once again.

Mr HENDERSON: Mr Deputy Speaker, I will use mono-syllabic words so that everyone can understand.

If the price of petrol is to be reduced, it has to be established that it is an enterprise that can be carried out by saving money elsewhere. I have simply pointed out that there are many Government activities which could be reduced, thus saving money, and the saving could be passed on to the people by a lower petrol price.

I am forced to conclude that the real reason for the failure of the Federal Government to pass on a full 10.6c a litre reduction to the Australian consumer is simply that it wants to protect Federal bureaucracies and does not want to reduce Federal power. Therefore, I am talking about petrol power, not petrol prices. I suggest to this House that the money could be saved, the price cut could be passed on and, instead of the money being centred in Canberra, it could be passed on to the Australian consumer to stimulate the economy, to promote free enterprise and to give tax cuts and so on, and, in that way, Australia would be much better off.

Mr VEIVERS (Ashgrove) (4.11 p.m.): Listening to this debate today, I have again come to the conclusion that the events of the last few weeks have been ratified and proven again. I have not heard one decent argument put forward from the Government benches or from the Liberals in relation to the oil parity scheme in Australia.

Once again, the Opposition has completely outdebated the Government and the Liberal Party. The Opposition has completely outmanoeuvred them. They have not come up with one positive statement of any rationale to prove what they have been trying to say today. The only thing that has been proven is that this Government is lacking in oil; it is a tired, old, rusty machine and needs oil desperately.

I will use, as an example, the attitudes of some of the Government Ministers and correct a blatant misrepresentation—or untruth, for that matter—by the Minister for Education (Mr Powell) during the course of his speech this afternoon when he claimed that the Petroleum Products Freight Subsidy Scheme had been abolished by the Commonwealth Government. That is not true. The basis upon which the subsidy was paid has been changed following a review in 1985 of the scheme by the Commonwealth Auditor-General.

I wish that the Minister for Education was in the House to hear this, because what he said this afternoon was not true. Until May 1985, the consumer bore the first 1.2c a litre and the Commonwealth Government bore the rest. I am talking about the freight subsidy scheme, which is quite relevant to this State. Since May 1985, the consumer has borne the first 5.2c a litre and the Commonwealth Government has borne the rest. The reason for that was that the State Government did not pass on to the consumers of this State the subsidy provided by the Commonwealth Government.

In 1984-85, the Commonwealth Government spent \$130.2m, of which Queensland received about \$46m. That freight subsidy scheme money has not been passed on in this State to benefit the consumers. The Minister for Education should be ashamed of his statement, of his lack of knowledge and of the poor briefing that he received. The

statements that he made in the House this afternoon are not true. I suggest to the Minister for Education that he stick to education or the class-room and stay out of the energy and oil industries.

Mr Price: No credibility there, either.

Mr VEIVERS: His contribution is another example of the lack of credibility of the Government.

I do not intend to go over all of the ground that has been covered quite extensively by the Opposition during this debate. Many of the points that have been made are quite valid; it is the State Government that, because it has responsibilities for the cartage of fuel in Queensland, has a direct input into the pricing of petrol. That is what has brought about high fuel prices in this State.

Who is responsible for the largest increase in the price of petrol in this country? I ask honourable members that. When the Liberals came to power in 1975, the average price of petrol in this country ranged between 15c and 18c per litre. By 1983, the price had increased to approximately 45c a litre, which was an increase of about 300 per cent in those few years. It is hypocritical of the Liberals and the National Party to support this motion, when it was a coalition of the Liberal and National Parties that oversaw the massive increases in the price of petrol in this country of from 15c to approximately 45c in eight years, which is well and truly beyond the increase in the Consumer Price Index. That is an example of the hypocrisy from the Government benches and the Liberal Party in this Parliament today.

I do not intend to say very much about the attitude of the Liberal Party, because everyone is aware of its hypocritical attitude these days. On every issue the Liberal Party is having 20c each way. This motion is a rather insipid and desperate attempt by the Liberal Party to get on the bandwagon and endeavour to gain some political mileage out of this issue.

Mr Davis: Gary Neat was down here this morning and demanded that Knoxy put it on.

Mr VEIVERS: Once again, the member for Nundah (Sir William Knox) has bowed to the pressure put upon him by his administration.

At the time the import parity pricing policy was introduced—in 1975—the price of petrol was very low. The Liberal-National Party Government oversaw that massive increase in the price of fuel. Who introduced import parity pricing? The facts surrounding that have been well canvassed in the House today. I am talking about the hypocrisy and the deceit of those in the Liberal Party who, supported by members of the Government, have spoken to this motion. I remind the House that it was a Liberal Treasurer in Canberra who presided over the greatest deficit this country has ever seen, a deficit of \$10 billion. The Liberal Party deceived the Australian people. The present Liberal leader (Mr Howard), when Federal Treasurer, supported by his Prime Minister (Mr Fraser), did his best to deceive the Australia people into believing that the deficit was in the vicinity of \$4 billion to \$5 billion. When the Labor Party attained office in Canberra, the facts were that the deficit was \$10 billion. So much for the credibility——

Sir William Knox: That is not correct.

Mr VEIVERS: Was it \$9.6 billion? What was the figure? It certainly was not \$4 billion to \$5 billion. It was certainly closer to \$10 billion than to the figures provided by Mr Howard, who was using the import parity pricing policy as a form of taxation. That caused the price of petrol to escalate from 15c a litre to 45c a litre. So much for the credibility of the Liberal Party! Can honourable members possibly believe what members of that party have been saying in the House today? "Political hypocrites" is the kindest description I can offer of them.

Today, I have not heard from any Liberal or National Party Government member how he would possibly fund the \$1.6 billion cost to the Australian community and the terms on which he would like to see the price of oil structured in this country. Not one word has been spoken about how that money would be raised. My only guess is that it would be raised by another form of taxation. Honourable members should bear in mind that the excise on fuel was a form of taxation introduced by a Liberal Government. If one is talking about broken promises, there is a perfect example.

Although I do not wish to delay the House to any great extent, I must point out that the *Daily Sun* is not in the habit of giving the Labor Party a fair go. The *Daily Sun* is a newspaper that supports the Government. In effect, it was bought for 30 pieces of silver. In today's editorial, under the heading "Fair deal on fuel prices", the following statement appears—

"The Federal Government has done a Solomon and satisfied most people with its decisions on fuel costs.

It has, however reluctantly, finally accepted the logic of the oil parity policy and spread the benefits appropriately."

That editorial appears in a newspaper that blatantly supports the Government. The editorial continues—

"The so-called rural revolt has scored a significant point, one which will improve the finances of many farmers and the government's stocks in country areas."

So much for the huffing and puffing by a small element of very irresponsible farmers who have been more than radical in their approach in recent times! Many farmers have been feeling the pinch and have encountered hard times. However, things cannot be too hard for all farmers, because recently in Toowoomba, some farmers paid \$150 a ticket to attend a dinner. Are they the farmers who are really battling and on the receiving end of massive fuel prices? No, they are not. Some genuine rural producers have encountered hard times. However, they were not in Toowoomba recently with other farmers who paid \$150 a ticket to attend a dinner.

Mr Davis: Tax deductible.

Mr VEIVERS: As the honourable member said, it is tax deductible.

Some farmers are trying to make political capital out of the situation by stirring up the good, sensible farmers in this country to achieve their own political ends. That point should be made very clear. I take very little notice of some elements in the National Party who have been using the price of petrol for purely political ends.

Mr Davis: Mr McPhie was there because he got a free ticket.

Mr VEIVERS: Is that true? He might have taken some of his friends along, too.

I want to make a very important point about this issue.

Sir William Knox: How much more are you going to read to us?

Mr VEIVERS: I am not reading from the paper.

Sir William Knox: I am sorry. You gave the impression that you were reading the paper.

Mr VEIVERS: I thank the honourable member very much. I did not realise that I was so articulate.

A very important point has arisen from this debate on oil-pricing in this country. There is a difference between rural and metropolitan fuel savings. They should not be the basis for a split, which I suspect—

An Opposition Member interjected.

Mr VEIVERS: Has he gone? I have too much with which to continue. However, I might see what happens.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row): Order! If the honourable member does not continue with his speech, I will call the next speaker.

Mr VEIVERS: Mr Deputy Speaker, I was just accepting an interjection.

It is important that no split develops between metropolitan or urban dwellers and rural producers. I am fearful that, as a result of petrol-pricing, some rural leaders have, for political ends, been trying to create divisions that will not benefit anyone in this country.

I will make another point on the attitudes, policies and statements that have been enunciated today in this Chamber regarding the price of oil. On many occasions, Government members have said that the Federal Government has broken its promise and has not abided by its policies in respect of the price of oil, and that there should not be any flexibility in the manner in which a Government plans its Budget and manages the finances of this country.

In response to the attack that has been made today on the Federal Labor Government for its flexibility on policy, I refer to an article in today's *Telegraph*, which states that the State Government has abandoned plans for the Stradbroke Island bridge.

An Honourable Member: You've made your point.

Mr VEIVERS: I have made my point. I am using it as an analogy.

That article contains the following comment by the honourable member for Redlands (Mr Clauson)—

“But the government's got to be flexible—”

and he is talking about the State Government—

“and realise if you're going to run a bridge like that it'd have to be toll free and you'd have to give developers land on the islands and that's not on.”

In support of the comment made by the honourable member for Redlands, the Premier and Treasurer stated—

“... the developers' demands for the government to bear the commercial risk—”
so he is talking about finance—

“and to pay for link roads and resumptions were not viable.”

In other words, it is all right for the State Government not to stick to its policies and to have a degree of flexibility, but it is just not on for the Commonwealth Government.

Mr FitzGerald interjected.

Mr VEIVERS: That has been the basis of much of the criticism and many of the points that the honourable member for Lockyer has been trying to score today.

I will direct some remarks to the Minister for Employment and Industrial Affairs, who has been involved in many petrol industry issues in this State. Last year, the Minister was quite vocal about a report submitted to Cabinet towards the latter part of 1984. On 18 September 1984, Cabinet received a report that was specifically commissioned by the Minister for Employment and Industrial Affairs. An article in *The Courier-Mail* headed “Petrol report to Cabinet today” is quite specific. It states—

“Mr Lester had accountants look at financial records of lessees—”
at the retail end of the industry—

“who have been looking to the State Government for a better deal.

But Government sources said last night Mr Lester's submission recommended little direct action to relieve their situation.”

That would have resulted in a fall in the price of petrol in this State.

On 18 September 1984, the Leader of the Opposition released a press statement about the Government's attitude to petrol prices in Queensland. It stated—

"It would seem that State Cabinet has dumped the problem of retail petrol prices in the 'too hard basket'.

In doing so it has shown total disregard for the interests of motorists.

. . .

The Q.M.I.A. has claimed that a free market situation being allowed to operate in petrol retailing would lead to cheaper petrol prices for motorists."

In other words, the State Government has a direct say in the pricing of petrol in Queensland. Every member of the Opposition who has spoken today has made that point clearly. The Government's control over freight rates gives it the power to influence the price of petrol by as much as 6c. My colleagues the member for Mount Isa and the member for Nudgee have stated quite clearly that, in central Queensland, for example, the State Government could reduce the price of petrol by as much as 6c a litre. The Government, therefore, is totally hypocritical in the attitude that it has adopted in today's debate.

In conclusion, I repeat that not one reason has been heard by the House in substantiation of the arguments put forward by the member for Nundah (Sir William Knox) in moving the motion or by the Premier in moving his amendment. We have heard not one rational, sensible reason for criticising the Federal Government's attitude to the pricing of petrol in this country.

Hon. Sir WILLIAM KNOX (Nundah) (4.30 p.m.): I welcome the support given to the motion by the majority of honourable members. I welcome the Premier's support. Of course, the amendment that he has moved is perfectly in order as far as I am concerned. It has the Liberal Party's support.

It is appropriate that the debate should take place today. It is not often that a matter as close to the public as this issue happens to be announced when the Parliament is sitting. It is timely for the Queensland Parliament to pass a resolution on the matter.

The principle of parity pricing, and its accompanying formula, was designed to do two things for the nation: to stabilise, as far as possible, the price of fuel in our nation, to the limits of the Government's control, bearing in mind the powers of the Constitution, and to encourage the exploration for oil in Australia and off shore in such a manner as would give the explorers protection on the world market for their product in the long term. The policy involved the co-operation of the States and was supported by all political parties, because of these two reasons. That philosophy still obtains. That the world price rises and falls is no reason to abandon the philosophy and formula.

The formula has not been abandoned. However, the philosophy behind the formula has been abandoned. In the last 24 hours, an entirely new policy has been defined. All that everybody in this country believed about the price of fuel, which is artificially controlled in Australia, has flown out the window. As I said in my earlier remarks, the world knew that the OPEC countries would not for ever hold to their pricing policy for crude. It is well known that that cartel dominated the world crude oil export market. When, at the meeting prior to Christmas, the OPEC policy was abandoned, it was inevitable that the price of crude would drop. That was forecast by all commentators. Everybody took note of it. It may well be that the price will rise again. In fact, many people are forecasting that that will happen in due course. I have no doubt that the Federal Government will grab such price increases with glee as further excuses for imposing excise increases, indexed as they are every six months.

Yesterday's decision by the Federal Government has two unsavoury features. Firstly, instead of accepting the formula and allowing the limit of a 10.6c a litre reduction in price, the Government went only half-way, although for some people it went the whole

way. For most Australians, the Government will only go half-way. However, at the same time, the Federal Government has introduced an entirely new tax, which will be increased every six months. The Federal Government has engaged in a little double-talk over this issue.

Up till yesterday, the level of excise per litre was 10.4c, and because it is very difficult to determine what the actual price would be in the market-place, that rate of excise has been calculated on the basis of a price of 50c a litre. That level of excise represents a little more than 20 per cent of the cost of a litre of petrol at the bowser. However, because of the new tax that has been imposed, the level of excise will be 15.7c a litre, which, on the basis of a price of 50c a litre, brings the overall level of taxation to more than 30 per cent on every litre sold at the bowser. Even now, I suspect that the revenue that is likely to be obtained by the Federal Government, by reducing the price of petrol at the bowser but by increasing the excise at the same point of sale, could exceed the revenue that had been collected in the past over a monthly or six-monthly period.

Mr Scott: Make some promises on behalf of Mr Howard.

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: The people of Australia have already been led to believe that the promises had been made by the Federal Labor Government.

Before the 1983 election, the Prime Minister said that he would reduce the price of fuel by 3c a litre. He claimed that the reduction in price was inevitable because, at that time, petrol was over-priced. However, nothing of the kind happened, and, instead, every six months the price increased automatically.

The Federal Government has now introduced into the system a new tax that will account for in excess of 30 per cent of the cost of fuel at the bowser. As it affects the consumer, it represents an increase of approximately 50 per cent more than the old tax rate. On a per litre basis, that represents a very substantial increase in taxation.

Despite what everyone would usually expect, a full reduction in the price of petrol has not been obtained. At the same time, a new tax has been imposed, and it may well take more per litre from the motorist than has been taken in the past. It should also be remembered that the new tax will be indexed. Every six months, the new tax level will increase by something of the order of 2 or 3 per cent, so that by the end of a one-year period, it will amount to 7 or 8 per cent. It will be interesting to note how high that new tax will be in a few months' time.

From March this year, the 50 per cent increase in tax per litre of fuel will be imposed in this country. This sleight of hand manoeuvre by the Federal Government should not be allowed to go unnoticed or without criticism, because it is a device that has been used to increase the taxes and impositions that are part of the system of government in this country. In contrast to that, the people of Australia had been led to believe that the Federal Labor Government would provide goods and services in a better manner and less expensively. Of course, someone has found a way of getting round those promises.

I would have expected that, without any increase in excise, a reduction in the price per litre of fuel would have led to a reduction in the Consumer Price Index sufficient to avoid the creation of a wage spiral. Perhaps the Government in Canberra has a vested interest in the increases flowing from the CPI. Perhaps the Government in Canberra is attempting to convince the workers in this country that when wages go up the standard of living also rises, whereas in fact the opposite is true. Perhaps the Government in Canberra is really in greater trouble than the figures in the polls would suggest, and therefore may not be in a position even to honour its promises about the reduction of income tax later in the year. The Federal Labor Government may well be in deep trouble.

The benefit that should have been passed on to the public, and should have been of the order of \$1.7 billion, has been reduced to approximately \$420m, which represents approximately a quarter of the benefit that should have flowed to the public.

The Federal Government says that it has given something to the rural industries, but it has not given relief to all the people living in the rural areas—only to some people living in rural areas. Most of the people living in provincial and remote areas will not get better benefits than the people living in Sydney and Melbourne.

Mr Littleproud: And the ones who get it will only get it on some of their fuel.

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: That is true.

A confidence trick has been perpetrated on the people of Australia. It should be condemned. I hope that the House will support my motion.

Question—That the words proposed to be added (Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen's amendment) be so added—put; and the House divided—

AYES, 47		NOES, 30	
Ahern	Lee	Braddy	Warburton
Alison	Lester	Campbell	Wilson
Austin	Lickiss	Casey	Yewdale
Bailey	Lingard	Comben	
Bjelke-Petersen	Littleproud	D'Arcy	
Booth	McKechnie	De Lacy	
Borbidge	McPhie	Eaton	
Cahill	Menzel	Fouras	
Chapman	Miller	Gibbs, R. J.	
Clauson	Muntz	Goss	
Cooper	Newton	Hamill	
Elliott	Powell	Kruger	
FitzGerald	Randell	Mackenroth	
Gibbs, I. J.	Simpson	McElligott	
Glasson	Stephan	McLean	
Gunn	Stoneman	Milliner	
Gygar	Tenni	Palaszcuk	
Harper	Turner	Prest	
Harvey	Wharton	Price	
Henderson	White	Scott	
Innes		Shaw	
Jennings		Smith	
Katter	<i>Tellers:</i>	Underwood	<i>Tellers:</i>
Knox	Kaus	Vaughan	Davis
Lane	Neal	Veivers	Warner, A. M.

Resolved in the affirmative.

Question—That the motion (Sir William Knox), as amended, be agreed to—put; and the House divided—

AYES, 47		NOES, 30	
Ahern	Lee	Braddy	Warburton
Alison	Lester	Campbell	Wilson
Austin	Lickiss	Casey	Yewdale
Bailey	Lingard	Comben	
Bjelke-Petersen	Littleproud	D'Arcy	
Booth	McKechnie	De Lacy	
Borbidge	McPhie	Eaton	
Cahill	Menzel	Fouras	
Chapman	Miller	Gibbs, R. J.	
Clauson	Muntz	Goss	
Cooper	Newton	Hamill	
Elliott	Powell	Kruger	
FitzGerald	Randell	Mackenroth	
Gibbs, I. J.	Simpson	McElligott	
Glasson	Stephan	McLean	
Gunn	Stoneman	Milliner	
Gygar	Tenni	Palaszcuk	
Harper	Turner	Prest	
Harvey	Wharton	Price	
Henderson	White	Scott	
Innes		Shaw	
Jennings		Smith	
Katter	<i>Tellers:</i>	Underwood	<i>Tellers:</i>
Knox	Kaus	Vaughan	Davis
Lane	Neal	Veivers	Warner, A. M.

Resolved in the affirmative.

PRIVILEGE

Application of Sub Judice Rule; Mr Speaker's Statement

Mr **WARBURTON** (Sandgate—Leader of the Opposition) (4.53 p.m.): I rise on a point of privilege.

Mr Speaker, I seek your advice and guidance on your statement to the House this morning regarding the sub judice convention.

Mr Speaker, you said that you had been informed that—

“Criminal proceedings have been commenced in respect of certain matters relating to Mr Allen Callaghan.”

You then said—

“In accordance with the recommendations of the Select Committee of Privileges and the practice followed by the House, discussion on such matters will be regarded as sub judice.”

Mr Speaker, the recommendation of the Select Committee of Privileges regarding the sub judice convention states—

“Matters awaiting or under adjudication in all courts exercising a criminal jurisdiction should not be referred to (in motions, debates or questions) from the moment a charge is made.”

It is my understanding that a charge being made involves a summons being drawn up, the complaint being sworn before a justice of the peace, a summons being issued, and the summons being served.

I seek your clarification, Mr Speaker, as to whether this has occurred in the case of certain matters relating to Mr Allen Callaghan. I seek your advice as to whether it is true that a summons has been drawn up and a complaint sworn before a justice of the peace. I am advised that this had not, in fact, been completed this morning. Can you show the House that these things in fact occurred prior to your statement to the House?

Furthermore, Allen Callaghan is reportedly interstate and has to be found before the summons can be served.

I am advised that, if the complaint contained in the summons has not been sworn before a justice of the peace, it cannot be considered that criminal proceedings have commenced.

I ask: Are you, Mr Speaker, in a position to assure the House that criminal proceedings have actually commenced? If this is not the case, a statement to that effect outside the House would be defamatory.

Mr Speaker, if it is necessary for you to receive advice on this matter—from either the Minister for Police or any other Minister—I ask that you adjourn the House to enable the receipt of such advice.

The House needs to be advised as to if and when complaints have been sworn and if and when summonses have been served on Allen Callaghan. I ask for this matter to be determined properly, as it may impinge upon my right and the right of other members of this House to ask certain questions of Ministers of the Government during question-time.

In addition, Mr Speaker, it is not sufficient for you, I would put to you in the circumstances, to simply read the statement on sub judice without supporting documentation. I would urge that you seek further information for the House so that it can be sure that your determination in this matter is in fact a correct one.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I have received notification from the Attorney-General that proceedings against Mr Callaghan have taken place. It is on the Attorney-General's advice that I made the statement this morning on sub judice. It is on that advice that I have ruled that the matter is sub judice.

QUESTIONS UPON NOTICE

Questions submitted on notice were answered as follows—

1. Trailer Couplings

Mr NEAL asked the Minister for Transport—

With reference to accidents that have occurred as a result of drawbar and coupling failure on certain types of heavy vehicles and trailers—

What measures are being undertaken to overcome this dangerous problem?

Answer—

I am more than fully acquainted with the problems which are occurring, particularly with pig and dog-type trailer couplings.

For the information of honourable members, I state that pig trailers are those which have their axles mounted on the centre of the trailer and often have rigid drawbars. Dog-type trailers have axles mounted at each end with a steering axle, able to swivel on cornering. Dog trailers can have both rigid or hinged drawbars.

Honourable members may recall that in July last year, an extremely serious accident occurred when the coupling of a pig trailer cracked and the trailer careered into the path of a vehicle, shearing off its roof and killing three innocent people. In that accident, the forces applied by the trailer coupling were greater than allowed for in its design. When the trailer came away from the truck, the trailer brake came on automatically, but that did not stop the loaded trailer wandering across the road.

After that accident, I had officers of the Engineering Services Division of my Department of Transport undertake extensive examinations of couplings of both pig and dog trailers. The result confirmed our worst fears, that a substantial number of these couplings are unsafe, having fractures or fatigue cracks. Quite a number were subsequently

immediately ordered off the road by my officers. It is our belief that the problem is widespread. As a result of our investigations, my Department of Transport has introduced the compulsory fitting of safety chains to certain trailers. That has been given the force of law by changes to the Traffic Act and Regulations.

The problem with these drawbar couplings on pig trailers is that they become subject to greater loads than they are designed for. In the case of dog trailers, when the trailers are reversed they tend to jack-knife. This jack-knifing on the drawbar produces tremendous stresses, which cause cracks. These pig trailers are used particularly for carrying large stones or rocks for sea-walls and the like. While all these trailers have emergency braking mechanisms whereby when the brake airlines are broken the brakes are automatically applied, the mechanism relies on prevention after the horse has bolted.

In some cases, brake hoses can stretch a long way before they snap, but, in any case, the major emergency prevention measure should be to ensure that the trailer remains attached to the towing vehicle should the coupling fail. Safety chains seem to me to be the only real answer, but these safety chains must have rigid specifications on both size and on the mountings they are attached to. That has been specified in Queensland.

Unfortunately, at the present time, there is no Australia Design Rule for the manufacture and selection of couplings or drawbars for pig and dog trailers. There is an Australian standard for the manufacture of pin-type couplings, but this standard takes no account of the use of the couplings. The problem is in the selection and application of components.

At the last meeting of Australian Transport Advisory Council, held in Hobart last December, I raised this problem and, as a result, there will be an immediate investigation by the Vehicle Standards Advisory Committee for report to the next ATAC meeting. From Queensland's point of view, we believe that, as a matter of urgency, there needs to be a new ADR for trailer design which takes into account the coupling, drawbar and suspension mechanisms. This ADR should be able to define what type of coupling should go on what type of trailers. This alone will not overcome the problem of break-away trailers, which can only be solved by the compulsory fitment of approved size safety chains. The fitment of these chains is a matter dealt with by each State under its existing road traffic regulations, as has been done in Queensland.

My departmental mechanical engineers are continuing to monitor the problems and make regular checks of these trailers. Any trailers with the least sign of fatigue are being ordered off the road for repair.

2. Financial Assistance to Tin-mining Industry

Mr ROW asked the Minister for Mines and Energy—

With reference to Queensland's tin-miners, who have suffered from the international tin market crisis caused by the suspension of tin-trading on the London Metal Exchange on 24 October 1985—

(1) Does the Government recognise its responsibility to assist this section of the industry in the same way as it offered relief to other sections of the mining industry in the past?

(2) If so, what form will this relief take, and for what period will it operate?

Answer—

(1) Yes. I am fully aware that the international tin market crisis caused by the suspension of tin trading on the London Metal Exchange last October has had severe repercussions for Queensland's tin-miners and some north Queensland communities. The Queensland Government is always ready to assist, wherever possible, Queensland mining industries, particularly those in difficulties, arising from unpredictable circumstances.

(2) The Queensland Government recently adopted a package of financial assistance for the Queensland tin-mining industry, which is estimated to cost \$1.3m in 1986.

The Honourable the Premier and Treasurer has also written to the Right Honourable the Prime Minister outlining Queensland's concessions for the industry and seeking urgent consideration of tin-mining industry requests for Federal assistance, particularly by way of low-interest loans and increases in fuel rebates.

The current world market situation has resulted from the International Tin Council's price support policy. Although the State Government has played no part in the council's activities, the Commonwealth Government is a signatory to the 6th International Tin Agreement to continue price support for the industry. Therefore, the Queensland Government believes that some of the responsibility for providing assistance to the tin industry should be accepted by the Commonwealth Government, as a member body of the ITC.

The State Government's assistance package is based on deferral, until 30 September 1986, of royalty payments and mining rentals for all existing tin-miners. Interest or any other form of penalty accrued in respect of royalties and rentals deferred until September will be written off.

For existing tin-miners who leave the industry prior to 30 September 1986, royalties on tin produced after 24 October 1985 will be written off. If mining leases or claims are surrendered, the rental due for 1986 will also be written off.

The Queensland Government will require a realistic offer of financial assistance from the Commonwealth before implementing its approved package. Meanwhile, the situation in the tin industry will continue to be monitored by the Department of Mines and the Treasury Department, in close consultation with the industry.

3. Applications for Authorities to Prospect

Mr ROW asked the Minister for Mines and Energy—

With reference to the considerable increase in applications for authorities to prospect in the six months to 31 December 1985 compared with the number of applications in the previous six months—

- (1) What is the break-down of these application statistics?
- (2) What is their significance to Queensland's mining industry?

Answer—

(1) In the six months to 31 December 1985, the department received 106 applications for authorities to prospect, which represented an increase of 41 per cent over the previous six months and can be attributed largely to the intense level of interest in gold exploration.

Of the total of 106 applications, 91 per cent related to applications for authorities to prospect for minerals, while 9 per cent related to petroleum. No applications in that period related to coal.

(2) Those figures are an accurate reflection of the present interest by exploration companies in mineral and petroleum resources, particularly in Queensland. The Government regards those figures as a healthy sign. However, as honourable members would recognise from those figures, imposition by the Commonwealth Government of a tax on gold-mining would have a major inhibiting effect on our exploration industry and on future mining developments.

4. Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation, Video Production Unit

Mr VAUGHAN asked the Minister for Tourism, National Parks, Sport and The Arts—

With reference to the in-house video production unit within the Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation—

- (1) Do the people involved in this video production unit also produce videos for the private market?

(2) Do these same people use the production equipment within the QTTC for this private work?

(3) Have these same people used the QTTC equipment to produce a commercial for Daydream Island, which is owned and operated by the deputy chairman of the QTTC, Mr J. J. Kennedy, CBE?

Answer—

(1) I am advised that there have been a few instances of freelance work by employees of the Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation Video Production Unit, but any work has always been outside of normal office hours and has been carried out with the prior permission of management under strict controls.

(2 & 3) No. Members opposite show their true colours when they criticise a man such as Jim Kennedy.

Last week, in this House, honourable members witnessed one of the most disgraceful and cowardly attacks on Mr Kennedy by the honourable member for Wolston (Mr R. J. Gibbs). For him to suggest that Mr Kennedy has exploited the tourist industry shows how little he knows or cares about the tourist industry. I challenge him to repeat his claims outside this Chamber.

Mr Kennedy is a pioneer of the tourist industry, and today he is one of the industry leaders in Australia. He has committed a great deal of time and money into establishing tourism as a leading growth industry.

As honourable members know, Mr Kennedy is deputy chairman of the Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation and is the chairman of the Small Business Development Corporation. However, what honourable members opposite obviously do not know is that Mr Kennedy is chairman of the Federal Government's overseas Exposition Committee and is also chairman of the Federal Minister's committee to inquire into tourism in Australia and the role of the Australian Tourism Commission.

Even the Federal Labor Government realises the contribution that Mr Kennedy has made. The State Labor Party is out of step with its comrades in Canberra, and will remain in the wilderness while it continues to attack men such as Jim Kennedy.

5. Financial Transactions, Queensland Film Corporation

Mr VAUGHAN asked the Minister for Tourism, National Parks, Sport and The Arts—

(1) Have large amounts of money been laundered by debiting them against the Queensland Film Corporation as payment for gifts to film industry administrative bodies in other States or to members of such bodies?

(2) Did the acting Auditor-General recently approach the New South Wales Film Corporation to inquire whether it received a gift from the Queensland Film Corporation?

(3) Is he aware that the acting Auditor-General's inquiry was the first knowledge that the New South Wales Film Corporation had of supposedly being the recipient of a gift from the Queensland Film Corporation?

Mr McKECHNIE: Mr Speaker, according to your earlier ruling, I believe that the subject matter of question No. 5 is sub judice.

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

6. Road Toll

Mr KAUS asked the Minister for Transport—

(1) Has an analysis been made of the Queensland road toll for 1985?

(2) If so, what are the major findings and, in the light of those findings, what action is planned for 1986 to reduce the road toll further?

Answer—

(1 & 2) The Transport Policy Planning Unit of my department has provided me with a comprehensive analysis of last year's road toll. As honourable members would be aware, the final number of road deaths was 504, which was one less than the previous year.

It is estimated that the cost of those deaths alone to the Queensland community was in excess of \$151m. The total costs of all road accidents in Queensland involving death and injury for last year could well exceed \$685m—and that figure does not include vehicle or property damage.

In terms of road-users, the most significant features of last year's road toll were that passenger fatalities decreased by 15 per cent on 1984, pedal cycle fatalities increased by 31 per cent and are now the highest on record since 1977, and pedestrian fatalities increased by 9 per cent—the highest since 1980.

A more detailed analysis of the road toll showed that more than one-third of vehicle occupants were not wearing seat belts at the time of the fatal accident. 23 per cent of fatalities occurred in the Brisbane metropolitan area. That is a 72 per cent increase on the previous year. Nearly half of all deaths occurred in single-vehicle accidents in which the vehicle either hit a stationary object, overturned, or left the roadway. Approximately 54 per cent of fatal accidents were multivehicle collisions. These comprise head-on collisions (26 per cent), intersection accidents (13 per cent) and rear-end collisions (3 per cent) and other accidents.

Once again, young people were over-represented in last year's road deaths. Those aged 17 to 24 years made up 34 per cent of fatalities, yet comprise only 14 per cent of Queensland's population. For this age group, alcohol and speed were the main contributing factors. Elderly pedestrian fatalities also emerged as a significant factor in last year's road toll. Those aged 60 years and over accounted for 35 per cent of all pedestrian fatalities, whilst comprising 14 per cent of the population.

As expected, alcohol was a significant ingredient in the road toll. Post mortem results available up to the end of October revealed that 39 per cent of all drivers and motor-cyclists killed who were tested for alcohol had a positive alcohol reading. Approximately 96 per cent of those were above the 0.05 per cent blood alcohol concentration limit. The average blood alcohol level of impaired drivers killed was 0.19 per cent and for motor-cyclists 0.16 per cent.

The information that has been extracted by officers of my department has been used to develop the road safety parameters for this year. From what I have said, it is obvious that we need to concentrate our efforts on young people, elderly pedestrians, bicycle-riders, and the use of seat belts. Special enforcement efforts will also have to be made to detect drink-drivers and speedsters.

Recently, I established within the Transport Policy Planning Unit of my department a special Road Safety Research Group. Its charter is to do research into road accidents, to make policy recommendations and evaluate countermeasures already in existence. No doubt, some honourable members would already have seen some of the traffic accident bulletins produced by that group.

Although considerable progress was made last year in containing the road toll, there is no reason for complacency or a lessening of our efforts. On my instructions, both the Department of Transport and the Queensland Road Safety Council have been asked to increase their efforts this year to further reduce the road toll.

7. Australia Acts (Request) Act

Sir WILLIAM KNOX asked the Premier and Treasurer—

(1) Has he received legal opinions casting doubt on the validity of the Australia Acts (Request) Act recently passed by this Parliament?

(2) In the light of those opinions, is he reconsidering his attitude to the Australia Acts (Request) Act?

(3) What is his view now of the Federal Government's intention regarding the Australia Acts (Request) Act?

Answer—

(1) No. Perhaps the honourable member is referring to an opinion given by a Mr O'Hair who, I understand, is a junior law lecturer at the University of Queensland. That opinion apparently has been widely distributed and has been used as the basis for all kinds of fanciful claims. However, although Mr O'Hair queries the desirability of the legislation, he does not challenge its validity. For the information of the honourable member, I point out that the validity of the legislation was upheld by a judge of the Supreme Court of Queensland on 17 February 1986.

(2) No. The Australia Acts enacted by both the Australian and United Kingdom Parliaments have now received royal assent.

(3) In view of fears expressed by some well-meaning citizens that the enactment of the Australia Acts will somehow lessen the constitutional position of the Queen in the Government of this State, I take this opportunity of assuring all Queenslanders that such fears are completely unfounded.

My Government has been successful in protecting the office of Governor from attack by the forces of centralism and republicanism. If ever we are unfortunate enough to again see a Whitlam type of Government in Australia, I am sure that those people who treasure our links with the Crown will look back and thank my Government for being one of the prime instigators in the drafting of the Australia Acts.

Finally, I should mention that the Queen herself has expressed entire agreement with the relevant legislation.

8. Confectionery

Sir WILLIAM KNOX asked the Minister for Education—

With reference to the indication by the Minister for Health in this House on 20 February that there are no confectionery lines available in this State declared as unfit for human consumption—

Will he now reconsider his department's ban on the sale of confectionery in high school and State school tuck-shops, with a view to assisting the Queensland sugar industry?

Answer—

My department is currently reviewing its policy on the sale of goods, including confectionery, in school canteens and tuck-shops. In reviewing the departmental policy, advice has been sought from the Confectionery Manufacturers of Australia Limited. A submission from Mr R. Mulcahy, the chief executive officer and federal director of CMA, is pending. In the course of this review, information is being gathered from various sources, including the Department of Health, on the impact of confectionery on children's health.

My department is conscious of the need for school canteens and tuck-shops to provide nutritional foodstuffs for sale to children and is aware that the presence of sugar in items should not necessarily preclude them from being available at schools.

9. Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation, Public Relations Agencies

Mr D'ARCY asked the Minister for Tourism, National Parks, Sport and The Arts—

(1) Which public relations agencies or consultants, and which advertising agencies or consultants, were engaged by the Queensland Film Corporation in 1984-85?

(2) How much was paid to each of these agencies or consultants in 1984-85, and for what specific purposes?

Answer—

(1) Leo Burnett Pty Ltd and Ogilvy and Mather Pty Ltd.

(2) Leo Burnett Pty Ltd was paid \$12,581.61 for spot ads in national, trade, corporate and overseas press.

Ogilvy and Mather Pty Ltd was paid \$34,798.81 for the following work: spot ads in national, trade, corporate and overseas press; production of a film and video resources guide; production of a series of posters; production of the annual report; production of promotional material for seminar; printing of stationery; and progressive charges on shooting and compiling promotional film.

10. Federal Government Policy on Housing

Mr SIMPSON asked the Minister for Works and Housing—

In view of the earlier warnings given by him about the consequences of the Federal ALP Government's moves affecting the housing industry and home-seekers, will he now outline the effects of such moves by the Federal Labor Government?

Answer—

It is amazing that, given the hardships that the Australian Labor Party's policies are causing to the home-buyer and to the housing industry, the Federal Labor Government has yet to formulate a plan to rescue both groups from their present situation. As late as last week, the Federal Labor Party was deciding not what assistance it would give but whether it should take any steps at all. Its parliamentary leader, Mr Hawke, was, last Wednesday, still defending one of the main causes of the growing chaos in the housing industry—the Federal Labor Government's high-interest policy. He told a press conference on that day that the public had accepted high interest rates as a part of the Government's economic strategy.

Let me make it quite clear to the Parliament: in the housing area, the Federal Labor Government has proved itself both inept and indifferent. As a result, home-buyers and the housing industry are increasingly in debt and in trouble. And, closer to home, the State Labor Party's protests on behalf of the home-seeker have been inaudible.

Yes, over a number of months now, I have spoken out to warn of the situation which would inevitably arise unless there was a drastic rethink of Federal Government policies which have caused increasing distress to the home-seeker, particularly the lower-income members of our community.

Firstly, the Federal Government cut the first home owners scheme grants. And the result, according to Western Australian Premier (Mr Burke), is that that scheme is now underspent by at least \$50m.

The Master Builders Federation further estimates that, with more than half the financial year gone, applications for assistance under the first home ownership program are a third of the total number for the whole of the previous financial year. Secondly, the negative gearing and capital gains tax moves were introduced, and they have combined to drive investment out of the private rental market. The first to be hurt by such moves, of course, are our lower-income-earners. Higher rents in the private rental market have been forecast. The other result, inevitably, is a greater demand on the tax-payer to foot the bill for more public housing because of what is a slump induced by the Federal Labor Government in the private rental market. The Federal Labor Government's high interest policies are causing a housing loans drought.

The Australian Bankers Association has warned that bank lending to home-buyers in the first half of 1986 would be down by 40 per cent on the levels of lending in the September and December quarters of last year. The Housing Industry Association has

warned of job losses facing the industry, predicting the downturn already facing the industry, which will mean a loss of up to 8 000 jobs, with more likely if the situation continues to deteriorate.

The situation is one of the Federal Labor Government's own making. Unless it takes immediate steps to address the chaos it has generated, Australia will be facing an increasingly grave housing situation.

11. Roadworks, Iwasaki Tourist Resort

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

With reference to my understanding that, under the franchise agreement, a four-lane highway would be built to the boundary of the Iwasaki resort from Normanby Street, Yeppoon, which was to connect with the Iwasaki four-lane highway completed and built to the boundary of his resort—

As the Iwasaki resort will open on 1 May 1986, will his department release funds to construct this section of main road, which will be the only access to this magnificent tourist resort?

Answer—

The franchise agreement provided for upgrading of the Yeppoon-Byfield road between Yeppoon and the resort to an appropriate standard at no cost to Livingstone Shire Council.

The road has been upgraded to a two-lane standard that is considered to be adequate for both current traffic and future resort traffic until at least 1990. A contribution was also made by the Department of Main Roads to the Iwasaki company towards the cost of construction of a roundabout linking the internal access road of the resort with the Byfield road.

The situation will be closely monitored following opening of the resort. The timing of upgrading of the Yeppoon-Byfield road will depend on growth in traffic and the funds available to the Department of Main Roads for road construction and maintenance throughout the State.

12. Child Abuse

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

(1) Does she agree that legislative reforms will solve only a small part of the child abuse problem?

(2) Is she aware of the chronic under-resourcing on all aspects of child protection in Queensland, whether it is in the areas of referrals and investigations, post-abuse treatment programs (such as therapy, counselling and family support services), community and child education, or community support programs?

(3) Will she give an unequivocal commitment to find the necessary additional funds and staff, and to implement new programs to fight the shocking problem of child abuse, or will she follow the pathetic ploy of her predecessor and abrogate her responsibility to protect all vulnerable children by passing the buck to the voluntary sector, without providing the voluntary sector with the necessary funds and resources?

Mr Davis: This is the question I should have been able to ask without notice the other day.

Mrs CHAPMAN: I did not hear that rather smart comment from the honourable member, who sits on the edge of his seat all the time. However, in answer to the question asked by the honourable Clayton's deputy mate on the other side of the House—

Answer—

(1) My predecessor and I have said publicly in recent weeks that we do not consider that legislative reforms, as important as they are, will be the sole answer to the problems of child abuse.

Mr Davis: Who told you that?

Mrs CHAPMAN: It is a pity that the honourable member for Brisbane Central does not listen a bit more. The protection of children, in my opinion, is a responsibility which must be shared by families, the community and Government. Of course, members of the Australian Labor Party do not know anything about families. All the time, they are trying to split families up.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Minister will proceed with her answer.

Mrs CHAPMAN: It is far better to be looked over than to be overlooked.

Answer (continued)—

There is a big job in education to be carried out in the community, and I will be doing everything within my power to seek the right solutions to this and other aspects of the problem. As part of this, I propose to encourage the voluntary sector to become involved and to respond to the needs for non-statutory services.

(2) I am well aware of the necessity for additional resources to be directed towards preventing, detecting and treating the problem in the light of the dramatic increase in reported cases of child abuse in the past few years. However, some very positive steps towards meeting this need have been taken already, including the establishment of Australia's first Child Abuse Prevention Centre in Brisbane and the allocation of additional staff by Cabinet.

(3) I deplore the honourable member's criticism of my predecessor and remind him that, shortly before my appointment, my colleague was successful in gaining approval for 40 additional positions for the Department of Children's Services.

An Opposition Member: Where are they? We have not sighted them yet.

Mrs CHAPMAN: One thing is for sure: we do not pick the riff-raff that the honourable member runs round with.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Debate will cease.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Minister will proceed with the answer.

Mrs CHAPMAN: Thank you, Mr Speaker. As I was saying——

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Minister will proceed with the answer.

Mrs CHAPMAN: In answering the question, I want to make it quite clear that we will be absolutely certain that the 40 people are definitely the right people for the positions.

Mr Fouras: Oh, yes!

Mrs CHAPMAN: It is not the same as the honourable member thinks.

Answer (continued)—

These staff will go into the field in the next few weeks. Following an internal operational audit, I am also studying a report relating to the possible deployment of other departmental staff towards services of this nature.

Should there be a need for additional resources after the completion of these steps, I can assure the honourable member that I will be making further representations in the

appropriate quarters. I will certainly make sure that these people are the right people for the job. I will not put on people in the way that that was done by the honourable member's contemptible cronies in Canberra.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Application of Sub Judice Rule; Mr Speaker's Statement

Mr WARBURTON: In asking a question of the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General, I put to him that, no doubt, he heard Mr Speaker's comments when he responded to me after I spoke on a point of privilege this afternoon. Mr Speaker said that he was relying on the Minister's advice on the serious matter of sub judice in the Allen Callaghan affair. I now ask the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General, who appeared to be somewhat surprised by Mr Speaker's statement, to tell the House when he delivered the said advice to Mr Speaker. I also ask the Minister to advise the House of the advice or opinion that, it is claimed, he gave to Mr Speaker and, out of respect for all members of the House, will the Minister table a copy of the advice or opinion that he gave to Mr Speaker?

Mr HARPER: I do not really think it is necessary to table the advice, but I inform the House that, this morning, I delivered to the Speaker, before the commencement of the proceedings, a notice dated today's date, that is, 25 February, which reads—

"Dear Mr. Warner,

This is to inform you that a Complaint and Summons was taken out on the 24th February, 1986 against Allen Lindsay Callaghan, former Under Secretary of the Department of Tourism, National Parks, Sport and The Arts, charging him with the offence of misappropriation of property under Section 408C of the Criminal Code."

For the enlightenment of honourable members, I further indicate that, in part, page 95 of the Third Edition of Kennedy Allen's *Justices Acts* reads—

"... the laying of the complaint not the issue or the service of the summons is the commencement of the prosecution.

. . .

A prosecution has been instituted as soon as the complaint is lodged and the summons issued."

Queensland Film Corporation; Expenses of Minister for Tourism, National Parks, Sport and The Arts

Mr WARBURTON: In directing a question to the Minister for Tourism, National Parks, Sport and The Arts, I refer to his ministerial expenses and ask him whether, at any time, the Queensland Film Corporation met certain of his expenses? The Minister will be aware that the person auditing the books and accounts of the corporation claimed that the expenses should have been included in the return to Parliament. In addition, he asked the former chairman (Allen Callaghan) to detail the expenses. I ask the Minister whether it is a fact that Callaghan informed him of the auditor's request and, this being the case, why is it that neither the Minister nor the Film Corporation complied with that request?

Mr McKECHNIE: I told this House that I was informed by the accountant of my department on, I think, the day of the ministerial statement, or some time round that period, that any ministerial expenses that were required to be tabled in this House have been tabled. They have been properly allocated. They have been tabled—it is as simple as that.

Unions' Stand on Bid for BHP

Mr NEAL: I ask the Premier and Treasurer: Has his attention been drawn to an article in today's *Daily Sun* headed "Union acts on BHP bid", wherein the Federated Ironworkers Association has threatened that industrial harmony could not be guaranteed if the unions' stand on BHP was disregarded? Can he advise this House of the likely effect of such a stand?

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: Yes, I did see that statement in the press today. If it was in Queensland, there would be no problem; it would not happen.

Again, this is another clear, blatant instance in which the unions not only have taken the stand that they have, as far as the Commonwealth Government's directing them is concerned, but also are trying to play an upper hand in the business community and in business generally. They are saying who can do what and who cannot do what. It is a real stand-over tactic if ever there was one, and it ill behoves the Commonwealth Government to take a stand with those unions and not only seek to deregister them—I am sorry, it was not the Builders Labourers Federation this time; it was one of the other unions, the metal trades union, if I recall correctly. The Commonwealth Government ought to take some definite action and adopt a definite attitude towards them. That is far outside the role of unions, and again it indicates quite clearly how blatantly they think they can do anything and everything in this country when they should not have the opportunity to do so.

Sale of Lindeman Island Lease to East-West Airlines (Queensland) Pty Limited

Mr R. J. GIBBS: I ask the Premier and Treasurer: Will he confirm or deny that, following a conversation between Sir Edward Lyons and himself, Sir Edward Lyons, acting on the Premier's authority, telephoned the chairman of the State Government Insurance Office (Mr Jim Peel) advising him that any proposal to sell the Lindeman Island lease to East-West Airlines (Queensland) Pty Limited would be considered favourably by the Premier and Cabinet?

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: The honourable member must think that I was born yesterday. He knows very well that there is no justification whatever for that question. It is one of his cheap political efforts to highlight himself and get a little bit of media coverage, and at the same time to try to create a little mischief. I am afraid that I cannot oblige him by answering such a stupid question.

Sale of Lindeman Island Lease to East-West Airlines (Queensland) Pty Limited

Mr R. J. GIBBS: I ask the Premier and Treasurer: For what price was the Lindeman Island lease of 62 ha purchased by East-West Airlines (Queensland) Pty Limited from the State Government Insurance Office? What purchase price is now being negotiated with East-West Airlines (Queensland) Pty Limited for the freehold purchase of Lindeman island?

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: This was a private transaction. If the honourable member wants to satisfy his curiosity, and if he has not already read it in the press, he ought to go and ask the company.

Opposition Members interjected.

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: Why not? Why does he not go and ask the company?

Mr Comben: He is asking you.

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: What has it got to do with me, anyway?

The negotiations in this regard are continuing, as the honourable member may know or ought to know generally from the comments that he would have heard.

I reiterate that this is one of the most exciting developments and it will be one of the most beneficial tourist centres in the State. It will play a very important and vital role. It will play a vital role in the employment——

Mr R. J. Gibbs: How much money is involved?

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr R. J. Gibbs interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Wolston cannot insist on——

Mr R. J. Gibbs interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I warn the honourable member for Wolston.

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: I object to the remarks of the honourable member for Wolston (Mr R. J. Gibbs). I ask him to withdraw them immediately, because they are completely untrue.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Premier has asked the honourable member for Wolston to withdraw certain references made to him. I ask the honourable member to withdraw them.

Mr R. J. Gibbs: I am somewhat perplexed.

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: I ask for those words to be withdrawn, Mr Speaker.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Would the Premier repeat the words that he wishes to be withdrawn?

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: There is absolutely no need for me to repeat the words, and I have no intention of repeating those words. The honourable member for Wolston knows what he said and he will withdraw them.

Honourable Members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I have asked the honourable member for Wolston to withdraw the words to which the Premier has objected. I will not repeat them myself. As Speaker of this House, I do not have to repeat them and I will not. I ask the honourable member for Wolston to withdraw the words that the Premier found objectionable.

Mr R. J. GIBBS: I am unable to accede to your request, Mr Speaker, on the basis that I do not know which words the Premier found objectionable. I made no reference at all to the Premier in any shape or form. My understanding of the Standing Orders is that the Premier is unable to take a point of order or ask for a withdrawal on behalf of any person who is outside this Chamber. I made no reference to the Premier.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Does the honourable member for Wolston refuse to withdraw the remark? I have asked him to withdraw the words to which the Premier objects. I have no alternative but to warn the honourable member for Wolston under Standing Order No. 123A if he does not.

Mr WARBURTON: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order.

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: On a point of order, I have asked the honourable member for Wolston to withdraw the remarks.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! It was on a point of order that the Premier rose to object to the words that the honourable member for Wolston used against the Premier. I have asked the honourable member for Wolston to withdraw those particular references, and I will ask him to do so right now.

Mr Warburton: He cannot do it if he does not know what they are.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I am not in a position at present to know what the words were myself.

Mr Fouras interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I warn the honourable member for South Brisbane under Standing Order 123A for persistent interjections over a period.

Mr Premier, the honourable member for Wolston has stated that he does not know what the words are and he has asked for you to repeat the words. If you will not repeat them, it leaves me in a position in which I will have to ask you to repeat them.

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: The honourable member for Wolston made some very snide remarks.

Mr Warburton: Is this a point of order?

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: I insist on having the words withdrawn. The honourable member is not so stupid that he does not know what he said only a few moments ago. I ask him to withdraw the words and the reference that he made to some payment in relation to this matter.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I have asked the honourable member for Wolston to withdraw the words. I now warn him under Standing Order No. 123A that unless he withdraws the words, I will have to ask him to leave the House.

Mr WARBURTON: I rise to a point of order.

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

Mr WARBURTON: I rise to a point of order.

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: On a point of order, I demand to have my point of order dealt with.

Mr WARBURTON: All we on this side of the House are asking for is some fairness. Mr Speaker, I put to you that on two occasions you have asked the Premier to offer to this House the words that he wants withdrawn. You have admitted that you are unaware of the words to which the Premier refers. We on this side of the House are saying that we are unaware of them. Mr Speaker, it is unreasonable and unjust if you proceed with a warning under Standing Order No. 123A to the honourable member for Wolston—unreasonable and unjust!

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: On a point of order—the honourable member for Wolston knows very well what he said. He cannot play the game that he is so stupid that he does not know what he said a few moments ago. I ask him again to withdraw the words. All of this is just a sort of a game that he is playing to try to big-note himself. He knows very well what he said.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I ask the member for Wolston to withdraw the words.

Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen: Any remarks that he made.

Mr SPEAKER: I ask the honourable member to withdraw the additional remarks that were made.

Mr R. J. GIBBS: Mr Speaker, I withdraw the fact that I said that there was a back-room involvement in the National Party.

High School Student Retention Rates

Mr STEPHAN: In asking a question of the Minister for Education, I refer to an article in *The Courier-Mail* of Monday, 17 February, which referred to a study by the Economic Planning Advisory Council (EPAC) which claimed that high school retention rates were unacceptably low and that post-school education, particularly in technology and business studies, used outmoded management and work practices. I now ask: What are the details of what is presently occurring in education in Queensland?

Mr POWELL: Yes, my attention has been drawn to that article, the source of which was EPAC, which criticised education not only in Queensland but also in Australia generally for its lack of attention to technological education. I am aware also that it criticised student retention rates in Australia. By that I mean the number of students staying on to Year 12.

From 1975 to 1985, in Queensland the retention rate of children going on from Year 10 to Year 12 has increased from 32 per cent to 55.2 per cent. It is estimated that this year it will be in the vicinity of 60 per cent. Used as raw figures, those retention rates really do not accurately reflect what is going on in education, because a large number of students leave school after Year 10 simply because they can find in the senior secondary school no subjects or no courses to their liking or that are relevant to them.

Queensland is attempting to attack that problem. Firstly, two years ago my department began a number of link courses, with students in senior secondary high schools being involved with TAFE colleges. That has brought into being the college at Hervey Bay, which will be opened on Friday by the Premier and Treasurer. It will attack that problem. The department will be opening another college at Alexandra Hills, which will further attack that problem and so give young people the opportunity of undertaking courses that they might find relevant and that will be relevant to them when they leave school.

In that way, we believe that the retention rate in Queensland will increase dramatically. That will be to the advantage of young people, who will have an opportunity to broaden their education and not leave school ill-prepared for entry into the work-place.

The other criticism related to technical education and post-compulsory school education. It might be of interest to honourable members that the Queensland TAFE sector was the first in Australia to pioneer the pre-vocational programs, which are now universally accepted throughout Australia and are gaining acceptance in New Zealand. As I have stated recently, those forces are designed to give young people an opportunity to undertake a course prior to employment, which will assist them when they leave school.

The figures are interesting. In 1977, Queensland had 250 students in that field. In 1985, the number was 2 000. As the program has become more well known and as more colleges, including TAFE colleges, provide pre-vocational courses, it will be possible to cater for an increasing number of students. They will be able to undertake subjects as diverse as engineering, building, rural industries, hair-dressing, graphic arts, tourism and hospitality. That then feeds into the community and gives them opportunities to gain employment.

As to technological education—because some people feel that the education system has not been able to keep up with high technology, considerable criticism has been levelled at the education system Australia-wide and world-wide. It is fair to say that it is difficult for education to keep up with high technology. Young people in the 25-year age group are right in the thick of technological advances. However, when those persons were at school, those technological advances were unknown. Therefore, it is unfair to criticise the education system for that.

In 1986, the Queensland Government will spend \$2,941,000 on the provision of computers in schools.

An Opposition Member: Plus or minus.

Mr POWELL: Not "plus or minus"; that is the amount that will be spent on computers in schools this year.

Already, 2 171 Sperry computers are provided in schools in Queensland. By December this year, 900 additional computers will be in place. Queensland secondary departments will receive five per school. That is important for people who live in areas in which there are secondary departments and not full high schools. Schools with fewer than 1 000 students will receive 15 computers per school. Schools with more than 1 000 students will receive 30 computers per school. Over three years, the total funding will be \$7,500,000.

This year, a trial on a Practical Computer Methods course will begin. That trial will be undertaken by 30 schools. The students will experience the use of computers in many facets of their work and social life. The program is designed to give students not only the opportunity of learning the bare rudiments of the computer but also the instructions on how to use it and manipulate it in their work-place. Trials on the information processing and technological courses will begin with 180 students in four State secondary schools and three non-Government schools. It ought to be emphasised that those courses, which are devised by the Board of Secondary School Studies, go across the whole secondary school spectrum in Queensland, not only into the State schools.

The last thing that I would mention about the use of technology in education is the distance education program in Queensland. The trial that is being operated through Mount Isa is the first in the world. Queensland leads the world in that type of technology. For EPAC to criticise that project shows that it really has not done its homework. Had it looked objectively at Queensland's education system, it would have found that the Queensland Government is responding as quickly as possible to the needs of the community and industry.

Financial Assistance to Sugar Industry

Mr MENZEL: I ask the Premier and Treasurer: In view of the recent statements by Mr Kerin that the Queensland Cane Growers Council has not agreed to deregulate sufficiently for him to agree to fund the sugar industry with \$140m of Federal Government money, will the State Government go it alone and implement its own sugar package and let the Federal Government stand condemned for not helping cane-growers and merely playing politics? Also, is the Premier aware that the Federal Government has reneged on a promise to the cane-growers of New South Wales and, so far, has not given one cent to those cane-growers because they are demanding more deregulation?

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: In answer to the honourable member for Mulgrave, I inform him and other honourable members whose electorates are in cane-growing areas that, next week, Cabinet will visit Babinda, which is the home town of the honourable member for Mulgrave, where a Cabinet meeting will be held. Public meetings in Innisfail, Babinda and a couple of other places will be addressed. Of course, at that time, Government members will outline very clearly what Mr Kerin has not done for the sugar industry and why he has hedged and backed and filled and refused to give any assistance to that industry.

As the honourable member for Mulgrave knows, in the meantime the Queensland Government, which has supported the industry very considerably, will continue to do so. The Queensland Government will put in \$170m if the Commonwealth Government will put in \$150m. One is related to the other. If the Commonwealth Government does nothing, it will have to pay an interest and redemption subsidy on huge sums of money that should have been wiped by a grant from the Commonwealth. The Queensland Government could dissipate large sums of money to no purpose, because the Commonwealth might come in at a later date. The funding must be co-ordinated. However, next

week, I will have something further to say as to what steps this Government could take in that eventuality.

Sale of National Park on Lindeman Island to East-West Airlines (Queensland) Pty Limited

Mr BRADDY: In directing a question to the Minister for Tourism, National Parks, Sport and The Arts, I refer to the continuing denials of both the Premier and the Minister that, if East-West Airlines (Queensland) Pty Limited can obtain freehold title to Lindeman Island, its proposal is to subdivide large sections of what is currently national park, and I ask: Why does its concept plan show as follows—

Stage 1—approximately 70 rural blocks of from 2 000-6 000 square metres, totalling 42 ha;

Stage 2—approximately 20 rural blocks of from 2 000-6 000 square metres, totalling 9.6 ha; and

Stage 4—approximately 27 rural blocks of from 2 000-6 000 square metres, totalling 10.5 ha.

If those blocks are not to be sold for the establishment of millionaires' villas, and their proceeds used to fund other aspects of development on the island, what is the purpose of their sale?

Mr McKECHNIE: In answer to the honourable member for Rockhampton—as the Premier has already informed the House, negotiations are proceeding. There is no final plan, so whatever the honourable member thinks does not mean very much at the moment, anyhow.

As the responsible Minister, I plan to obtain a good deal for both departments. In regard to the conservation element, I believe that Queensland will benefit from any arrangements that I enter into with the company.

Appointment of Mr J. Andrews to Sugar Board

Mr ALISON: In directing a question to the Minister for Primary Industries, I refer to comments by Mr Beattie in the *Sunday Sun*, of 23 February, attacking the appointment of Mr John Andrews to the position of chairman of the Sugar Board.

Would the Minister agree that the comments of Mr Beattie were completely uncalled for and nothing more than a cowardly attack on a very distinguished public servant who, over a long period, has rendered an outstanding service to the people of Queensland?

Mr TURNER: That is not only regrettable but also rather typical of Mr Beattie and some other members of the Australian Labor Party. John Andrews was a senior public servant, whose honesty and integrity were beyond reproach during his career. He has had a long and distinguished career, having been Deputy Commissioner of Main Roads, Chairman of the Public Service Board, Administrator of the city of the Gold Coast for two years and Agent-General in London, a position he filled with dignity and distinction. During his term of office, he attended International Sugar Agreement talks. He had meetings and discussions with Czarnikows, our agents in London. Three years ago, he was approached about the possibility of his accepting the position of Sugar Board Chairman. In my office, I have a letter from the four sugar industry presidents supporting the appointment of Mr Andrews to the position.

It would have been better had Mr Beattie not raised the issue, because it led me to ask about the ALP's attitude to the appointment of former ALP people. Surprise, surprise! Lance Barnard was appointed as the Australian Ambassador to Norway, Finland and Sweden. We all know of Lionel Murphy's appointment to the High Court. A former Premier of South Australia, Don Dunstan, was appointed as the head of tourism in Victoria. The famous flashy dresser, Al Grassby, was appointed Commissioner for Community Relations after being defeated in Riverina.

An Opposition Member interjected.

Mr TURNER: I understand that the member's shoes are pinching, but let him sit there and cop it.

What about David Combe? He was appointed as assistant trade commissioner in Ottawa as a reward, following the disclosure that he had dealings with the Russian KGB agent, Ivanov. That all poses the question, although it might be regarded as facetious: what positions are in the pipeline for the future appointment of Bill Hartley and Norm Gallagher?

It is ludicrous for Mr Beattie or anyone else in the ALP to question the integrity and ability of a man such as John Andrews.

Photograph of Foster Child with Minister for Welfare Services, Youth and Ethnic Affairs

Mr HAMILL: In directing a question to the Minister for Welfare Services, Youth and Ethnic Affairs, I refer to the publicity generated by the Minister, which appeared in *The Courier-Mail* on Thursday, 13 February 1986, when the Minister posed for a photograph, hugging a four-year-old foster child and ask: Is the Minister aware that the child's name, age and status as a foster child were given to the newspaper and published? Is it customary for the Department of Children's Services to make public such information about children in its care? Is that type of information confidential within the meaning of section 144 of the Children's Services Act? Is the Minister further aware that, under section 144 (3) of that Act, penalties of up to \$1,000 or 12 months' imprisonment are provided for those who publish confidential information about children in the care of the Department of Children's Services?

Mrs CHAPMAN: Yes, I did pose with the child. I had the permission of the foster mother although, at the time, I did not know that she was a foster mother. The little child sat on my knee and just hugged me—something that it probably would not have done to members opposite.

The head of my department brought the matter to my attention. I will ensure that it does not happen again. I would hate to jeopardise anybody who has been kind enough to foster a child.

Mr Goss: Especially for the sake of cheap publicity.

Mrs CHAPMAN: Oh, be quiet. If the honourable member with the moustache, whom I can never understand, wants to hear my answer to the question, he ought to get his cronies to shut up for a while.

The honourable member can rest assured that that would not happen again, because, if it were to occur at any time in the future, I would ensure that the child was not a foster child.

Interstate Migration; Effects of Youth Unemployment in Queensland

Mr HAMILL: In directing a question to the Minister for Employment and Industrial Affairs, I refer to his ministerial statement last Thursday in which he confirmed the figure, supplied by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, that indicates that Queensland gained a net increase in population through interstate migration of 10 000 people during the year 1984-85. No doubt the Minister will go on from that point and be prepared to confirm a figure that has been obtained from the same ABS survey, namely, that during the same period, Queensland sustained a net loss in population of approximately 4 000 people aged between 15 and 35 years, or approximately 80 young people per week. I now ask: Do those statistics reflect the fact that, with an unemployment rate of 9.6 per cent, Queensland has the highest rate of unemployment of any mainland State in Australia, and that young people are voting with their feet as a consequence of the bleak prospects for obtaining employment in this State under this uncaring, economically

ignorant, illiterate Government, and because of its lack of a coherent youth employment policy?

Mr LESTER: The net migration gained by Queensland was more than 10 200. The statistics used by the honourable member were out of date and were not in line with current thinking.

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

Sitting suspended from 5.56 to 7.15 p.m.

Mr SPEAKER'S RULING

Motion of Dissent

Mr WARBURTON (Sandgate—Leader of the Opposition) (7.16 p.m.): I move—

“That the ruling given by Mr Speaker on Tuesday 18 February concerning the application of the sub judice rule not applying to the ministerial statement of the Premier be dissented from.”

Mr Deputy Speaker, at the opening of this year's sitting of State Parliament last Tuesday, Mr Speaker made a statement regarding the application of the rules on sub judice. His statement to the House was as follows—

“I have to inform the House that I have received legal advice to the effect that criminal proceedings have commenced in respect of Mrs Judith Callaghan, former executive director of the Queensland Day Committee, and that I now regard that matter as sub judice.”

Several minutes after this ruling was made, I took a point of order on the Premier and Treasurer during his ministerial statement on what is generally known as the public funds affair.

The Premier's ministerial statement appears in *Hansard* under the specific heading of “Auditor-General's Audit of Selected Activities Within the Department of The Arts, National Parks and Sport and the Queensland Film Corporation”. This, the Premier told the House, was the subject which his ministerial statement would be dealing with.

I take the opportunity now to remind honourable members of the Premier's opening remarks. He said—

“I desire to inform the House of certain matters brought to my attention by the Auditor-General in relation to an audit which has been carried out of selected activities within the Department of The Arts, National Parks and Sport and the Queensland Film Corporation.

In so doing, Mr Speaker, in accordance with your ruling I do not intend to make any comments on another related matter other than to confirm that certain court proceedings have now been set in train.”

However, having advised the House that, in accordance with the Speaker's ruling, he did not intend to make any comments on this other related matter, other than to confirm that court proceedings had been set in train, the Premier proceeded to comment at length on this other matter.

To begin with, the Premier advised the House that I was wrong when I told the media that expenditure of the committee established under the auspices of his department was not subject to audit by the Auditor-General's Department.

Mr Deputy Speaker, immediately upon hearing the Premier's making those comments in breach of his own undertaking to observe the sub judice rule, I rose to a point of

order. I regarded his remark as being in clear breach of the sub judice rule, and I put that to the Speaker very directly in the point of order that I took, when I said—

“Mr Speaker, I understood you to say at the outset that all matters relating to the Queensland Day Committee are regarded by you as sub judice. Now we have the Premier and Treasurer talking about the Queensland Day Committee, though not by name. The Premier and Treasurer is referring to the Queensland Day Committee in his statement.”

At that point, Mr Speaker advised the House that he had seen the statement made by the Premier and Treasurer. He assured honourable members that, as far as he had ruled, there was nothing in it that was sub judice. In fact, he ruled that there was no basis to my point of order.

It was then that I rose on a further point of order, saying—

“At the commencement of this session today, you rose to your feet and gave a very brief but concise ruling on sub judice. I am now pointing out to you that the Premier and Treasurer, although not using the words ‘The Queensland Day Committee’, is in fact referring to that committee in his ministerial statement.”

Mr Speaker's response to this further point of order was as follows—

“It is also my decision that the statement does not refer to the committee in those words. No point of order has been made out.”

It was at this juncture that I gave notice that I would move that a ruling given by Mr Speaker concerning the application of a sub judice rule not applying to the ministerial statement of the Premier be dissented from.

It is that motion that we are debating today, and it is important that we consider carefully the content of the Premier's ministerial statement, which he then proceeded to complete.

I remind honourable members that the Premier assured the House that he would not comment on a matter relating to the subject of his ministerial statement, which he nominated as an Auditor-General's audit on selected activities within Mr McKechnie's department and the Queensland Film Corporation. The only thing he intended to say about this other matter was, in line with Mr Speaker's earlier ruling on sub judice, to confirm that certain court proceedings had been set in train.

The Premier reneged on that undertaking. He began to refer very directly to the spending activities of the Queensland Day Committee. He did not mention the Queensland Day Committee by name, but every member in this House and every person in the public gallery knew immediately that he was referring to it. It was at that point that I objected to the Premier's comments.

Upon resuming his ministerial statement, the Premier continued to refer directly to the Queensland Day Committee. He said—

“The next few paragraphs that I intend to read make it quite clear that certain other matters are the subject of court proceedings, not expenditure by the committee of funds from my department.”

In other words, the Premier was distinguishing very clearly between “certain other matters” that are the subject of court proceedings and the expenditure of Premier's Department funds by the Queensland Day Committee.

The Premier went on to make further comments about the Queensland Day Committee, which were as follows—

“Funds are allocated to the committee in the Estimates of my department. The accounts of the committee are audited annually by the Auditor-General, as happened in this instance. The audit found no anomalies in the expenditure of those funds.”

Mr Deputy Speaker, it is my opinion that those comments were also in breach of the sub judice rule. The rule of sub judice applies not only to the specific matter before

a court but also to any associated matter that would necessarily need to be examined by the court in determining the specific matter.

It is my belief that the allocation, spending and audit of funds provided by the Premier's Department to the Queensland Day Committee, while perhaps not being the specific matter before the court, would necessarily need to be examined by the court in determining the specific matter.

It is my belief that the allocation, spending and audit of funds provided by the Premier's Department to the Queensland Day Committee, while perhaps not being the specific matter before the court, would necessarily need to be examined by the court in determining the specific matter. I stand by that opinion in this debate tonight.

How on earth can the allocation, spending and audit of funds provided by the Premier's Department to the Queensland Day Committee not be considered as, in all probability, necessary of examination in determining the specific nature of the charge for which the former executive director of the Queensland Day Committee, Mrs Judith Callaghan, has been summonsed to appear before the Magistrates Court?

The Opposition was prepared to observe the rules of sub judice regarding the Queensland Day Committee, but the Premier was not. We could have had a field day probing the role of the Premier, who also masquerades as Treasurer of this State, in this public funds affair.

In this debate, we are being told by the Government precisely how it believes the rules of sub judice should be applied in this matter. The Government's position obviously does not coincide with that of the Opposition. But if the Government wants to enforce its position here tonight, I give notice that we in the Opposition will respond accordingly. We will test the sincerity and consistency of the Government in this matter.

I hope that all members are absolutely clear on the following point: If the Government enforces its position, it is saying that questions, comment and debate on the allocation, spending and audit of Premier's Department funds are not to be considered as sub judice. That is the interpretation of the sub judice rule that it insists on being applied. That is also the interpretation of the sub judice rule that Mr Speaker insisted on being applied last Tuesday.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row): Order! The honourable member's time has expired. Is there a seconder?

Mr WARBURTON: Mr Deputy Speaker, I think that the clock has gone wrong.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I apologise; the Leader of the Opposition has two minutes left.

Mr WARBURTON: Mr Speaker said—and I will repeat his comment—

“I wish to point out to honourable members that I have seen the statement made by the Premier and Treasurer. I assure all honourable members that there is nothing in it that is sub judice, as far as I have ruled.”

In other words, Mr Speaker is saying that he also does not regard questions, comment and debate on the allocation, spending and audit of Premier's Department funds by the Queensland Day Committee as being sub judice.

The Premier certainly commented on those matters in his ministerial statement. He certainly distinguished those matters as being distinct and separate from those matters involving the Queensland Day Committee and its former executive director, Mrs Judith Callaghan, which are now before the court—and therefore as not being sub judice.

We will soon see just how genuine the National Party Government is in this matter.

Mr R. J. GIBBS (Wolston) (7.24 p.m.): I second the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition. It is important for me to say at the outset that it is never with any

enjoyment that the Opposition moves a motion of dissent from Mr Speaker's ruling. It does so only when it considers that it is receiving unfair treatment—we have witnessed that since the commencement of this session—and when a lack of impartiality is displayed by the Chair. As a duly elected Opposition, we have the right to expect impartiality from the Chair.

It is important for me to say in this House tonight that, regardless of the side of politics one happens to be on, the Leader of the Opposition, generally speaking, is seen by the community and considered to be an honourable person, a man who has not at any time attempted to abuse the Standing Orders of this Parliament. However, it has been very obvious to members of the Opposition that, since the commencement of this session, because of the effective way in which the Leader of the Opposition has exposed the weaknesses of this Government, there is now a very deliberate attempt on the part of the Government itself and on the part of the Premier and Treasurer (Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen) to collude with Mr Speaker to prevent the Leader of the Opposition from exercising his correct rights in this Parliament, that is, to debate matters to their fullest and to ask questions as required.

I refer to a matter recorded in *Hansard* on 13 November 1984, when my colleague the honourable member for Chatsworth (Mr Mackenroth) was referring to a question that was before the courts for hearing at that particular time. At that time, he directed a question to the Minister for Water Resources and Maritime Services, the late John Goleby. Mr Speaker's ruling on that occasion was as follows—

“Order! I understand that this matter will be the subject of court proceedings. However, I shall leave it to the Minister to reply, if he so desires.”

At that stage, Mr Speaker exercised correctly the convention contained in the report of the Committee of Privileges that was tabled on 8 December 1976. In part, that report states—

“9. We do not believe that the commencement of either criminal or civil proceedings should by itself thereupon prohibit consideration by the House of any matter.”

That was a joint parliamentary committee representative of all political parties of this Parliament, and that was the recommendation that came down.

On that occasion, Mr Speaker acted within the spirit of that recommendation. He believed that honourable members are responsible and fair-minded enough not to abuse the convention covering a situation in which a person may be before a court of law, but that matters should be allowed to proceed in this House.

In 1984, the honourable member for Woodridge (Mr D'Arcy) raised a matter that could have been considered sub judice. It concerned a company named Telford. It is now common knowledge that everything that Mr D'Arcy said on that occasion about that company proved to be correct. On that occasion, when it was known that a writ had been served upon the honourable member for Woodridge—a stopper writ at that—Mr Speaker made a ruling wherein he stated quite clearly in this House that the matter of sub judice could not be classified as such until an actual date had been set for court or criminal proceedings to begin.

In a period of three years, Mr speaker has made two conflicting statements, and only last week, Mr Speaker acted incorrectly and unfairly and has deliberately gone out of his way to protect the Government.

I draw to honourable member's attention the fact that before this 1986 session commenced, the Premier himself went on record as saying that he would tell Mr Speaker how to run this Parliament. That was printed in the media. The Premier said on television that he would tell Mr Speaker how to run this Parliament. As every day goes by, it is becoming very obvious that the privilege of this Parliament is being abused by the Government and by the Premier. The members of the public, members of this Parliament and the media can see that this is happening.

Of late, in this House not a day goes by without the Premier and Treasurer getting up out of his chair on at least two occasions and going over to give advice to Mr Speaker as to how the proceedings of the House should be handled and dealt with. It is obvious that he is not going to Mr Speaker seeking advice because, when he is after advice, he correctly and rightly goes to the Clerk of the Parliament. Obviously, one can conclude that he is going to Mr Speaker to give what have become known as riding instructions to Mr Speaker on how to handle the Parliament.

Mr Speaker comes into this House on almost every sitting day and it seems to me that, of late, he has developed a syndrome that allows him to see only out of the eye on the left-hand side of his head, so that he can see only the Opposition. He never warns Government members yet, the very first thing each morning, in this Chamber, he very gleefully and willingly warns members on this side of the House under Standing Order No. 123A.

Honourable members have witnessed what has gone on in this House over the past week. Members on this side of the House have been suspended—unfairly suspended! My colleague the member for Ipswich was wrongfully suspended because Mr Speaker was not aware of the Standing Orders of the House and was not able to, or was not competent enough to be able to, correctly identify the member who interjected at that time.

In short, although one gets no enjoyment from standing and making these comments, what I am saying is that not just because of tradition but because of necessity and because of the fact that he holds a very auspicious position, Mr Speaker should be entitled to the respect of the members of this House. Regrettably, members of this House are unable to give that support and that respect to Mr Speaker. I believe that Mr Speaker must take it upon himself to improve his knowledge of the Standing Orders. I think it is now shared common knowledge that he is not au fait with Standing Orders and is incompetent in their use in the running of the House. Mr Speaker does not have control of this Chamber because, generally speaking, members on both sides of the House—although members on that side would obviously deny it in this place, outside they do not—have no respect for him. One does not earn respect by coming into the Chamber and screaming at people simply because one happens to be on one's feet. Because of his own incompetence, Mr Speaker is not able to preside over proper parliamentary procedure. I get no pleasure from saying that about Mr Speaker.

I will take this matter one step further. I believe that it is imperative—absolutely imperative—in the interests of our Westminster system of government that those on the opposite side of the Chamber at least make some semblance of an attempt at fair and open government. That is both imperative and essential for the good running of this House. I believe that Mr Speaker would best be served by resigning and standing down from his position gracefully.

As of late, because of the incompetence of Mr Speaker, this House certainly does not resemble an open Parliament, one where full and fruitful discussion can take place. What honourable members saw in the past week—it culminated on Thursday of last week—was a very deliberate attempt by this Government—a Government which is in disarray, a Government which is running scared, and a Government which has stooped to the lowest depths known to members of this House—to hide behind a phoney, put-up ruling by Mr Speaker to prevent the Leader of the Opposition asking in-depth questions of the incompetent Minister for Tourism, National Parks, Sport and The Arts (Mr McKechnie).

That is what this is all about. Is it any wonder that members on this side of the House and members on the Government side of the House—even though they will not admit it in this Chamber—have lost confidence in Mr Speaker? For the sake of all parliamentarians, he should stand down and resign.

Time expired.

Hon. L. W. POWELL (Isis—Minister for Education) (7.35 p.m.): Mr Deputy Speaker, it is my honour to lead the attack on this motion, which I regard as frivolous.

An Opposition Member: Frivolous?

Mr POWELL: Yes; I regard it as frivolous.

Anybody who read in *Hansard* the statement made by the Premier and Treasurer and the statement made by Mr Speaker would agree that the motion before the House is frivolous. If members opposite wish to pick a fight with Mr Speaker, they have moved the wrong motion in the wrong place.

In his statement to the House last Tuesday, the Premier and Treasurer did not at any time impinge upon the rights of any person. He did only what could reasonably be expected of him, that is, put in place clearly events that had taken place in connection with the work of the Auditor-General. At no stage did the Premier and Treasurer open up for debate any area in which a person's innocence or guilt could be an issue. That is the whole reason for the sub judice rule. The Premier and Treasurer put before the House the exact events that had taken place.

I was a member of the Select Committee of Privileges that set up that rule and made the recommendation to the Parliament. That Privileges Committee was only trying to make sure that the Parliament was not used by members who, for some peculiar reason known only to themselves, wanted to debate within the Parliament under absolute privilege the rights of citizens.

Ever since the role of Speaker changed in the 1640s from one of spokesman for the King to one of protector of the rights of members of the Parliament, it has been incumbent upon members of Parliament to be aware of their responsibilities that attach to that right. It is a pity that some members of this Parliament do not recognise those responsibilities.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I put it to you that in the instance before the House tonight the Premier and Treasurer acted properly, as did Mr Speaker, who ruled that the matter was sub judice. Because of the publicity attaching to the case, because of the people involved—I am speaking about people other than members of Parliament—and because of the high profile that they have kept in the community in the past, it is my firm belief that the sub judice rule was correctly applied in this case. The Opposition, in picking on this particular case and in looking at the remarks of the Premier and Treasurer, is misconstruing them to the utmost.

The honourable member for Wolston (Mr R. J. Gibbs), in seconding the motion, spoke in reasoned tones about a lack of impartiality. As one who has been an occupant of the chair, I can assure honourable members that it is very difficult to know exactly the name of the member or members who are making noise. Again, the responsibility of members of Parliament cannot be overstated in this instance.

Too many times in this Parliament we have witnessed instances in which members from both sides of the Chamber have tried to give Mr Speaker advice by shouting out from the floor of the House. That does not help anybody, least of all Mr Speaker, in trying to maintain impartiality.

Mr Deputy Speaker, it is my proposition to you and to the members of this Assembly that Mr Speaker, as we know him, is impartial. He displays that impartiality. He attempts to maintain order in this Chamber. However, some members of Parliament are determined not to be kept in order.

Mr Davis interjected.

Mr POWELL: Immediately we hear from the honourable member for Brisbane Central, who cannot keep quiet and listen. That is one reason why Mr Speaker must

warn members who interject continuously and try continuously to disrupt the proceedings of this Assembly. One could not blame Mr Speaker for warning honourable members who persistently interject. It is clear to me that honourable members must remain quiet and conduct themselves in an orderly fashion so that the member on his feet may be heard.

The accusation that Mr Speaker is not impartial is simply not fair to a man who has done his best in this Parliament to discipline members who are determined not to show any responsibility.

Mr De Lacy: Do you believe that?

Mr POWELL: It is my belief that Mr Speaker goes out of his way to attempt to be impartial, and to show that impartiality. However, honourable members opposite do not help him.

Opposition members certainly do not help Mr Speaker by rising in their places and arguing with him while he is on his feet. Honourable members opposite—particularly those members who have served in this Parliament for a long time—know that it is a rule of the Parliament that the moment the Speaker rises to his feet, all honourable members should sit down and remain quiet.

Mr Fouras: Except the Premier.

Mr POWELL: Some honourable members, such as the honourable member for South Brisbane, continue to shout interjections. The honourable member for South Brisbane simply cannot contain himself. He cannot keep quiet, and continually plays to the gallery.

Mr Speaker was accused of wrongfully suspending some members of Parliament. If that were the case, a point of order should have been taken or, at least, a motion of dissent moved from the ruling that the Speaker made. In only one instance has that been done, and that particular ruling will be debated very shortly.

The honourable member for Wolston made a valid point that I would throw back at him and members of his party. I will precis the honourable member's words. He said, "You don't get respect by coming in here and screaming and shouting out." The honourable member is completely correct. Honourable members do not gain respect with such action. Members of this Parliament who continually do so do great harm to the respect not only for Parliament but also for individual members of the Parliament.

I believe that this particular motion should be roundly and soundly defeated, because Mr Speaker acted quite properly in the instance being debated tonight.

Mr Speaker acted perfectly correctly when he ruled on the sub judice question. He listened to the Premier's statement. At no time did the Premier break the sub judice convention and, at all times, some of the questions that were asked by Opposition members were likely to do so.

It must always be upon the shoulders of, and the responsibility of, members of Parliament to act properly and responsibly. Members of Parliament have a very important position in the community and, if that position is abused, Mr Speaker has every right and, indeed, the responsibility, to deal with that abuse.

In regard to the pending court cases, it was important that Mr Speaker ensure that discussion did not take place in this Parliament such that might prejudice a fair trial. It is an overall tenet of British justice, which is followed in this country, that a person is innocent until proven guilty. If members of this Parliament—or members of any other Parliament, for that matter—who are uncaring, are unfeeling or are trying to use some political advantage, wish to prosecute a case, it is perfectly clear that Mr Speaker would be completely correct in ruling in the manner in which he did in this case.

I believe—and I suppose that it is a forlorn hope—that this Parliament should unanimously reject the motion, as it is really one that is moved out of peevishness. It is really one that is wrong in logic. The arguments that have been put forward tonight are wrong.

Mr Speaker has the responsibility of maintaining order in the Parliament and, in my view, he should evict any member who will not respect the Chair and will not behave himself or herself in a proper and parliamentary fashion.

Hon. W. D. LICKISS (Mount Coot-tha) (7.44 p.m.): Much that has already been said in the debate, in my opinion, has strayed from the substance of the motion of dissent before the Chair. The motion arises as a result of a ministerial statement made by the Honourable the Premier and Treasurer, to which members of the Opposition took exception, as they regarded certain parts of it as being sub judice.

The Standing Rules and Orders of the Parliament are silent on the matter of sub judice. Therefore, it is incumbent upon honourable members, in deliberating on a matter on which Standing Orders are silent, to follow the practice adopted in the House of Commons. The appropriate direction in which we should be heading to determine the matter of sub judice is the 20th edition of *Erskine May—Parliamentary Practice*, at page 429. For the purpose of the exercise, I ought to read that section into *Hansard*—

“Matters awaiting judicial decision

Subject to the discretion of the Chair and to the right of the House to legislate on any matter or to discuss any matters of delegated legislation, matters awaiting the adjudication of a court of law should not be brought forward in debate (see p. 378).

Following the First Report of the Select Committee on Procedure, 1962-63, the House passed a resolution (23 July 1963) which set out the rule in detail. This resolution bars references in debate (as well as in motions, including motions for leave to bring in bills, and questions, including supplementary questions) to matters awaiting or under adjudication in all courts exercising a criminal jurisdiction from the moment the law is set in motion by a charge being made to the time when verdict and sentence have been announced, and again when notice of appeal is given until the appeal is decided . . .”

Various other aspects are then referred to before *Erskine May* says—

“ . . . the Chair should not allow reference to such matters if it appears that there is a real and substantial danger of prejudice to the proceedings; and should have regard to the considerations set out in paragraphs 25 to 28 . . .”

Therefore, it appears that Mr Speaker has a direct discretion in the matter.

In his reply to the Opposition, Mr Speaker stated that he had read the document. His words were—

“I wish to point out to honourable members that I have seen the statement made by the Premier and Treasurer. I assure all honourable members that there is nothing in it that is sub judice, as far as I have ruled.”

After a number of interjections, he said—

“Order! It is also my opinion that the statement does not refer to the committee in those words. No point of order has been made out.”

The debate tonight, to say the least, has not in any way dignified the Parliament. One thing that members should not do is reflect on the Chair. Tonight, there have been numerous reflections on the office of the Chair. That is to be deplored.

I now come to the nub of the matter. It is clear that Mr Speaker had seen the statement. The Chair has a discretion in what is allowed to be referred to. The Chair would not allow reference to a matter if there were “a real and substantial danger of prejudice to the proceedings”. In my opinion, Mr Speaker acted correctly. The contents

of the statement, which I have read, would not in any way prejudice any one person or any group of persons facing criminal charges.

The Liberal Party comes down heavily in support of Mr Speaker in this matter.

Mr LITTLEPROUD (Condamine) (7.49 p.m.): I rise to speak against the motion of dissent moved by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr Warburton). Having studied the *Hansard* reports of 18 February, I am completely satisfied that Mr Speaker acted exactly in accordance with Standing Orders. A number of factors must be considered. Firstly—and no-one denies this—in his opening remarks for the day, Mr Speaker stated—I mention that I am quoting from notes—

“I have to inform the House that I have received legal advice to the effect that criminal proceedings have commenced in respect of Mrs Judith Callaghan, former executive director of the Queensland Day Committee, and that I now regard that matter as sub judice.”

It is important to note that that reference made by Mr Speaker was to Mrs Judith Callaghan, and that he referred specifically to the Queensland Day Committee. Tonight, honourable members have heard the Leader of the Opposition, in moving this motion of dissent, admit that the Premier and Treasurer (Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen) never mentioned the Queensland Day Committee.

Secondly, in giving his ruling on the point of order raised by the Leader of the Opposition, Mr Speaker said—again, I am quoting from notes—

“I wish to point out to honourable members that I have seen the statement made by the Premier and Treasurer. I assure all honourable members that there is nothing in it that is sub judice, as far as I have ruled.”

Mr Hamill: Are you quoting from the *Hansard* pulls?

Mr LITTLEPROUD: I am quoting from notes that I made.

That statement implies that Mr Speaker perused the prepared statement before the House met on that day. Clearly, Mr Speaker had time to ensure that there was nothing in the statement made by the Premier and Treasurer that was sub judice. It is equally clear that the Premier and Treasurer chose to have the statement studied by Mr Speaker so that any allegation by the Opposition that his statement was on matters that were sub judice could be dismissed quickly; and so it was.

What this motion of dissent does is highlight the fact that the Opposition has a long history of baseless sensations that turn out to be fizzers. Long before I was elected as a member of this House, I grew tired of the blunders that were repeated ad nauseum by Mr Burns, Mr Casey and Mr Wright when each of those gentlemen was Leader of the Opposition. This motion arises out of similar circumstances. It also highlights the fact that the Leader of the Opposition has shown no regard whatsoever for the authorities who are undertaking the investigations into the Queensland Day Committee.

Tonight, the Leader of the Opposition stated that the Opposition is prepared to obey the Speaker's rule on sub judice; yet, last week, the Leader of the Opposition showed no respect for the advice or wishes of no less people than the Solicitor-General, the Auditor-General, and the Commissioner of Police.

Mr WARBURTON: I rise to a point of order. The comments made by the honourable member are untrue. They are absolutely false. I am offended by them, and I ask that they be withdrawn.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row): Order! The Leader of the Opposition states that he is offended by the comments made by the honourable member for Condamine and asks that they be withdrawn.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: In deference to the Chair, I will withdraw them, but I will lead on now with some information——

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Does the honourable member withdraw the comment?

Mr LITTLEPROUD: I withdraw the comment, in deference to the Chair.

I will now go on to mention evidence that came to light later during that week. I am quoting from notes that I took from a statement made by the Deputy Premier, Minister Assisting the Treasurer and Minister for Police (Mr Gunn) on Thursday, 20 February. I recall that the Deputy Premier quoted from a telex he had received from Mr Ian Hatcher from the media office of the Police Department. The telex stated as follows——

“... it was normal practice in investigations of such a sensitive nature that the department canvassed the assistance and co-operation of both Government and Opposition members as well as any other individual or organisation, in an effort to ensure that the police inquiries were not unduly influenced by outside pressures.”

The telex went on to mention a press statement issued by the Commissioner of Police, in which the commissioner said——

“The sensitive nature of such inquiries are not well served by the ceaseless glare of media speculation or the translation of rumor and innuendo into tomorrow's headlines.”

Quite clearly, the Leader of the Opposition has disregarded a press statement by the Commissioner of Police that called for his assistance and co-operation.

Mr WARBURTON: I rise to a point of order.

Mr Borbidge: You are touchy tonight, Nev.

Mr WARBURTON: No. I do not like lies being told by Government members. The position is——

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Will the Leader of the Opposition make his point of order?

Mr WARBURTON: Yes, I am trying to. A few warnings under Standing Order No. 123A could be directed to members on the Government side of the House. Mr Deputy Speaker, the position is clearly this: on no occasion have I ever read a telegram. By the way, it was a telex. That shows up the honourable member for what he is. On no occasion have I received a telex, read a telex directed to me, or had any conversation with the Auditor-General or the Commissioner of Police in which I have been told what the honourable member is suggesting that I was told. The comments of the honourable member for Condamine are untrue. I am offended by them, and I ask that they be withdrawn.

Mr Fouras interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! In a moment, I will warn the honourable member for South Brisbane under Standing Order 123A for interjecting.

The Leader of the Opposition finds offensive some aspects of the statement made by the member for Condamine. Will the member for Condamine accept the explanation of the Leader of the Opposition as to his situation?

Mr LITTLEPROUD: In deference to you, Mr Deputy Speaker, I withdraw the statements, but I am drawing inferences. Certain inferences were drawn by the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Wolston. They were quite offensive to me. Opposition members can certainly give it, but they cannot handle it.

Honourable Members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The Chair objects to the persistent interjections that are being made in the Chamber at the moment. With due partiality, I warn any member about interjecting in that way.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: *Hansard* bears out the behaviour that I have witnessed. On no fewer than six occasions, the Speaker had to warn members of the Opposition for interjecting during ministerial statements. After consistent interjections by many members of the Opposition, Mr Speaker acted properly in insisting that ministerial statements were to be heard in silence.

Even after that insistence by Mr Speaker, he had to warn the members for Murrumba, Bulimba, Chatsworth, Brisbane Central, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and even the Leader of the Opposition. That was not an isolated instance. No fewer than 78 interjections by Opposition members are recorded for Tuesday, 18 February. I dare say that a study of *Hansard* for any sitting day will reveal the same trend.

The fact is that Opposition members have double standards. They make repeated interjections and engage in raucous behaviour as much as possible, because they know that a noisy Parliament is perceived by some members of the public as a smear on the Government. When the Chair uses Standing Orders to discipline offending Opposition members, they immediately become paragons of virtue and accuse the Speaker of being partial, undemocratic, incompetent or biased. Such double standards do not go unnoticed. Many visitors to the House quickly realise that the behaviour of some members of the Opposition is deplorable. These people are amazed that elected members of Parliament should conduct themselves in such a shameless manner. The Leader of the Opposition has highlighted that fact by implying that the Speaker's ruling on sub judice was infringed by the Premier when, in fact, the Leader of the Opposition was using premeditated tactics to disrupt the business of this House. I am convinced that that is the case. The record in *Hansard* is clear evidence that Mr Speaker's ruling was correct.

I urge honourable members to vote against the motion of dissent.

Mr VEIVERS (Ashgrove) (7.59 p.m.): I listened to an outline of historical facts about what occurred in this Parliament. It gives me no pleasure at all to speak in this debate. I do not wish to cast any aspersions on the person or personality of the Speaker. As members of Parliament, we should all be concerned when we witness, daily, hundreds of children in the public gallery as invited guests of the Parliament while Parliament is sitting. I am considerably disturbed, as I am sure all honourable members are disturbed, to realise that, quite frequently, the children leave Parliament with what must obviously be a very low impression of its prestige.

Government Members interjected.

Mr VEIVERS: Immediately, I hear interjections from the Government side, and I have not completed my case.

An Opposition Member: And they are being ignored by the Chair.

Mr VEIVERS: Once again, those interjections are being ignored.

Each and every one of us should be concerned about the prestige that attaches to this Parliament. On occasions, members on the Opposition side of the Chamber have been culpable; but, during the period in which I have been a member of this Chamber, on many occasions Government members have been equally culpable, and absolutely nothing has been done about their conduct.

The image of politicians generally and of politicians in this Parliament is very low. I have referred to the conduct of members themselves. However, a large share of the responsibility for upholding the prestige of this Chamber must rest with the person who occupies the chair. That person has the responsibility of ensuring that the Standing

Orders are fairly implemented and that impartiality is displayed from the chair. The job of the person who occupies the chair is to implement the Standing Orders and to apply the normal rules of debate as fairly as possible. That matter concerns me more than any other factor.

Mr Speaker seems to have a great deal of trouble in coming to grips with the role of the Speaker and his loyalty to his own party. Much more respect is shown to the chair when it is occupied by other members of this Chamber. When the member for Warwick (Mr Booth) occupies the chair, he seems to get a great deal more respect than many others do. There is absolutely no question about his loyalty to his party; but he certainly carries out his duties in the chair with a fair degree of impartiality.

Ms Warner: Say something nasty about him as well.

Mr VEIVERS: Does the honourable member think that I should say something nasty about him as well? On a number of occasions, the honourable member for Warwick, when he has occupied the chair, has turned on the Opposition—no doubt very fairly—to deliver a ruling. Impartiality is a critical factor in carrying out one's duties in the chair.

Another important factor is that the person occupying the chair should have a good knowledge of the normal rules of debate. The other important factor is that he should have a knowledge and understanding of the Standing Orders. I believe that Mr Speaker is very short on a knowledge of the Standing Orders. The only Standing Orders that I have heard him mention are Standing Order No. 123A and Standing Order No. 124. Those Standing Orders are always directed at the members of the Opposition. In that sense, I wonder whether Mr Speaker is acting genuinely as a result of his own concern for the Standing Orders or under orders or pressure from the Government. If he is acting under orders or pressure from the Government, that is a very sad situation.

Mr Speaker seems to see with one eye and hear with one ear. A Speaker should have good eyesight and good hearing. A good umpire should certainly have those basic characteristics or qualities. Confidence is also a necessary ingredient, wherein self-assurance and an attitude of control in the role of speakership should be conveyed to the House.

All honourable members would agree that the Speaker appears to have lost confidence, and that is reflected in a number of the comments that have been made tonight.

It gives me no pleasure to say these things, because I believe that the honourable member for Toowoomba South (Mr Warner) is a very decent man. I feel sad that, because of the pressure that has been put upon him by the National Party in his judgments and his rulings, he has not performed as he possibly would have liked to perform in this House. In that sense, he has not performed well as a Speaker, and I feel sad about that.

Mr POWELL: I rise to a point of order. The honourable member for Ashgrove is reflecting on the Chair. I believe that he is out of order in doing so and that the matter should be ruled upon accordingly.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row): Order! I believe that some comments concerning Mr Speaker could be regarded as being out of order. I rule accordingly. I ask the honourable member for Ashgrove not to refer to the Speaker in any personal manner again.

Mr VEIVERS: I certainly had no intention of doing that. There was nothing personal in my remarks. I made the point that I am sure that the Speaker is a very decent man. However, I am talking about rulings, judgments and Standing Orders, which are the reason for this debate tonight.

Mr R. J. Gibbs: Would you support the honourable member for Aspley for Speaker? He could put a clown's hat on.

Mr VEIVERS: I am not really discussing who ought to be Speaker and who ought not be.

In reinforcing the remarks I made earlier I state—and the Minister for Education (Mr Powell) must surely agree—that the speaker of this House has a very heavy responsibility to ensure that Parliament is conducted in such a way that the prestige of the Parliament and its members is held in the highest esteem. It is saddening for me to see that the colours have been lowered on the prestige of this House, more as a result of the attitude of the National Party Government than of the attitude of the Speaker himself.

Hon. Sir WILLIAM KNOX (Nundah) (8.9 p.m.): It was not my intention to speak in this debate, but two Opposition speakers have attacked the integrity of the Speaker tonight and have cast gross reflections on the Speaker and the institution of Parliament.

Honourable Members interjected.

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: Honourable members may laugh and joke about this. I criticise the Government for sitting in silence and allowing it to happen. I did not think members of Parliament would ever cast reflections on the Speaker. It is quite wrong for this House to allow that to happen.

Honourable Members interjected.

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: Honourable members may wish to destroy the Parliament. However, when they do, they destroy their right to be heard in this place.

Mr Hamill: We don't have to destroy the Parliament. They do it every day in this Parliament.

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: The remarks made by the honourable member for Wolston (Mr R. J. Gibbs) and the honourable member for Ashgrove (Mr Veivers) are not apposite to the debate before this House, which, of course, concerns the ruling by Mr Speaker. The Liberal Party has already indicated very clearly that it is supporting Mr Speaker on that particular ruling, and that that ruling has absolutely nothing to do with the personal opinion of honourable members about the Speaker and his role in this House. It is about time that the Opposition stopped expressing personal opinions, and it is about time that the Government started to defend the Speaker.

Mr Hamill: You can't, because he is indefensible and so is their behaviour in this place.

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: In my view, by just making that remark, the honourable member for Ipswich is grossly disorderly; but apparently it has escaped the attention of the Chair.

Mr Hamill interjected.

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: I regard those sorts of remarks as being completely out of order; but I am not in charge of the proceedings of the House.

This debate is on a ruling made by Mr Speaker. That ruling is supported by the Liberal Party and, I hope, by all members of this House, in spite of the Opposition's dissatisfaction with it.

This Parliament and other Parliaments have given a great deal of attention to the sub judice question. The Select Committee of Privileges of this House that reported on this matter in 1978 did so after considerable deliberation. As a result of that, Mr Speaker gave a very fine ruling on the subject of sub judice; it is the best that the House has on the subject. As has been pointed out by my colleague the honourable member for Mount Coot-tha (Mr Lickiss), it has been used effectively.

I rose to speak in this debate because I am offended by the manner in which two members of this House, the member for Wolston (Mr R. J. Gibbs) and the member for Ashgrove (Mr Veivers), have behaved on this occasion.

Question—That Mr Speaker's ruling be dissented from (Mr Warburton's motion)—put; and the House divided—

AYES, 29

Braddy	Wilson
Campbell	Yewdale
Casey	
Comben	
D'Arcy	
De Lacy	
Eaton	
Gibbs, R. J.	
Goss	
Hamill	
Kruger	
McElligott	
McLean	
Milliner	
Palaszczuk	
Prest	
Price	
Scott	
Shaw	
Smith	
Underwood	
Vaughan	
Veivers	<i>Tellers:</i>
Warburton	Davis
Warner, A. M.	Fouras

NOES, 47

Ahern	Lee
Alison	Lester
Austin	Lickiss
Bailey	Lingard
Bjelke-Petersen	Littleproud
Booth	McKechnie
Borbidge	McPhie
Cahill	Menzel
Chapman	Miller
Clauson	Muntz
Cooper	Newton
Elliott	Powell
FitzGerald	Randell
Gibbs, I. J.	Simpson
Glasson	Stephan
Gunn	Stoneman
Gygar	Tenni
Harper	Turner
Harvey	Wharton
Henderson	White
Innes	
Jennings	
Katter	<i>Tellers:</i>
Knox	Kaus
Lane	Neal

Resolved in the negative.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER'S RULING

Motion of Dissent

Mr **WARBURTON** (Sandgate—Leader of the Opposition) (8.18 p.m.): I move—

“That the Deputy Speaker's ruling given on Tuesday 18 February, that the member for Mackay be not allowed to take a point of order be dissented from.”

Last Tuesday, in this House, I gave notice of a motion of dissent from a ruling by Mr Deputy Speaker (Mr Row).

I preface my comments in this debate by saying that a motion of dissent from the Deputy Speaker's ruling is not a matter that the Opposition approaches lightly. But, in this instance, the Opposition had no alternative but to move a motion of dissent from the ruling given in this House last Tuesday.

Today's debate boils down to whether or not this House supports the right of a member, as provided under Standing Orders, to take a point of order. That right of members is clearly set out in Standing Orders Nos. 108 and 115.

Standing Order No. 108 states—

“Except as in these Standing Orders otherwise expressly provided, a Member may speak to any Question before the House, or upon a Question or Amendment to be proposed by himself, or upon a Question of Order arising out of the Debate but not otherwise.”

Standing Order No. 115 complements Standing Order No 108. It states—

“A Member may rise to speak to Order, or upon a matter of Privilege suddenly arising.”

So the right of a member to take a point of order is beyond question; it is not at the discretion of the Deputy Speaker.

Admittedly, last Tuesday there was a degree of cross-fire in this Chamber when the member for Mackay was denied the opportunity of speaking in the debate that was under way. That cross-fire was a direct result of the Government gagging its own censure motion against the Federal Government.

The exchanges between the member for Mackay and the Deputy Speaker stemmed directly from the desire of the member for Mackay to speak in the debate. But those exchanges in no way diminished the right of the member for Mackay to take a point of order, and those exchanges in no way diminished the responsibility and duty of the Deputy Speaker to allow the member for Mackay to state his point of order immediately. However, last Tuesday, the member for Mackay was denied that basic right, despite his attempts to make it clear that he was merely seeking to exercise his right, under Standing Orders, to take a point of order.

Following the initial point of order taken by the member for Mackay, the Deputy Speaker dismissed it, saying that he had given the call to the Minister in charge of the House. The member for Mackay then rose on a further point of order, advising the Deputy Speaker of the provision under Standing Orders for a point of order to be taken at any time.

The Deputy Speaker then ruled—

“I will not accept a point of order.”

That is what the Deputy Speaker said. It was an unbelievable comment from a person in charge of this House. I will repeat it. The Deputy Speaker said—

“I will not accept a point of order.”

That is really the crux of the motion being debated.

Mr Lane: It happens in Canberra all the time.

Mr WARBURTON: I will accept that interjection. The honourable member for Merthyr said, “It happens in Canberra all the time.” This Parliament happens to be the Parliament of Queensland, and members of this Parliament happen to be applying the Standing Orders that apply in this Parliament, the Standing Orders that have been accepted by this Parliament. The Standing Orders of the Queensland Parliament are the only Standing Orders with which I am concerned.

I repeat that the Deputy Speaker said—

“I will not accept a point of order.”

In the circumstances, the Deputy Speaker had no right not to accept a point of order. He did not give the member for Mackay the opportunity to state his point of order. The Deputy Speaker was obliged to allow the member for Mackay to state his point of order.

Under the Standing Orders of this Parliament, that was the firm obligation of the Deputy Speaker. It was then the prerogative of the Deputy Speaker to rule on that point of order.

The only prerogative of the Deputy Speaker was to rule on the point of order, after he had heard the point of order. That is provided under Standing Order No. 116, which appears under the heading “Question of Order, how Dealt with.” Standing Order No. 116 states—

“Upon a Question of Order being raised, the Member called to Order shall resume his seat; and after the Question of Order has been stated to Mr. Speaker by the Member rising to the Question of Order, Mr. Speaker shall give his opinion thereon; but may first invite the opinion of the House.”

Quite clearly, the point of order taken by the member for Mackay was not correctly dealt with. The Deputy Speaker did not allow the member for Mackay to state his point of order. It goes without saying that the Deputy Speaker could hardly have offered his opinion on the point of order of the member for Mackay without first hearing it.

I refer honourable members to *Erskine May—Parliamentary Practice* on the right of members to direct the attention of the Chair to supposed breaches of order—

“It is the right of any Member who thinks that such a breach has been committed to rise in his place—”

I emphasise that, because that is exactly what the honourable member for Mackay did—

“interrupting any Member who may be speaking, and direct the attention of the Chair to the matter, provided that he does so the moment the alleged breach of order occurs.”

That is exactly what the honourable member for Mackay tried to do.

Erskine May continues—

“A Member speaking to order must simply direct the attention to the point complained of, and submit it to the decision of the Speaker.”

Last Tuesday the member for Mackay was not afforded the opportunity to submit his point of order to the decision of the Speaker.

Erskine May states also that Speakers have exercised discretion over the taking of points of orders, but that does not mean that Speakers have any discretion over allowing a member to state a point of order. That is the basic difference. That discretion applies to his ruling or decision on whether or not to accept a point of order.

In the circumstances, Mr Deputy Speaker's ruling was clearly wrong. Not only was the member for Mackay denied his basic right under the Standing Orders of this Parliament; the incorrect ruling led to the member's suspension from the House. This is not a trifling matter. It strikes at the very heart of the rights of members to be heard.

Mr CASEY (Mackay) (8.27 p.m.): Last Tuesday was a day of infamy in the Parliament, beginning what could be classified as a week that really got out of hand for the Government, principally because of mistakes being made from the chair, as is illustrated by the motion just dealt with and the one now before you, Mr Deputy Speaker. Unquestionably, when such mistakes are made, the whole House loses confidence in the Standing Orders, the methods of operation of the Parliament and the way in which debates are conducted.

Perhaps I could best sum up what happened last Tuesday by quoting the words of Mr Speaker, who is elected by the Parliament. As opposed to the person selected by the Government to be Deputy Speaker, Mr Speaker is elected by his peers. On the occasion to which I refer, the Premier and Treasurer was again endeavouring to interfere in the Speaker's work. It occurred with an exchange across the Chamber between the Premier and Treasurer and the member for Ipswich West (Mr Underwood). The member for Ipswich West was seeking to take a point of order while the Premier was endeavouring, as usual, to bluster his way over the top of everybody else in the Parliament. Mr Speaker then said to the Premier—apologetically, I accept—

“Unfortunately, Mr Premier, I have to listen to a point of order.”

Mr Davis: “Unfortunately”!

Mr CASEY: They were the words of Mr Speaker during debate in the Parliament last Thursday.

Clearly, he accepted his role and his responsibility under the Standing Rules and Orders of the Parliament, which was not done on the previous Tuesday afternoon in the incident affecting me. I will therefore recount some of the events. Certainly, events

in the Chamber sometimes proceed with speed. It is necessary for us to sit back, reflect and examine the position later.

I was suspended from the House, supposedly for disorderly conduct. If honourable members were to examine Standing Order No. 106, they would see that it relates to what the action of a Speaker should be when two or more members rise at the same time or on the same issue. It distinctly provides—

“ . . . Mr Speaker shall call upon the member who first rose in his place.”

I did first rise, and before the Leader of the House (Mr Wharton). I did call the attention of Mr Deputy Speaker to that fact and, in the ensuing exchange and noise in this Chamber, it was impossible to hear exactly what his ruling was or what was going on. I believe that Mr Deputy Speaker had given me the call fairly because I rose first, and I began to speak to the debate. As I said, amid the noise, that call could be heard.

However, when Mr Deputy Speaker then called upon me on a particular point on which he was ruling, I indicated that Mr Deputy Speaker had the list of speakers and that I was next on the list to speak. The subject-matter of the debate was the economy, and that matter had been brought on by the Government. I was listed to speak on behalf of the Opposition on the all-important question that had been raised during that debate by the honourable member for Mirani (Mr Randell), by the Premier and Treasurer (Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen) in his opening remarks, and by the Minister for Industry, Small Business and Technology (Mr Ahern) when seconding the remarks made by the Premier and Treasurer on the motion that he had moved concerning the sugar industry in Queensland.

I had been selected by the Opposition to speak to that particular matter. At that time, when Mr Deputy Speaker indicated that, under Standing Order No. 142, he was about to apply what is commonly known as the gag, moved by the Leader of the House, I then indicated that I had risen to a point of order. I quite clearly said that it was a point of order that I wished to raise. In the previous debate this evening, the Minister for Education (Mr Powell) spoke on behalf of the Government and at one stage, while referring to the events that precipitated that previous debate, stated clearly that it was the role of members of Parliament to raise particular matters by way of points of order. I point out that that is exactly what I sought to do on Tuesday, 18 February in this Parliament—the very thing that the Minister for Education stipulated should have been done.

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr Warburton) has explained clearly Standing Orders Nos. 108 and 115, which set out the rights of members of this Assembly in terms of taking a point of order. Standing Order No. 116 clearly states that it is the duty of Mr Speaker to hear a point of order and then rule on it. Last Thursday, Mr Speaker indicated to the members of this Parliament that that was his role.

However, at that time, the member who was Deputy Speaker (Mr Row) would not accept the point of order. That same person has done a similar thing previously in this Chamber. I believe that, last year, the honourable member for Ipswich West (Mr Underwood) was suspended on one occasion because of an issue that arose when the Chair would not listen to a point of order. For my part, I certainly indicated to Mr Deputy Speaker at that time that I did not deny his right to rule on the gag, but that I was seeking to take a point of order. I may be gagged by motion of the Government in this Parliament, but I will certainly not be silenced.

Calling for my rights, I was then named by Mr Deputy Speaker. Immediately that happened, the Premier and Treasurer was once again very happy to extend his hand and the hand of his Government to the Speaker's Chair of this Parliament.

It is the right of any person in the community, whether that person be a member of a football club, a service club, a social club or a women's sewing club, under the terms of an ordinary constitution that governs any meeting or an assembly of people,

to take a point of order during such a meeting. However, it would appear that in this Parliament, under the control of Mr Deputy Speaker, that is not the case.

That is the reason why the Opposition considers the ruling made by Mr Deputy Speaker to be so wrong, so incorrect and so severe that this motion of dissent should be moved. It was moved in an attempt to highlight what has happened in the House. It has been pointed out previously that this Parliament is one of the few places in which that kind of thing occurs.

I reiterate that I was seeking a ruling from Mr Deputy Speaker as to whether his ruling applied only to the motion moved by the Leader of the House concerning the amendment or on the substantive motion. Subsequent events in this Parliament proved that the ruling applied only to the amendment moved by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr Warburton). Subsequently, divisions of the House occurred so as to cover all aspects. Because of the possibility of my speaking if the normal motion had been allowed to continue to flow, I would have accepted the ruling as made; however, that did not occur. I made no other comments in Parliament on that occasion. Exactly the same circumstances arose today when the member for Chatsworth took a point of order on a similar matter.

Standing Order No. 124 was invoked against me. It is usually invoked when a member disregards the authority of the chair. Standing Order No. 124 clearly states that a member may be named for persistently and wilfully obstructing the business of the House. I did not do that. It is always the right of any member to draw to the attention of the Chair any breaches of order. That is set out clearly in our Standing Orders and in *Erskine May—Parliamentary Practice*. Indeed, it is the duty of a member of Parliament to take points of order on certain matters, in the same way as it is the duty of the Opposition to highlight the wrongdoing of Mr Deputy Speaker in this matter.

To return to the sentence imposed—*Erskine May—Parliamentary Practice* sets out that in the case of irrelevance in debate—certainly there was no irrelevance on this occasion—a member may be directed to discontinue his speech. That did not happen. I sought a right under Standing Orders Nos. 108 and 115. *Erskine May—Parliamentary Practice* sets out that suspension can follow minor breaches of order or when a member transgresses rules of debate. Exactly the opposite occurred. I was seeking to ensure that the rules of debate in this Chamber were adhered to. The opportunity was not given to me.

Erskine May—Parliamentary Practice sets out that the use of disorderly or unparliamentary words can result in suspension of a member. *Hansard* shows clearly that that did not happen.

A member can be suspended for grossly disorderly conduct, but again that did not happen on the occasion when I was suspended. It may have happened on other occasions. *Erskine May* then refers to grave disorder. That certainly did not happen. *Erskine May* also refers to obstruction of the House leading to suspension. Quite clearly, that did not happen.

Erskine May sets out that a point of order is to be taken at the moment of occurrence. That is what I sought to do. *Erskine May* states clearly that Mr Speaker must give his decision immediately he has heard a point of order. Once more, that did not happen; it does not happen in this Parliament. In Parliament, the Speaker must be fair, he must be impartial and he must afford equal opportunity. Those things did not take place last week. That did not do the Parliament any good and it did the Government no good. The role of Speaker in this place is very important.

Time expired.

Hon. M. J. AHERN (Landsborough—Minister for Industry, Small Business and Technology) (8.38 p.m.): This debate on the motion of dissent from Mr Deputy Speaker's ruling centres on the House being asked to consider whether Mr Deputy Speaker acted properly in the circumstances, and whether at any time a member of Parliament should

reserve unto himself the right under the provisions of Standing Order No. 115 to take a point of order.

I indicate that, in practice, that is a totally ridiculous proposition. It is totally unworkable in practice, and *Erskine May—Parliamentary Practice*, in its totality, is quite clear on the issue. If we were to try to operate the Parliament with a totally disorderly Opposition, or even a totally disorderly Government, the Parliament could not and would not work.

Tonight we are being asked to consider the defence of the honourable member for Mackay. As a long-serving member of this House, he is entitled to a fair defence. I was certainly prepared to consider his case. However, looking back through the records, I find that the last occasion on which the Leader of the House approached me to speak on an occasion such as this was when none other than the member for Mackay had erred. It is mostly the member for Mackay who is in this sort of trouble. Indeed, the honourable member for Mackay has the most suspensions of all members of this Parliament.

Mr CASEY: I rise to a point of order. The Minister is deliberately misleading the House. Last Tuesday was the first occasion on which I have been named and suspended in this Parliament. I ask that his remarks be withdrawn, as they are offensive to me.

Mr AHERN: I certainly withdraw them. However, the honourable member knows full well that he is talking on a technicality. He refers to Standing Order No. 124. I refer to Standing Order No. 123A, which deals with a withdrawal from the Chamber. The honourable member for Mackay has had more orders under Standing Order No. 123A than any other member in this Chamber. He has had more suspensions than the Indooroopilly toll bridge has. He is condemned, to an extent, by his record.

On this occasion, the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Mackay referred to Standing Order No. 115. They read it out, and I shall also read it. It states—

“A Member may rise to speak to Order, or upon a matter of Privilege suddenly arising.”

They say that that Standing Order applies under all circumstances—during prayers, while Mr Speaker is on his feet, regardless of the circumstances in the House at the time and regardless of all the other Standing Orders. Does Standing Order No. 115 say that? Other Standing Orders are quite clear in their application. They say, “Taking into account other Standing Orders, this Standing Order will apply.”

Standing Order No. 115 does not say that, regardless of all other Standing Orders, a member may rise to speak to order. Does it say, “This Standing Order applies regardless of Standing Order No. 142”? No, it does not. Standing Order No. 142 is quite clear. Tonight, Opposition members have totally ignored this Standing Order, which, as I say, is quite clear. It states—

“At any time during a Debate in the House or during the proceedings of a Committee of the Whole House, and whether a Member is speaking or not, any Member may move ‘That the Question be now put’; and, if Mr. Speaker or the Chairman is of opinion that the Question has been sufficiently debated, such Motion shall be put forthwith without Debate.”

It does not go on to state, “With particular deference to Standing Order No. 115 and provided that every member of the Opposition or the Government who might want to speak is allowed to take a point of order.” The debate could continue for another half an hour. No. The Standing Order is quite clear. It says, “. . . such motion shall be put forthwith without Debate”.

Mr Deputy Speaker was quite clear. Having called the Leader of the House, under the provisions of Standing Order No. 142 he proceeded to put the question forthwith without debate.

The honourable member for Mackay often takes a point of order when the gag is applied. He stands up and does so on every occasion. Since I became a member of this Chamber, on 100 occasions I have seen half a dozen members of the Opposition rise to their places and say, "I rise to a point of order. I want to speak." Standing Order No. 142 is quite clear; the question shall be put forthwith without debate. Mr Deputy Speaker rightly said, "I shall proceed to put the question forthwith." Whereupon the honourable member for Mackay decided to have his day. He rose to points of order and demanded what he claimed were his rights. He was rightly warned not once, but twice, under the provisions of Standing Order No. 123A. He disregarded the authority of Mr Deputy Speaker and his interpretation of Standing Order No. 142, which any schoolchild can read. It is not qualified.

Mr Deputy Speaker decided to put the question. On two occasions, the honourable member decided to disregard the authority of the Chair. Under the provisions of Standing Order No. 124, Mr Deputy Speaker proceeded to deal with the honourable member. The honourable member then asks, "But was I rightly dealt with under the provisions of Standing Order No. 124?"

Standing Order No. 124 states—

"Whenever any Member or Members shall persist, after warning by Mr. Speaker or the Chairman, as the case may be, in the offence of disregarding the authority of the Chair, or of abusing the Rules of the House by persistently and wilfully obstructing the business of the House, or otherwise, Mr. Speaker or the Chairman may name such Member or Members; and if the offence has been committed in the House, Mr. Speaker shall forthwith—"

etc. Obviously, the Deputy Speaker acted properly. He had a disorderly member, who had a right to raise a point of order under the provisions of the Standing Orders. If I had been Deputy Speaker, my interpretation would have been that the right time for a point of order to be taken in those circumstances was after the provisions of Standing Order 124 were implemented by the House, that is, after that question had been put.

The honourable member for Mackay said, "Ah, but I asked that." That was not until such time as he had been asked to leave the Chamber. I submit that he would have been allowed to take his point of order if he had taken it at the appropriate time.

Honourable members have been asked tonight to say that Standing Order No. 155 overrules all the other Standing Orders of the House and is totally all-embracing and that, at any time, regardless of circumstances and all the other Standing Orders, members have the right to stand in their places, one at a time or all at once, which might take half an hour, to deal with points of order, regardless of the business of the House. That is patently ridiculous.

Erskine May rules that practice out. He said—

"On 1 July 1952 the Deputy Speaker deprecated a growing practice of interruptions of debate by Members who, 'when the Hon. Member who is speaking refuses to give way, think that the only way that they can get their word in is by raising a point of order'. He stated that in his opinion such interruptions constituted fraudulent points of order, and should be stopped."

He went on to say that Speakers have exercised discretion over the taking of points of order. I say that, rightly, they should, and that, on this occasion, the Deputy Speaker did the right thing completely. The proposal by the Opposition tonight is totally preposterous.

Hon. W. D. LICKISS (Mount Coot-tha) (8.47 p.m.): The issue before the Chair tonight is simply whether a member of this place can rise to a point of order. So far this evening, honourable members have heard the honourable member for Mackay give a spirited address on how he was wrongly treated. That was followed by what has been a dissertation on the application of Standing Orders No. 123A and No. 124, neither of which enters the debate this evening. The debate this evening is whether an honourable

member, believing that he has a point of order to raise, has the right to stand in his place, call "Point of order" and be heard. That is an undeniable right of every honourable member of this place.

I wish to preface my argument by reading into *Hansard* some sections of the Standing Orders that have already been included, but I do it again because of the argument that I wish to put forward. Standing Order No. 46 states—

“Questions of Privilege

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

Standing Order No. 108 states—

“When Member May Speak

Except as in these Standing Orders otherwise expressly provided, a Member may speak to any Question before the House, or upon a Question or Amendment to be proposed by himself, or upon a Question of Order arising out of the Debate but not otherwise.”

The next Standing Order that I wish to read into *Hansard* is Standing Order No. 115, which deals with speaking to order or privilege. It states—

“A member may rise to speak to Order, or upon a matter of Privilege suddenly arising.”

A member's right is clearly established in that Standing Order; it is as of right.

I now turn to Standing Order No. 116, which deals with a question of order and how it is dealt with. It states—

“Upon a Question of Order being raised, the Member called to Order shall resume his seat; and after the Question of Order has been stated to Mr. Speaker by the Member rising to the Question of Order, Mr. Speaker shall give his opinion thereon; but may first invite the opinion of the House.”

Mr Deputy Speaker, I ask the House: How can Mr Speaker give a decision as to whether or not a point of order is acceptable until the member standing in his place and raising the point of order states his point of order? It is a physical and mental impossibility. Herein is the crux of the motion before the House tonight.

The Minister who led for the Government in this debate said that if that were the case, the House would never be able to function as a Parliament. Although the Standing Orders of the House do not deal with the matter of frivolous points of order, I return to the 20th edition of *Erskine May—Parliamentary Practice*. I shall quote from page 447. It states—

“Right of members to direct the attention of the Chair to supposed breaches of order

It is the duty of the Speaker to intervene to preserve order, though he may refrain from intervening if he thinks it unnecessary to do so. If he does not intervene, however, whether for the above reason or because he has not perceived that a breach of order has been committed, it is the right of any Member who thinks that such a breach has been committed to rise in his place, interrupting any Member who may be speaking, and direct the attention of the Chair to the matter, provided that he does so the moment the alleged breach of order occurs.”

Now, this is the important part—

“A member speaking to order must simply direct attention to the point complained of, and submit it to the decision of the Speaker. If the Speaker is of the opinion that the words or conduct complained of are disorderly, he will call upon the Member to conform to the rules of the House.”

Equally, if a member rises to a frivolous point of order, there is provision for the Speaker or the person in the chair to deal with that person for being disorderly in the House. That has happened before.

What the House must look at very carefully is the way in which it functions, because, quite frankly, if one could put a description on the so-called points of order that are sometimes raised, they may be more aptly described as points of disorder. It is the responsibility of the House and the members of the House to see that relevant points of order are raised and dealt with in this place. It is equally the responsibility of the House, through the Chair, to ensure that points of disorder do not interrupt the functioning of this House. But that is not the issue tonight; that is a matter between the Chair and the House, or the Committee—whatever the state of the Chamber might be at that stage.

Quite clearly, pursuant to Standing Order No. 116, a member rising in his place and requesting a point of order must be heard, because it follows that, after hearing the point of order, the Speaker or the person in the chair then expresses an opinion, and an opinion cannot be expressed unless the point of order has been heard. It is as simple as that. The Liberal Party clearly supports the motion.

Mr HAMILL (Ipswich) (8.53 p.m.): In this debate this evening, one could well ask the question: When does the taking of a point of order constitute grossly disorderly conduct? I am saddened to think that in this Chamber the answer to that question seems to be: When it is a member of the Opposition who endeavours to take the point of order.

I hear laughter from the Government benches; but, sadly, the record of the day clearly shows that the only attempt by the member for Mackay (Mr Casey) was his attempt to have his privilege as a member of this House upheld by the Chair.

It is the duty of the Speaker of the Parliament to rule impartially upon the Standing Orders of the House. In doing so, the Speaker defends the Parliament, the institution, its forms and procedures. After all, it is the Standing Orders of the House that are fundamental to the orderly conduct of business in the House.

The points in issue are established clearly in the Standing Orders. It is remarkable that honourable members should even be debating the meaning of the Standing Orders and the rights and privileges that they confer.

Standing Order No. 115 states quite clearly—

“A Member may rise to speak to Order, or upon a matter of Privilege suddenly arising.”

Mr Lee: The member for Mount Coot-tha told you that.

Mr HAMILL: I am pleased to agree with the findings of the honourable member for Mount Coot-tha, and I am pleased that in the present debate the members of the Liberal Party are showing the intestinal fortitude to stand up for the Standing Orders of this House.

Standing Order No. 116 states—

“Upon a Question of Order being raised, the Member called to Order shall resume his seat; and after the Question of Order has been stated to Mr Speaker by the Member rising to the Question of Order, Mr Speaker shall give his opinion thereon; but may first invite the opinion of the House.”

I ask all members: What was the crime committed by the honourable member for Mackay? In what way did he flout the Standing Orders of the House? I suggest to honourable members that the honourable member for Mackay merely sought his rights under those Standing Orders. All that the honourable member for Mackay sought to do was rise in his place and seek a point of order. In doing so, he acted within the letter of Standing Order No. 115.

In the case of Standing Order No. 116, again the honourable member for Mackay merely sought to exercise the rights conferred by that Standing Order. It is in relation to Standing Order No. 116 that his rights as a member of Parliament were denied, which

led ultimately to his being removed from this House for a number of days, thereby being prevented from representing in this Chamber his constituents, as is his right and duty as a member of Parliament.

I repeat that Standing Order No. 116 states—

“ . . . after the Question of Order has been stated to Mr Speaker by the Member rising to the Question of Order . . . ”

At no time did Mr Deputy Speaker allow the honourable member for Mackay the right, as conferred by Standing Order No. 116, to present his point of order. It would seem that despite the fact that the honourable member for Mackay had been denied the opportunity to present his point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker took unto himself powers of premonition that somehow enabled him to read the mind of the honourable member for Mackay, because he would not accept the point of order.

Mr FitzGerald: What was his point of order going to be? Do you know?

Mr HAMILL: I do not know; neither does the honourable member, because he did not have the benefit of hearing the point of order; neither did the Chair. Therein lies the Opposition's case on the motion. The point of order was being prejudged by the Chair prior to the honourable member's having an opportunity to present his point of order. That is the real question at stake in this motion.

The Standing Orders of the House exist to protect all honourable members. Supposedly, they are the bulwark for all members in this Chamber. In this House, the Standing Orders are used as a cudgel to hit members of the Opposition over the head. The Standing Orders are used capriciously and improperly to stifle the Opposition, as can be seen by the removal of the honourable member for Mackay for merely standing up for his rights as a member of this Assembly.

Government members hide behind Standing Orders to divert criticism of the Government and to prevent the Opposition from conducting its proper duty in the House of probing and scrutinising the administration of the State. The Standing Orders are used to prevent the Government from being accountable to the House and, in turn, to the people of Queensland. That is why I have great pleasure in supporting the motion. I have pleasure in supporting the motion, because I believe that I am supporting the rights and privileges of all honourable members, regardless of whether they are voting for or against the motion.

Mr Davis: This is non-party.

Mr HAMILL: Indeed, as the honourable member for Brisbane Central says, it is non-party.

I, too, recall the events of that afternoon very vividly. I, too, have taken points of privilege on my own behalf because, as I have stated in this House on the following day, my privilege as a member was infringed upon by the rulings of the Chair in relation to the Standing Orders of this House.

That question of privilege is still to be answered by the Speaker, even though I sought rulings in relation to those important matters as to the meaning of Standing Order No. 123A. I am prepared to await that ruling. However, in the interests of all honourable members, I again ask that that ruling be given.

A former Speaker of this House, Mr Muller, when asked how he viewed his position as Speaker, said that he viewed it as a means of serving the Government.

Mr Lee: You weren't here.

Mr HAMILL: No, I was not a member of this Parliament then. However, at that time, I had the task of endeavouring to teach in the sphere of government at the University of Queensland, and I was distressed to hear the Speaker of this Parliament say that his role in the Parliament was to serve the Government.

I am disgusted that that attitude has been echoed this evening by the Minister for Industry, Small Business and Technology. It was a great disappointment, because I remember the Minister—at that time he was the honourable member for Landsborough, not a Minister—coming out to the university and sprouting about his commitment to the institution of Parliament, his commitment to its forms and procedures. I can only construe from his speech this evening that all those statements that the Minister made to those students were absolutely hollow.

By his arguments this evening, the Minister for Industry, Small Business and Technology has been exposed as a sham, and he will be seen as a sham by the public because he has repudiated the Standing Orders of this House, he has repudiated the practice and forms of this House and, indeed, he has repudiated the attitude that he claimed to hold by when he used to come out to the university and talk to students about how life would be different when the younger generation of the National Party took over.

The Chair in this Parliament, as evidenced by the comments of that former Speaker, has been slavish in its desire to please the front bench opposite. As a consequence, it has lost much of the faith of the people of Queensland in its endeavour to uphold the traditions of this House. So often, the Speakers of this House endeavour to be authoritative but, failing to be authoritative, they merely turn out to be authoritarian.

The Speaker is elected by all members of this House and is charged by all members with the duty to uphold the Standing Orders. Of course, the Deputy Speaker is appointed by the Government—in this instance, of course, the Deputy Speaker is also the Chairman of Committees—but when he is in the chair, the Deputy Speaker is charged with the responsibility of the Speaker, that is, the impartial exercise of authority in the operation of the Standing Orders of this House.

Honourable members should expect, of all honourable members who take the chair, that impartial exercise of authority. Honourable members have a right to expect that the Standing Orders will be upheld and that the incumbent of that position will exercise his authority with impartiality.

Again this evening, it was distressing to hear the Deputy Speaker warn honourable members that he would rule with “all due partiality”.

In the instance cited in the motion being debated, the Deputy Speaker, I believe, has failed to exercise impartiality; he failed in his duty to the House; he failed to protect the privilege of the honourable member for Mackay; he failed to uphold the Standing Orders, and he failed the House. Consequently, I believe that all honourable members, if they respect the institution of Parliament, have no alternative but to support the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr BOOTH (Warwick) (9.3 p.m.): I rise to take part in the debate on the motion of dissent from the ruling of the Deputy Speaker.

I am very appreciative of the very generous remarks of the honourable member for Ashgrove (Mr Veivers). If a member of the Labor Party opposes me at the next election, I will say to him, “You can’t get any votes because the member for Ashgrove says I’m a fine man.”

The Deputy Speaker who made the ruling is not an inexperienced person. He was a member of Parliament long before I arrived. He gives a great deal of thought to his decisions. I am sure that the ruling made by him would have been considered and made with great sincerity.

Whenever a person is chastised, he thinks that he has done the right thing and does not like being chastised. From the age of 5, I did not like being chastised. Throughout life, however, one must live according to the set of laws or rules applying. In this Parliament, honourable members are governed by the Standing Rules and Orders. We might consider why they exist. They are for the protection of the back-bencher. If it

were not for those Standing Rules and Orders, we would not get a fair go. I would much rather Mr Speaker, the Deputy Speaker or whoever else occupies the Chair be too rigid in his rulings than allow the House to get completely out of order.

Mr Hamill: Mr Booth——

Mr BOOTH: I would like to answer the interjection of the honourable member for Ipswich, but I wish to answer some of the points he made in his speech.

The member for Mackay (Mr Casey) spoke. I was rather surprised that he exercised an option to speak in the debate, which follows an incident during which he was told to leave the House under the provisions of Standing Order No. 124. A person against whom a charge is laid is not also one of those serving on the jury considering his case.

Mr Casey: If you were in the dock, you would certainly like to give evidence on your own behalf.

Mr BOOTH: Yes. I do not think I have ever said anything at which the honourable member for Mackay would take umbrage. I hope I have not. If I have, it would have been accidental. However, on this occasion, I believe that the honourable member for Mackay is biased, and he should take that into consideration.

Mr Hamill: You voted against the Opposition Leader the other day when he was accused of certain matters and he wasn't given an opportunity to speak in his defence.

Mr BOOTH: I am not debating that in any shape or form. Tonight, I am debating a commonsense decision.

It is said that, in this day and age, one of the principal things we should teach at colleges and other places of learning is commonsense; yet it is never on the curriculum. What is happening in the debate tonight is that those supporting tonight's motion are attempting to pick out a rule or Standing Order that suits their case. They are not prepared to consider the common sense of it.

Whoever sits in the chair—I do not care who it is—has to make decisions quickly. Matters arise suddenly, as was admitted by the member for Mackay, and must be dealt with promptly and with relevance. If the occupant of the chair is continually challenged, another point arises. The honourable member for Mount Coot-tha (Mr Lickiss), whom I respect and who has had a great deal of experience, said that a point of order may be taken at any time. I do not believe that, on the basis of the Standing Rules and Orders, that is so.

Sir William Knox: The Standing Orders say so.

Mr BOOTH: Standing Orders also say that at any time a member can move, "That the question be now put." That is the point that was challenged, not whether a point of order could be taken. The challenge from the member for Mackay was that that could not be moved without going through some of the ramifications of arguing with him.

Mr Hamill: You are attempting to prejudge the point of order. He didn't get an opportunity to say what his point of order was.

Mr BOOTH: If points of order were taken foolishly and frivolously—and continually—the House could not function.

The occupant of the chair needs to be strong enough and capable enough to make decisions, and allow the House to function. Although I am not trying to blow my own trumpet, I point out that, before I was elected to be a member of this Assembly, I had acquired about 20 years' experience in chairing approximately 15 bodies; in fact, one could say that I was almost a professional chairman because I did very little else. However, at one meeting, I was taken on by a young man who said I did not understand the rules of debate. I was able to get the better of him by pointing out to him that the first rule of debating is to obey the Chair.

I cannot see how this Parliament can function or how a party-room can function if members do not obey the Chair. I am willing to bet that the young honourable member for Ipswich (Mr Hamill) would not challenge the Leader of the Opposition in the party-room or in caucus although, tonight, he stands up and says that he wants the right on any occasion to challenge a ruling made by the Chair.

Mr HAMILL: I rise to a point of order. I am merely exercising my right to take a point of order at any time in this House. The point of order I take is this: at no time did I say that I would like to challenge the occupant of the chair. I merely argued that it was the right of any member to take a point of order at any time, as I am doing now, under the provisions of the Standing Orders of this Parliament.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Randell): Order! No point of order has been made out.

Mr BOOTH: Although I would like to continue to debate that issue, time is running out, and I wish to direct my remarks to the central point of the argument.

The honourable member for Mackay repeatedly argued with the Chair and was then asked, under the provisions of Standing Order 123A, to withdraw from the Chamber. At that stage, the honourable member still tried to take a point of order. On that matter, the Standing Orders and rules are absolutely clear. As soon as an honourable member is ordered to withdraw from the Chamber, a point of order cannot be taken. In the light of the number of times that the honourable member had been warned, I do not think that he was treated harshly.

I turn now to comment on the responsibility of all honourable members to act properly if, in return, they wish to enjoy maximum protection from the Chair under the Standing Orders. It is surely the responsibility of all honourable members to make the House function. All honourable members could enter the Chamber and conduct themselves as though they had a fuse about a sixteenth of an inch long and blew up suddenly on any occasion. I will be quite honest and say that, many times in this Chamber, I would have liked to express myself more harshly, but I realised that, if the House was to function in an orderly fashion and in a manner of which all honourable members could be proud, all honourable members must conduct themselves with a large degree of responsibility.

In the final stages of his speech, the honourable member for Ipswich stated that all persons have the right to disagree. However, I am not quite so sure about that. The honourable member also said that, in all societies, people have the right to disagree. That may be true, but only up to a point. The point that must be borne in mind is that, in the society in which we live, at all meetings—irrespective of whether they are meetings of ordinary day-to-day committees, such as p. and c. associations, or political meetings—all participants accept the need for obedience to the Chair.

In conclusion, I refer to the comments of the honourable member for Ipswich, in which he claimed that the Chair is used repeatedly to disadvantage the Opposition. In that matter, I think that the honourable member is very wrong. What he said is highly insulting to anyone who occupies the chair, and I say that by virtue of my experience gained through infrequent occupancy of the chair. When I occupy the chair, I try to do my best, I try to be as tolerant as possible, and I make decisions that I can live with. I know personally the Deputy Speaker (Mr Row), Mr Speaker and the gentleman who presently occupies the chair, the honourable member for Mirani (Mr Randell). I see no reason to suggest that any one of them would act differently from the way that I have described when I occupy the chair.

Time expired.

Mr INNES (Sherwood) (9.14 p.m.): I rise to speak very briefly to this matter. With the sentiments expressed by the previous speaker, the honourable member for Warwick (Mr Booth), that is, that members of this House should obey the Chair, members of the

Liberal Party of Australia agree. That is the reason members of the Liberal Party supported the expulsion of the honourable member for Mackay (Mr Casey) when he disobeyed and persisted in disobeying the Chair after the initial problem arose. It is unfortunately true that, in this House, members on both sides regularly disobey rulings made by the Chair and do not give way to the initial action taken by the Chair.

According to my recollection and to the notes that I have checked, the first time that a point of order was called by the member for Mackay was the time when the Chair refused to accept it.

A point of order can be called at any time. An examination of *Erskine May—Parliamentary Practice*, our Standing Orders, and the practices of the House of Representatives or the Senate reveals that to be so. I regret that a member of the panel of Temporary Chairman of Committees does not accept that a point of order may be called at any time. A point of order may be called in division. That must be done seated, with one's head covered; that is the practice of the House. For instance, that might be necessary if the Chair read out wrongly the motion that should be put. A point of order can be put at any time, and that is necessary for the purposes of correction and for the benefit of the House. It can be interposed; when it is called, debate stops. Because the motion, "That the motion be now put" is accepted by the Chair, that does not mean that until it is finally concluded, no point of order can be taken. That is perfectly clear.

A reference by Odgers in *Australian Senate Practice* is interesting. It is in these terms—

"Upon a question of order raised the Senator called to Order resumes his seat and, until decided, the question of order suspends the consideration and decision of every other Question."

That is a good, brief encapsulation of the practice in Odgers.

The member for Warwick and the Minister for Industry, Small Business and Technology had a strong tendency to assert that because the member for Mackay apparently has a bad name relative to Standing Order No. 123A—

Mr Booth: I did not say that.

Mr INNES: Certainly, the member for Landsborough said that because the member for Mackay had been warned on other occasions under Standing Order No. 123A, it was reasonable for the Chair to presume that what he was going to say on a point of order would be baseless. Until the point of order is raised, that decision cannot be made. If the honourable member took a point of order, and it was frivolous, it would be correct for the Minister to invoke the quotation from *Erskine May* that he invoked wrongly. If a member takes a fraudulent point of order and attempts to persist with it, he can certainly be sat down; but, in fact, that was the first occasion on which the member for Mackay took a point of order. He had interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Randell): Order! The honourable member has exhausted his time.

Question—That the Deputy Speaker's ruling be dissented from (Mr Warburton's motion)—put; and the House divided—

AYES, 36		NOES, 41	
Braddy	Price	Ahern	Lester
Campbell	Scott	Alison	Lingard
Casey	Shaw	Austin	Littleproud
Comben	Smith	Bailey	McKechnie
D'Arcy	Underwood	Bjelke-Petersen	McPhie
De Lacy	Vaughan	Booth	Menzel
Eaton	Veivers	Borbidge	Miller
Fouras	Warburton	Cahill	Muntz
Gibbs, R. J.	Warner, A. M.	Chapman	Newton
Goss	White	Clauson	Powell
Gygar	Wilson	Cooper	Row
Hamill	Yewdale	Elliott	Simpson
Innes		FitzGerald	Stephan
Knox		Gibbs, I. J.	Stoneman
Kruger		Glasson	Tenni
Lee		Gunn	Turner
Lickiss		Harper	Wharton
Mackenroth		Harvey	
McElligott		Henderson	
McLean	<i>Tellers:</i>	Jennings	<i>Tellers:</i>
Milliner	Davis	Katter	Kaus
Palaszcuk	Prest	Lane	Neal

Resolved in the negative.

CITY OF BRISBANE ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Hon. C. A. WHARTON (Burnett—Leader of the House), by leave, without notice:
I move—

“That leave be given to bring in a Bill to amend the City of Brisbane Act 1924-1984 in certain particulars.”

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

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

Second Reading

Hon. C. A. WHARTON (Burnett—Leader of the House) (9.25 p.m.): I move—

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

This Bill, which contains a number of machinery provisions in relation to the principles to which I will refer later, introduces certain new major principles in relation to the administration of local government in the city of Brisbane.

In the main, the principles incorporated in the Bill have been requested by the Lord Mayor and, I believe, have the council's full support.

Firstly, there is a proposal to omit from the existing Act all references to the vice mayor of the city and to replace it with a reference to the deputy mayor. It is felt that this is a more appropriate term in today's circumstances.

A provision is also to be included spelling out in detail the powers, duties and responsibilities of the mayor of the city.

It is provided that the mayor shall be, *ex officio*, a member of each committee of the council, shall have power to formulate general policies concerning the government of the city, and be responsible to the council for the proper workings and business of the council. The mayor shall, in addition, exercise such other powers, duties and functions as are assigned to the mayor under the Act.

Under the City of Brisbane Act, as it presently stands, where a vacancy occurs in any office in the council administration, the vacancy is required to be advertised internally before it may be advertised externally.

Where there is a position requiring appointment and it is obvious to the council that there is no person internally capable of filling the position, there is a disadvantage in having to first advertise internally. The Bill therefore proposes that vacancies of this type in future may be advertised internally and externally at the same time.

As honourable members will no doubt be aware, the Brisbane City Council has, for many years, maintained a scheme of superannuation for its employees. It established and maintained the scheme on the basis of the general provisions contained in the Local Government Act, and the opportunity has now been taken to provide specifically in the City of Brisbane Act for the establishment and maintenance of such scheme, including the recognition and continuation of the existing scheme. Any future amendment of the scheme will require the approval of the Governor in Council.

It is also to be provided that the Auditor-General shall audit the books and accounts of the trustees of the scheme as well as those of the trustees of the aldermanic superannuation scheme.

Following the election of a new Brisbane City Council in April last year, an investigation was carried out into the organisation and structure of the administration of the council and a report submitted to the council thereon recommending that certain changes be made. The council is desirous of implementing many of the recommendations of that report but, in order to do so under the existing law, would need to carry out extensive alterations to its ordinances, which would be a time-consuming task.

As the council is desirous of moving quickly in this matter for the better administration of the city, the Bill empowers the council to take the necessary action by resolution and, as a consequence, provides that, where units of administration, subunits of administration, and permanent heads of departments, etc., are referred to in the various laws and documents relating to the administration of the council, suitable adjustments may be made.

The Bill provides that the council shall maintain a register in a consolidated form of the organisation and structure of the council and shall keep at its office copies of the register in a printed form available for sale to the public.

As indicated early last year when a Bill was introduced to amend the Local Government Act to provide, amongst other things, for the levying by local authorities of differential general rates, provision will be made to include such powers in the City of Brisbane Act for use by the Brisbane City Council, and the Bill so provides.

Briefly stated, the provisions will enable the council to categorise lands in the city into certain categories and to levy differential rates on lands included in the various categories by the Valuer-General.

The provisions included in the Bill in this regard are almost identical to those contained in the Local Government Act and provide rights of appeal where people are dissatisfied with the category in which their land has been included. Machinery has also been provided for correcting situations in which lands have been omitted from any category or where an incorrect categorisation has been made.

In relation to this matter, the Bill also provides that the council may implement the system of differential general rates only on and from a date to be fixed by proclamation.

The opportunity has also been taken to repeal a number of archaic provisions in the Act that relate to the 1920s and the 1930s and are no longer of relevance.

As indicated earlier, I consider that the amendments proposed will lead to a more efficient operation of the affairs of the city and will be for the benefit of the citizens of the city generally.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Prest, adjourned.

CRIMINAL CODE AMENDMENT BILL**Committee**

The Chairman of Committees (Mr Row, Hinchinbrook) in the chair; Hon. N. J. Harper (Auburn—Minister for Justice and Attorney-General) in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 9, as read, agreed to.

Clause 10—Amendment of s. 131—

Mr GOSS (9.30 p.m.): The Opposition wishes to move an amendment to clause 10. Copies of it are being circulated. During the second-reading debate, the Opposition adverted to the question of who will have the discretion in relation to the institution of a charge of conspiracy. It is the contention of the Opposition that that discretion—that decision-making power—should rest with the court that has final jurisdiction in relation to the trial of the charge and the trial of the accused.

The Committee will recall that, during that debate, I referred to a speech made in 1984 by Mr Sturgess, now Director of Prosecutions, when he railed against the propensity of the Crown to bring conspiracy charges, and the unfortunate consequences of that practice—delays, expense and prejudice to the person charged. At that time, Mr Sturgess strongly expressed the view that it should be necessary for the State to go to the court to obtain consent for the commencement of a conspiracy charge. The Opposition supports that view. From the comments of the Minister during the second-reading debate, it would appear that he does not support the views of his Director of Prosecutions.

I indicate that the amendment that the Opposition proposes to move also relates to clauses 11, 32, 76, 77 and 78. Obviously, what happens in relation to those clauses will be determined by the result of the proceedings that the Opposition now undertakes with this amendment. Accordingly, on the basis of what I have outlined, I move the following amendment—

“At page 3, line 5, omit the words—

‘the Attorney-General’

and substitute the words—

‘a Judge of the Court having the final jurisdiction in respect of the trial of such offence’.”

Mr INNES: As indicated in my speech at the second-reading stage, the Liberal Party will support the Government on this matter, in line with the repeated calls that we in the Liberal Party have made over the years that the Attorney-General should exercise discretion in the bringing of conspiracy charges. Until we see this in operation, we in the Liberal Party do not see that it is necessary to go to the trial judge himself, provided that the Attorney-General acts properly and on advice.

The main purpose of the clause is to provide the net through which these conspiracy charges will flow, a net that will be used by a more sophisticated level than currently operates. The police have a tendency, shall I say, to take a less sophisticated approach to prosecution. As has been evidenced by a number of speeches in the House, conspiracy is a dangerous charge. The Liberal Party believes that the matter will be considerably improved by having it put through the net cast by the Attorney-General, who should have an interest in minimising lengthy trials and in minimising the injustices that do and can occur by bringing conspiracy charges, which have widened rules of evidence. At this stage, unless it is found that it does not work, the Liberal Party is prepared to settle for the significant improvement, which is to require the consent of the Attorney-General.

Mr HARPER: I think that the honourable member for Sherwood has adequately summed up the position and the Government’s thinking in this matter. The Opposition

would be asking the court to make the preliminary finding, whereas the Attorney-General is the first law officer of the State, and he accepts the responsibility, and should do so. I agree with the honourable member for Sherwood that if there was some indication that he was not exercising his responsibility in a responsible manner, there may be room to look elsewhere. It is my contention that it is the responsibility and duty of the Minister in this case, as he is also the first law officer, to act in this way. Of course, all conspiracy sections of the Criminal Code are to be amended in the same manner, as the honourable spokesman for the Opposition has noted in the amendments that he has suggested.

Mr GOSS: I understand the point made by the honourable member for Sherwood and also by the Minister. As I said earlier, Mr Sturgess railed against this practice. In particular, he complained long and loud about the decision of the State—the Crown—to proceed by way of conspiracy charges against the Russell Island defendants. As I understand the situation, that case was handled by the Solicitor-General's Office from the outset. As I recall, the brief was given by the Solicitor-General's Office to a barrister at the private bar. I challenge the Minister to tell us how the law, as amended by this Bill, is different from the situation that operated in relation to the Russell Island case. In other words, in important cases, and big cases in which there is a likelihood of prejudice, delay and extra expense as a result of conspiracy charges, it would seem that the amendment proposed would result in exactly the same thing happening as in a case analogous to the Russell Island case. The Minister is not reforming or changing the law; he is simply consolidating the position as it is now. That seems to be no improvement at all, and it seems, as I said earlier, to fly in the face of the criticisms levelled by Mr Sturgess, with which the Opposition agrees.

Mr INNES: I will have a second bite of this cherry. The Russell Island trial is one that, I hope, will not be repeated. I hope that the realisation of the separate and supervisory role would operate in the prosecution section of the Solicitor-General's Office, particularly with experiences such as Russell Island in mind. I do not think that anybody who saw the beginning of the Russell Island trial could have foreseen the length of the trial and the horrendous complexities into which it fell. Members of this House—perhaps some members of the Opposition—would realise that if they wish to jump on bandwagons and beat up a public furore, sometimes they raise an irresistible background that leads to the institution of criminal proceedings. The alternative is that the Government is duck-shoving or covering up something—in other words, something sinister is at work. A great deal of pressure was exerted in this Chamber by a member of the Labor Party. It made it difficult to apply cold, analytical legal principles. It was the general aura that was created. There was something rotten at the crossroads. Hundreds of people were diddled. Those emotional climates beaten up by politicians sometimes make the administration of justice very difficult.

Mr GOSS: I would like to respond briefly to the point made by the honourable member for Sherwood. He has put forward an excellent argument for supporting the Opposition's amendment. He says that political pressure at a particular time in a particular case can force or pressure a Government into bringing the sort of conspiracy charges that we saw instituted in the Russell Island case.

Surely, one way of overcoming the faults or problems of that process is to take away from the Government of the day, and away from the Minister of the day, the decision relative to whether or not a conspiracy charge is brought, and to put it in the hands of the court.

It seems to me that, on the basis of the argument that the honourable member for Sherwood (Mr Innes) has just put forward, he would have no alternative to supporting the Opposition.

Mr HARPER: I point out to the spokesman for the Opposition that in the Australian system of justice, in the Queensland system of justice, and, in fact, in the system of justice in the democratic world as we know it in Australia, a judge is not an investigator.

A judge should not be called on to investigate. Of course, the Opposition has shown clearly that it does not believe in that philosophy.

Mr Goss: That is absolute rubbish. We don't say he's an investigator. Where did you get that idea from? Apart from in the box over there, where did you get that idea from?

Mr HARPER: I do not know whether the Opposition runs away from the philosophy of its colleagues in the Federal sphere, but the Australian Labor Party has shown clearly that it believes that a judge can also be an investigator. I am sure that the honourable member for Sherwood (Mr Innes) and the other members of the Liberal Party would join with the Government in condemning the philosophy of the Labor Party of turning the judiciary into an investigatory—

Sir William Knox: That's what they like doing; that's what they do federally.

Mr HARPER: Exactly.

It would seem that the wish of the Opposition in this State is to follow the line taken by its Federal colleagues.

I believe that the Opposition spokesman should, once and for all, listen to me when I say, as I have said before, that Mr Sturgess, when he was at the private Bar, spoke as a private barrister. I make it very clear to the Opposition—including the Opposition spokesman on justice—that the Director of Prosecutions is not responsible for formulating Government policy. The Director of Prosecutions was appointed to carry out a specific role. Since his appointment he has fulfilled that role with distinction, and I believe that he will continue to fulfil that role with the greatest distinction that one could expect of a person in that position. However, the Director of Prosecutions is not appointed to formulate Government policy.

The proposed amendment does improve the law. It does give the Attorney-General a degree of control that should satisfy the intent of the amendment. The Government does not accept the amendment proposed by the Opposition.

Question—That the words proposed to be omitted from clause 10 (Mr Goss's amendment) stand part of the clause—put; and the Committee divided—

AYES, 47

Ahern	Lee
Alison	Lester
Austin	Lickiss
Bailey	Lingard
Bjelke-Petersen	Littleproud
Booth	McKechnie
Borbidge	McPhie
Cahill	Menzel
Chapman	Miller
Clauson	Muntz
Cooper	Newton
Elliott	Powell
FitzGerald	Randell
Gibbs, I. J.	Simpson
Glasson	Stephan
Gunn	Stoneman
Gygar	Tenni
Harper	Turner
Harvey	Wharton
Henderson	White
Innes	
Jennings	
Katter	<i>Tellers:</i>
Knox	Kaus
Lane	Neal

NOES, 30

Braddy	Warburton
Campbell	Wilson
Casey	Yewdale
Comben	
D'Arcy	
De Lacy	
Eaton	
Fouras	
Gibbs, R. J.	
Goss	
Hamill	
Kruger	
Mackenroth	
McElligott	
McLean	
Milliner	
Palaszczyk	
Prest	
Price	
Scott	
Shaw	
Smith	
Underwood	<i>Tellers:</i>
Vaughan	Davis
Veivers	Warner, A. M.

Resolved in the affirmative.

Clause 10, as read, agreed to.

Clause 11—Amendment of s. 132—

Mr GOSS (9.50 p.m.): In view of the decision on any amendment to clause 10, the Opposition will not proceed to move amendments to clauses 11, 32, 76, 77 and 78.

Clause 11, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 12 to 48, as read, agreed to.

Clause 49—New s. 450A—

Mr GOSS (9.51 p.m.): I move the following amendment—

“At page 10, line 1, omit all words after the word ‘officer’.”

The basis of the amendment is a simple one. Members of the Opposition believe that it is dangerous to create a special, privileged class of people who have the power of arrest. In this case, the power of arrest is extended beyond police officers to “the owner of the property in question or his servant or by any person authorized by such owner or servant.” The Opposition believes that the existing powers of arrest, set out in section 546 of the Criminal Code, are quite adequate, and that the clause as it stands would create the potential for violence and injury both to the person purporting to exercise the power of arrest and the person arrested.

Mr INNES: The Liberal Party has foreshadowed its attitude to this matter. Members of the Liberal Party have reservations but, insofar as this clause is confined to the offences that, generally speaking, are likely to be associated with the more remote areas of Queensland where difficulties are experienced in obtaining the assistance of police officers, and because the same words already appear in the Criminal Code in respect of another offence that is also in a restricted area of operation, the Liberal Party supports the clause. Members of the Liberal Party will watch the developments with interest.

Mr GOSS: The danger inherent in the sort of approach that extends powers of arrest to police officers or private citizens in a restricted area of operation is that, later on, another restricted area will be added, and then another. In a fairly short time, it is possible that honourable members will find they have surrounded themselves with extended powers in restricted areas.

The end result is that these restricted extensions of police powers or powers of arrest that are given to private citizens become so extensive that they operate in the majority of situations. It is not difficult to imagine situations in which the Government will seek to introduce similar provisions to extend powers of arrest to private citizens because of a matter of particular concern, such as drug offences or some other controversial matter. In each case, the Government believes that its action is justified at the time. As I said previously, the end result is that widespread power is given to private citizens to effect arrests. I think that that is dangerous, not only for the private citizen but also for the person who is suspected of committing the wrong-doing.

Mr HARPER: With a degree of hesitation, I state that I wonder whether the spokesman for the Opposition, the honourable member for Salisbury (Mr Goss), truly understands the Bill.

The offences to which this provision relates are offences relating to livestock. The fact of the matter is, as the honourable member for Sherwood mentioned, that new section 450A is simply a repetition of existing section 455. It is necessary that it be included, because a start has been made to collect animal offences into a new chapter division of the Criminal Code. The section is necessary because these offences occur frequently in remote areas.

I invite the attention of the Opposition spokesman to the fact that section 455 has not caused problems in 86 years of operation. I find it difficult to appreciate the concern and reservations that he has expressed.

Question—That the words proposed to be omitted from clause 49 (Mr Goss's amendment) stand part of the clause—put; and the Committee divided—

AYES, 47		NOES, 30	
Ahern	Lee	Braddy	Warburton
Alison	Lester	Campbell	Wilson
Austin	Lickiss	Casey	Yewdale
Bailey	Lingard	Comben	
Bjelke-Petersen	Littleproud	D'Arcy	
Booth	McKechnie	De Lacy	
Borbidge	McPhie	Eaton	
Cahill	Menzel	Fouras	
Chapman	Miller	Gibbs, R. J.	
Clauson	Muntz	Goss	
Cooper	Newton	Hamill	
Elliott	Powell	Kruger	
FitzGerald	Randell	Mackenroth	
Gibbs, I. J.	Simpson	McElligott	
Glasson	Stephan	McLean	
Gunn	Stoneman	Milliner	
Gygar	Tenni	Palaszcuk	
Harper	Turner	Prest	
Harvey	Wharton	Price	
Henderson	White	Scott	
Innes		Shaw	
Jennings		Smith	
Katter	<i>Tellers:</i>	Underwood	<i>Tellers:</i>
Knox	Kaus	Vaughan	Davis
Lane	Neal	Veivers	Warner, A. M.

Resolved in the affirmative.

Clause 49, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 50 to 57, as read, agreed to.

Clause 58—New s. 450I—

Mr GOSS (10.1 p.m.): As I indicated during the second-reading debate, the Opposition believes that there is a potential—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! There are far too many conversations taking place in the Chamber. The background noise is above the level of the speech of the honourable member, and I insist on silence.

Mr GOSS: Thank you, Mr Row. I am sure that if Government members could hear me, they would agree with what I am saying.

The Opposition's concern is that the Bill, as presently drafted, contains the potential for the property of innocent third parties to be forfeited to the Crown. The Opposition has no objection to property, such as a motor vehicle, vessel or other equipment that belongs to an accused person, being seized if that person is convicted.

As presently drafted—and I think that there is a defect in the drafting—the clause could result in the seizure or forfeiture of property that was hired, borrowed, leased or whatever by the convicted person, and, therefore, the property of an innocent third party could be seized.

I will be disappointed if the Government fails to support the amendment from purely a commonsense and logical point of view, because the Minister, in responding to the second-reading debate, was good enough to acknowledge that the Opposition had a legitimate point relative to this clause, and to say that there was the possibility of third parties being prejudiced. He indicated that the Standing Committee of Attorneys-General was presently considering the question of forfeiture. Notwithstanding that that consideration is under way, that the Attorneys-General are considering that question, the amendment that I will move is a simple one. It is really not controversial at all. It

would appear that the Minister, with his legislation, acknowledges the problem and the need for some sort of an amendment.

It is not good enough to wait until the Attorneys-General finally get their act together and decide on some form of uniform legislation. I appreciate that such consideration takes time, and I am not criticising the delay in reaching some sort of agreement on that matter. However, I say that there is no need to delay this amendment in Queensland. It is time to put an end to sloppy drafting and, where possible, to produce the best form of legislation. Accordingly, I move the following amendment—

“At page 17, line 23, after the word ‘thing’ insert the words—

‘, which is the property of such person, and which has been’.”

Mr INNES: Before I say a few words on this amendment, I point out that I think the member for Salisbury (Mr Goss) meant to say “line 23”. I think he said “line 3”.

Mr Goss: No, “line 23”.

Mr INNES: Very well.

Mr Comben: It is petty.

Mr INNES: It is not petty at all. If I looked at line 3, I would not find the word ‘thing’. I am sure that the honourable member for Windsor has a great insight into the word “thing”.

If honourable members take away a few of the emotional epithets, what has been said by the honourable member for Salisbury is eminently good sense. There is every justification for having forfeiture provisions. Certainly, in the case of young men and motor vehicles, the greatest penalty for them is to lose their sacred motor car.

The forfeiture provision is a very salutary additional weapon for the courts. Clearly, forfeiture will occur for offences relating to the stealing of animals, and it is quite proper that offenders who are convicted of such offences should put their property in jeopardy. However, there can be no justification for having anything less than full blown legal proceedings to deprive anybody of their property. With conviction according to the very high standard of criminal proof, clearly, a criminal offender can be visited with forfeiture. For instance, the property might ostensibly belong to an offender or might be under mortgage or bill of sale, or the property right might be in the hands of some other person whose rights must be recognised. The property might be entirely some other person's. It probably is a drafting oversight to have made the provision so wide. If it is not an oversight, I cannot see how the Government can justify it.

Only a person who goes through due process of law should be at risk in regard to being deprived of property from people. One must arrive at a very high degree of certainty before one takes anybody's property. If there are no appropriate court proceedings, by way of either civil or criminal process, I cannot see why because A has been convicted, one can talk about taking B or C's property, because no finding has been made in relation to B or C. Nothing in this clause suggests that B or C should part with their property.

The Liberal Party supports the amendment proposed by the honourable member for Salisbury (Mr Goss).

Mr FITZGERALD: I know that people's minds are very fertile when they are trying to think of the various ways in which somebody could have his property forfeited in circumstances over which he had no control. Of course, that would be an injustice.

I point out to the Committee that the clause definitely contains the words “may order”. The clause reads—

“450I. (1) Where a person is convicted of an offence under section 398 (where the offence relates to the stealing of an animal), section 444A, section 444B, section

445, section 446, section 447, section 448 or section 448A, the Court or stipendiary magistrate may order to be forfeited to Her Majesty any vehicle, vessel, animal, equipment of other property or thing . . .”

I can think of circumstances in which two people might deliberately set out to carry out a stock-stealing offence. I know that if I used my four-wheel-drive vehicle to rustle some cattle off a property, I could possibly lose that vehicle. An offender could possibly think his vehicle would be forfeited to the Crown. But if I came to an arrangement with my brother, or with a neighbour or somebody else, and I drove his vehicle, the vehicle could not possibly be forfeited if the Opposition's amendment was passed. There are circumstances such as that in which I believe that the word “may” should be adhered to. Also, for an offence involving the riding of a horse, the magistrate may decide that the property should be forfeited. Many different circumstances could arise.

I have a reasonable amount of faith in the law. I do not believe that any magistrate in Queensland would order the forfeiture to the Crown of a rented Budget four-wheel-drive vehicle. The person who committed the offence would have to wear the penalty himself. Circumstances could arise in which a vehicle may be forfeited to the Crown. That is quite a reasonable provision, and I accept it.

Mr INNES: I must respond to that. A little knowledge is a dangerous thing.

Mr FitzGerald: You would know.

Mr INNES: No; when things like this are under discussion, I have a little more knowledge than the honourable member for Lockyer has. If the growing of lettuce is under discussion, I defer totally to the honourable member.

In the circumstances described by the member for Lockyer, the person who allowed his vehicle to be taken to be used in the commission of an offence is an accessory to the offence and, therefore, should be charged and would lose his vehicle in any event. I know that the word “may” implies a discretion. However, the honourable member could well concede that if a scoundrel—a cattle-duffer—tells lies to a policeman who acts in good faith only on the information of the scoundrel, the court might never know that the property belonged to somebody else. Under these provisions, it could be forfeited. If it is confined to the property of the person concerned, the fact that a court has made even a mistaken forfeiture would not operate to deprive the person with true ownership of the property.

In any event, courts go wrong. Magistrates Courts go wrong; that is why the system has appeal courts and other courts. The Bill gives absolute power to the court that makes the decision on forfeiture, without apparently preserving any rights of appeal. It is wrong. A person's property should not be taken or jeopardised except by a finding in that regard according to some particular offence. The test should be imposed by legislation. Such a test is not imposed by this legislation. It is a broad discretion that is available. Broad discretions are not enough to deprive people of property rights.

Mr HARPER: I take exception to the criticism by the Opposition Justice spokesman of the drafting capabilities of the Parliamentary Counsel and the abilities of my officers who were part and parcel of the preparation of this legislation. I take exception to his comments such as “sloppy drafting”. Quite frankly, it appears to me that that is an attitude that is certainly egotistical in the extreme. The fact is that it seems that, although the Opposition has had this Bill for some months, it still has not properly prepared itself. It still has not properly considered it. It certainly has not thought through the amendment that it has moved this evening.

It is important to recognise that the Bill says that the forfeiture may be ordered; there is a discretionary power in the clause that is being considered by the Committee. If the Opposition thought through its amendment, it would realise that it would have the effect of limiting forfeiture only to property which was actually that of the offender. I suggest to honourable members that that would merely encourage a scoundrel—the

member for Sherwood referred to scoundrels—and would encourage these criminals—I am talking about criminals, because those who steal livestock are just as much criminals as the white-collar criminal or anyone else who offends against society—to use the property of a third party and thus avoid confiscation of their own property.

I invite the attention of honourable members to the ample protection contained in the legislation. Government members have thought the legislation through and have not acted on the spur of the moment. The legislation contains suitable protection of the interests of third parties. Apart from the discretionary power contained generally in the Bill, discretionary power is provided in the new subsection (2), which stipulates—

“Anything forfeited to Her Majesty pursuant to this section shall be dealt with or disposed of in such manner as the Attorney-General directs.”

Again, I cannot say too strongly that the proposed section provides that the court or the stipendiary magistrate “may order to be forfeited to Her Majesty”. There is no compulsion; it is a discretion. Surely the Opposition is not suggesting that the discretionary powers of the court are not sufficient protection. The Opposition spokesman referred to comments in my second-reading speech that uniform legislation is being prepared by the Standing Committee of Attorneys-General. By having input from the Attorneys-General of all States of the Commonwealth, a degree of uniformity will be achieved as well as a piece of legislation detailing forfeiture provisions that will be acceptable to all jurisdictions. We will see how that turns out. In the meantime, I am confident that the Bill, particularly this clause, affords ample protection to third parties and, at the same time, acts as a deterrent. That is what the Criminal Code is all about; it is designed to provide a deterrent to those who would offend in this area against society.

Mr GOSS: The Minister somewhat lamely complains about egos. It would seem that the corporate ego of the Minister and his advisers is not only bruised but also very sensitive. The Minister complained that we criticised his legislation and criticised the fact that innocent third parties could have their property seized because of the Bill and because of the sloppy drafting that the Minister brought into this Chamber.

During his reply to the second-reading debate, the Minister said—

“I take note of the mention made by the honourable member for Salisbury of the need to ensure that forfeiture is limited by the provisions of this legislation. . .”

Yet he steadfastly refuses to do so, when he can readily do so by acceding to the terms of the amendment moved by the Opposition and supported by the Liberal Party. It is pure ego and obstinacy on the part of the Minister that prevents this Assembly from passing competent and well-drafted legislation. The Minister acknowledged my point in relation to the need to limit the provisions of the legislation—they are the Minister’s words—and he went on to say—

“... I do not disagree greatly with the suggestion that forfeiture should be limited to the property of the accused or property that can be closely associated with the accused. . .”

Although the Minister said that, he has now changed his tune and he is not prepared to budge an inch. The Minister has the hide to talk about ego! His ego is getting in the way of proper drafting and in the way of the rights of innocent third parties.

The Minister talks about the legislation being directed at criminals. None of my criticism or the criticism of the honourable member for Sherwood (Mr Innes) in any way contradicts the assertion that criminals should be deterred or that they should be convicted and have their property taken away from them. What the honourable member for Sherwood and I are talking about is the position of innocent third parties and the situation in which their property could be seized.

The Minister and the honourable member for Lockyer (Mr FitzGerald) talk about the existence of the word “may” in the legislation. This is criminal legislation, and if people’s liberty or property is to be taken away, it should be done in the clearest terms, so that situations do not arise in which the circumstances are doubtful, in which

discretion is exercised and in which innocent parties may have their property taken away from them.

I suggest that the Minister and his corporate advisers put their egos to one side for a moment, return to the sentiments that the Minister expressed at the conclusion of the second-reading debate, and accede to common sense for just once.

Mr INNES: Each section of the debate raises something new. If the only purpose of the legislation is deterrence, I suggest that the Minister make all of the offences contained in the Criminal Code subject to the death penalty. In fact, the Minister's views might very well be more at home in Iran. If the hands of everybody who stole were chopped off, a reduction in the incidence of theft would be achieved.

Mr FitzGerald interjected.

Mr INNES: It might not work in the electorate of Lockyer, but it would work in my electorate of Sherwood.

The reality is that deterrence is one aspect and justice being done is another aspect. The Government tries to implement penalties that are appropriate to offences; it tries to preserve some respect for the presumption of innocence; it tries to preserve the presumption of innocence of third parties and the effects on third parties.

The Minister constantly states in this Chamber that he makes the decisions. All the time he says, "I make the decisions. I am the first law officer." I become concerned when the Minister does not appear to appreciate the sorts of very simple propositions that are put forward by the honourable member for Salisbury (Mr Goss) and me and will certainly be supported by people round us.

I can say with confidence that the Minister received similar representations from the Law Society and the Bar Association. People who are used to working with the criminal law and to seeing the strengths and weaknesses of the system recognise that the drafting is too wide.

The Minister is very sensitive about drafting and sloppiness. With the sorts of policy instructions that the people working in the Minister's departments or with the counsel get from this Government at times, it is difficult for them to be anything other than sloppy. Those people have to work with the policy directions that they are given, and some of them are clearly astray.

After talking with people who draft legislation for other Parliaments, I can say that they no longer look to Queensland in the way that they used to for a precedent in drafting legislation. Recently, I have spoken with parliamentary draftsmen who used to look towards Queensland regularly as a precedent. Too much crazy stuff is coming out.

Mr FitzGerald interjected.

Mr INNES: Of course, the honourable member for Lockyer was intimately associated with the Land Sales Act Amendment Bill, that well-known perfectly drafted piece of legislation that went through three drafts in one year before it was proclaimed, despite all the warnings that were given.

Some of the acid should be taken off the public servants. If they are told that the Government must come down on the cattle-duffers of the world with the full might and force of the law, and if the purpose of the legislation is to write emotions on the wall, there will be one sort of drafting. If the parliamentary draftsmen are told to use their training and to register the traditional lessons of the law in impementing policy, there will be a different sort of drafting. The whole blame cannot be laid on the draftsmen. They are limited by way of policy.

As I say, a little knowledge is a dangerous thing, and some of the little bits of knowledge that some honourable members exhibit must be very difficult for the public servants who have to draft the legislation to convert into reality.

Mr HARPER: I assure the honourable member for Salisbury that my obstinacy in this matter is not brought about by any entrenched obstinacy or ego. The fact of the matter is that the safeguards in the clause are considered to be quite adequate; indeed, they are quite adequate.

I draw the attention of the Committee to a surprising statement by the honourable member for Salisbury. He said that I acknowledged, during his speech at the second-reading stage, that there was a need to ensure that property of persons other than the person convicted was not forfeited unnecessarily or unwisely. The honourable member quoted me as saying, in the second-reading debate, the words, "property of the accused or closely associated with the accused". However, the Opposition, through its spokesman the honourable member for Salisbury, seeks, instead of the words, "property of the accused or closely associated with the accused", the words, "property of such person". That is not acceptable. I stress that the safeguards in the clause are adequate and have been thought through. The Government is therefore not prepared to accept the amendment, which is supported by both the Opposition and the Liberal Party.

Question—That the words proposed to be inserted in clause 58 (Mr Goss's amendment) be so inserted—put; and the Committee divided—

AYES, 36		NOES, 40	
Braddy	Palaszcuk	Ahern	Lester
Campbell	Price	Alison	Lingard
Casey	Scott	Austin	Littleproud
Comben	Shaw	Bailey	McKechnie
D'Arcy	Smith	Booth	McPhie
De Lacy	Underwood	Borbridge	Menzel
Eaton	Vaughan	Cahill	Miller
Fouras	Veivers	Chapman	Muntz
Gibbs, R. J.	Warburton	Clauson	Newton
Goss	Warner, A. M.	Cooper	Powell
Gygar	White	Elliott	Randell
Hamill	Wilson	FitzGerald	Simpson
Innes	Yewdale	Gibbs, I. J.	Stephan
Knox		Glasson	Stoneman
Kruger		Gunn	Tenni
Lee		Harper	Turner
Lickiss		Harvey	Wharton
Mackenroth		Henderson	
McElligott	<i>Tellers:</i>	Jennings	<i>Tellers:</i>
McLean	Davis	Katter	Kaus
Milliner	Prest	Lane	Neal

Resolved in the negative.

Clause 58, as read, agreed to.

Progress reported.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. C. A. WHARTON (Burnett—Leader of the House): I move—
"That the House do now adjourn."

Seafarers Centre of Gladstone

Mr PREST (Port Curtis) (10.33 p.m.): Last Thursday, in this House, the Premier and Treasurer of Queensland (Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen) answered questions put by me, but he did not answer them as they should have been answered. The Premier and Treasurer dodged the issue, but he made certain that the questions I asked and the answers he gave were later published in *The Gladstone Observer*. For that, I thank him, because, after all, since the date on which that was published, Friday, 21 February, there has been a great response to the issue.

The mayor of Gladstone (Mr Col Brown) appeared on Channel RTQ-7 in Rockhampton and denied that he is in any way involved in this matter. He also said that he did not wish an investigation to be conducted into the matters that had been raised.

On Saturday, 22 February, in *The Gladstone Observer*, the deputy mayor of Gladstone (Mr Burns), who is also the former manager of the Seafarers Centre, stated that, in relation to the debt of approximately \$621,000 as at 19 December 1985, he knew that misappropriation of funds had occurred at the Seafarers Centre. He indicated that he knew who was responsible for it.

Can honourable members imagine the mayor and the deputy mayor of the city saying that they are not guilty of malpractice or any of the antics involving the council, Westpac Banking Corporation or the Seafarers centre, and their not wanting an investigation? They admitted knowledge of a misappropriation of funds amounting to hundreds of thousands of dollars, said that they knew who was responsible, but that they were not involved. Both of them are guarantors of the club and should each pay \$24,000 to Westpac. The former manager of the club said that he knows who is responsible for the misappropriation but he does not want the matter investigated. Can honourable members imagine anyone who is not party to an offence allowing people to take so much money from the till over 12 to 18 months and knowing that, in the long term, he will be called on, with 18 guarantors and the mayor, to make good his guarantee to make up the shortfall?

The action taken the other day by the Premier and Treasurer was similar to that taken by the Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing (Mr Hinze) in 1977. The Premier evaded his responsibility to ensure that there was no theft, misappropriation or blackmail in the Gladstone City Council, and that there was no theft at the Seafarers Centre. The Premier dodged his responsibility. The former manager said, "I know funds were misappropriated. I know who did it, but I will not be saying anything." In this instance, Westpac has a responsibility to explain why it allowed the account to run for so long, and why it took no action. On 16 December, Mr Paul Rigby, the regional manager of Westpac, was present at the High Point Hotel and spoke with the guarantors. The mayor of Gladstone asked, "Will you be calling in the police?" When Mr Rigby said "Yes", the mayor of Gladstone turned pale.

The receivers took over on 19 December, but until the present day no action has been taken to bring in the Fraud Squad. The Deputy Premier, Minister Assisting the Treasurer and Minister for Police (Mr Gunn), the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General (Mr Harper) and the Premier and Treasurer have a responsibility to the members of that club, and to the guarantors other than the mayor and deputy mayor, to ensure that justice is done. I am very concerned about the comment of the deputy mayor, Mr Burns, that no deal was made between Westpac and the council about this account. He said that the council changed its account about three to four months before the debt in the Seafarers Centre's account became known to the council.

On 2 July, Westpac sent a letter to all guarantors pointing out that a debt was outstanding and that they were in trouble. It is obvious that in the four months before the date on which the receivers came in, that is, 19 December, which is the time that Mr Burns said the bank was changed, the council had time to hold a meeting, negotiate with Westpac and come to some agreement. The Premier and Treasurer, the Deputy Premier, Minister Assisting the Treasurer and Minister for Police, and the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General should take action to ensure that justice is done and that the culprits in this massive misappropriation of funds are brought to heel.

Time expired.

Housing

Mr STEPHAN (Gympie) (10.39 p.m): In speaking on behalf of home-seekers, I am very mindful that ALP members have a record of failure to do so at a time of growing crisis for the home-seekers and the housing industry, which generates so much employment.

The only Opposition statements on this matter are the worn-out, misleading statements that are made periodically about the Housing Commission and the wait-list for rental housing. I shall set the record straight on that matter.

Whilst other States have been facing grave and growing wait-lists, Queensland has been the outstanding State of achievement in that, over the past two years, it has successfully reduced its wait-list by 19 per cent. We can, in fact, see just how effective Queensland has been when we compare the performances of State housing authorities in catering for those needs.

I shall look at this matter on a per capita basis. For every 1 000 people in this State, there are 3.4 applicants for Queensland Housing Commission rental housing. That is the best figure for any State in the nation. The next best performance is that of Victoria, which has a significantly higher ratio—5.7 applicants per 1 000 people. The next State is Western Australia, which has a figure almost double that of Queensland—6.1 applicants per 1 000 people. The figure is 9.2 in Tasmania. In New South Wales, the figure leaps to 10.7 applicants per 1 000 people.

It should be remembered that New South Wales has a little more than double the population of Queensland. The wait-list in New South Wales exceeds 58 000—six times the number on Queensland's wait-list. It is little wonder that the New South Wales Housing Minister (Mr Walker) has thrown up his hands in despair and talked of it taking decades to overcome the housing problems in that State. It is no wonder that he has become frustrated and cannot see any light at the end of the tunnel. But that State's ratio is minute compared with that of South Australia, which is another Labor-controlled State. The figure in that State is a mammoth 25.7 applicants per 1 000 people. For every 1 000 people, there are almost 26 applications for public housing. With half of Queensland's population, South Australia has, in fact, a public housing wait-list that is four times as large as that of Queensland. That is an indication of what Queensland is doing and how successful the State has been in overcoming the housing problem.

Mr Borbidge: Most effective.

Mr STEPHAN: The State has been every effective. We compliment the Minister for Works and Housing (Mr Wharton) and his department on their efforts. The Minister is doing a fantastic job.

South Australia is the State that is so often held up by the Labor Party in Queensland as an example of effectively dealing with housing needs. How effective is South Australia's housing policy when the State has four times the number of people on the housing list that Queensland has? The truth is that South Australia has the most disproportionate share of the public housing wait-list of any State in Australia. In fact, with 8.6 per cent of the nation's population, South Australia accounts for almost 25 per cent of the total number of people listed throughout Australia for public housing.

The ALP in Queensland should forget about trying to divert attention from the appalling record of the Federal Government on housing matters and try addressing the real issues that are facing home-seekers today—oppressively high interest rates, which are frustrating the hopes of home-buyers, and Federal Government tax moves, which are ensuring a withdrawal of investment from the private rental market. By shirking those responsibilities, the Labor Party in Queensland has clearly shown that it has no genuine interest in the housing needs of the people of this State.

I shall look at what the Federal Government's policies are doing to people who are considering buying their own home. From \$43m in December 1985 to \$27m in January 1986, there was a sharp cut-back in lending by permanent building societies in Queensland. Lending in January 1986 was disappointing compared with lending in January 1985, when the societies lent \$64m. On current indications, the February figures will show a further monthly reduction, and prospects for an early improvement are not encouraging.

Permanent building societies, which are the principal providers of low-deposit homes, are now suffering from the effects of the continuing tight money market conditions. The

combination of prevailing excessively high interest rates and constraints on money supply growth imposed by the monetary authorities is restricting the funds available for societies to lend on housing.

Time expired.

Conduct of National Party Officials, Townsville

Mr SMITH (Townsville West) (10.45 p.m.): Tonight, I want to draw attention to the actions, standards and performance of certain National Party officials.

During the early evening of Friday, 31 January, during a period of heavy rain, a Mr Leslie Howard, who by his own admission had consumed a considerable quantity of alcohol, ran into the path of a vehicle driven by the deputy mayor of Townsville, Mr Tony Mooney. Mr Mooney personally reported the accident to a duty policeman soon after he had assisted in placing the injured person in an ambulance. The superintendent of the Townsville police district, Inspector Grant, has gone on printed record as stating that the matter had been fully investigated to the satisfaction of all concerned and that Alderman Mooney's actions were correct in every respect.

Certain National Party members then thought to invent or magnify something to discredit Alderman Mooney. They entered into what can only be described as a conspiracy. At least one of the people, whose identity I shall shortly disclose, entered into an arrangement with a Mr David Smallwood to call a media conference in an attempt to discredit the deputy mayor and, from Mr Smallwood's point of view, to enhance the compensation potential for Mr Howard.

In fact, the media found the alleged statement of wrongdoing highly unconvincing and, in spite of the urging of one of the National Party conspirators, ignored it. In fact, nothing was reported until Friday, when an article which recognised that Tony Mooney had nothing to answer appeared in the *Townsville Bulletin*.

On Friday, a well-known Townsville person, who is certainly not an ALP supporter, gave me information that he believed, in good conscience, should be placed on the public record to expose the behaviour of at least one person. He told me that, although he preferred to remain anonymous, in the interests of justice he would be prepared to come forward to make a formal statement to Federal police if that became necessary. Essentially, he told me of a conversation between a person named Geoff Moss and two other people, one of whom was the area chairman of the National Party, Terry Bolger.

On Monday afternoon, 17 February, at the National Party headquarters in Stanley Street, Townsville, Moss said to his National Party colleagues that he had attempted at some earlier time to get from staff at the Townsville General Hospital information about the accident and the victim. He said—

“I wasn't getting anywhere until I told them I was from ASIO and then they told me everything I wanted to know.”

Neither my informant nor I am in a position to know whether in fact the false representation took place or if Moss was merely being a loud-mouth. What is important is that, firstly, Moss claimed to have carried out an illegal act and, secondly, Moss was not reprimanded by chairman Bolger for his stated action.

It is reasonable to conclude that, as Mr Bolger took no action against Moss, he must have at least concurred with what had taken place.

I have provided a statement of events to Federal police, who are vigorously investigating the matter. The police know the names of the National Party people who were present at the time, and it will be interesting to see whether they will perjure themselves to protect Moss and, to some lesser extent, Bolger.

It is interesting to study the motives of Moss and others involved. Moss, in particular, is very much a high-profile hanger-on who does not hold office in the National

Party but likes to be seen in the company of both local officials and visiting National Party politicians. I understand that, in fact, he is somewhat work-shy.

I believe that local National Party people think of Moss as something of a giggle, but I cannot dismiss the clear intent to discredit a leading member of his political opposition and a potential candidate for the new seat of Townsville. Indeed, the elements of conspiracy are in place.

Both Moss and Bolger are people who carry on a public vendetta against the ALP council administration, and Alderman Mooney and Alderman Reynolds in particular. It is significant that both Moss and Bolger are involved in business activities that seek contractual council work, particularly in respect to street maintenance and cleaning.

On 22 September 1984, both men were involved in making allegations that contractual work for the council that was carried out by a competitor was only half done but that the rival contractor had in fact received full payment for the work. The council, and Alderman Mooney in particular, successfully rebutted the charges and, faced with legal action by the wronged contractor and clear public support for the council, both men placed identical notices of apology in the *Townsville Bulletin* on 9 January 1985.

I seek permission to have those notices incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

Following recent articles in the *Townsville Bulletin* regarding road sweeping in the Townsville area, Mr Terry Bolger wishes to make it clear that in the comments which he made and which were reported in those newspaper articles, he was not intending any criticism of the performance of the Contractor, Power Sweepers (Qld) Contracting Pty. Ltd.

Mr Bolger accepts that the Contractor has been satisfactorily performing its obligations under the Contract which it has with the Townsville City Council.

Mr Bolger regrets any embarrassment which has been caused to Power Sweepers (Qld.) Contracting Pty. Ltd. as a result of these articles.

Following recent articles in the *Townsville Bulletin* regarding road sweeping in the Townsville area, Mr Geoff Moss of Road-Mark Pty. Ltd. wishes to make it clear that in the comments which he made and which were reported in those newspaper articles, he was not intending any criticism of the performance of the Contractor, Power Sweepers (Qld.) Contracting Pty. Ltd.

Mr Moss accepts that the Contractor has been satisfactorily performing its obligations under the Contract which it has with the Townsville City Council.

Mr Moss regrets any embarrassment which has been caused to Power Sweepers (Qld.) Contracting Pty. Ltd. as a result of these articles.

Universal Superannuation Scheme

Mr NEAL (Balonne) (10.49 p.m.): The matter that I wish to raise tonight is the planned introduction of a universal occupational superannuation scheme via the proposed national wage productivity case later this year.

I am particularly concerned at the manner in which the implementation of the superannuation scheme has been devised with minimal reference to employers, who will be required to pay the benefits. I am also concerned at who will control the massive sums of money that will be paid into these funds by employers. I am also concerned as it is clear that the union bosses will be in complete control.

It has been estimated that the 3 per cent contribution presently being spoken about will give the unions approximately \$3 billion annually to invest. The same unions have already indicated that contributions should be increased to 15 per cent to cover what they term forgone wage increases. Such an increase would give unions enormous funds annually. I am particularly concerned as, within a few years, the union-controlled funds would be receiving sufficient contributions to allow them to lead attacks on the stock exchange. Every year, they would be able to buy effective control of a company the size

of BHP. In that field, they would be able to make Robert Holmes a'Court look like a novice.

They would have sufficient funds to intrude into small business by providing loan capital. By the purchase of industrial and commercial real estate, they would control rents. By buying up rural properties from farmers in distress, unions could make farmers tenants of the union landlords. That would not be far from the collectivisation policies of Big Brother. Once the money was in their hands, their options for investment and involvement would be virtually limitless. I believe that all people must be concerned, because the unions will do what I am saying and more.

I will outline the real reasons behind the superannuation scheme. In doing so, I shall quote the following passage from a paper delivered to the 1981 ALP Special National Conference—

“There are a number of issues raised by the extension of union involvement in Superannuation Schemes. Ultimately these questions include an examination of the investment strategies of those funds and their implications for industrial relations, employment and structural changes in the economy.

Conflicts may arise from those investment decisions. For example, investment in highly profitable areas will maximise the members' retirement benefits, but the social consequences of that investment may create a conflict. Obvious examples are investment in Uranium mining or in firms which operate in South Africa.

What we must recognise at this early stage of union involvement in the Superannuation issues is—”

and this is the crux of the whole matter—

“that control over the funds will provide unions and governments with considerable financial leverage. That leverage can be used to advance the cause of Socialism in Australia.”

That is a background to what this national superannuation scheme is all about.

In conclusion, I say that this scheme is nothing short of an attempt to bring about the socialisation of Australia and, at the same time, create a monopoly of political and financial power in the hands of the Australian Council of Trade Unions and its political offshoot, the Australian Labor Party.

For these reasons I am very concerned, as I believe that all employers in private industry should be concerned, about the implementation of this scheme. It is nothing short of a snide attempt to socialise Australia and place those billions of dollars into the hands of the union bosses.

Alleged Misuse of Funds Allocated for Rural Assistance; Statement by Minister for Primary Industries

Mr CAMPBELL (Bundaberg) (10.55 p.m.): On Thursday, 20 February 1986, the Minister for Primary Industries misled honourable members in a statement to the House. It was not a slip of the tongue but a written, prepared and deliberate statement to mislead the members of this Assembly as to the administration and responsibility of funds allocated for rural assistance.

I join with the Labor spokesman on Primary Industries, who, last Thursday, in a personal explanation, described as misleading the Minister's statement about the position concerning rural assistance.

The Minister, in his statement, said—

“The State bears the cost of administration, and must also be responsible for any bad debts.”

That statement is clearly untrue and is proved to be untrue by official reports of the Queensland Government.

In Queensland, rural assistance is provided by the Rural Reconstruction Board. The annual report of the board, which is presented to Parliament by command, shows the Minister's statement to be misleading. The 1985 annual report of the board clearly states that the Commonwealth Government shares administration costs of the Rural Adjustment Scheme and in some schemes shares the risk of bad debts with the Queensland Government. That fact is in direct conflict with the Minister's statement that "the State bears the cost of administration, and must also be responsible for any bad debts."

Rural assistance is provided under the Rural Adjustment Scheme, which is funded by the Government. Under Part A of the Rural Adjustment Scheme, over \$40m has been provided to farmers under the agreement signed by both the Commonwealth and the State Governments. Under the heading "Administration", the following statement appears—

"The Agreement with the Commonwealth provides for the equal sharing of costs of administration between the Commonwealth and the State of up to 2 per cent of the value of approvals in each year for all loans under Parts A and C of the scheme. . ."

It further states—

"In Queensland's case, claims totalling \$526,242 representing recoverable costs since inception to 30th June, 1985, have been lodged."

That is in total conflict with the Minister's statement that the State bears all of the responsibility.

Part B of the Rural Adjustment Scheme deals with carry-on finance, and an amount of over \$30m has been provided. The report on the operations of the Rural Reconstruction Board for the year ended 30 June 1985 states in Part B—

"Costs of administration of the carry-on finance provisions and any shortfall of either principal or interest payments by borrowers, are shared equally with the Commonwealth."

Under the old Beef Cattle Industry Assistance Scheme, it is reported that—

"Funds were provided equally by the Commonwealth and the State, and losses and costs of administration are shared equally."

The three examples that I have quoted from the Queensland Government's own reports show that the Minister for Primary Industries clearly misled the Parliament in his statement to the House on 20 February. His statement that "the State bears the cost of administration, and must also be responsible for any bad debts" is in conflict with and contradicts directly his own department's reports that have proved that administration costs and, in some assistance schemes, bad debts are met equally or part or the Commonwealth, and not solely by the State Government as was stated by the Minister. In 1984, the cane-growers of Queensland were circulated with a Queensland State Government publication entitled *Facts About Sugar*, which stated that, in 1983-84, the Queensland Government had provided \$15m in financial assistance to cane-growers. However, in the 1985 Budget, the Premier and Treasurer put the record right and stated that the State Government had provided only \$10m. In that instance, the Queensland Government misled the cane-growers of Queensland. However, the instant case is different. In the present case, the Parliament, not the cane-growers, has been misled. The statement made by the Minister for Primary Industries has been discredited totally by his own reports. In a statement to the Leader of the Opposition, the Premier and Treasurer said, "If a Minister lies, he should resign."

Bill of Rights

Mr BORBIDGE (Surfers Paradise) (10.58 p.m.): I join in the Adjournment debate to express the gravest possible concern about the activities of the Human Rights Commission, an organisation that is unelected, has assumed the role of a Star Chamber and is an affront to parliamentary democracy in this country. It is of note that the Labor

Party Government in Canberra, the colleagues of honourable members opposite, has determined that the Human Rights Commission will administer the Bill of Rights, if it does become law, and that it will at some future and undesigned time oversee and implement a new electoral system in the State of Queensland, in defiance of the Australian Constitution and the legal rights of this Parliament.

It is appropriate to examine the track record of this unelected, unrepresentative, self-righteous and arrogant organisation, which has an appalling record. Its continued existence simply cannot be justified.

The prime role of the Human Rights Commission appears to be to indulge in the socialist pastime of social engineering. I have received a copy of a publication entitled, *Teaching for Human Rights—Activities for Schools*, by Ralph Pettman. It is written for the Human Rights Commission. That document shows quite clearly what the Human Rights Commission is all about and what it is seeking to achieve in Australia and elsewhere.

Part of that document states—

“There has been mass assassination, too, by more covert and indirect means. The construction of a capitalist world economy, predicated upon dishonesty and greed, has slaughtered uncounted millions the world over through the exploitation and the mis-development of global resources. The United States and the other erstwhile ‘free market’ democracies have much to answer for in this regard.”

Those words are contained in a publication approved and circulated by the Human Rights Commission to educational institutions throughout Australia.

I turn to what the writer of that document has to say about the family and family life in Australia. The document states—

“In Australia—a Liberal, capitalist, multicultural democracy, with social welfare proclivities, a highly stratified class structure, a value system that is secular, racist, sexist, and materialistic—the family reflects and promotes this fact.”

I will now examine the record of the Human Rights Commission and the rulings that it is handing down, which are plain un-Australian, undemocratic and contrary to what this nation is all about.

Between February and May of last year, the Human Rights Commission came to some quite staggering conclusions. It recommended that any illegal immigrant couple, who have a child in Australia, be entitled to permanent residency. It attacked the Queensland Government over the industrial laws that were passed by this Parliament, in the interests of the people of Queensland, to ensure a continuous supply of electricity to the people of this State.

The Human Rights Commission made a ruling that supported the so-called right of Women Against Rape to march on Anzac Day. It banned the deputy leader of the Federal parliamentary Liberal Party (the Honourable Neil Brown) after he dared to criticise its operations. I could go on.

I suggest that the activities of the Human Rights Commission are a disgrace. Its activities are un-Australian and are completely foreign to everything that the vast majority of Australians believe in and support. The fact that the Human Rights Commission—

Mr Neal interjected.

Mr BORBIDGE: That is right. The Government Whip is quite correct.

It is a shame and a tragedy that an organisation such as the Human Rights Commission can be permitted to be funded by the tax-payers and continue to be supported by the Labor Party in government in Canberra and, I assume, the Opposition in Queensland.

Government members know that the Labor Party in this State wants the Human Rights Commission to determine what sort of electoral system——

Time expired.

Motion (Mr Wharton) agreed to.

The House adjourned at 11.5 p.m.