

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 5 AUGUST 1986

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Legislative Assembly

FOURTH SESSION OF THE FORTY-FOURTH PARLIAMENT

Appointed to meet

AT BRISBANE ON THE FIFTH DAY OF AUGUST, IN THE THIRTY-FIFTH YEAR OF
THE REIGN OF HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II, IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD 1986

TUESDAY, 5 AUGUST 1986

OPENING OF PARLIAMENT

Pursuant to the Proclamation by His Excellency the Governor, dated 10 July 1986, appointing Parliament to meet this day for the dispatch of business, the House met at 11 a.m. in the Legislative Assembly Chamber.

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

The Clerk read the Proclamation.

COMMISSION TO OPEN PARLIAMENT

Mr SPEAKER: I have to inform the House that I have received from His Excellency the Governor a Commission appointing me and Mr E. C. Row, Chairman of Committees, or either of us, Commissioners to open this session of Parliament.

I now call on the Clerk to read the Commission.

The Clerk read the Commission.

Mr SPEAKER, as the Senior Commissioner, said: Honourable members, we have it in command from His Excellency the Governor of Queensland to communicate to you that Parliament has been summoned to meet this day to consider legislation, the granting of Supply to Her Majesty and such other matters as may be brought before you; that the customary Speech will not be delivered at the Opening of this the Fourth Session of the Forty-fourth Parliament of Queensland and that, nevertheless, it is His Excellency's desire that you proceed forthwith to the consideration of the aforementioned business.

PAPERS PRINTED DURING RECESS

Mr SPEAKER: I have to report that the following papers were ordered to be printed and circulated during the recess, in accordance with the resolution of Parliament passed during the session of 1901—

Reports—

Queensland Institute of Medical Research 1984-85

Agricultural Bank 1984-85

Queensland Institute of Medical Research Trust 1984-85.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING CHIEF REPORTER AND ACTING DEPUTY CHIEF REPORTER

Mr SPEAKER: I have to inform the House that following the vacancies which occurred in the Parliamentary Reporting Staff through the retirement of Mr John Bevan Battersby, formerly Chief Reporter, and Mr Robert Ward Gustavson, formerly Deputy Chief Reporter, Mr Warwick Trotman Foote and Mr Peter Bradshaw Rohl, reporters, Parliamentary Reporting Staff, are to carry out the duties of the aforementioned positions respectively, until such time as appointments are made to these positions.

PRINTING COMMITTEE

Resignation of Mrs Y. A. Chapman

Mr SPEAKER: I have to inform the House that a vacancy exists on the Printing Committee consequent upon the resignation of Mrs Yvonne Ann Chapman from that committee.

Appointment of Mrs L. T. Harvey

Hon. C. A. WHARTON (Burnett—Leader of the House), by leave, without notice: I move—

“That Mrs Leisha Teresa Harvey, member for Greenslopes, be appointed to the Printing Committee to fill the vacancy caused by the resignation of the said Mrs Yvonne Ann Chapman.”

Motion agreed to.

REFRESHMENT ROOMS COMMITTEE

Resignation of Mrs Y. A. Chapman

Mr SPEAKER: I have to inform the House that a vacancy exists on the Refreshment Rooms Committee consequent upon the resignation of Mrs Yvonne Ann Chapman from that committee.

Appointment of Mrs L. T. Harvey

Hon. C. A. WHARTON (Burnett—Leader of the House), by leave, without notice:
I move—

“That Mrs Leisha Teresa Harvey, member for Greenslopes, be appointed to the Refreshment Rooms Committee to fill the vacancy caused by the resignation of the said Mrs Yvonne Ann Chapman.”

Motion agreed to.

VOTING AS AND FOR A MEMBER ABSENT THROUGH ILL HEALTH

Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing

Mr SPEAKER: I have to report to the House that I have received the following medical certificates—

“Dr. EMMANUEL J. COMINOS
M.B., B.S. (QLD.) F.R.A.C.G.P.

CHEVRON HOTEL ARCADE,
GOLD COAST HIGHWAY,
SURFERS PARADISE
Q. 4217

Telephone:
Surfers Paradise 31 6710
P.O. BOX 339
Surfers Paradise
Residence 55 1690

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I, Doctor Emmanuel J. Cominos of Chevron Hotel Arcade, Surfers Paradise, a legally qualified medical practitioner hereby certify that RUSSELL JAMES HINZE by reason of recent operation on 29 July 1986 is in such a state of ill health through no fault on his part that he is unable and in my opinion will during a period of four weeks on and from 5th August 1986 be unable to attend any sittings of the House without gravely endangering his health.

Signed E. J. COMINOS
Dated at Surfers Paradise
this 25th day of July 1986.”

“PAUL ROBINSON
M.B., B.S., F.R.C.S. (EDIN), F.R.A.C.S.
ORTHOPAEDIC SURGEON

144 FERNY AVENUE
P.O. BOX 750
SURFERS PARADISE 4217
TELEPHONE: 38 6636

August 1, 1986

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I, Doctor Paul Robinson of 144 Ferny Avenue, Surfers Paradise a legally qualified medical practitioner hereby certify that RUSSELL JAMES HINZE by reason of a knee condition is in such a state of ill health through no fault on his part that he is unable and in my opinion will during a period of four weeks on and from 5th August 1986 be unable to attend any sittings of the House without gravely endangering his health.

Signed PAUL ROBINSON
Dated at Surfers Paradise
this First day of August 1986.”

In considering this correspondence, I must rely on the medical certificates lodged as being of paramount importance. Therefore, I am satisfied that the Minister is not able to attend the sittings.

Further, I have received a notification from the honourable member for Balonne, acting on behalf of the honourable member for South Coast, the absent member, that he has endeavoured to secure, and through no fault on his part has failed to secure, a pair during the period specified in the beforementioned certificates and that the honourable member for South Coast desires to vote as a member at every sitting of the House and of every Committee of the whole House by means of a proxy in the person of the Honourable Sir Johannes Bjelke-Petersen or, in his absence, by means of a proxy in the person of the Honourable Claude Alfred Wharton, both of whom are members of this Assembly.

Pursuant to the requirements of the Legislative Assembly Act Amendment Act of 1922, I declare that I am satisfied that the matters stated in such notification are true.

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: Mr Speaker——

Mr INNES: I rise to a point of order.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! As yet, because I do not believe that the House is properly constituted, I cannot accept a point of order. However, later on I will listen to the honourable member.

Honourable Members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I apologise to the honourable member for Sherwood. Would the honourable member please state his point of order?

Mr INNES: Mr Speaker, my point of order relates to your ruling on the proxy. No approach has been made to me, as the Liberal Party Whip, for a pair during the absence of the Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing (Mr Hinze).

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I rule that there is no point of order.

MOTION OF CONDOLENCE

Death of Commodore Sir James Maxwell Ramsay, KCMG, KCVO, CBE, DSC

Hon. Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN (Barambah—Premier and Treasurer) (11.12 a.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

“1. That this House desires to place on record its appreciation of the services rendered to this State by the late Commodore Sir James Maxwell Ramsay, KCMG, KCVO, CBE, DSC, formerly Governor of the State of Queensland and its dependencies in the Commonwealth of Australia.

2. That Mr Speaker be requested to convey to the widow and family of the deceased gentleman the above resolution, together with an expression of the sympathy and sorrow of the members of the Parliament of Queensland in the loss they have sustained.”

In early May, Queensland experienced a deep loss with the death of the previous Governor of this State, Sir James Maxwell Ramsay.

It is not often that we have the privilege of having among us men of Sir James's standing. He was in every sense a gentleman. Sir James put people at ease wherever he went. He was a man with a delightful sense of humour.

Although very conscious of the high office that he held, Sir James easily related to Queenslanders at all levels. He carried out his duties diligently and respected each occasion for what it was, strong in the knowledge that he represented Her Majesty the Queen.

Undoubtedly, Sir James was admired and well respected. Although, understandably, some disappointment was felt on the announcement of his retirement, the people of Queensland were happy that Sir James would be able to enjoy himself as a private citizen, away from the rigours of official occasions. Although everyone would have liked to see Sir James enjoy his retirement for many more years, it was fitting that he was enjoying himself right to the end in one of his favourite pastimes, that is, boating.

Sir James Ramsay was born in Hobart on 27 August 1916 and was educated at Hutchins School in that city. In 1930, he joined the Royal Australian Naval College at Jervis Bay, and in 1933 he graduated with first-class honours, receiving the prize for navigation, seamanship and engineering.

Sir James saw service during the Second World War in the Indian Ocean, the Red Sea, the Atlantic Ocean, Singapore, the Persian Gulf, Burma and the South-west Pacific war zones. He served on a number of Australian and British ships. In May 1941 he was officer of the watch of the British battleship King George V when the German battleship Bismarck was sighted.

In 1945 he married Janet Burley. They had three daughters and one son. Their son followed Sir James into the navy. Sir James became fleet navigator of HMAS Sydney in 1948 and in 1952 was commander of HMAS Warramunga during the Korean War. He is well remembered for his daring during the Korean War, when he took the Warramunga close in shore under heavy fire from North Korean shore batteries to rescue two American minesweepers.

After the Korean War, Sir James was appointed captain of HMAS Arunta. He was then seconded to the British Admiralty from 1953 to 1955 and to the United States Armed Forces Staff College from 1955 to 1956. He was appointed aide-de-camp to the then Governor-General, Sir William Slim, in 1957 and was Australian Naval Representative to Britain from 1964 to 1965. In that same year, Her Majesty made Sir James a Commander of the Order of the British Empire.

He became Naval Officer Commanding, Western Australia in 1968 and retired from that position and naval service in 1972 at the age of 55, after 42 years' service. He was appointed Lieutenant-Governor of Western Australia in 1974 and was created a Knight Bachelor in the New Year's Honours List in 1976. Sir James was appointed by Her Majesty to succeed Sir Colin Hannah as Governor of Queensland and was sworn in on 22 April 1977.

Sir James served his fellow-man for all of his life and took on onerous duties without flinching and with a great degree of courage and diligence. Just when most men would be looking towards retirement, Sir James moved into one of the most demanding fields of all—viceregal representation, firstly in Western Australia and subsequently in Queensland.

He will be remembered for his great record in time of war, he will be remembered for his personal qualities, and he will be remembered for the warmth and affection which he had for the people of Queensland—feelings which, I am sure, we all reciprocated deeply. It may be considered unnecessary to say that he will be sadly missed by many, but those who knew Sir James will miss the charm, the wit, the integrity and the warm personality with which we were honoured.

To Lady Ramsay, who served the State as loyally as Sir James and was for ever by his side, we extend our heartfelt sympathy. Flo and I hold Lady Ramsay in the

warmest and highest regard; she is a very dear friend. It is with sadness that I extend my personal sympathy to her. I am sure that all honourable members will join me in extending the sympathy of this Assembly to Lady Ramsay and her family.

Hon. W. A. M. GUNN (Somerset—Deputy Premier, Minister Assisting the Treasurer and Minister for Police) (11.18 a.m.): I second the motion moved by the Premier to express sympathy to Lady Ramsay and the other members of the family of the late Sir James Ramsay. The sentiments that Sir Joh expressed reflect my own personal admiration for a very remarkable man.

In an era in which it has become fashionable to knock tradition and standards, Sir James Ramsay, with his approachability and easy charm, gained the respect and affection of people across all walks of life. Sir James's eight-year term as Governor of Queensland saw a welcome reaffirmation of loyalty to the Crown. The measure of esteem and affection with which Queensland people hold the royal family was clearly demonstrated by the crowds that turned out to greet the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh during the 1982 Commonwealth Games and more recently, the Duke and Duchess of Kent.

To the majority of people, the royal family represents a guarantee of continuity in changing times, when many of the values and traditions passed on to us by our parents have a tendency to be overshadowed by those who advocate so-called modern views.

As the Premier has said, Sir James's entry into public life followed a distinguished naval career, during which he saw service in both World War II and the Korean War. Although he had a fund of anecdotes from 42 years in the navy, Sir James always preferred to talk of the future, not of the past.

After retiring from the navy in 1972, Sir James offered his invaluable service, expertise and experience to a number of organisations. He was appointed Lieutenant-Governor of Western Australia in June 1974 and acted continuously as Administrator for more than 12 months from September 1974 to November 1975.

Sir James's love of pageantry and ceremonial ritual was widely recognised, but less well known was the fact that as a 22-year-old lieutenant aboard HMAS Hobart off Somaliland, he was involved with the destruction of a Government House. The force of which he was part had set up headquarters ashore in Government House, but when it became necessary for the force to evacuate as enemy troops advanced on the town, Government House was reduced to rubble by the Hobart's guns.

Among Sir James's most outstanding achievements was the wisdom that he demonstrated in the selection of his partner for life. I know that, without the support and involvement of my wife, my political career would be extremely difficult. I am sure that that could be said of other members in this Chamber. So I appreciate how great a contribution Lady Ramsay made to the marriage of two outstanding people. Successful partnerships stand like beacons in today's stormy times, and Sir James and Lady Ramsay's togetherness was a major factor in enabling Sir James to cap off his naval career by taking on the demanding role of Her Majesty's representative in Queensland, which he filled extremely well.

I join with the Premier and Treasurer in expressing condolences to Lady Ramsay and her family.

Mr WARBURTON (Sandgate—Leader of the Opposition) (11.21 a.m.): The Opposition joins in the motion of condolence to the widow and family of the late Sir James Maxwell Ramsay. As has been indicated, Sir James was born in Hobart. He entered the navy when he was 13 years of age and embarked on a very long and very distinguished career in the Royal Australian Navy. His career included many important postings, such as Australian Naval Representative in the United Kingdom; Naval Officer Commanding, Western Australian area; and commanding officer of HMAS Leeuwin.

It was well known that, as Governor of this State, Sir James took a vital interest in the machinery and the administration of government of Queensland. He was the sort of person who was prepared to let his views on matters that he believed needed

adjustment or correction be known confidentially to government. He was a very popular figure as the Governor of this State. He certainly had a very pleasant personality. I understand that Sir James was the fourth Australian-born Governor of this State, his predecessors being Lavarack, Mansfield and Hannah. Sir James's good wife, Lady Ramsay, is still a resident of the Gold Coast. Only recently it was my pleasure to add my approval for her appointment to the Queensland Council of the Australian Bicentennial Authority. I am certain that she will make a very substantial contribution to that organisation.

Sir James and Lady Ramsay were a very fine team when they were in residence at Government House. It is very disappointing that a person who served in this nation's navy for a considerable time and then in viceregal capacities in both Western Australia and Queensland should have his life tenure cut short after what could only be termed a very brief retirement.

Mr Speaker, the members of the Opposition acknowledge Sir James's contribution to the administration of government in this State. To his family we extend our sincere sympathy.

Hon. Sir WILLIAM KNOX (Nundah) (11.23 a.m.): Mr Speaker, on behalf of the Liberal Party, I join in the motion moved by the Premier and Treasurer, seconded by the Deputy Premier and supported by the Leader of the Opposition. The history of Sir James Ramsay has been outlined very fully. One of the unusual things about Sir James's tenure of office is that he was first and foremost a naval officer, having had a distinguished naval career. It is only natural that he was very proud of that association. It is not often that Governors come from the ranks of the navy. In fact, it is rare in this nation. Of course, the first naval Governor was Captain Phillip, Governor of New South Wales. The first naval Governor in Queensland was Sir James Ramsay. Naval Governors are very few and far between.

Sir James's distinguished service to this State is a matter of record. However, when he first came to Queensland, the description given to him by the media was that he was an ice-breaker. He was a person who was very easy to have conversation with. If anybody was at all uncomfortable in the presence of the Governor, Sir James put him at ease in a matter of seconds. He had a whimsical sense of humour and he was a delight in any company. He mixed extremely well and was highly respected by all people in the community, regardless of their status. His own particular human qualities warmed him to many people. That fact was reflected not only in the farewells to him when he retired as Governor but also in the tributes paid to him on the day of his funeral.

Sir James was born in Tasmania. It is interesting that he was the uncle of Mr Neilson, the youngest member ever elected to the Tasmanian Parliament, representing the Australian Labor Party, who later became Premier. Sir James and his family were highly regarded in Tasmania.

When Sir James was appointed Lieutenant-Governor of Western Australia, under what were somewhat difficult circumstances, he managed with great dignity to earn the respect of all people. On a number of occasions, he acted as Governor of Western Australia. With such a record, therefore, it is little wonder that he was chosen to be Governor of Queensland.

Since the abolition some years ago of professional Governors, Australians have been concerned that there may not be people capable of holding the office of Governor. That capability has been demonstrated on more than one occasion. Sir James Ramsay, possibly more than any other person, demonstrated how it was possible for a person not raised in a political atmosphere and not associated with political life, to cope with the difficulties that from time to time face the Governors of all States. He had a warm personality and the ability to mix freely in the community. He showed strength of character and great leadership qualities that everybody admires.

The Liberal Party joins the motion and extends condolences to Sir James's family and those close to him.

Motion (Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen) agreed to, honourable members standing in silence.

MOTION OF CONDOLENCE

Deaths of Mr J. V. Hayes and Rev. S. R. Ramsden

Hon. Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN (Barambah—Premier and Treasurer) (11.27 a.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

“1. That this House desires to place on record its appreciation of the services rendered to this State by the late John Vincent Hayes, Esquire, and the late Reverend Samuel Raymond Ramsden, former members of the Parliament of Queensland.

2. That Mr Speaker be requested to convey to the families of the deceased gentlemen the above resolution, together with an expression of the sympathy and sorrow of the members of the Parliament of Queensland in the loss they have sustained.”

John Vincent Hayes, who died on 16 June, was an honoured and respected member of this House for 15 years. Between 1932 and 1947, he represented the electorate of Nundah as a member of several Australian Labor Party Governments led respectively by Mr Forgan Smith, Mr Frank Cooper and Mr Ned Hanlon. Mr Hayes retired from Parliament the year I entered this House, so I had little chance to really know him.

Mr Hayes was born in Ipswich in 1897 and educated at St Mary's catholic primary school and the Christian Brothers College. He started work as a shop assistant and later moved into the insurance field. He became an executive officer and delegate of the Shop Assistants and Warehouse Employees Union.

It was with that background that he entered State Parliament in 1932. Others to enter this House in that same year were two future State Premiers, the late Sir Francis Nicklin and the late Vincent Clair Gair, and also the late Sir Arthur Fadden, a Queenslander who was to become Prime Minister for a short period in 1941, and later Treasurer.

Following the entry of Japan into World War II in the Pacific area, Mr Hayes, at the age of 45, obtained leave from Parliament and enlisted in the army. He served from 1942 until 1944 as a member of the 8th Australian Motor Ambulance Corps.

John Vincent Hayes was a keen sportsman who gave great encouragement to youngsters through the Queensland Junior Rugby League, of which he was a trustee.

He retired from Parliament in 1947, after losing the ALP endorsement for Nundah to Mr Frank Roberts.

John Hayes was obviously dedicated to improving the lot of his fellow man, as can be seen from the great public service he rendered to Queensland both in peace and in war.

His parliamentary career was typical of the many hardworking members who have served in this House down through the decades, mindful of the needs of their electorates, and always trying to meet those needs. It is a record of which his grieving family may be proud because it is lit with dedication and lined with service. I am sure all members will join with me in extending our sincere sympathy to them.

Samuel Raymond Ramsden, who died on 1 July 1986, was an honoured and respected member of this House for 14 years. As the member for Merthyr, he was known to many of us here simply as Sam, a modest person with a warm and endearing personality. In his own commonsense way, during his term as a parliamentarian he gave great service to his electorate, in particular, and to the people of Queensland. He was a man who believed in the great principles of the Westminster system of government and who jealously guarded them in this House.

Sam Ramsden was born in 1913 and was educated in Sydney. Even in early life he showed great concern for others and entered the Anglican ministry, becoming curate of the New South Wales parish of Parkes in 1937 and, in 1939, rector of Geurie.

During World War II, from 1942 until 1945, Sam Ramsden served in the RAAF as an air force chaplain in the South-west Pacific area. At the end of the war, he was posted to chaplaincy duties for all three forces and to Anglican civilians in Port Moresby, from where he was discharged. In 1946, he resigned his church appointments and, for the next two years, underwent war-caused hospitalisation.

From 1950 to 1957, Sam Ramsden was assistant secretary of the Queensland Regional Committees Services Canteens Trust Fund. In 1956, he contested the seat of Merthyr but was defeated by the then Health and Home Affairs Minister, W. M. Moore. The following year, with the ALP in Queensland split, it was a different story. He entered this House as the member for Merthyr on 3 August and held the seat until his retirement in June 1971.

As a parliamentarian, Sam Ramsden was quickly made honorary secretary and a member of the special committee appointed by the Nicklin Government in December 1957 to investigate youth problems. Down through the years, that committee's recommendations had considerable impact upon Government policies in that vital sphere. In recognition of his great belief in the Westminster system, Sam Ramsden was the Queensland delegate to the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Conference held in Uganda in 1967.

Upon retiring from the House, Sam Ramsden turned his almost limitless energies towards helping the less fortunate in the community and was the first full-time administrator and chief executive of the Multiple Handicapped Association, which honoured him with life membership. He was a past chairman or committee member of several other very significant bodies—the Missions to Seamen, the Metropolitan Fire Brigades Board, the Queensland Fire Services Council and the Queensland Council of Social Services. Sam Ramsden still found time to be a Fellow of the Royal Commonwealth Society, President of Toc-H in Queensland in 1967 and Life Fellow of the Intercontinental Biographical Association.

Mr Speaker, I have related a brief outline of the lifetime of dedicated service given to the public by Samuel Raymond Ramsden, a hard-working and sincere member of this House. I hope it will be of some consolation to his sorrowing family, to whom we present members extend our deepest sympathy.

Hon. W. A. M. GUNN (Somerset—Deputy Premier, Minister Assisting the Treasurer and Minister for Police) (11.34 a.m.): I second the motion moved by the Premier and Treasurer to express sympathy to the families of the late John Vincent Hayes and Rev. Samuel Raymond Ramsden.

As the Premier has said, Mr Hayes served as the member for Nundah during a very difficult period in Australia's history. Mr Hayes entered Parliament in 1932 while the nation and the world economy generally were in the grip of the Great Depression. Many of his early speeches dwelt at length on the plight of the unemployed and their families.

It is of interest to note that in August 1936 Mr Hayes, together with all the other members of the Queensland Parliament at the time, took an oath of allegiance to King Edward VIII. They are among a minority of politicians in that era of the British Empire who had taken the oath during King Edward's brief reign.

In 1942, Mr Hayes was granted leave of absence from Parliament because of war duties. He served with distinction as a member of the Eighth Australian Motor Ambulance Corps until February 1944. In contrast to his early years in Parliament, when so many people were unemployed, Mr Hayes returned to Parliament in times of a manpower shortage. At this time, his speeches reflected the problems caused by the manpower shortage not only in such major areas as capital works but also, closer to his constituents, through the abandonment of home deliveries of commodities, such as bread.

Mr Samuel Raymond Ramsden, Liberal member for Merthyr for 14 years from 1957, gave a lifetime of service to the public. As the Premier and Treasurer has said, Mr Ramsden began life as a cleric, firstly as a lay preacher in 1935 and, secondly, ordained as a Church of England priest two years later. After war service, he took his discharge in Papua New Guinea, where he intended to work in the interests of local people. Illness put an end to that plan after 12 months, and he spent four years undergoing almost continuous hospitalisation before returning to work as assistant secretary to the Services Canteen Trust Fund.

Mr Ramsden was an early advocate of pollution control, and devoted much of his maiden speech to the need for a clean air Act. He believed that education should be provided for all children, irrespective of mental ability. As the Premier and Treasurer has said, Mr Ramsden was honorary secretary to the committee appointed by the Government in 1957 to investigate youth problems. As a result of the committee's work, the first Welfare and Child Guidance clinic was opened in 1959; the Wilson Youth Hospital was established; in schools, a campaign was initiated to alert children to the dangers of alcohol; subsidies were provided to Boys Town at Beaudesert and a number of other youth homes; and the social welfare section of the Department of Health was established.

In less than a decade under Mr Ramsden's direction as honorary chairman, the Multiple Handicapped Association grew from a small organisation with no assets to the stage at which a full-time administrator was needed. In June 1971, he resigned his seat to tackle the new challenge of being a full-time administrator of the expanded program adopted by the association to cope with the needs of the increasing number of multiple handicapped children which accompanied the growth in population of Brisbane.

My knowledge and understanding of both Mr Hayes and Mr Ramsden is that they represented their electorates strongly and made a significant contribution to the House during their terms as members. I join with the Premier and Treasurer in extending condolences to their families.

Mr WARBURTON (Sandgate—Leader of the Opposition) (11.38 a.m.): The Opposition supports this motion related to the passing of Mr John Hayes, who was the member for Nundah from 11 June 1932 to 3 May 1947. In 1932 when John Hayes was first elected, his election to Parliament coincided with the election of the Forgan Smith Government. He was the second-last surviving member of the Forgan Smith Government.

During the last Brisbane City Council election, in spite of his 88 years, Mr Hayes made himself available to assist in the successful election of a Labor alderman. He was a very methodical, hard-working member for the Nundah electorate. Prior to entering Parliament, he worked in the insurance industry. When he finished his parliamentary career, he worked as a clerical officer with the Queensland Government Tourist Bureau. He was also connected with the Shop Assistants Union. His interest in junior Rugby League was well known. Members of the Opposition certainly extend their sympathy to his family.

Our support also goes to the motion of condolence relating to the Rev. Samuel Ramsden, who was the member for Merthyr from 3 August 1957 to 30 June 1971. Although Mr Ramsden was not known to me personally, he certainly had a reputation which related to his very great concern for handicapped people. In many ways, he was one of the prime-movers in facilitating Government assistance for this very important sector of our community.

Some of my associates who knew Mr Ramsden have described him as a very agreeable type of person, who distinguished himself in Parliament when he filled the role of Temporary Chairman of Committees. During his exercise of those duties, Mr Ramsden was greatly respected for his impartiality. He carried out this responsibility with a great deal of dignity.

The Opposition extends its sincere sympathies to those who were close to him.

Hon. D. F. LANE (Merthyr—Minister for Transport) (11.40 a.m.): Mr Speaker, I am very pleased to join the previous speakers in offering condolences to the relatives of the late Sam Ramsden, who not only was a very honoured and respected member of this House but also was a very good friend of mine before and after I became a member of this Assembly.

Sam Ramsden preceded me as the member for Merthyr, serving the electorate well from 3 August 1957 until his retirement on 30 June 1971. I well remember the occasion of Sam's resignation from Parliament. As was customary with the gentleman, he felt his first obligation was to his electorate, and before he spoke of his resignation to anyone else he called a public meeting in St Michaels and All Angels hall in New Farm, where he assembled local citizens and leaders of community organisations to explain his resignation and to give them an account of his stewardship over 14 years during which he had been a member. I attended that meeting. It was a most moving occasion.

Sam Ramsden had very strong feelings on issues that he took up. One that stands out in my mind and, I am sure, in the minds of members who knew him well, was his public advocacy for a river crossing at the mouth of the Brisbane River. Older members of this House will remember that he brought to Queensland eminent engineers and technical people from Europe—particularly from Germany—who were skilled in tunneling and in building tunnels under waterways. He made quite a campaign of that matter. He spoke about it in the House on several occasions, held public meetings and generally raised it prominently in the public's mind. That campaign was, I believe, the basic reason why Brisbane now has the Gateway Bridge. The Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing (Honourable R. J. Hinze) at the opening of the bridge, acknowledged that the thought of a river crossing was first put in his mind by Sam Ramsden, who advocated a tunnel. Later feasibility studies by officers of the Main Roads Department proved that a bridge was the most viable type of crossing. But it was Sam Ramsden who first thought of it.

Sam Ramsden had an interesting life. He was born in 1913, was educated in Sydney at Burwood Primary, the Summer Hill Intermediate and the Parramatta High Schools and undertook training in the Anglican priesthood at the College of St John the Evangelist in New South Wales. He served as a curate and a rector in churches in New South Wales before serving in the RAAF during World War II. He was a Flight Lieutenant Chaplain in the South-west Pacific, which included a period at Milne Bay from 11 October 1943 until March 1944; so he saw his nation in conflict and, I think, was steeled in later life by that experience.

During the 1950s he served in many top administrative positions in Government and community-based organisations. They included the first full-time administrator and chief executive of the Multiple Handicap Association of Queensland. In fact, it was he who negotiated the establishment of Multicap Meadows at Rochedale and the shifting of that organisation from his home suburb of New Farm to that outer suburb on the south side of Brisbane. He later followed the organisation, taking up residence at Rochedale so that he could be near the organisation that he cherished so much over such a long period of his life.

Sam Ramsden was a member and chairman of the Queensland Council of Social Service and its co-ordinating committee and vice-patron of the Australian Legion of Ex-Servicemen and Women. As has been said, after entering Parliament in 1957, he became the honorary secretary and member of the Committee for Youth Problems, which was appointed by the Government in the same year.

Sam Ramsden was the secretary of the joint Government parties in the days when the parties met in a very amicable way. I attribute much of the success of the early coalition years to the personality of Sam Ramsden, who had a very calming effect on those who at that time had ambitious personalities. For many, many years he was a contributing factor to the coalition parties being held together. I have heard him preach as an Anglican minister at Saint Michael and All Angels where, since his retirement from this place, he was a visiting priest.

I attended his funeral, which was held just a few weeks ago. I wish to acknowledge that a former Cabinet Minister, the Honourable Val Bird, Sir David Nicholson, a former

Speaker of this House, and Bob Moore, the former member for Windsor and a very close friend of Sam Ramsden, also attended that funeral. We paid our respects to Sam and to his family at his cremation service, which was conducted by an old colleague of Sam's who had been ordained with him.

Sam Ramsden was a very fine man. In parliamentary behaviour, he was a traditionalist. He had a firm belief in the institution of Parliament. I regret that the era of the Sam Ramsdens of this world has passed but, as a result of his performance in this place and in the community, those of us who knew him will remember him well and favourably.

Hon. Sir WILLIAM KNOX (Nundah) (11.47 a.m.): The Liberal Party wishes to be associated with this motion. I knew both of the late gentlemen well. The late Jack Hayes was the member for Nundah in this House for some years. When he eventually retired, he lived a very useful and good life. After he left Parliament, he worked in the Queensland Government Tourist Bureau. He is remembered in high regard by older citizens in the Nundah electorate, who knew him extremely well.

His service in the war was quite extraordinary. As a man of senior years and having sought leave from the House to attend to war duties—as many other members of Parliament in Australia who felt they had something to contribute to the war effort did—he joined the ambulance corps and saw service with the Australian Motor Ambulance Company. Jack Hayes will be long remembered by his friends in the Nundah area. Today honourable members have the opportunity to pay tribute to his memory.

Sam Ramsden and I were very closely associated for all of our political lives. He was a wonderful person who was strongly dedicated to causes. He was prompted to enter Parliament by his fear and actual experience of the bureaucratic attitude to child care and welfare. He was very concerned about that. It directly affected him personally. As a result of that experience he was determined to enter Parliament to reform the system. That is what inspired him.

In 1956, when he first nominated as a Liberal Party candidate for Merthyr, we campaigned together and shared many public meetings in the electorate. As the Premier and Treasurer has pointed out, he was not successful on that occasion. Nevertheless, he was certainly enthusiastic about the causes which he espoused. He was determined to become a member of this House to make the changes that he sought.

In 1957, when the opportunity again arose for him to try to enter Parliament, there was a great deal of competition within the Liberal Party to become the endorsed candidate for the Merthyr electorate. To the credit of Sam Ramsden and in spite of the fact that the competition was of a very, very high standard, those in the Liberal Party branches in Merthyr were so impressed by his qualities that he was successfully endorsed without any difficulty at all. He was a genuine person. On that occasion, I remember one person saying, "We have never had such a dedicated person associated with us. We want to have him as our member and we are prepared to work for him.", which the local people did. For as long as he was the member for Merthyr, Sam Ramsden was certainly vigorously supported by all those who knew him so well.

The Premier and Treasurer has outlined the many activities with which Sam Ramsden was associated while he was a member of Parliament. He became very intense about the issue of the down-river crossing. Indeed, very humorous parliamentary debates took place among Government members as to whether a bridge or a tunnel should be constructed. Of course, Sam Ramsden was a strong advocate for a tunnel. In fact, he travelled round the world, at his own expense, in order to become more informed about the engineering problems associated with the crossing of the river. As a result, he was more convinced than ever that a tunnel should be built. However, eventually a bridge was built.

I was delighted that the Minister for Main Roads (Mr Hinze) saw fit to invite Sam Ramsden to the final ceremonies associated with the joining of the bridge at its peak. Everyone was delighted to see Sam there, even though his health was failing.

I am sure that people do not know what a tremendous problem Sam Ramsden had with his health. Not long after becoming a member of this Parliament—a very popular member, whose company was sought by members of both sides of the House—he suffered very serious problems with his lungs, as a result of which a substantial part of both lungs had to be removed. He was left with virtually half a lung. Sam had those operations while he was a member of Parliament. I remember visiting him. The operations took place in New South Wales because that type of operation was not then available in Queensland.

In spite of that enormous physical defect—that impediment to his breathing, which made it difficult for him to speak for any length of time or to sustain any physical exercise—Sam Ramsden remained a member of Parliament for many years, and was always active. The enormous difficulties that Sam Ramsden had with his health never ceased and, of course, in recent times his health deteriorated very severely.

After his retirement as a member of Parliament, Sam often called in to the Parliament. Because he had difficulty walking from place to place, I ensured that he was driven—often I drove him myself—to various appointments in the city.

Sam Ramsden was a man who, once met, could never be forgotten. His long service to the church, which was mainly in New South Wales but in later years was in Queensland, was inspired by his involvement with Christianity and his belief in God. He was in fact a very godly man, though his personality very often misled people who did know that he was a churchman.

Sam Ramsden was a very dedicated Anglican and churchman who contributed a great deal to his church, both in war and in peace. As a chaplain, he was highly regarded and well respected. When after the war he accepted the chairmanship of the canteen trust, it had many millions of dollars to disburse to the relatives and children of ex-servicemen, particularly through bursaries. He undertook the job with great personal enthusiasm.

The positions that Sam Ramsden held were not token appointments. He carried out the position of chairman of the Queensland Council of Social Services with great enthusiasm. However, Sam Ramsden's greatest effort was directed to Multicap. Today, the work that he did at that institution is gratefully acknowledged. There was never any tokensim about Sam Ramsden. If he took on a job, it was done personally, with enthusiasm and success.

Another institution that has not been mentioned today, with which Sam was very closely allied all his life, is the Missions to Seamen, which at the time was in my electorate. He was chairman of the Missions to Seamen and worked tirelessly for it. His personal physical effort, apart from being chairman of the committee, was enormous. He worked day and night and at week-ends, and was frequently called upon to perform services at very short notice and at inconvenient times. Never for a moment did he hesitate to give his time and effort to the Missions to Seamen.

Sam Ramsden was a very dedicated Christian. During his time as a member of Parliament, which was coextensive with the time I was a member, he was very respected. He will always be remembered by those who were associated with him as a champion of causes and, indeed, as a successful champion of causes. Many of the things he set out to do were achieved in his time in this House. Those that were not achieved during his time as a member were achieved subsequently.

I have a very high personal regard for the late Sam Ramsden and will miss him very greatly. I extend to his relatives most sincere condolences.

Motion (Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen) agreed to, honourable members standing in silence.

MOTION OF CONDOLENCE**Moura Mine Disaster**

Hon. Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN (Barambah—Premier and Treasurer) (11.56 a.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

“That this House desires to express its deepest sympathy with the relatives and friends of the men who lost their lives in the tragic mine disaster at Moura on 16 July 1986.”

Whenever an accident happens, whether it is a road, air or shipping disaster, and many people lose their lives, it is something that makes people realise how uncertain life is and the tragedy of it all. When 12 hard-working men who have been underground in a mine doing their work meet their death in the way that the men at Moura met theirs, I am sure all honourable members' thoughts, best wishes and deepest sympathy go out to the wives, families and friends of those who lost their lives.

Steeped in the mining tradition as the miners were, they were following their everyday working routine, accepting as part of a miner's lot underground that an element of risk was attached to their labour. Miners are hard-working people, ever ready to meet that sort of challenge. The work carries its own comradeship and unspoken loyalty that have developed among workmates below the surface. I am sure honourable members can all understand and appreciate that point. The explosion that took their lives and the tragedy that it brought went throughout the State, as it were, and were felt by all—by each and every one of us.

Queensland has lost a group of people who were making a very worthwhile contribution to the State's economy by way of coal production, which has reached record levels in Queensland in recent years. The Moura community has lost dear ones, loved ones and close friends. The miners' union has lost loyal and true members who unflinchingly undertook demanding and, at times, dangerous work. Above all, the miners' families have suffered very, very deeply and the Government's heartfelt sympathy goes out to and remains with them. They have at least been left a legacy of proud memories, I am sure.

The bond that unites the coal-mining fraternity was never more obvious than in the response when rescuers were sent into the deadly area where all the gas had accumulated. Men answered that call. I myself saw them come, and they were prepared to go underground. They faced a great danger. They endured a great deal of anxiety and sadness at the loss of their mates, but did not flinch from the dreadfully distressing job that they had to do. It was done with respect and dignity.

In Moura, I saw at first hand the courage and steadfast spirit of the townspeople and the mining community. The concern of the community for those who had perished was deeply moving and inspiring as they displayed a quiet resignation and a determination to carry on, despite the burden of grief that had been so suddenly thrust upon them. Queensland can well be proud of such citizens.

The Queensland Government and I—and, I am sure, all honourable members—extend most sincere sympathy to the families of the 12 men who perished in that unforeseeable and tragic accident.

Hon. W. A. M. GUNN (Somerset—Deputy Premier, Minister Assisting the Treasurer and Minister for Police) (12 noon): I second the motion moved by the Premier and Treasurer to express sympathy to the wives and families of the miners who lost their lives in the Moura disaster. Everyone was saddened to hear of the loss of the lives of so many of our very fine miners in that disaster, which rocked this State and nation.

In spite of the precautions taken, a grave risk is involved in that type of mining. We all recognise that. I personally recall the Box Flat disaster because many of the miners who lost their lives were very well known to me. I can appreciate the trauma that the Moura disaster has caused for the young wives and families of the deceased.

We think of them today in their time of great sorrow. I join with the Premier and Treasurer in extending condolences to the wives and families of the miners who lost their lives in the Moura disaster.

Mr WARBURTON (Sandgate—Leader of the Opposition) (12.1 p.m.): The members of the Opposition join with all other honourable members in this Chamber in expressing their sincere sympathy to the families, relatives and friends of the mine-workers who recently lost their lives in such tragic circumstances at Moura.

One of my friends was part of the combined management/union team that took over the responsibility for the recovery operations. I can well recall the many telephone conversations that he and I had from the time when the disaster occurred until the recovery was finally made. As a result of the conversations I had with him, he left no doubt in my mind that members of the Moura community wanted to do their own thing. Of course, he also reflected the sadness and the tension that hung over the people of Moura during that very hectic time. As he clearly indicated to me, great tribute must go to those who worked together in complete harmony and who were responsible for organising and participating in the events that finally led to the opening of the mine and the recovery of the lost mine-workers.

I was informed that the attendance at the memorial service of many prominent people from public life was appreciated greatly by the people of Moura. I know that Senator Bjelke-Petersen, Senator Gareth Evans, a Minister in the Federal Government, members of the Queensland Government and the Opposition Mines and Energy spokesman (Ken Vaughan) took time to go to Moura to pay their sincere tributes to those people.

Nothing said today can overturn the tragedy that has taken place and the sorrow that has spread across so many families and friends of those no longer with us. My sincere desire, which I think would be shared by all honourable members, is that we can work collectively towards endeavouring to ensure that such a tragedy never recurs.

Hon. Sir WILLIAM KNOX (Nundah) (12.4 p.m.): The Liberal Party wishes to be associated with the motion moved by the Premier. The sadness associated with disasters and tragedy is widespread. It is amazing how far afield that feeling goes in the community. In the present case, it becomes very moving indeed because of the special difficulties associated with such a tragedy and the uncertainty of the life which people lead and the conditions under which they work in mining operations. Anyone who has visited a mine would probably have found the surroundings somewhat awesome and unusual. Those who live with them as their normal environment face the constant prospect of a tragedy and those things associated with it.

Many tragedies have occurred in mines in Australia, particularly in Queensland. The work performed by thousands of people at the mine site and elsewhere, in the hope that something would happen to avert a tragedy of such magnitude, indicates the enormous strength in the community for those people involved.

This is a very moving situation. I extend the deepest of sympathy to the families of the miners involved. I have already done that in another way, but it is certainly appropriate that this House recognise this tragedy. The Liberal Party joins with the Premier, the Deputy Premier and the Leader of the Opposition in this motion.

Hon. I. J. GIBBS (Albert—Minister for Mines and Energy) (12.6 p.m.): I wish to join in this condolence motion. I am sure that in expressing the deepest of sympathy to the wives, families and relatives of the 12 miners who lost their lives in the Moura mine disaster, I speak for all honourable members and, indeed, all Queenslanders. The tragic accident, which took the lives of those 12 men, occurred on 16 July and shook the whole of Queensland and Australia. Mere words cannot convey sufficient sympathy to the families of those men who were killed.

I pay a special tribute to the mines rescue teams who worked untiringly, often in very dangerous conditions, to attempt the rescue operation. I also pay tribute to the

officials of the mining company, the inspectors of the Mines Department and all the union officials who gave whatever assistance they could during the attempted rescue operation. Their sole aim was to attempt to rescue the men trapped underground. Tragically, their efforts were unsuccessful.

On the night when I, as Minister for Mines and Energy, attended at the site of the disaster with the Premier and Treasurer and the Honourable Neville Harper, we witnessed the frustration within the rescue camp. Men were talking and walking around in circles, doing whatever they could, waiting for the opportunity to initiate a rescue attempt or at least to find out what had happened to those men underground. At that stage hope was expressed that the trapped men may still have been alive.

I also pay tribute to the men who worked non-stop throughout the night on the drilling rigs in an attempt to reach certain areas of the mine and to gauge what was happening. Those men were totally dedicated to rescuing the trapped miners. I thank those people who joined together as a team.

I was privileged to attend the memorial service with Senator Flo Bjelke-Petersen and the Honourable Neville Harper, who is the member for the area, together with other Government members and, in particular, my colleague from Canberra, Senator Evans. The memorial service was held outdoors on a beautiful day. It was conducted with great sincerity, and all the people of Moura turned out to join hands in a Christian way to show respect for those killed in the tragedy.

I hope that another mine disaster of this magnitude, or for that matter of any magnitude, never occurs again in Queensland or Australia. None of us is on this earth for very long, but this was an untimely death for those 12 men.

On behalf of my department, its officers and inspectors, and all staff involved in mining from year to year and on a daily basis, and on behalf of those teams who worked hard at the site, and those with responsibilities under the Mining Act, I as Minister for Mines and Energy offer condolences to the families of the deceased men. Of course, they are now in good hands. They are in the hands of God. I ask for God's blessing on those who remain, that they may be given strength through their Christian beliefs. I ask that through the support of their friends and families they be given the strength to carry on and re-establish their lives in the community.

Mr VAUGHAN (Nudgee) (12.10 p.m.): I join in this motion of condolence concerning the 12 men who unfortunately were killed at the Moura mine on 16 July. I extend my deepest sympathy to the wives, families and relatives of those men.

I first went to Moura in 1965 in my previous capacity as a union official with the Electrical Trades Union. From 1965 to 1977, I had a very close association with not only the Moura mine but also the other coal-mining areas of this State. I learnt a lot about the differences between open-cut mining and underground mining.

The Premier and Treasurer mentioned the comradeship that exists in underground mining in particular; it is different. The people who go underground know that they are taking certain risks every day of their lives when they are down there. Over the years, fortunately, the hazards that are faced by underground miners have been lessened, but even in this day and age, miners know that certain hazards are associated with going underground.

I was deeply shocked when I learnt that a second fatality had occurred in such a short space of time in the Moura area. The people of Moura did not deserve that sort of thing.

The Kianga disaster occurred in 1975 and, prior to that, there was the Box Flat disaster. I personally thought that people would not hear of an accident of such magnitude occurring again in a mine in Queensland or Australia. I thought that the problems had been overcome; but unfortunately a lot has still to be learnt. I sincerely hope that a lot is learnt from the inquiry that will be conducted, that note is taken of the findings and that any recommendations will be implemented to ensure safety in the mining industry.

I have been associated with the mining industry and I have attended inquiries. I attended the Kianga inquiry and also an inquiry into the death many years ago of an electrical tradesman at the Clutha mine just outside Blackwater. In every case, something unforeseen happens. That is an unfortunate aspect of underground mining.

When a single accident occurs, people tend to disregard it and say, "All right, one person has been killed. We will take note of that." In today's paper I read that a miner was killed in a pit in New South Wales. However, it hits home more when a large number of men—say 12—are killed.

I pay tribute to the men who went down the mine to try to rescue the men who were trapped. Early in the piece, I hoped that those men would be rescued. Knowing the little bit I do about the mining industry, I thought that there was a good possibility that the men would be rescued. I hoped beyond hope that they would be rescued, but, unfortunately, that was not to be.

I sincerely regret the tragedy that has occurred at Moura and I sincerely hope that such a tragedy does not occur again. I extend my sincere sympathy to the wives and families of those who have been killed.

Hon. N. J. HARPER (Auburn—Minister for Justice and Attorney-General) (12.13 p.m.): I rise to support the motion moved by the Premier and Treasurer and to record in this House my own expressions of sympathy with all those who have suffered a bereavement in the recent tragedy. They are spread throughout the southern area of the State.

As the member representing the area, I know the mine well and I know the people well. I have been down the No. 4 mine. It was distressing that a second disaster of this type should have occurred. The whole community have been drawn closer together by this tragedy.

It is appropriate that the records of this House contain the names of those 12 miners who died in this underground disaster, so I shall read them into the record. They are: Brandt Afton Fechner, aged 18 years; Carl Steven Friske, aged 25 years; Raymond Charles Phillip Holton, aged 37 years; Steven Craig Hull, aged 19 years; Ronald Kevin Keyworth, aged 53 years going on 54; Paul Douglas Laing, aged 28 years; Leigh Anthony McCulloch, aged 23 years; Scott Kenneth McPherson, aged 22 years, nearly 23; Paul Allan Sainsbury, aged 23 years and nine months; Ernest Kevin Sleep, aged 57 years; Robert Turner, aged 41 years going on 42; and Peter Vincent Waning, aged 35 years. Might I record that, thanks to the mining unions, the family of Peter Waning and his wife were to be brought to Moura but, unfortunately, Denise Waning lost her father en route, so that neither he nor her mother was able to reach Moura.

I, too, pay tribute to those who worked so hard after the disaster. They were the mines rescue team, the mine management, the trade union officials, the police, the clergy, the ambulance officers, the mine employees generally, officials of the Department of Mines, and the community at large.

As has been indicated by previous speakers, the mining community, particularly those members who work underground, have bonds that cross the oceans to Great Britain. That is certainly so in Moura. Those bonds are probably not appreciated fully by those of us who know the industry as observers only.

I pay tribute to the families and friends whose strength was taxed to the limit throughout the days of torment and distress. I, too, believe that the Government must redouble its endeavours to ensure that underground mining is as safe as humanly possible and is as safe as modern technology can achieve.

Mr CAMPBELL (Bundaberg) (12.17 p.m.): I rise to join other honourable members in speaking to this motion of condolence to the families of those men who lost their lives in the Moura mine disaster. One of the miners who died was a young Bundaberg man, Steven Craig Hull. Steven was only 19 years old when he died, and his sudden, tragic death was a great loss to Steven's family—his parents, Tony and Dale, and his

sister, Kerry. Steven Hull was a very popular student at Kepnock and he had many friends. In a search for work, Steven had to leave Bundaberg and go to Moura as a cadet coal manager.

I wish to convey to his whole family the condolences of myself, my family and the community of Bundaberg. I also wish to convey condolences to all the families of the men who lost their lives. The loss of close family members leaves an irreparable void, but it is hoped that the memories of happier times will assist those families in their hour of great sadness and that their sorrow will mellow with the passing of time.

Mr HARTWIG (Callide) (12.18 p.m.): As the member for Callide, I join with the Premier and Treasurer and previous speakers in this motion of condolence. The disaster was possibly the second worst to have occurred in Queensland, and it is the second tragedy concerning central Queensland that has occurred during my time in this House. Since 1969, 59 men have lost their lives in mining disasters in this State.

I visited Moura and offered my condolences to many of the families. On 26 July at Biloela, I also attended the funeral of Paul Laing, which was attended by many hundreds of people. I am sure all honourable members join me in offering deepest sympathy to members of the families concerned.

The many acts of heroism involved in attempts to rescue those unfortunate men must also be acknowledged. Tragedies such as this highlight the hazards associated with the occupation of underground mining.

Underground miners have a bonded mateship and fellowship that seem to apply only to that profession, as was evidenced by the tremendously difficult work involved in recovering the bodies of these 12 unfortunate miners.

Finally, Mr Speaker, I join with the Minister in suggesting that everything possible be done by the Government and the mining companies to invoke every possible safeguard for the security of those men who continue to mine, if not to eliminate the risks. The miners ought to know that all possible precautions have been taken to ensure their safety when they brave the underground elements. On behalf of the people of Callide, I offer my sympathy.

Mr RANDELL (Mirani) (12.21 p.m.): As a member representing a major coal-mining area, I extend, on behalf of the people in my electorate, sympathies and condolences to the families, friends and colleagues of the people who died in the tragic Moura disaster.

As a father of two sons who are working in the coal-mining industry—my younger son is an underground miner—I can understand the anxieties and grief that the parents must have experienced. Even though the risks that these miners take are understood, it certainly comes as a great shock when something of this magnitude happens. I know that each and every one of us shares the grief of the parents.

Briefly, I pay tribute to those who worked tirelessly in attempting to rescue the miners. My colleagues have outlined that. At a time such as this, people are drawn together in a common bond. That bond certainly must be of great help and comfort to those who have borne the ultimate loss. I join with my colleagues in extending my sympathy to them.

Mr HAMILL (Ipswich) (12.22 p.m.): As a member who also represents an area in which underground mining is a major industry, I associate the people of Ipswich with this condolence motion.

Having experienced a similar tragedy in the Box Flat mine disaster approximately 13 years ago, the people of Ipswich know full well the sorrow that the families in Moura must be feeling. The mine rescue teams, of which we can be justly proud, again excelled in their endeavours in the recent disaster. I pay tribute also to the brave men who were engaged in that work.

The people of Ipswich have expressed their sympathy to the people of Moura. The Queensland Colliery Employees Union has collected funds to assist the bereaved families, who have to continue in the wake of this terrible tragedy. I say to the people of Moura, especially to the relatives and friends of the deceased, that the people of Ipswich extend their sincerest sympathies at this tragic event.

Hon. V. P. LESTER (Peak Downs—Minister for Employment and Industrial Affairs) (12.24 p.m.): As I, too, represent a predominantly coal-mining electorate, I wish to say that the people of Peak Downs, and in particular the coal-miners, have asked me to convey in this motion of condolence their sympathies to the affected families and also to pay tribute to those people who helped so very, very much during the trying hours after that unfortunate event.

Much has already been said in the debate. To add anything further would be merely to repeat what has already been said. Quite simply, the electorate of Peak Downs offers its sympathy and help to the people of Moura, who should know that those in my electorate are ready to assist if needed.

Motion (Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen) agreed to, honourable members standing in silence.

SITTING DAYS

Sessional Order

Hon. C. A. WHARTON (Burnett—Leader of the House), by leave, without notice:
I move—

“That during this session, unless otherwise ordered, the House will meet for the dispatch of business at 11 o’clock a.m. on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday in each week, and that on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and after 1 o’clock p.m. on Wednesdays, Government business shall take precedence of all other business.”

Motion agreed to.

TIME LIMIT OF SPEECHES

Sessional Order

Hon. C. A. WHARTON (Burnett—Leader of the House), by leave, without notice:
I move—

“That for this session, unless otherwise ordered, the following amendments to the times for certain speeches shall apply—

Under Standing Order No. 109—

- (1) Paragraph one—substitute ‘thirty minutes’ for ‘forty minutes’ in line one and omit all words following the word ‘House’ in line two to the end of the paragraph.
- (2) Paragraph three—omit the word ‘thirty’ and substitute the word ‘fifteen’.
- (3) Paragraph seven—omit the words ‘one hour’ in the third line and substitute the words ‘thirty minutes’.

Mr WARBURTON (Sandgate—Leader of the Opposition) (12.26 p.m.): I oppose the motion. Because the motion moved by the Leader of the House (Mr Wharton) relates to the time limit of speeches, it is vehemently opposed by the Opposition. It is only a very short time ago—1983—that the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly were amended after an exhaustive investigation by the Standing Orders Committee and after a rather hectic debate in this House.

In March 1983—not long ago—Standing Order No. 109 came under scrutiny. A minor amendment, which certainly did not change the times for speeches, was adopted by the Legislative Assembly. On 13 August 1985—almost 12 months ago—the Standing

Orders Committee held its most recent meeting. At that meeting a reduction in the speaking times of members was proposed by the Leader of the House (Mr Wharton). His proposal was suitably put to rest after having been opposed by the other Labor representative on that committee, the honourable member for Nundah, who is the leader of the Liberal Party in this place, and me.

At that time there was general agreement that the Whips would do their best to reach agreement on speaking times when such an arrangement was deemed to be warranted. My personal belief is that that arrangement works very satisfactorily in the interests of honourable members on both sides of the House.

Mr Speaker, I put it to you and to other honourable members that the motion is typical of the jackboot style of government practised in this State. Instead of having this matter referred back to the Standing Orders Committee, before which it was first raised by the mover of the motion and before which it failed to receive the necessary support, it is now brought here in the form of a Sessional Order to be railroaded through the House simply by the weight of numbers.

Why would the National Party want to reduce the time for speeches? For the National Party, the reduction of time for debate in the House is paramount. The motion further limits the capacity of the non-National Party forces to criticise the antics, the maladministration and the mismanagement of the economy by the National Party Government in Queensland.

Mr Gunn interjected.

Mr WARBURTON: It effectively reduces the time of National Party speakers such as the Deputy Premier, who is presently having so much to say. Usually, the Minister has nothing of consequence to say, anyway; so the time limit of speeches is helpful to him.

This move is further downgrading of the rights of each and every member of this House. Of course, what is contained in a Sessional Order today can easily become part of the Standing Orders tomorrow.

Some years ago when I first entered this Parliament—and you will recall this, Mr Speaker—introductory or so-called first-reading debates were held. They were done away with. Today, many members of this Parliament rue the day that that occurred; others, of course, heralded that day.

At that time, members were accused of using the introductory debates to do the rounds. However, at least when first-reading debate was allowed, each and every member had an opportunity to raise matters relevant to the people whom he purported to represent. That was of particular importance, and should always be of importance in any Parliament.

Be that as it may, the procedure was confined to a second-reading debate. Now, honourable members have witnessed a very deliberate attempt to further reduce their rights. It is a move that is designed simply to make life very much easier for a Government that, quite frankly, regards this Parliament as a waste of time and an imposition upon its authority to rule. That is how the Leader of the House (Mr Wharton) views it.

I can well recall the promises that were forthcoming when the House confined itself to second-reading debates. Some of the promises came from members who are present today and who regularly took their places in the chair. Promises were made that the new system to be introduced would still allow wide-ranging debate to continue. The fact is that in many instances those promises were not kept; hence the absolute importance of not allowing members' rights to be whittled away any further.

Standing Order No. 109 has stood the test of time. No change whatsoever is needed. The Sessional Order that has been moved today need not have been dragged before the

House. The Leader of the House does not need to try to circumvent the Standing Orders Committee, as he is so obviously doing. In August 1985 the Leader of the House took the matter to the Standing Orders Committee and he was done like a dinner. Today, the Leader of the House moved a Sessional Order to limit speeches, because he knows full well that if he had taken the matter to the Standing Orders Committee in the intervening period, he would have had problems pushing it through. Undoubtedly, on this occasion, the Leader of the House has some additional supporters within the Cabinet.

The National Party Cabinet believes that criticisms of its performance, which come forth often, must be curtailed at all costs. That is the opinion of the National Party Cabinet Ministers. The Sessional Order that has been moved is the means by which that can be achieved in this Parliament.

As has been indicated, the Opposition will most certainly vote against the motion. The Opposition completely rejects the back-door method that is being adopted to bring about what I regard as a further diminution of the rights of members as political representatives.

Mr DAVIS (Brisbane Central) (12.34 p.m.): The question that must be asked is why—

Hon. L. W. POWELL (Isis—Minister for Education): I move—

“That the question be now put.”

Question put; and the House divided—

AYES, 42		NOES, 37	
Ahern	Lester	Braddy	Palaszczuk
Alison	Lingard	Burns	Price
Austin	Littleproud	Campbell	Scott
Bailey	McKechnie	Casey	Shaw
Bjelke-Petersen	McPhie	Comben	Smith
Booth	Menzel	D'Arcy	Underwood
Borbidge	Miller	De Lacy	Vaughan
Cahill	Muntz	Eaton	Veivers
Chapman	Newton	Gibbs, R. J.	Warburton
Clauson	Powell	Goss	Warner, A. M.
Cooper	Randell	Gygar	White
Elliott	Row	Hamill	Wilson
FitzGerald	Simpson	Hartwig	Yewdale
Gibbs, I. J.	Stephan	Innes	
Glasson	Stoneman	Knox	
Gunn	Tenni	Kruger	
Harper	Turner	Lee	
Harvey	Wharton	Lickiss	
Henderson		Mackenroth	
Jennings	<i>Tellers:</i>	McElligott	<i>Tellers:</i>
Katter	Kaus	McLean	Davis
Lane	Neal	Milliner	Prest

Resolved in the affirmative.

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

AYES, 48		NOES, 31	
Ahern	Lee	Braddy	Warburton
Alison	Lester	Burns	Warner, A. M.
Austin	Lickiss	Campbell	Wilson
Bailey	Lingard	Casey	Yewdale
Bjelke-Petersen	Littleproud	Comben	
Booth	McKechnie	D'Arcy	
Borbidge	McPhie	De Lacy	
Cahill	Menzel	Eaton	
Chapman	Miller	Gibbs, R. J.	
Clauson	Muntz	Goss	
Cooper	Newton	Hamill	
Elliott	Powell	Hartwig	
FitzGerald	Randell	Kruger	
Gibbs, I. J.	Row	Mackenroth	
Glasson	Simpson	McElligott	
Gunn	Stephan	McLean	
Gygar	Stoneman	Milliner	
Harper	Tenni	Palaszczuk	
Harvey	Turner	Price	
Henderson	Wharton	Scott	
Innes	White	Shaw	
Jennings		Smith	
Katter	<i>Tellers:</i>	Underwood	<i>Tellers:</i>
Knox	Kaus	Vaughan	Davis
Lane	Neal	Veivers	Prest

Resolved in the affirmative.

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE ON BILLS BROUGHT OVER FROM PREVIOUS SESSION

Hon. C. A. WHARTON (Burnett—Leader of the House), by leave, without notice: I move—

“That, pursuant to Standing Order No. 276, the following Bills, which were presented in the third session of this Parliament, be resumed in this, the fourth session at the stage reached in the previous session and thereafter be proceeded with as if no prorogation had taken place—

Land Act Amendment Bill: Resumption of second-reading debate (20 March 1986, Mr Mackenroth).

Adoption of Children Acts and Another Act Amendment Bill: Resumption of second-reading debate (18 March 1986, Mr Prest).

Local Government Act Amendment Bill: Resumption of second-reading debate (18 March 1986, Mr Davis).

Local Government Act Amendment Bill (No. 2): Resumption of second-reading debate (26 September 1985, Mr Wharton).

Optometrists Act Amendment Bill: Resumption of second-reading debate (12 March 1986, Mr McElligott).”

Motion agreed to.

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S ECONOMIC POLICIES

Hon. Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN (Barambah—Premier and Treasurer) (12.39 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

“That this House—

- (a) condemns the gross mismanagement of the nation's affairs by the present Federal Government which has resulted in an economic crisis unparalleled since the depression years of the 1930s—”

Mr Burns: What a surprise.

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: I did not want to disappoint the Opposition.

Mr Burns: You've taken the place by complete surprise.

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: I have taken the member for Lytton by complete surprise.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: I am glad that honourable members opposite were prepared for this motion and expected me to move it.

I further move that the House—

“(b) calls upon the Federal Government to take urgent steps to cut interest rates, reduce Government spending and duplication, amend the personal taxation system to restore incentive and abolish the taxes on fringe benefits, capital gains and superannuation.”

The ALP socialists have had control of the Treasury benches in the Federal Parliament for just 41 months, and what a mess they have made—record interest rates, record debt, high taxes and a dollar that is not worth picking up. In that time the nation has experienced accord politics, the farce of summits, consensus, crisis management and banana economics.

Instead of confidence, there has been confusion. Instead of sound economic planning, there have been five Budget statements so far—the sixth one is coming on 19 August—as well as a tax package and a rural economic statement. One day Canberra implements a tax on foreign investments. A few weeks later they panic, change direction, abolish the tax and say instead, “We want more foreign money.” In the process they make fools of ALP members opposite—if they are not always that—who for years have built barricades to stop foreign investment in this State.

In all the attempts to fiddle with the nation's economy, new public bodies have been created to waste more money in non-productive spheres, such as the National Occupational Health and Safety Commission, with an average staff of about 300 and a net budget of \$33.3m; the Australian Sports Commission; the Australian Trade Commission, with a staff of 1 400 and a budget of about \$200m; the Commission for the Future; the Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission; the Prices Surveillance Authority; and the Federal Airports Corporation, which is to have a staff of 1 600. I could at length outline the grave mismanagement taking place in Canberra.

It is clear that under the Hawke ACTU/ALP coalition Government the red tape industry has flourished. The Trade Practices Act Amendment Act contained 76 clauses and amendments to the Companies and Securities Act incorporated about 200 clauses, all of which were to restrict and regulate business and industry, thus blunting its competitive edge.

There was, too, the Affirmative Action Agency and the Sex Discrimination Act, both of which provided more restrictions and more costs for business. They were supported by honourable members opposite. In all, about 16 430 Federal public servants are engaged in regulating business, at a cost to the nation of \$1.4 billion each year.

There is no need to ask why business and industry is not forging ahead and expanding. The answer is quite clear. It has been tied down by Canberra red tape, which is stifling incentive and growth. It has been brought to its knees by the ALP's high interest rates, high taxation, anti-achievement policies. Business in Queensland, as well as business across the nation, is caught up in the mess that Labor has made.

The consultative mechanism has further weakened the business sector's competitive edge. The Economic Planning and Consultative Council and the host of industrial councils set up for consensus politics have not been in the best interest of business and industry. They have simply created the deceptive impression that the Hawke Labor Government is somehow supportive of business and private enterprise. Honourable members know what a load of rubbish that is.

To prove my point, I quote from Mr Hawke's own words in 1971 when, as President of the Australian Council of Trade Unions, he was reported in *The Australian Financial Review* as saying—

“I believe that ultimately the welfare of the people of Australia will be best served when the means of production, distribution and exchange are removed from private ownership and are owned by the people.”

In reality, the ALP's consultative mechanism has transferred economic and political power to the union bosses and has allowed the unions entry to the highest level of Government decision-making.

After the next Federal election, of course, the Federal Labor Government will be tossed out. Its members will not know what has happened to them.

The Prices and Incomes Accord assures the unions of dominance in Government economic matters until October 1987. The accord, mark II, provides for a 38-hour week, toughening of the Prices Surveillance Authority, wage increases and a productivity claim. The accord has done nothing to assist the manufacturing sector, business or industry to become competitive. In fact, as all honourable members would know, it has made things worse. The accord has made employers pay out more money and provide more benefits, without regard to Australia's trading position or to the ability of industry to pay. Labour costs in Australia have increased faster than those of our trading partners.

Mr De Lacy: How much in the last 12 months? 2.3 per cent?

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: I will give it to the honourable member, if he likes. Recent figures show that growth in earnings was: Australia, 7.3 per cent; Japan, 4 per cent; and the United States of America, 2.7 per cent. Under the accord, labour costs are set to rise 13 per cent during the next year.

Mr De Lacy: These are more figures that you are making up.

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: How does the honourable member expect to keep people employed in this nation? In May this year, the Federal Treasurer (Mr Keating) advised that Australia was moving towards the status of a banana republic. Whereas for the previous 37 months of office the Prime Minister (Mr Hawke) and the Federal Treasurer insisted aggressively that all was well with the nation's economy—and they tried to convince people that everything was going according to plan—in that period, the ACTU/ALP coalition imposed, on business and the community, job protection and redundancy payments, the assets test, lump-sum superannuation taxation, prescribed payments taxation, which forced many small businesses into bankruptcy or pay-as-you-earn taxation, and an excise tax on a range of commodities, including beer, petrol and cigarettes, that rises automatically in accordance with increases in the Consumer Price Index. In addition, approximately 40 benefits or concessions were withdrawn from the rural sector and capital gains tax, an entertainment tax, a Medicare levy and compulsory superannuation were imposed.

Mr Vaughan: Fees and charges imposed by your Government rise with the CPI, too.

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: I am amazed that the Opposition would line itself up with the ACTU/ALP. To cap it all off, there is a new fringe benefits tax.

Mr Vaughan: As proposed by you last year.

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: That is entirely different.

Mr Prest: Oh yes, there is a difference.

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: There is a difference.

Mr Vaughan: You want employees to pay.

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: I would not be seen dead with the one backed by the honourable member—a tax that will hurt the ordinary worker and tax-payer, bleed industry and crush business with huge administration costs and a nightmare of paperwork. It will result in the employment of an additional 600 public servants and put thousands of people out of work, especially in the motor vehicle and restaurant industries.

All honourable members remember the Federal Government's promise of lower taxes, lower petrol prices and a simpler form of taxation. The result was exactly the opposite. How the ALP came up with its present economic policy defies reason and beggars description. It hurts the people whom the ALP was elected to protect, and it is nothing like the proposal envisaged by my Government for single-rate taxation, which did not include a tax on the benefits paid to workers or a tax on items such as remote-area housing. I repeat: they were never included.

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr Warburton) and all other Opposition members are now caught in a bind and they are squirming. They support the fringe benefits tax in its present form. The Leader of the Opposition and Opposition members are under orders from Canberra to support it. Naturally, the political consequences for the ALP in Queensland will be disastrous, as members opposite will discover soon.

I forecast that, after the next election, the number of members now sitting on the opposite side of the House—five Opposition members and two Liberals—will be all that will be left.

Mr McKechnie interjected.

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: It will not be the present members who will occupy the seats on behalf of the Opposition. The honourable member for Port Curtis will not be returned—that is for sure!

As I was saying, in the same pre-banana republic period, the ALP gave the nation interest rates that reached a record high of up to 22 per cent, which has hit families, home-buyers, farmers, and small and big business. The ALP delivered inflation at three times the rate of that of Australia's major trading nations. The dollar has collapsed, Australia's foreign debt has doubled to \$85 billion and the current account deficit has increased from \$6.7 billion in 1982-83 to a record \$14.3 billion.

Sitting suspended from 1 to 2.15 p.m.

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: Before lunch I was saying that Australia's foreign debt doubled to \$85 billion—a colossal sum in anybody's language—and the current account deficit increased from \$6.7 billion in 1982-83 to a record \$14.3 billion in 1985-86—an increase of 130 per cent. Now the Budget deficit has blown out by \$825m to \$5.744 billion. Only Labor socialists could achieve such an outrageous objective. That's the ALP for you—and, unfortunately, for the nation. That is the very ALP that says it can manage the Queensland economy. This Government will ensure that these wreckers never get a chance to destroy Queensland in the way that they are destroying the future of this great nation.

I remind honourable members opposite that in January this year, the Prime Minister (Mr Hawke) said that he believed that the right level of the Australian dollar should be somewhere between US72c and US75c.

Despite that sad and sorry record, for the same 37 months the Hawke/ACTU coalition Labor Government, along with the Opposition parties in Queensland Parliament, ignored the serious situation of the Australian economy as a whole and consistently talked down the Queensland economy for party political reasons.

Mr Vaughan: You're a knocker.

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: I do not know what the honourable member for Nudgee would call himself.

Mr Vaughan: I'll tell you what you are later on, too—worse than that.

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: That's all right.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row): Order! The honourable member for Nudgee will not do so while I am here.

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: Mr Deputy Speaker, the honourable member for Nudgee is trying to be funny. The Labor Party's best attempts failed miserably. The "world's best Treasurer"—if the honourable member knows who that is—finally admitted in May that the nation's economic position as a whole was worrying, and according to the Prime Minister, Australia's economy was facing the worst crisis since war-time. Unfortunately, Queensland has had to bear the brunt of the Hawke Government's anti-incentive and pro-union policies.

Data obtained from the *Commonwealth of Australia Gazette* shows that bankruptcies have increased Australia-wide. For the financial year 1985-86, bankruptcies in Queensland increased by 22.4 per cent, which was the second lowest rise in Australia. Victoria—a Labor State—experienced the greatest increase of 45 per cent, which is twice that of Queensland.

The Federal Government's housing policy is adding to the nation's bankruptcy problems. Its refusal to subsidise the building societies, as it did the banks, has added a very big burden to the lower and middle-income borrowers in Queensland who are purchasing their home through a building society.

By their attacks on Queensland's economy, members opposite have only sought to distract attention away from the root cause—the factors and ALP policies that have contributed to the national economic crisis all Australians now face.

An examination of business activity indicators shows the impact of the Federal Government's economic policies over the past financial year. The data derives from the ABS. It shows that Queensland, with 16 per cent of the population, contributed 19 per cent of the dwelling unit approvals for the first 11 months of the financial year 1985-86. Compared with the same period last financial year, Queensland's dwelling unit approvals were down 13.8 per cent. Nationally, the drop was 12.1 per cent. The highest fall recorded was in South Australia, which, incidentally, is another Labor State. Its fall was 29.6 per cent.

For the nine months ending March 1986, Queensland contributed 20.4 per cent of national dwelling unit commencements. This was down 4 per cent compared with the same period in 1985. Nationally, the fall was 6.3 per cent. Again, South Australia recorded the largest drop of any other State, with a 23.6 per cent drop.

Queensland's contribution to Australia's non-building construction commencements for the nine months ending March 1986 was 20.6 per cent. Queensland recorded an increase of 39.3 per cent over the same period in 1985, which compared with a national increase of 57.5 per cent. South Australia recorded a decrease of 14.1 per cent.

Mr De Lacy: Tell us about bankruptcies now.

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: I will get to that in a minute.

For the 11 months to May 1986, Queensland contributed 23 per cent of the nation's exports. For the months between May 1985 and May 1986, retail sales in Queensland increased by 12.4 per cent, compared with the national increase of 11.9 per cent. Tasmania's retail sales increased by 8.3 per cent. For the financial year ending 1986, expected private fixed capital expenditure dropped by 13.2 per cent in Queensland. This compares with a national drop of 14.3 per cent. Queensland's share of fixed capital expenditure is 16.2 per cent.

These figures do not spell doom and gloom, as honourable members opposite always attempt to suggest. Queensland is more than making its contribution to the nation's economy, despite a national economic downturn. For the 12 months ending the June quarter 1986, Queensland had an inflation rate of 8.2 per cent, which is lower than the weighted average of the eight State and Territory capital cities of 8.4 per cent.

For the financial year ending June 1986, Queensland, with 4.9 per cent, had the highest employment growth rate of any Australian State, compared with the national average of 4.5 per cent.

Mr De Lacy: Tell us the employment percentage. Tell us about that.

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: I will give the honourable member the whole lot.

Furthermore, for the 12-month period ending June 1986, Queensland recorded the highest labour force growth of any Australian State. The Queensland figure increased by 4.4 per cent, which is higher than the national average of 3.6 per cent.

Queensland does have the highest unemployment rate, which is currently running at 9 per cent. The frustrating part is that Queensland still leads the nation in employment growth, yet still has a high unemployment rate. That reflects, as I have always said, the combination of the high internal migration growth, the prolonged drought, the downturn in the sugar industry, changes in prices received for our exports and the Federal Government's general economic policies.

For sure, compared with the same time last year, like the other States, Queensland has suffered falls in certain areas, but when those are seen against a backdrop of the Federal economy and the disincentives of high taxation and high interest rates, it is quite clear that Queensland's economy is performing as well as, if not better than, those of the other States.

For example, a bright spot in Queensland's economy is tourism. Latest indicators suggest the value of tourism will top \$9 billion, which is double the figure of three years ago. A survey called *A Statement on Queensland Tourism* has shown that Queensland's tourist industry continued to out-perform those in all other States——

Mr R. J. Gibbs: That is a lie. That is a misquote. You're down; you're telling deliberate untruths again.

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: The honourable member can try as hard as he likes. He is still reeling from the shock of the results of the week-end by-elections. He has not recovered yet, so I will forgive him.

Mr R. J. Gibbs interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row): Order! I remind the honourable member for Wolston that persistent, drawn-out interjections only confuse the issue under debate in the Chamber. I ask him to desist.

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: Mr Deputy Speaker, it will probably take another month or six weeks for him to recover.

That survey showed that Queensland's tourist industry continued to out-perform those in all other States, with an average growth rate between 1978 and 1985 of 8.5 per cent per annum. The Australian growth rate was 4.8 per cent.

Queensland still has the lowest taxes, charges and fees per capita of any Australian State and, what is more, the State Budget will contain no new taxes—no petrol tax, cigarette tax or financial institutions duty. The Budget will be balanced. There can be no better measure of financial management. It is a pity that the ALP in Canberra cannot husband the nation's financial resources in the same way.

The motion will attract the support of any member of this House who is concerned for the future of Queensland and Australia. There must be a complete change of direction in Canberra before it is too late for this nation. I forecast that after the next Federal election those who are now in power and all their hangers-on, advisors and so on will be out lock, stock and barrel. It will be a completely new ball game. I make exactly the same forecast in regard to Hawke as I did in regard to Whitlam. Opposition members know jolly well that I am right.

Mr Milliner: What about the wheat sales to the coms?

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: Is the honourable member for Everton also still recovering from the results of the by-elections?

The Federal Government has the opportunity to do the difficult things required to be done when Mr Keating brings down his Budget later this month. However, everyone knows that the difficult decisions will not be made. The union masters of the ALP will see to that.

Only one course is left open, that is, to get rid of the Federal Labor Government in Canberra and replace it with a Government that will get off the backs of the people, business and industry, and keep the unions tied up somewhere out of the way.

In 1983, at the first summit, I said that the policies of the Federal Labor Government were wrong. Those policies were wrong then, and today they have been proven wrong.

The Federal Labor Government should stand condemned by this Parliament and the people of Australia.

Hon. M. J. AHERN (Landsborough—Minister for Industry, Small Business and Technology) (2.26 p.m.): I second the motion. It is entirely appropriate that today the Queensland Parliament debate the national economy and examine closely national priorities and also State priorities. All honourable members should relish the chance to examine issues that are of principal concern right now in the community.

The economic debate is no longer confined to the business columns or to a few television commentators. Now it is being very broadly discussed in the community. People are looking for answers. Blame is being apportioned and solutions are being sought.

Today a fundamental incongruity confronts the Queensland tax-payer bewildered by the antics, tactics and rhetoric that has emanated from the Australian Labor Party daily during the last three years. The Queensland National Party Government has been subjected to a campaign of vilification and vituperation about its alleged economic mismanagement of the affairs of this State. The Liberal Party has also been trying to apportion blame to the Queensland Government.

Broadly stated, the Queensland Government is accused of being directly responsible for this State's having the highest unemployment rates in the Commonwealth. It is acknowledged by the Queensland Government that this State does have a high unemployment rate. However, what bewilders people and leaves them confused—and often very angry—is the duplicity of the ALP. On the one hand, the Federal Labor Government criticises the Queensland Government because this State has high unemployment and, on the other hand, it reduces the money available to Queensland under the tax reimbursement formula.

The average person cannot understand why the leaders of the nation point the finger of accusation at Queensland when, at the same time, they cut back the revenue of this State, or why no initiative or special program has been undertaken to assist the State, from a financial point of view, to overcome the problem.

It is a fundamental incongruity. It is straight-out political opportunism of the worst possible type for the Federal Labor Government, which recognises the high unemployment in this State and points directly to it, to cut back revenue to Queensland, with absolutely no display of sympathy. While other States are receiving sympathetic treatment through special consideration grants, Queensland is left out in the cold, in economic isolation, and is subjected to federally induced financial stringency.

That is the response of the Federal Labor Government to the issue presently on everybody's lips in Queensland. Instead of helping because unemployment is high in this State, the Federal Labor Government has simply exercised cold cynicism. The Federal Labor Government has told the State Governments privately to raise their taxes. Since the Queensland Government is not a Labor Government, no help will be forthcoming.

The national economic problems of Australia stem from the Federal Labor Government's pursuing a short-term course when a longer term view is needed. It tried to

kick-start the Australian economy with a massive increase in Federal Government spending. The \$20,000m offshore borrowing spree embarked upon by the Federal Labor Government has produced a massive legacy for future generations of young Australians.

Recently, Keating spoke in glowing terms of the enormous economic growth rates that have occurred in this country. He cited them as being the highest in the Western World. He spoke glowingly of his job-generation strategies and, almost as an added afterthought, he mentioned that Australia now has this little problem of international competitiveness. The problem of international competitiveness is not little. It is massive, and one that will be extremely difficult to address, given the kick-start strategies Mr Keating has pursued.

When the dollar was floated, it was surely axiomatic that the international competitiveness should have had top priority. The National Party was then urging Mr Keating to consider the international rules, the apparent trends, the tools being used and the practices implemented by the successful economies with which Australia, having floated its currency, would be competing. The decision to float the Australian currency was right. What was wrong was Australia's refusal to examine what the international competition was doing.

It has taken a couple of years for Australians to run off the end of the short-term strategy. In view of our currency's being 40 per cent devalued, our offshore borrowings escalating enormously and the huge boost in consolidated revenue and gross national production that is required to simply pay interest and redemption on the national debt, it is painfully apparent that Australians are facing a substantial cut in living standards.

Clearly, Australia has recently been living beyond its means. Australia, the lucky country, has sought to give maximum support to disadvantaged groups by running welfare projects. Nobody questions the need for social development in Australia or reasonable support for cultural development, but it has all become too much for the fundamental economic wealth-producing sector—the sector that pays the taxes and generates the jobs. Australia is living beyond its means.

Today about half the country is either working for the Government or living on welfare. The business of Government is growing. The wealth-producing sector is being soaked and stripped with extra bureaucracy and a plethora of new taxes. It is happening as we in the National Party said it would. The system is growing on itself like a cancer: more tax, more public servants, more welfare, less value in our currency, more inflation, higher interest rates, less economic growth and a problem clearly evident in the long, long term.

Taxes are growing daily in number and complexity. The fringe benefits tax is the daddy of them all. Recently, two accountants I listened to said that in some circumstances the tax will be payable on birthday and wedding presents. What nonsense! The Federal Labor Government has built up a false expectation that the Government—that is, the tax-payer—can look after Australians, and that the Government—the tax-payer again—can find them jobs and look after them on retirement. There is even an attitude amongst corporations that the tax-payer, through grants, owes them something, too.

An increasing number of company representatives are coming in to see me. They are aware that other State Governments use millions of dollars of tax-payers' funds to set up manufacturing facilities. In principle, I have serious reservations about paying, on behalf of the poor old Queensland tax-payers, huge amounts of capital simply to encourage large international organisations to establish manufacturing facilities here. Some level of assistance is required and justifiable, but I do not think they should be able to pirate the Treasury or put their arms into the pockets of Queensland tax-payers up to the elbow.

Recently a manufacturer came to see me and, after his presentation, I said, "I do not think you are really a manufacturer." He was quite surprised. He said to me, "What am I?" I said, "You are a farmer. You are not manufacturing. Your business is in farming Government grants." Too many manufacturers have adopted the practice of

complaining about high taxes and Government regulation, but, in the same breath, asking for millions of dollars for themselves. Australia is not likely to become internationally competitive if more and more companies rely on Government grants. To become internationally competitive, Australians have to get off the tax-payer's back and put an end to grantsmanship.

Appropriate priority must be given to those trying to generate economic wealth and job creation through the private sector. Only then will Australia's economic ills be overcome. That will not be popular or easy, because the electorate has been discouraged from that view.

Australia cannot long continue closing down its major industries, running a huge trade deficit and building up an unprecedented foreign debt while still trying to support its growing population and its heavy-overhead way of life on minor and secondary industries. Australia is in danger of becoming a place where goods are bought, not made. This represents an economic dead end for the Australian people. Unless Australians have an important role as producers, they cannot long continue to be consumers.

The National Party has always believed that a reasonable level of Government services should be provided; but, when it has argued that there should be that level and no more, the Labor Party has complained and wailed and compared Queensland's performance with that of all other States. Although three-quarters of the ALP speeches in this Chamber have been arguments for greater Government expenditure on welfare, education, health, police, consumer affairs, Aborigines, or whatever, Queensland's long-term economic strategy has been aimed at a reasonable level of Government services appropriate to the capacity of the wealth-producing community to pay.

Had Queensland's policy been adopted nationally, Australia would not be in the pickle that it is in today. I urge members to spend time examining the Queensland Government's economic management performance. It will give the lie direct to ALP politicians who have been trenchantly critical of it and provide, too, some measure of reply to the bleatings of the members of the Liberal Party who are now hitched to the ALP bandwagon. It has even been suggested to us that the Queensland economy is dragging down the national economy. Let us examine that for a moment.

It is surely no secret that 97 per cent of Australia's sugar output comes from Queensland. Therefore, when that industry is in trouble, the economic effects are almost totally restricted to Queensland. The sugar industry is having economic difficulties. Is it the responsibility of the Queensland Government that that problem arose? Surely not! The 7 000 farms and the 30 sugar-mills, each large industrial undertakings in themselves, are victims of the quick-fix, kick-start policies of the Federal ALP. What assistance sugar-farmers have received was received from the National Party's policies of small Government, lower taxation and emphasis on the generation of economic wealth. I know where the farmers' priorities lie, and I know that their confidence will be in the Queensland Government.

It is no secret, either, that the Queensland Government, in the '70s, actively promoted the development of Queensland's coal resources. At that time, that was one of the proudest achievements of the Government. Of course, the Opposition complained daily and at every turn about those development policies, but these policies were shown to be right and in tune with the times. They resulted in an enormous amount of economic development and job creation that took Queensland to the pinnacle of job creation in Australia. Queensland was then the envy of all the other States.

Times change; the world demand for coal products has slowed significantly, and the infrastructure industry that for a decade was investing \$1,000m annually also inevitably slowed, as it did world-wide. The international press tells us that we are now in a post-resources-development era. The slow-down in that massive development expenditure has had its impact on Queensland.

Is the Queensland Government directly responsible for that massive change in international investment patterns? Certainly not! The base metals—silver, lead, zinc,

copper and aluminium—have been the victims of a phenomenon known internationally as social metal; the poorer nations have sought to protect the meagre value of their currencies with massive subsidies of those metals on their export markets. Is the international problem of social metal the direct responsibility of the National Party Government in the State of Queensland? That is a ridiculous proposition; yet the very significant problems of Mount Isa Mines and Queensland's massive aluminium industry are being blamed directly on the Queensland Government. What a nonsense!

What has been the response of the Queensland Government, in economic management terms, to these structural changes? Has it been adequate, reasonable and responsible? Any answer to that question must involve a comparison with what the successful regional economies in the world have done to accommodate the problem. Let us look at how the State's overall economy is faring at the moment. I do that happily and proudly. Despite massive structural change, peculiar to Australia, and particularly to Queensland, during the last 12 months Queensland generated over 51 000 new jobs net. That was not a bad achievement. During the year, electricity consumption escalated by 5.5 per cent, the highest electricity consumption increase in the nation.

Despite structural changes, the outcome for Queensland as a whole has been incredibly good. Long-term prospects are excellent. If the Commonwealth Government had treated all States in an even-handed way financially, more jobs could have been created in Queensland. However, as I have previously pointed out, that opportunity to create employment was specifically denied to the Queensland Government.

I turn now to some of the strategies adopted by the Queensland Government. I will mention but a few, although the list is long. A \$600m special capital works project has been designed to target problem areas of employment. That project has had a substantial effect.

One billion dollars has been borrowed for the railway electrification program, designed to target all industries which have been affected by the slowing down of the infrastructure industry. The railway electrification program has proved to be very effective and has cost tax-payers nothing. Eventually it will pay for itself through savings in fuel costs.

The Queensland Industry Development Corporation, operative since 1 July, will give Queensland the capacity to lend equity funding to innovative industries and will also provide a framework for export.

Overseas initiatives in Turkey and elsewhere could result in the sale of extra millions of tonnes of coal and could specifically aid the resources sector, which is being targeted in the Queensland Government's overall strategy.

A task force on business regulations has been introduced with a comprehensive program for implementation. The Queensland Government is doing something meaningful about regulations, contrary to the actions of the Federal Labor Government, which has multiplied business regulation to a greater extent than any other Government in Australia's history. There is no doubt about that. The fringe benefits tax is at the pinnacle of the Federal Government's regulation-making efforts.

Tourist industry funding has increased by a massive amount. Several new development projects are now under way along the Queensland coast.

A comprehensive development program in Brisbane has generated thousands of new jobs, with more developments planned in the near future. The planning for Expo '88 will lift Queensland's horizon in the international sphere.

In the past 18 months, Crown high-technology manufacturing parks have been established. One of those parks is situated at Labrador on the Gold Coast and another is at Eight Mile Plains in Brisbane. Both manufacturing parks contain high-technology industries established through substantial Government incentives.

Mr Davis: Is this your Estimates debate?

Mr AHERN: A research park is now being developed adjacent to the Griffith University. Work will soon begin on the construction of an industry incubation centre, complete with computer access, where Queensland innovators and inventors will operate in Government-subsidised premises to commercialise their ideas into new products for Queensland industry through the aid of scientists from three major tertiary institutions in Brisbane.

In answer to the honourable member for Brisbane Central—it is not the Estimates debate. I am answering the specific question that has been directed to the Queensland Government during the parliamentary recess: “What are you doing about diversification in the State and about broadening the economic base of Queensland?” I am giving some of the answers. They are hard answers, and they are working.

Crown estates, scattered throughout Queensland, are being continually developed and expanded. Good, fully serviced industrial land is provided in those estates at concessional rates to manufacturers. Nowhere else in Australia is that provided.

These are some of the things the Queensland Government has done in an effort to broaden Queensland's manufacturing and economic base. The urgent need to develop brain-based exports in Queensland is recognised. The Government has grasped the significance of the growth in the information labour force. Strategies have been developed through the Science and Technology Council to encourage information-based industry in Queensland, and a technology strategy will soon be announced.

Queensland has an innovation centre, which has recently celebrated its first full year of operation. It has been instrumental in assisting the innovators and inventors of Queensland to finance and develop their concepts into products, creating jobs for Queenslanders and profits for local firms.

Queensland is developing a 10-year telecommunications strategy that will ensure the best possible use, at the most economical price, of a range of telecommunications networks—satellite, microwave, etc.—that will enable the development of industries throughout the State.

A micro-computer demonstration centre has been established in association with the Small Business Development Corporation. The Government has funded a full-time staffed industrial supplies co-ordinating office in Brisbane to ensure that Queensland and Australian firms are given a chance to compete with interstate and overseas firms by spreading the knowledge of local products amongst major producers.

A new State purchasing policy—in force since July 1986—that has been developed will help Queensland firms secure a bigger slice of the Government work and create yet more jobs.

While this Government has been in office, it has quadrupled the budget of the Small Business Development Corporation, which is now fully prepared to give financial, marketing, administrative and other expert advice to small businesses.

The Government has established Q-Net, a satellite-based telecommunications network, at a cost of \$7m—a network that will not only reduce the so-called tyranny of distance and improve the living conditions of thousands of Queenslanders in remote and isolated areas but also be of considerable economic benefit to Queensland's industrial and commercial organisations looking to remain viable in remote areas. That program is being used to develop a communication manufacturing industry in our State.

An economic strategy is now being developed for Queensland. That will pull all the development agencies of the State together into a co-ordinated strategic mode to plan the infrastructure of Queensland and to promote economic development and job creation. That will give us the means to create the proper economic environment and practical assistance necessary to ensure future economic growth of our business community to the year 2000 and beyond.

They are just some of the Government responses to the economic changes occurring in Queensland—changes that occur in any community that is alive.

The Government's response to the challenge of economic change has been as innovative as any in the nation. It has carried it out with remarkable effect and with a very heartening outcome in the face of high interest rate strategies by the Commonwealth Government and a festering taxation system that has proved to be the most complicated bureaucratic, inequitable hotchpotch in this nation's history.

I am proud of the Queensland Government's achievements. The critics have not taken the time to look at what has been achieved. They propose, as Federal Labor proposed before them, that the answer to economic ills is further huge investments of tax-payers' money. Well, it is not. Federal Labor's strategies have failed miserably. A carousel of higher Government expenditure and higher taxation has got this nation into serious economic difficulty. I am sure that, after last Saturday's by-elections, Australians have suddenly realised the enormity of the problem confronting them because of the Federal Labor strategy. The solutions must involve providing the framework, the atmosphere, the environment and the incentives for the economic wealth-producing private enterprise sector to function and to grow. Then a reasonable level of goods and services can be provided to our citizens in the knowledge that the nation has the economic growth to pay for it.

The State of Queensland has enormous future potential. It has the resources, the climate, the life-style and the skill base to secure a great future for our children. There is tremendous faith in the future here and enthusiasm for growth, a sense of optimism and people willing to take up the challenge of risk. The formula is right. The major problems that beset us have been inflicted upon us by a national Government with its big-spending strategies, big-Government initiatives and big economic consequences.

It is totally right that we express our anger and our animosity at the national policies of the Left in Australian politics today; they have been nothing but a miserable failure.

Mr WARBURTON (Sandgate—Leader of the Opposition) (2.49 p.m.): I am thoroughly disgusted at the affontery and hypocrisy of the Premier and Treasurer (Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen) in moving this motion, particularly when all honourable members know that the Premier presides over the worst-performing economy of any State. That is beyond argument. Yet he has the gall to come into this House today and accuse the Federal Government of economic mismanagement.

This motion is a crude and very clumsy device to divert attention from the National Party State Government's appalling mismanagement of the Queensland economy. I admit to being very surprised to see the Minister for Industry, Small Business and Technology (Mr Ahern) second the motion. I can only conclude that he drew the short straw, because I do not think he had his heart in it.

The State Government is responsible primarily for the management of the Queensland economy, and it is that responsibility that the National Party Government of Queensland does not accept. The Premier and Treasurer (Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen) is poking his interfering nose into the Federal Government's backyard when his own backyard is in such a dreadful mess. It is laughable that the Premier and Treasurer should pretend that he is equipped to advise anyone on economic matters.

The Premier masquerades as the Treasurer, but he merely has top billing in a performing side-show of economic incompetence. That is what the Premier and Treasurer presides over, and I shudder to think of the devastation that would be wrought on this country if the Premier and Treasurer was ever able to influence national economic decision-making.

It is bad enough that the National Party State Government is incapable of managing our own State's economy competently. What is worse is that, on top of that, the Queensland Government is refusing—and always has refused—to co-operate in the national effort to strengthen Australia's economic performance. Australia can no longer afford the non-co-operation of the Queensland Government—that is, any Queensland Government—in efforts to sustain this country's economic recovery.

The fringe benefits tax, to which the Premier and Treasurer referred in his motion, is a Federal Government responsibility, as all honourable members would know, and is part and parcel of Federal efforts to reform Australia's taxation system. The stated aim of that reform effort is to make Australia's tax system fairer, and that is what the Federal Government is saying. I know that that is a word that is missing from the vocabulary of some or many of the Government members, but at least the Federal Labor Government has bitten the bullet. It has tackled the job of overhauling the taxation system in an effort to make it more equitable, which lies in stark contrast to the years of neglect by the Liberals and Nationals, who allowed rorts and shonky avoidance schemes to flourish.

At the Federal level, Labor has worked towards smashing the tax avoidance industry, and that is why so many screams are coming from those avoiders and evaders and their supporters when they are asked to pay their share. Along with other members who say that they know, I, too, know that there are anomalies in the fringe benefits taxation proposal in its present form. I have made my views known both publicly and at Federal level, and I have made what I believe to be at least a constructive suggestion for changes. I might add that the approach taken by me has more chance of success than the mindless and hypocritical ramblings of people, such as the Premier and Treasurer, who continue to whip up hysteria and misinformation. There are anomalies with the taxation proposal in its present form, and I am the first one to say that they should be addressed.

The Premier and Treasurer should be the first to agree that there is nothing wrong with fine tuning. The Queensland National Party Government engages in it all the time. One only has to look to the Drugs Misuse Bill, the commercial fire levies system that still has to be sorted out, the trading hours controversy, and the uproar that occurred a few years ago over changes made to pay-outs to compulsory third-party insurance claimants. When it comes to fine tuning, the National Party Government is expert, because it never gets anything right the first time, and it never has.

The question must be asked of the National Party and the Liberal Party: Are they or are they not in favour of stamping out tax avoidance and tax evasion? That is the question that must be answered. History will certainly record that at least the Australian Labor Party did take on the tax-evaders federally, and that some of them are now resting comfortably in gaols throughout the country.

On the subject of tax avoidance in Queensland I can recall a case in which a certain person tried to avoid income tax by using a device for issuing company shares and subsequently selling those shares.

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: Again the Leader of the Opposition is going to try to say something in a backhanded sort of way that he knows is not correct. What he will end up doing is saying it outside the House, and will get himself into further trouble.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row): Order! Does the Premier and Treasurer wish to take a point of order?

Mr WARBURTON: He is taking up my time; that is what he is doing.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I call the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr WARBURTON: On the subject of avoidance, as I say, I can well recall a particular case that ended up in the court, which found against the person. In doing so, it made clear that the tax avoidance——

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

An Opposition Member interjected.

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: The honourable member will be pleading guilty before too long.

Speaking to the point of order—the Taxation Commissioner did not take this certain person to court; it was the person who took the Taxation Commissioner to court.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr Warburton: I am talking about tax avoidance.

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: It is not tax avoidance at all.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Any innuendo made in this Chamber by way of comment will have to be substantiated for me to accept a point of order. I believe the matter is settled.

Mr WARBURTON: Mr Deputy Speaker, what I am saying is in doing so, the court made it clear—and I will prove the point by tabling documents in a moment if you want me to—that the tax avoidance scheme failed because the person concerned never had the slightest intention of undertaking personally the expense of exploiting the rights that a particular authority to prospect conferred. They are not my words but the words of the people who presided. It was as plain as it could be that it was that person's intention to secure a substantial financial benefit. All I am saying is that that benefit required the payment of income tax, which the person in Queensland to whom I refer tried vainly to avoid. The person to whom I have referred, of course, is none other than the man there.

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

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: It is all very well for honourable members opposite to laugh and so on, but I have to draw to the attention of the House through you, Mr Deputy Speaker, that there is no such thing as "attempting to avoid". There was never at any time any attempt to avoid. Everything was revealed to the commission. The commission made a decision, against which I appealed. It is as simple as that.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I point out to the Leader of the Opposition that the Premier and Treasurer has substantiated a point of order since the Leader of the Opposition named him. I warn honourable members that any imputation of improper motives against another member will be treated as such under Standing Orders.

Mr WARBURTON: Mr Deputy Speaker, as I said, that is the person—none other than the man who now has the audacity to condemn a form of taxation that he himself promoted at last year's national taxation summit. I am now referring to the fringe benefits tax, as mentioned in the Premier and Treasurer's motion. He promoted it.

A Government Member: He did not.

Mr WARBURTON: It is true.

As I was about to say, the story that I related before is all about the Premier and Treasurer of Queensland. It is about his appeal to the High Court of Australia in 1962 against a requirement for him to pay tax that he tried unsuccessfully to avoid paying. And now, this political hypocrite tries to throw a cloud over his own tax-avoidance attempts and his own call for a fringe benefits tax by moving this negative but very predictable motion.

The Premier and Treasurer has performed a very amazing somersault within his campaign against the fringe benefits tax. In recent months he has mounted a determined attack on the fringe benefits tax. Yet only this year it was the Premier and Treasurer himself who recommended a fringe benefits tax at the national taxation summit. He fully supported the principle of a fringe benefits tax, but he wanted employees to pay for it.

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

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: The single-rate tax that this Government is advocating is not the same principle at all.

Mr WARBURTON: Mr Deputy Speaker, the Premier and Treasurer has made his contribution.

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: I rise to a point of order. When the Leader of the Opposition sits down and takes it calmly, he may say something reasonable. The Leader of the Opposition is trying to imply something that is quite incorrect. There is no justification for his statement at all. The single-rate tax that I proposed does not apply the principle that is referred to in the motion.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! A moment ago I stated that imputations of improper motives will be dealt with according to Standing Orders. If the Leader of the Opposition is imputing improper motives against the Premier and Treasurer, I must ask him to withdraw them.

Mr WARBURTON: I am not imputing improper motives.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I warn the honourable member that, if he does, I will deal with him.

Mr WARBURTON: What I will do is table an extract from the document that was presented to the national taxation summit by the Premier and Treasurer of this State. In summary, it states that one of his submissions was for a fringe benefits tax on the beneficiary, but with employers to be required to record such benefits on group certificates. In other words, employees would have to pay.

Whereupon the honourable member laid the document on the table.

The motion moved by the Premier and Treasurer needs substantial amendment. I therefore move the following amendment—

“That all words after the word ‘that’ where it appears in the first line, be deleted, and in their place there be inserted—

‘This House views with the greatest of concern, and wishes to bring to the attention of the Federal Government the deplorable mismanagement of our State’s economy and the evidence of waste and extravagance in relation to Government expenditure of public funds.

The House brings to the attention of the Federal Government the following matters—

- Queensland has the highest rate of unemployment of any of the Australian States;
- the lowest average weekly earnings;
- the highest budget sector deficit for the 1985-86 financial year;
- a State debt of \$10.7 billion at the end of June 1985 raising it to \$12.5 billion as of now, because of increased borrowings;
- the Queensland Government’s refusal to properly address the problems associated with the proliferation of quangos;
- the Queensland Government’s mismanagement and poor planning in relation to our State’s electricity industry;
- the Government’s bungling in relation to fire levies, compulsory third-party insurance and retail trading hours;
- the Queensland Government’s frightful response to welfare issues;
- the Queensland Government’s handling of the Lindeman Island affair;
- the general crisis in our State’s emergency services;

- the Queensland Government's refusal to correct our State's corrupt electoral system;
- the Queensland Government's refusal to establish a public accounts committee to guard against the misuse of public funds;
- the failure of the Queensland Government to introduce random breath-testing in the face of strong evidence that in the first year of operation our State's road toll could be reduced 20 per cent; and
- recent media reports regarding a defamation action involving the Premier.

The House is of the opinion that the Queensland National Party Government has failed the people of Queensland, and no longer deserves to hold office in this State.' ”

I now raise a matter of grave importance to the financial, economic and political affairs not only of this State but also of the nation. It is a matter that is referred to in my amendment. I refer to recent media publicity about a defamation action involving the Premier and Treasurer and the Brisbane commercial television station, Channel 9.

It is not my role to pass judgment on whether the Channel 9 program *Today Tonight* defamed the Premier when it raised the allegation that he had used trips to Japan, said to be on Government business, to negotiate low-interest loans in excess of \$3m for John Bjelke-Petersen, his son. That is a matter either for the courts or for the parties involved to determine.

However, as the Leader of the Opposition, I have the right to be concerned when I read of an admission by Channel 9 before the Australian Broadcasting Tribunal that the defamation action was settled out of court, especially when I read that the settlement was in the Premier's favour for a sum in the vicinity of \$400,000. That is my business and it is the business of the people of Queensland. It is also my business to be concerned when neither of the parties involved in the defamation action has denied that reported settlement amount. It is certainly my business to be concerned when I am aware of many of the facts surrounding that settlement.

The basis for my concern is the unbelievably high amount of the settlement. I am advised by senior legal counsel that the amount is totally out of all proportion to the defamation action involved. I am advised that a settlement of \$10,000 for a defamation action of this nature would be considered generous. I am further advised that a settlement of \$20,000 would be considered excessively generous. However, according to the media report, the proposed settlement amount, as yet undenied by either of the parties involved—and that is the important thing—was a staggering \$400,000. That amount is 20 times greater than the nominated, excessively generous figure.

Naturally, the question arises: Why was that colossal out-of-court settlement made? Is it any wonder that yelling and screaming is occurring?

In an attempt to fathom the reasons and circumstances behind that extraordinary payment to the Premier, it is useful to consider many of the details of the take-over of that channel by the Bond Corporation and related matters. However, I will leave that for the time being.

I will deal with the astronomical out-of-court settlement allegedly paid to the Premier. If it is true, as reported, that that massive sum of money was paid to the Premier by the Bond Corporation, it was not a genuine out-of-court settlement. In fact, it was a corrupt settlement. I refer again to supporting information regarding defamation. The payment in question——

Mr WHARTON: I rise to a point of order. I find the words used by the Leader of the Opposition offensive. He said that the settlement was corrupt. It was not corrupt. I ask the Leader of the Opposition to withdraw those remarks.

Mr WARBURTON: I will withdraw them.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! It is within my jurisdiction to determine that the words used by the Leader of the Opposition, particularly the word "corrupt", are unparliamentary. I ask him to withdraw them.

Mr WARBURTON: I have withdrawn them.

The payment at issue is twenty times the biggest damages award for defamation ever given by a Queensland court and 800 times the amount that the Premier was ordered to pay John Sinclair by way of damages for defamation.

That single award to the Premier is about twice the total of all damages, settlements and legal costs of Queensland Newspapers Pty Ltd for the six-year period from 1978 to 1983 inclusive. I will examine the defamation costs of the major media group in this State, Queensland Newspapers Pty Ltd, for that six-year period.

During that time, no court awards were made against it in Queensland. One court award was made against it in New South Wales, of \$87,193, or a yearly average of less than \$15,000. More importantly, its total out-of-court settlements for six years were \$52,000, or a little more than \$8,000 per annum.

How does an annual figure of \$8,720 for all of the out-of-court settlements of Queensland Newspapers Pty Ltd compare with the alleged single payment of \$400,000 made to the Premier? The action was one that Channel 9 could easily have defended if it chose to, without reflecting on the truth or otherwise of the allegation or the question of conflict of duty and interest. Channel 9 could have defended its story as a matter of qualified privilege. The law in Queensland has been established to the effect that the media has an extensive privilege to discuss and criticise the conduct of politicians, yet Channel 9 chose not to defend this case.

The Opposition asks why it made that decision. The answer to that question is tremendously important to Queensland, as I will demonstrate. Is it correct that the insurers of Channel 9 refused to sanction that extraordinary payment? If it is correct, I ask: Why did its insurers refuse to pay the claim, if not because it was a bargain for services rendered and to be rendered by the State Government to the Bond Corporation?

Further support for my claims comes from the evidence of other broadcasters about defamation litigation. For example, last Friday the Australian Broadcasting Tribunal heard evidence on behalf of Channel 7 that it had settled only two defamation actions in 20 years and that it had a firm policy of defending defamation actions. If it is true that that settlement was made, any fair-minded Queenslanders considering the evidence would be forced to the conclusion that that secret payment was not a genuine settlement of the alleged defamation of the Premier but a cynical power play by the Bond Corporation to secure further advantages in Queensland.

Because of the media reports, the concerns that I have expressed today are rife not only amongst the legal profession right throughout the State but also amongst the community at large.

It is right and proper that I give the Premier the opportunity to answer media allegations, an opportunity that he has not taken at this stage. The alleged payment to the Premier in no way was justified in law. That is the point. The figure looks more like a telephone number than a realistic settlement figure.

I want to know whether the Bond Corporation has included or intends to include this alleged massive settlement as part of its allowable deductions for taxation purposes. If so, as a result, all Australian tax-payers will subsidise the Bond Corporation's payment to the Premier. I want to know whether Channel 9 share-holders were advised of the circumstances and the reasons behind the out-of-court settlement and the sum involved.

There is a clear obligation on the Premier to give full particulars regarding this whole affair. What settlement amount did he in fact receive? The media is saying \$400,000. Which legal firm did the Premier engage to mount his action? What were the Premier's legal costs in this defamation action? Did the normal arrangements of the National Party State Government apply? Were all the legal costs incurred by the Premier

met out of the public purse? Did the Premier personally receive the settlement amount, or was it paid into consolidated revenue as it should have been?

The Premier is duty-bound to provide full and complete answers and explanations to the matters that I have raised today. He is the political head of our State, and he has virtually been accused of taking \$400,000 as a settlement figure. If this defamation action was settled properly and above board, the Premier certainly has nothing to hide. Until he provides satisfactory answers and explanations, only one conclusion can be drawn regarding his secrecy—that he has something to hide.

This afternoon, because of the media speculation and the comments that have appeared in the media, I have raised very serious questions regarding the business dealings of the leader of government in this State and the dealings of a corporation that has had enormous impact on the economic and financial scene in Queensland. Since last year, the Bond Corporation has taken over Channel 9, which is one of Brisbane's three commercial television stations, it has taken over perhaps Queensland's most famous company, Castlemaine Perkins—the brewer of Fourx beer—and it stole the limelight at the 1986 National Party State conference on the Gold Coast with the Premier's announcement that the Bond Corporation intends to build a private university on the Gold Coast.

Today I call on the Premier again to disclose immediately the settlement amount of the defamation action with Channel 9. If in fact he did reap this secret financial bonanza, as reported in the media, the integrity of government in Queensland demands that he resign forthwith as Premier.

Mr Wharton interjected.

Mr WARBURTON: The Leader of the House did not even know about it. If the Premier refuses to reveal full details of this settlement, I call on him here and now to stand down and for the Government to set up a public inquiry into this matter. If the allegations that I have raised today are shown to be true——

Honourable Members interjected.

Mr WARBURTON: Government members should not laugh it off, because their heads are on the block.

If the allegations are shown to be true, the Premier and his National Party Government will be blown out of the water. The allegations centre on a reported \$400,000 payment to the Premier by the Bond Corporation as a settlement for a defamation action. That alleged payment can be regarded as 80 to 100 times an appropriate settlement figure for the defamation action in question. I call on the Premier to immediately reveal the reason for this incredible pay-out, if it in fact occurred.

The Premier has the opportunity today to tell the people of Queensland what happened. I was surprised and astounded that he did not give an explanation first thing this morning. If he was free of guilt, he should have risen to his feet and told the people that it was not true and that it was a much lesser sum. He is a public figure, and the public of Queensland deserve the truth.

I have been asked, "Was it a general 'you scratch my back and I'll scratch yours' payment by the Bond Corporation to the Premier, or was it a more specific sling for particular political favours?" If that is so, it is improper and it should not be happening in the State of Queensland. If the Premier is innocent, it does not deserve repeating. The Premier has a chance to come into the Chamber and deny that there was a payment.

If the payment was made to the Premier, he is embroiled in the most serious political scandal in Queensland's history. If the Premier accepted that alleged payment, he is not a fit and proper person to hold the reins of government in this State. Furthermore, if the Bond Corporation, as is alleged in the media reports, paid that amount to the Premier, it is not a fit and proper company to hold a television licence in this State.

Those matters have appeared in the media in this State. If accusations of that magnitude were made against my colleagues or other honourable members in this Chamber, they would defend themselves in this Chamber. Government members as well as Opposition members have done that on many occasions. In the present instance, no defence has been made. When one is a public figure in the public eye, one has to respond to such matters even though one might not like to do so.

Because the Premier walked out of this Chamber and was not prepared to cop it sweet, one can say only one thing, that is, there is an element of truth in what has been alleged. The Premier has the opportunity here and now to put an end to the talk that is particularly rife in legal circles and amongst the Queensland public. He can do that by meeting his public obligation in this matter.

Mr BURNS (Lytton) (3.18 p.m.): I second the amendment. I think that the National Party slogan in this State is, "You can fool some of the people all of the time; you can fool all of the people some of the time; if you cannot fool all of the people all of the time, the idea is to fudge it all with enough high-sounding rhetoric and, if you can hold them off long enough, the people won't realise until it is too late that you have taken them to the cleaners." That is exactly the policy of the National Party. It has been practising that policy all the way along the line.

This motion is the most calculated act of hypocrisy in recent parliamentary history. Twelve months ago, the Premier and Treasurer (Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen) went to the national tax summit. When he arrived in Canberra with his documents, he proposed a tax on the beneficiaries of fringe benefits paid by the workers' bosses and said that the bosses should only be required to record such benefits on group certificates. Why is he against it now? He is against it because some of his mates—not the ordinary old worker whom he wanted last year to pay the tax—might have to pay a bit of tax. All of a sudden, the Premier is against it because he and the cronies who have slipped the bucks into the National Party's pockets will have to pay a few bob.

Last year, the Premier went a bit further. He wanted to eliminate tax shelters, quarantine negative gearing and farm losses and eliminate film concessions. One never hears him say that now. However, that was part of the tax proposal submitted on behalf of the Queensland Government in 1985. The Premier and Treasurer is now ranting and raving against those taxes. He is a hypocrite. There is no other way in which to describe him. I repeat that he is a sheer, utter hypocrite. It is that sort of opportunistic, hypocritical behaviour by National Party Governments in this State and by past Governments—Fraser, Menzies and McEwen—that got Australia into the trouble that it faces today. It was the gutless failure to tackle the structural problems of the Australian economy by Menzies and McEwen.

McEwen is one of the Queensland Government's stars. "Black" Jack McEwen is the one the Government is holding up. He was the Country Party leader. I refer to Alf Rattigan, who was the chairman of the Tariff Board in 1963 until his retirement as Industries Assistance Commission chairman in 1976. Mr Rattigan referred to "Black" Jack McEwen as the godfather of the banana republic when he was the Country Party leader in the days of the Menzies Government. Mr Rattigan referred to John McEwen's protectionist policies.

I hear farmers today arguing against the protectionist policies. However, who laid down those policies? "Black" Jack McEwen was the one. The direct connection between the McEwen heritage and the banana republic scenarios painted today was McEwen's high protection policy. Rattigan went on to say—

"The effects of giving very high levels of assistance to industry are really rather similar to giving high levels of addictive drugs to people.

. . .

Once you start to do it they want more and more. The quality of life within the industries involved is pretty poor and the withdrawal symptoms are pretty terrible."

Rattigan went on to say that he fought John McEwen, Doug Anthony, Dr Jim Cairns, and finally Malcolm Fraser, along with John Howard, who was the last one in his time, the manufacturers, the unions and the Federal politicians—he fought against the policies that cause problems today.

When I hear the Premier attacking Lionel Murphy, who is dying of cancer, I realise he will never be an Australian. In my view, the Premier will always be a foreigner. He could never be an Australian. Australians do not kick people when they are down. Australians do not kick people when they are dying.

Australians stand up for the things they believe in. Why did the Premier do that? He did it because he wants the High Court to be as it was in the days of Sir Garfield Barwick. He wants a High Court such as that which has created the tax-evasion policies of this country. He wants a High Court that will look after the Tories—including Gibbs—who are in the Chamber today. I refer to Sir Harry Gibbs, not the Gibbs in this Chamber today; the one Mr Justice Murphy referred to as Sir Harry, the liar—Sir Harry lying Gibbs of the High Court. He is the type the Premier wants on the High Court; people who have allowed the tax-evaders—

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: I rise to a point of order. The honourable member is not entitled to make derogatory remarks about members of the High Court. It is quite out of order, and ridiculous.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row): Order! I will deal with the honourable member for Lytton in a moment. A provision in the Standing Orders states that a member may not impugn the veracity of the judiciary. The honourable member for Lytton should withdraw that remark.

Mr BURNS: I will stick to that old fraud Barwick, who used to be a member of the judiciary. Even the High Court itself, referring to the bottom-of-the-harbour cases, is reported by the *Taxation in Australia Journal* in the following way—

“Since the retirement in 1980 of Sir Garfield Barwick, the former Chief Justice of the High Court, the judicial attitude to tax avoidance schemes appears to have changed.”

My oath it has changed! Barwick was in favour of them. He gave rulings which allowed the bottom-of-the-harbour schemes to get under way. He allowed \$10,000m of tax-payers' money to be wafted away in bottom-of-the-harbour schemes. With that \$10,000m the jobs which we are arguing about constantly could be completed. Instead, the money went to the people at the very heart of the National Party—the grafters, the con men, the spivs and the others who donate to keep themselves on side with the National Party. Is it any wonder that its leader is raving about taxation and fringe benefits when it is his people who will have to pay?

The gutless failure to tackle the reform of the tax systems and the prosecution of the tax cheats has led to the current economic problems. It is also about time someone said to honourable members opposite that the ordinary man in the street is sick to death of hearing about farm leaders who can raise \$15m in five or six months and then demand that their workers' wages be reduced, that prices be increased and that farmers be subsidised at all levels.

Do honourable members opposite think that the \$15m fund will win them any votes? That fellow of theirs who is running round the countryside is starting to dig his own grave. In one breath that whinging leader screams for no more taxes. He wants taxes reduced. In the next breath, he asks for more subsidies. Who pays those subsidies? The worker pays.

Government Members interjected.

Mr BURNS: Farmers do not pay much tax. There are more tax bludgers on the Government side of the House than there are admirals in the Argentinian navy.

The worker is the bloke who pays. Tax is taken out of his wages at the end of the week. The farmers write off everything.

Mr FitzGerald: What subsidies?

Mr BURNS: You write off everything. The honourable member for Lockyer (Mr FitzGerald) is subsidised for the few words that he says in this Chamber. The few words that he says in this Chamber are heavily subsidised.

Government members cannot say that subsidies are not paid. I heard the Premier and Treasurer (Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen) demand fuel rebates for farmers.

Government Members interjected.

Mr BURNS: Is it suggested that they do not get fuel rebates? The Premier said the other day that he is pleased that President Reagan is selling wheat to Russia and that the farmers ought to ask the Federal Government to pay the same subsidy. The farmers are not asking for subsidies; they are demanding them.

The farmers' leaders who raised \$15m went down to Canberra and filled the brothels. The taxi-drivers were told to bring no more down. They all flew down to argue that they were starving. The farmers are the ones who ask the court to reduce the worker's wage. They do not want the worker on the cane farm, in the sugar mill, in the dairy farm, in the butter factory or in the meatworks to get a fair wage. They are against him getting a decent wage. All they want is something for themselves. They are the greatest mob of whinging no-hopers that I have ever met in my life. The farmers ought to sack them and get some decent farmers to represent them.

Government members complain about fuel excise. I did not hear any so-called farmers' leaders complain when Joh put up the proposal to pay 2c a litre extra for fuel for the bicentenary fund. Which Government member opposed it in Parliament? Let him stand and declare himself. None did. Government members are in favour of higher taxation.

Government members demanded more roads and more money to be spent. The honourable member for South Coast (Mr Hinze) said, "Why don't we spend more money?" When Joh went down to Canberra he demanded a 7.5 per cent reduction in all Government spending, but at the same time he said, "I want more money for Queensland. I want more money for roads. I want more money for this and that and everything else." How can the Government do both? How can it reduce taxation but increase expenditure?

I will say more about my mate Barwick. The honourable member for Nundah (Sir William Knox) has left the Chamber, but let me say that Barwick was the man who started the bottom-of-the-harbour schemes in this country. The reason that the Liberal Party and the National Party did nothing about bottom-of-the-harbour schemes was that the people who were slinging to them and putting their hands in their pockets were the ones that would have been hurt by action against bottom-of-the-harbour schemes.

I will list some of the names. I have a document with a list of the companies involved in bottom-of-the-harbour schemes. It has many pages. Honourable members opposite should look at the list. Two or three of them will probably find their family trust somewhere in the list.

The ordinary worker is paying tax through the nose because the Barwick High Court actively protected and promoted avoidance schemes used by tax bludgers by making section 260 of the Taxation Act inoperable. After the Barwick High Court had legalised the loopholes, Fraser and his political friends, including Bjelke-Petersen, protected the rorters politically by moving slowly to stop the rorts.

The principal promoter of those schemes was, of course, Brian James Maher. The scheme avoided tax through the purchase of legitimate companies, stripping them of their assets and sending the records to the bottom of the harbour. According to reports, \$200m was lost through Maher alone.

I remember the National Party on the Gold Coast squiring him at their functions. Maher and his associates received commission of \$8.7m.

Mr Borbidge interjected.

Mr BURNS: Maher mentioned the honourable member for Surfers Paradise (Mr Borbidge) when he was down there in Palen Creek. He said that he is getting \$2m a year while he is there. Maher will have \$10m left from what he rorted out of the system. He need not work for the rest of his life. If he is allowed to do that, that is a shame. Members of the Queensland Government ought to be ashamed because the retrospective collection of that money was stopped by their man Barwick, their Fraser Government, their Doug Anthony and the slow-moving Flo Bjelke-Petersen who voted with others in the Senate.

Mr Simpson interjected.

Mr BURNS: Yes, they did. The Liberal and National Party members voted all the way in the Senate to stop legislation that was designed to get the money back from Maher. Government members are on Maher's side—on the side of the tax bludgers.

Mr Simpson: You have Maher's money in your coffers, and we know it.

Mr BURNS: I will suggest this to the honourable member for Cooroora: I will put down my income tax return alongside the income tax return of the honourable member to see all of the donations that the honourable member received. Any old time that the honourable member wants to challenge me, that is what I will suggest.

Most of the money associated with Maher—and it amounts to more than \$10m—has never been recovered. Moreover, 916 companies were sent to the bottom of the harbour by Maher.

The Fraser Government was reluctant to move against tax-avoiders because, in the main, they were that Government's type of people. Let me mention some of the names. A report appearing in *The Sydney Morning Herald* on 15 February 1986 included the following names: Kerry Packer, Ian Rice, Victor Smorgan, the man involved in the meat industry, George Herscu, the fellow who has been donating funds to the National Party in Queensland, Carla Zampatti, wife of the Liberal shadow Attorney-General, John Spender, the former Country Party MLC, Sir Asher Joel, and last but not least, that old crook Abe Saffron. All of those people were connected with bottom-of-the-harbour schemes, and all were protected by the Liberal and National Parties from action designed to move against them.

Government members still have to show me why Flo Bjelke-Petersen and all of those other National Party senators and Liberal Party senators voted to stop the Federal Government taking the money back from those crooks. When Government members explain that to me when their turn comes to speak, I will be only too pleased to listen; but they had better not talk to me about retrospectivity, because John Howard introduced retrospective legislation when he was Federal Treasurer. If Government members wish to dump him during the course of the debate, they can go for their lives.

What a nice list of influential crooks got a buck out of the bottom-of-the-harbour schemes. When the Hawke Labor Government attempted to recoup the sums obtained by tax avoidance, the legislation was blocked three times in the Senate. The failure of the Fraser Government to tackle the problem of tax avoidance and the blocking by the Liberal and National Parties of legislation designed to recoup the avoided tax created one of the most unbalanced and unfair taxation systems in the Western World.

By taking their incomes in the form of non-taxable capital gains and fringe benefits, big business people were able to legally avoid paying tax. Instead of being paid a salary, which is taxable, businessmen were arranging for their companies to pick up the tab on the car, the school expenses, the mortgage and a whole host of other expenses limited only by the imagination of company accountants. Along with other businessmen, farmers arranged their affairs so that they received as low an income as possible, thereby avoiding

payment of tax. One only has to look at taxation records. It is a matter of form, and it cannot be argued against. They intended to take their incomes in the form of increased capital gain.

Naturally, the existence of these and a whole host of other tax minimisation loopholes, such as negative gearing that Joh was against last year, film concessions that Joh was against last year and the writing off of farm losses against other income that Joh was also against last year, have seriously eroded the taxation base. If honourable members on the Government side want to argue that the Premier and Treasurer was not against those proposals, I will supply them with a copy of the details.

The professionals also jumped on the bandwagon. In particular, the medical profession became extremely keen to make a buck by its demands made through tax-avoidance schemes. No-one can deny that. Barristers also became involved. The barristers' book-debt scheme was popular among members of the legal profession who became both clients and advisers. It would appear that the workers who were paid a salary or a wage were the only ones in Australia who did not have access to a scheme for the avoidance or evasion of taxation. I call it a bludging scheme. There is no other way to describe it. The worker had to pick up the tab for the bludgers, but no-one heard Bjelke-Petersen stand up for the honest tax-payer by criticising the avoiders and the bludgers because of the huge tax burden they had placed on ordinary wage and salary-earners. The reason is simple: Joh Bjelke-Petersen was up to his neck in tax avoidance. Joh Bjelke-Petersen does not want capital gains tax or fringe benefits tax because, for years, both he and Flo have used the loopholes to avoid tax.

I ask all honourable members to think about that for a moment. I am not being nasty; I am merely putting a case before the House. I challenge Joh to table in this House a document showing the tax that he has paid over the years. I believe that he and Flo have paid next to nothing. Many people might assume that, because he and his wife receive well over \$150,000 a year in parliamentary salaries alone, they would pay well over half of that amount in tax. However, because the tax they pay on their parliamentary incomes can be written off against farm losses on John's property and other family properties or be used in the development of their properties, they receive most of that tax back at the end of the financial year. This is one of the biggest rorts available for Queen Street farmers. Joh is not a Queen Street farmer; he's a George Street farmer. Joh and Flo are using their wages down here. They are just the same as the doctors. We have a new breed of farmers—National Party George Street farmers—and the leaders are Joh and Flo. There they are, taking this \$150,000 worth of wages and getting it tax free by writing it off against John's farm up in the bush. That system of tax rorts—

Mr Simpson interjected.

Mr BURNS: The honourable member for Cooroora wanted to be Speaker. In fact, he said that everybody asked him to be Speaker but he knocked it back. Remember him? I read about him in the newspaper. He wanted to be the Speaker.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row): Order! There is a requirement that honourable members refer to other honourable members by their proper parliamentary title. The honourable member for Lytton is straying well away from that.

Mr BURNS: I accept that. I am sorry, Mr Deputy Speaker.

In the newspaper the honourable member for Cooroora was quoted as saying that he was going to beat the member for Hinchinbrook—that is you, Mr Deputy Speaker—for the position of Speaker. He said that everybody asked him to be Speaker but he knocked it back. I will put it in the right context. I am speaking about the honourable member for Cooroora. Who would believe anything else he said after that story in the newspaper? It was said that he had no toys as a kid, either.

The biggest rort available is the Queen Street farmer rort. I say that Joh and Flo are George Street farmers. I also say that it is unfair that people with an income of

\$150,000, such as Joh and Flo have, should be paying less tax than the worker on \$18,000 a year—and that is what they are doing. The Premier and Treasurer did not speak out against tax avoidance, because he was one of the largest avoiders in the country. He is the last person to claim that he has paid his fair share of tax.

That \$10,000m loss because of tax avoidance should be put into perspective. In terms of the Queensland Budget, it is more than twice the total expenditure of the whole of consolidated revenue. That loss occurred because the Tories of the day—the members of the Liberal and National Parties—allowed the law to be amended so that tax-avoiders or bludgers could bludge on the ordinary community. First up, it is 11 times the Health Department budget, which means that we would have no more problems with poor old people wanting to get nursing-home beds, meals on wheels cut out for the lack of a few bob or cut-backs on community health and community home care if we could have 11 times the Health budget to spend on health care.

The loss incurred is 10 times the total amount that is spent on education. In other words, there would be no more kids in dark class-rooms with no lights, no more kids in tin sheds, no more parents paying p. and c. costs for the oil for the motor mower so the grass could be cut or for toilet rolls for the kids in the toilets. All of those things would have been paid for if the money had not disappeared into tax-avoidance schemes.

The loss incurred represents an amount that is 20 times the amount spent on Queensland's roads. Everyone would be able to have a road like the one Russ Hinze has got to his property if the money had not gone, and everyone would be able to have a four-lane highway past his front door.

The honourable member for Hinchinbrook complains about some of the roads in his electorate. The area near Proserpine, where the Minister for Corrective Services, Administrative Services and Valuation (Mr Muntz) resides, contains one of the worst sections of road in Australia. Something would have been able to be done about that if the Liberal and National Party members had done something about the tax bludgers and the \$10,000m that they took out of the ordinary person's pocket over a few years. And that is what they did. Everyone paid more money. Everyone paid more tax because Government members were protecting the tax bludgers. Government members were on their side and Joh is still on their side today. Make no bones about it.

That \$10,000m is a hundred times the total spent by the Primary Industries Department, or one hundred times the total amount that the Government spends through the DPI on farmers. The system was rorted by those tax bludgers who were allowed to get away with it by the Government.

The \$10,000m is twice the total defence budget for Australia. When pressure groups in Australia demand more money for this and more money for that, it should be remembered that the money was there, but people such as Brian Maher were buying race-horses for \$100,000 and boats for half a million or a million bucks out of the money that should have been paid in tax. That money could have been spent on the people, and the people would not have had to pay the amount of tax that they have paid.

I note the presence in the Chamber of the honourable member for Redlands (Mr Clauson), who is a lawyer. From his performance so far in this House, he is being over-paid. Lawyers were part of those tax-avoidance schemes; they were the ones who devised them. It was the tory lawyers such as the Barwicks who were the main architects of those schemes.

The matter that I wish to mention in my remaining nine minutes is that old Joh has always told me in this House that he was following "Reaganomics". He has said that he would follow the economic program of Reagan and reduce taxes, and that everything would be hunky-dory. He claimed that free enterprise would boom and that the whole place would be marvellous.

I will now examine what happened in America and consider the supply-side economics, as they are called. It was claimed that social justice causes inefficiency and

economic stagnation and that it is in the interests of society to subsidise the investments of the rich rather than the consumption of the poor and the middle class. The Government cannot deny that that is also its policy. It was claimed that slashing taxation would lead to an investment-led recovery of the economy.

Experience has shown that those claims are absolute bunkum. I quote from what happened in America. The former Director of the Budget in the White House has admitted publicly that the administration was fantasising and engaging purely in supply-side propaganda. He admitted that the whole purpose of the debate was to create the situation in which Reagan could give massive tax cuts to his supporters—that is, the wealthy. Haven't honourable members heard that in this Chamber!

I am quoting from records from Reagan's budget department. The result was that between 1981 and 1984—these are the latest figures I could obtain—44 companies at the top of the *Fortune* list of the 500 biggest American companies shared amongst them \$2.1 billion of tax rebate money. They declared \$53.66 billion in pre-tax domestic profit but paid no tax at all. So the Government paid them back \$2.1 billion in tax rebates. They declared \$53.66 billion in pre-tax profit, but paid no tax. It was claimed that they received not only a tax holiday but also an outright subsidy from tax-payers. I have not made this up; I am speaking from records. These are matters of fact. This is the sort of stuff that Joh has been throwing at us for some time.

The supply-side theorists would have it that these companies would dramatically increase their investment and employment by making use of the tax windfall. We are always getting this sort of thing in this House. One thing we are told is that if kids' wages were reduced, more people could be employed. Who really believes that? Everybody knows what these sorts of companies would do. They would sack the old people and employ more kids. When those kids got old, the companies would sack them and employ more kids. They would put the money in their pockets. That is what happened in the days of subsidies on clothing.

I can remember what happened when the tariff subsidies were removed from clothing. At that time, when I was in China I saw shirts selling at three for a dollar. On my return I saw one of the same shirts selling for \$21.90 as a special at the end-of-year clearance at Myers in the Valley. Nobody can tell me that it was not the big companies that were making a few bucks on the side. The fat cats opposite are always crying for assistance for the big companies. After a while it gets sickening.

We have been told that the big companies would receive these tax windfalls and invest them. I will cite the American experience. Companies reduced their capital spending by 4 per cent and their overall employment fell by 6 per cent. I will give the House some examples. Boeing paid no taxes, cut its capital spending by 38 per cent and reduced its pay-roll by 18 per cent. Dow Chemicals let its investment decline by 34 per cent and cut its work-force by 13 per cent. ITT reduced its investment by 30 per cent and cut its work-force by 25 per cent.

In contrast to the theory that Joh keeps giving us——

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row): Order! Once again, I have to ask the honourable member for Lytton not to refer to any other member by other than his correct parliamentary title. On several occasions during his speech he has referred to the Premier and Treasurer and his wife, Senator Florence Bjelke-Petersen, in terms that do not comply with Standing Orders. If the honourable member does not comply with Standing Orders, I will have to deal with him.

Mr BURNS: What will I say—the Honourable Doctor Sir Johannes Bjelke-Petersen?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member will say what is in the handbook. He knows that very well.

Mr BURNS: In contrast to the Premier's theory that if companies were given extra tax rebates they would employ more people, what actually happened was the opposite. The only benefits from the massive tax cuts to selected corporations were that they

responded by increasing dividends by 22 per cent and by throwing money at their chief executive officers. Average executive salaries increased by 54 per cent. So they gave themselves the fat packet in the pocket and the end result is that today the Democratic Party in America is changing its taxation policies. Reagan and his committees are considering proposals in order to do something about it. All the fat cat arguments that honourable members have been hearing for some time are a lot of tripe.

I will return to the point that I wanted to make about the speech made by the Premier and Treasurer. It is sheer hypocrisy for him to be arguing about fringe benefits taxes, and so on. Most of the problems in the economy have developed over a long period, going back to the days of the protectionist policies of "Black" Jack McEwen. Honourable members who wish to read about protectionist policies should read the book written by Rattigan.

Following on from that, it was the Barwick court, and the decision to appoint those tory judges of that day, who were more interested in protecting the tax-evasion policies of their friends and the fat cats who support the Liberal and National parties than in formulating decent taxation policies for Australia, that set this country on a very bad economic path.

Hon. Sir WILLIAM KNOX (Nundah) (3.46 p.m.): The debate has taken a rather interesting turn. If the new strategy of the Government, when it is plunged into a great hole, is to move a motion, I reprimand the Minister for Education (Mr Powell), who is supposed to be the heir apparent to the position of Leader of the House, for not keeping control of the debate and allowing the Opposition to take over. That is regrettable. It is rather unfortunate that the Government does not keep control of the debate.

I support the motion moved by the Premier and Treasurer. He has outlined the difficulties that the nation faces as a result of the activities of the Hawke socialist Government. Indeed, it was the same motion that I moved more than a year ago when Government members walked out of the Chamber. Nevertheless, the Government has now learnt that the real enemy is, of course, the socialists in Canberra and the socialists, who sit on the Opposition benches in this House, who support them.

Members of Parliament and members of the community should know that the Queensland Labor Party supports, without question, the policies of the Labor Government in Canberra. It does so without any reservation whatsoever. It is not good enough for the Leader of the Opposition (Mr Warburton) to say that the administration of the fringe benefits tax is at fault when in fact it is the fringe benefits tax itself that is wrong, is anti-social and is causing the problems.

Mr Davis: Why did the Premier support it?

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: I am not aware that the Premier and Treasurer supports it. If he did support it, I am sure that he made an error.

During the debate, the Minister for Industry, Small Business and Technology (Mr Ahern) at last admitted, on behalf of the Government, that this State has problems. I was pleased to hear the Minister say so, because one of the first things that must be recognised is that Queensland does face special problems, which call for special types of action. The Minister outlined certain action that he has in mind in order to overcome those problems. Unfortunately, until now, some of his colleagues have not allowed him to state what the problems were.

Most of the problems are outside the control of the Queensland Government. However, the solving of those problems and the cushioning of them is within the control of the Queensland Government. The decisions that should be made and have to be made from time to time to overcome those difficult problems should not be dodged in any way. Once the problems are recognised and understood—and today the Minister has indicated that they are—there is a pretty reasonable chance that some decisions will be made to assist the farmers, the business community and the people of Queensland in meeting the difficulties that have been visited upon them, that is, problems originating

overseas and those arising from the decisions made by the Federal Labor Government in Canberra.

Today, I hope that the Minister for Education, the heir apparent to the job of the Minister for Works and Housing (Mr Wharton), will not gag the debate and prevent Government members from defending the Government on the issues that have been raised. It is the duty and responsibility of the Government to ensure that a defence is provided.

Inflation in Australia is three times the level of inflation in the OECD countries, the countries by which Australia is measured, and the countries with whom Australia trades. The United States and Japan have reduced their rates of inflation to almost irreducible levels. Australia is immediately faced with an increase in inflation. Its inflation rate is already too high, and will be increased even further simply by the imposition of Government charges and taxes. That is a terrible state of affairs. It means that the standard of living of Australians will be eroded by an inflation rate that is increasing at a rate well above that of the OECD countries.

Australia faces its worst balance of payments situation since 1951, when the position was only slightly worse than it is today. The Federal Treasurer is allegedly the best Treasurer in the world. The Treasurer of Mexico received a similar award a year ago, and look at the position Mexico is in! The Federal Treasurer is well on the way to taking this nation along the same track as Mexico.

Mr McElligott interjected.

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: Mexico not only cracked, but it had to borrow money to pay its interest bill. A similar problem could easily face this nation if it goes any further down the same track. This is the same Federal Treasurer who warned the nation that it was on the verge of becoming a banana republic—a socialist banana republic. The only reason Australia faces that prospect is because of decisions and policies made by the ALP Federal Government. There is no other reason. Australia's foreign debt is predicted to reach \$100 billion by next year.

Mr Randell: A decision by the ACTU.

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: The ACTU appears to be governing the country. Many people have said Prime Minister Hawke ought to resign, go back to the ACTU and start running the country again, because apparently he has infinitely more power at the ACTU than he has in the Parliament of our nation.

Australia's foreign debt is predicted to be \$100 billion by the end of next year. That debt has been tripled in the first four years of the Hawke Labor Government. Today interest is levelled at usurers' rates. The rates that usurers used to charge are well above the level that will be tolerated in the community. Those rates are making it virtually impossible for young people to purchase their own homes. The socialists have a vested interest in not allowing young people to purchase their own homes. They would much rather that young people purchase homes with the help of the Housing Commission and public housing trusts. That is the only way the socialists see home-purchasers in this nation. The socialists refer to these people as little capitalists.

Mr Davis interjected.

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: Is the honourable member for Brisbane Central going to interfere in my speech again? He will have plenty of opportunity to speak later in the debate. He should concentrate on the policies of his party and look after his leader.

Real interest rates are at their highest level since the depression, and they are still rising. An announcement was made yesterday increasing the interest rates in this nation still further. The Australian dollar is at its lowest ever recorded level. It is hard to believe that at the turn of this century Australia had the highest standard of living of any country in the world. It has not taken very long for socialist governments to reduce the standard of living and the value of the Australian dollar to a very low level indeed.

An American Express joke is doing the rounds. A girl rushes up to a man and says, "Mr Wong, Mr Wong, I have lost my American Express travellers cheques." He replies, "What were they in?" She says, "Oh, they are in Australian dollars." He replies, "Don't worry, they are not worth anything anyway." Jokes are being made about our nation's currency.

Mr Davis interjected.

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: The honourable member can laugh and make fun of it. However, it is destroying the Australian way of life and our standard of living. The growth in Commonwealth Government outlays is now 5.3 per cent, which is the rate that it was years ago.

Tax receipts reflect the growth in spending. At present, a record 25 per cent of gross domestic product under the Hawke Government is attributed to tax receipts. Keating has become the biggest-taxing Treasurer in Australia's peace-time history. If there had been zero real growth, the expenditure would have meant a saving of \$20 billion in the first three years of the Hawke Government. However, in the last 18 months a family on average earnings has lost \$27 a week in disposable income. Translated from disposable income, that means a lowering in the standard of living of our community. People are beginning to discover it and feel it. That has been reflected in the ballot-boxes, particularly last week-end in New South Wales. The people who are dependent on the Labor Party, which claims to have the social reform cause high on its list of priorities, are suffering most under the present exigencies.

The impact of those policies on Queensland is horrific. I am sure that the Minister for Employment and Industrial Affairs (Mr Lester), who is presently in charge of the House, will agree with what I have said, because he knows what happens.

The fringe benefits tax is a super pay-roll tax. It is not a tax on the rich to go to the poor; it is not a tax that makes the 25 000 millionaires of this nation cringe. They could not give a damn about the fringe benefits tax. The fringe benefits tax hurts the little people in the community, such as the person who used to take home the firm's car at night, the man who is given some privileges in the staff dining-room and the person who is given some help with finance for his home. Those persons who have built homes in the mining towns of this State and those who receive subsidised rentals are the people who are hurt.

The boss is being asked to pay the tax, but the boss cannot pay the tax when he does not have the funds to pay it. He must simply say to his employees, "I have come to a new arrangement with you under these circumstances, because I cannot afford to pay x-million dollars in tax and the fringe benefits tax." The little people in the State are the ones who get hurt. The fringe benefits tax hurts the people in the motor car industry, the sugar industry and the mining industry, as well as public servants who enjoy the benefits provided by the Government, which will now be taxed. I wish the Government well in its challenge in the High Court on section 114 of the Constitution. Honourable members will recall that I raised that matter in this Chamber last year and again earlier this year. I said that the Government should act upon that matter.

Mr R. J. Gibbs interjected.

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: It appeared on the Business Paper.

I am pleased that the Government acted to challenge the legislation on the basis that the States should not be taxed by the Commonwealth.

Problems have occurred. The growth in bankruptcies in this State is the highest in Australia. Whereas in most other States the number of bankruptcies fell, in Queensland it rose. Problems have occurred in the housing industry. A very big reduction has taken place in the number of homes sold in this State. A great deal of that problem is due entirely to the high interest rates imposed on this nation by the Hawke Government. In fact, high interest rates are making it almost impossible for people to meet their commitments. For the first time in many years building societies are facing the prospect

of their clients' walking away from their homes. That is a result of the Hawke Government's deliberate policy of maintaining high interest rates.

The famous J-curve of the most famous Treasurer in the world is not even an L-curve; it is an I-curve—it will not turn, because there is not enough time before the next election for the J-curve to work. Mr Keating is being pushed aside by Mr Hawke, who, in his panic, is trying to fix up the situation for next year.

Queensland is discriminated against grossly in tertiary education. In Queensland, for every 100 000 of the population, 5 706 students are taking advantage of tertiary education. In New South Wales, the figure is 8 159, and in South Australia, 9 861. The national average is 7 678. A crash program is urgently needed to provide tertiary education for all Australian school-leavers. At the end of this year, of the order of 20 000 school-leavers will be turned away from tertiary education institutions in this State because of the failure of the Federal Government to provide tertiary education opportunities. The Federal Government claims to be looking after the unemployed. Those school-leavers have been waiting in expectation of entering tertiary education institutions. However, they will join the dole queues in January of next year because by then it will be too late for them to have obtained the jobs created in the community between now and Christmas. Those school-leavers will be disappointed and unable to cope in the twenty-first century, through the lack of tertiary education opportunities afforded them in the twentieth century. These young people are being grossly let down by the Federal Government, but the Federal Government does not care. So far as it is concerned, people can be imported from overseas to fill these vacancies. A program has been introduced to bring in people from overseas to fill those positions requiring skill, positions that should be filled by Australians who have been trained for those positions. The level of participation in tertiary education in Queensland, indeed throughout Australia, is one of the lowest of all OECD countries.

I support the Premier's motion and agree that Australia has a very serious problem in regard to providing tertiary education. Australia is facing the prospect of becoming a banana republic for no other reason than that the dead hand of socialism is trying to dominate the lives of all Australians and, in turn, destroy their will and dynamic qualities. Australians are being made aware of this.

I turn now to the statement made by the Leader of the Opposition regarding the Premier's settlement. His statement was one of the most serious accusations ever made in the history of this House, and it does call for an answer. It is regrettable that the Premier and other Ministers vacated the House when the accusation was being made. However, the Leader of the Opposition in making the accusation, has a duty to place on the table of the House the supporting and substantive evidence that he claims to have on this issue. This is a serious matter indeed, if one believes the accusation. The evidence is yet to be seen and examined by all honourable members.

The Leader of the Opposition claims that he has access to that evidence. He is duty-bound to place that evidence on the table in order that it may be examined by all honourable members before any other statements or moves are made.

Mr Vaughan interjected.

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: I am not here to defend the Premier on this issue. This is the first occasion on which this matter has been raised in the House. The Leader of the Opposition has demanded that an inquiry be undertaken. The bald statement made by the Leader of the Opposition is a very serious accusation indeed, and one worthy of response.

The Leader of the Opposition also has a duty to lay those papers on the table of the House so that all honourable members on both sides may form their own judgment upon them.

Hon. V. P. LESTER (Peak Downs—Minister for Employment and Industrial Affairs) (4.4 p.m.): In 1983 the ALP Opposition federally had a leader in Mr Hayden. When the

ALP realised that it had a chance of winning an election, it sold out Queensland, dumped Mr Hayden and replaced him with a union heavy-cum-politician from Victoria. That shows how much the ALP thinks of Queensland.

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr Warburton) and others in the ALP did not say a word. They copped it sweet. They could not care less. In fact, they still do not care about Queensland. They have done nothing to oppose capital gains tax—a new Federal tax that destroys incentive and takes away the chances of the little person to obtain a start in life. It throws the responsibility for community services from private enterprise to the public bureaucracy, and honourable members know what that does. That does nothing for the economy of this State or, indeed, of the nation.

The ALP has introduced capital gains tax at a time when other countries are phasing it out. The USA used to charge a capital gains tax at the rate of 34 per cent. It has now decided to phase it out. Already the tax is down to 17.5 per cent. France, even when it was a socialist country, decided to phase out capital gains tax. It could not make it pay. Canada is doing the same thing. Put simply, capital gains tax results in more jobs for the public service, no profit for the Government—and the loss of jobs in the private sector.

I use as an example a person who has saved an amount of money and decided to buy some land to build flats. The building provides jobs to the plumbers and numerous other tradesmen, who rent the flats. Now, however, flats and other types of accommodation are not being built by private enterprise. That responsibility has to be taken over by the public sector. It is always dearer for Government rather than private enterprise to provide accommodation. That is what the Commonwealth Government has done to Australia. It is not good.

Capital gains tax is soul-destroying. It is a senseless tax and it should be abolished. The Federal National Party has committed itself to its abolition forthwith upon its election. The tax is the result of a broken promise. Prior to the election in 1983, Mr Hawke spoke in his charismatic way at the Sydney Opera House, declaring, "There will be no capital gains tax." So much for Mr Hawke's promises! They did not amount to anything.

I move on to the fringe benefits tax. I am amazed that people such as the Leader of the Opposition (Mr Warburton), the honourable member for Cairns (Mr De Lacy) and all sorts of other people say that the fringe benefits tax is a good thing. They are blaming the employers for trying to frighten everybody and for putting people off. Employers cannot afford to retain people when such a tax is imposed, yet the ALP, which is supposed to support the little people, kicks them in the teeth, puts them out of jobs and does not care one bit about them. That tax will make Australia even more broke than it is now, although I do not know how it is possible. The Federal ALP and the Queensland Opposition are hell-bent on breaking this country. Unfortunately, they are succeeding, and we will all go with them unless the people of Australia realise that the Labor Government in Canberra has to be defeated and that the Queensland Opposition has to be reduced to a cricket team at the next State election. I am absolutely certain, on the basis of what happened in New South Wales, that the State Opposition will be reduced to less than a cricket team in the coming State election. The State ALP has not got the goods. It cannot perform. The people of Queensland need the National Party in its own right to do the job.

The fringe benefits tax puts an enormous burden on small business operators in particular. It is a tax that has to be paid even if the business has made a loss. Honourable members opposite, who I am sure have had no experience in business, should remember that. If a business makes a loss, usually no tax is paid. But the Feds have them now because even if they incur a loss they will still pay fringe benefits tax.

The tax has to be paid every quarter. Already, 550 people have been employed at the tax-payers' expense to administer collection of the tax. I understand that that figure will increase. That is the type of employment generation that occurs in Australia under the Federal ALP Government. It employs more public servants to administer collection

of taxes through a system that no-one can understand. Fringe benefits tax is so complex that, even now, many questions remain unanswered by the Federal ALP Government. The reason is that it does not know the answers but merely says, "Let us see. Let us wait. Let us find out."

I point out to the Federal Labor Government that the first quarter is almost complete and that taxation returns will soon be due. The Federal Government still does not know, in many instances, how returns should be filled out. Alterations have been made to the directions that have been given. Because the Federal Government is not too sure how the system works, amendment follows amendment.

Mr Unsworth said in today's edition of *The Australian* that the ALP had a tiger by the tail. He said that it will have to stop the rampage on small business and that he would have to talk to Mr Hawke. That is not a statement made by Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen; that is a statement made by Mr Unsworth who, at present, is fighting to win a seat. There is grave doubt that he will win the seat. If he does, it will be by the barest of margins. In tandem with the Queensland ALP, he will lose the election. That is what this taxation proposal has done for him. Is it any wonder that he has started to turn on his colleagues in Canberra, as the Premier of Western Australia (Mr Burke) and some of his counterparts are starting to do?

The fringe benefits tax legislation was rushed through Parliament without consideration being given to its effects upon employers and employees. It represents a total discrimination against country people, which seems to be what the Australian Labor Party stands for. The principle of one vote, one value is discrimination against country people; fringe benefit tax is discrimination against country people; capital gains tax is discrimination against country people. That type of discrimination is self-perpetuating.

The Federal Government tax proposals could cost the Queensland Government \$87m, yet the Opposition has the effrontery to say that the scheme is good for Queensland. I ask members of the Opposition to stand up and be counted; to stand up as men and women for the State of Queensland rather than for the ideological policies of the Australian Labor Party. Members of the Opposition in Queensland are to be condemned because they do not stand up for Queensland, and I wish that point to be made very clearly.

The Emerald Shire Council will lose \$20,000 because members of the Opposition in Queensland did not fight the proposal to implement a terrible new tax that no-one seems to know anything about. Members of the Opposition stand totally condemned because they have not stood up for Queensland and they do not know what taxation is all about. Members of the Opposition do not know what small business is all about. They could not care less about the small-businessman who offers employment. The attitude of members of the Opposition is soul-destroying and job-destroying and the Opposition does not know where it is going. The taxation proposal will cost coal mines \$20m which will make it impossible for Australian companies to compete against overseas suppliers.

Last night, I attended a business meeting at Carindale in the electorate of Chatsworth. Approximately 150 people attended and voted unanimously for me to say in Parliament that they wanted the tax removed. Members of the Opposition can find out for themselves from the Carindale Tavern that there was not one dissenter to the motion. It was a public meeting, not a political meeting. If I were a member of the ALP, I would be a little worried.

The capital gains and fringe benefit taxes were introduced because the Federal Government gave in to the unions at the recent, much-publicised summit conference. Originally, the consensus related to a new, broad-based consumption tax under which everyone would have shared the burden. However, at the summit conference, the unions said, "No." They took the Prime Minister (Mr Hawke) and the Federal Treasurer (Mr Keating) into a dark corner and threatened them, saying, "Look, you have got to make the employer pay. Let's kick small business. Let's kick the farmers and the job-creators. That is what employment is all about." As everyone knows, Mr Hawke and Mr Keating

gave in. The representatives of big business who joined them were caught, which is exactly what the Premier and Treasurer (Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen) said would happen.

Why wouldn't the unions win the summit conference? Twenty-seven members from the ACTU were there. Twenty-seven members were invited. There was only one representative of Australian small business. Just imagine that, Mr Deputy Speaker: 27 members from the ACTU, one from small business and only one from rural Australia. The business people and the job-creators did not have a hope. Mr Hawke could not even organise parliamentary numbers against the unions. I understand only about 18 members of Parliament were there; so the ACTU won again. It is very clear that already the ACTU is running the country, in coalition with the Federal ALP Government. There is consensus in this country only if the ALP gives in to union demands. Unfortunately, to the detriment of us all, that happens quite often. The Federal ALP is giving in to union demands and helping to wreck our great nation. It is taking away Australia's ability to be competitive. Australia has to begin standing up to union demands and not give in, as the ALP does.

Since 1977, compared with Japan's productivity increase, Australia's productivity has declined by 10 per cent. All honourable members should take stock of that. The statistics provide the proof. Australian productivity increases have declined considerably compared with most of its major trading competitors, but what has the Hawke Government done to overcome the problem? It has succumbed to the unions more and more and it has continued to kick people in business, those on the land and those who have tried to make a living not only for themselves but also for the people they employ.

I turn now to the SEQEB dispute. This Government took action to assist law-abiding citizens stricken by illegal black-outs when the Electrical Trades Union defied an Industrial Commission order to return to work. What did the Federal ALP do? It rushed legislation through Federal Parliament. It talks about the State Government rushing legislation through, but the State Government could not be compared with the way in which the Federal Government rushed legislation through the Federal Parliament to make it easier for State unions that had broken the law to move into a Federal award. The Federal Government thought it was assisting the law-breakers. The State Government challenged the Federal legislation in the courts and won. Because of that, Queenslanders have had a 100 per cent continuity of power supply ever since. That will continue in the future, but no thanks are due to the ALP. It did not even help the Government one little bit. It did not stand up for the defenceless Queenslanders in those times. It took a National Party Government to stand up, be counted and act for the rights of all of the people. Now the ALP is crying wolf. The ALP was not in it; it deserves no credit; and the people will decide accordingly at the next polls.

What else has the Federal Government done? It has tried to repeal sections 45D and 45E of the Trade Practices Act. If it had been successful, Pendarvis would never have beaten the unions. The State Government would never have won the SEQEB dispute. Dollar Sweets would never have been able to stand up to the unions and win. The Federal ALP tried to take away what little accountability the unions have in this nation. If the little people in this nation are accountable in the civil courts, why aren't the unions accountable in the Industrial Court? I repeat that simple question: if we, the little people—that is, each and every Queensland—are accountable in the civil courts, why are the unions not accountable?

It can be seen that the ALP has cast aside the aspirations of the little people and voted in favour of the unions, which do not have to be accountable. If Opposition members disagreed, they would have disagreed with me then, but they did not. They said they agreed. The unions have the say. It is too bad for the little people. The Opposition has given democracy away. It doesn't care. At least the Government is trying to stand up for the little people in this State.

I will spend a little time on the superannuation/productivity claim. In the time leading up to and during the recent hearings of the Federal Arbitration Commission, Keating and Hawke tried to paint a very rosy picture of our economy. That hearing was

for a flow-on of wages and for an employer-funded superannuation scheme based on productivity increase. By saying to the commission that all in Australia was rosy, they hoodwinked it.

After the unions had won the right to negotiate for superannuation, Mr Hawke appeared on television and told the people that they would have to tighten their belts, that things are not as good as they should be and that perhaps the Federal Government should not have been giving away so much. He then had the effrontery to kick business. All honourable members heard what he said. He did not blame the unions for what had happened; he kicked business.

I am very happy to be able to say that in the hearing scheduled for 8 August, which will deal with a claim by the Transport Workers Union, Queensland will stand side by side with employers and oppose the claim for superannuation based on productivity. The Queensland Government will oppose that claim because the building workers have already received an increase of 3 per cent and are applying for another one. That will be a total increase of 6 per cent. It will not be very long before their claims for increases are up to 15 per cent. Before not too long at all no employer will be able to afford to employ anybody.

I ask: What happened to the myth of the Labor Party's affinity with the unions? What has happened with the waterfront unions, the coal industry and the petrol prices? Because of the laws in this State, the Queensland unions in the fuel industry did not go on strike. What has happened with the airline unions and the Federal Public Service unions? What has the Hawke Government done to stop the strife caused by the actions of all of those Federal unions? I know the answer. All other honourable members know the answer. The Hawke Government has done absolutely nothing!

The new move by the Federal Government is the Hancock inquiry into industrial relations, which has the aim of transferring the power of the State Conciliation and Arbitration Commission to the Federal Arbitration Commission. It hopes to knock out the small unions and supports, believe it or not, the removal of the penal clauses.

The people who comprise the Hancock inquiry are Professor Hancock, who commenced work in the ACTU as a research officer, Mr Polites, who went to college with Mr Hawke—he is supposed to be the employer representative—and the big union heavy, Mr Fitzgibbon. I do not need to say any more about the last of those. Honourable members can see how that inquiry is loaded in favour of the big unions and against the States. In this State, 60 per cent of union membership is with State-registered unions and there is very little strife from them. All of the trouble comes from the Federal unions.

Look at where this is leading Australia. Australia is now ranked last in the international credit ratings of the 19 developed countries. Today's news is that the Strategic Research Institute has released a report stating that Australia has the worst current account performance of 19 countries. What a record for our Treasurer, although he has already admitted that this nation is headed towards becoming a banana republic!

Oil exploration has been cut back. What a terrible thing to happen. We should fight that with everything at our disposal. The current accrued debt is \$14.5 billion. Imports are exceeding exports considerably—except in Queensland.

I will leave my contribution at that. I have already said enough. All I suggest is that, for the good of this country, we should get rid of the ALP from Canberra and, at the next State election, put the National Party back in Queensland in its own right. Only then will we get a sense of pride back into this country.

Mr CASEY: Mr Deputy Speaker—

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: Mr Deputy Speaker—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row): Order! I give the call to the Premier and Treasurer.

Mr CASEY: I move—

“That the member for Mackay be heard.”

Question put; and the House divided—

AYES, 37		NOES, 41	
Braddy	Palaszczuk	Ahern	Lester
Burns	Price	Alison	Lingard
Campbell	Scott	Austin	Littleproud
Casey	Shaw	Bailey	McKechnie
Comben	Smith	Bjelke-Petersen	McPhie
D'Arcy	Underwood	Booth	Menzel
De Lacy	Vaughan	Borbridge	Miller
Eaton	Veivers	Cahill	Muntz
Gibbs, R. J.	Warburton	Chapman	Newton
Goss	Warner, A. M.	Clauson	Powell
Gygar	White	Cooper	Randell
Hamill	Wilson	Elliott	Simpson
Hartwig	Yewdale	FitzGerald	Stephan
Innes		Gibbs, I. J.	Stoneman
Knox		Glasson	Tenni
Kruger		Gunn	Turner
Lee		Harper	Wharton
Lickiss		Harvey	
Mackenroth		Henderson	
McElligott	<i>Tellers:</i>	Jennings	<i>Tellers:</i>
McLean	Davis	Katter	Kaus
Milliner	Prest	Lane	Neal

Resolved in the negative.

Hon. Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN (Barambah—Premier and Treasurer) (4.31 p.m.): Mr Deputy Speaker—

Mr WARBURTON: I rise to a point of order. Do I take it that the Premier is closing the debate?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row): The Premier is addressing himself to the amendment.

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: There is not a great deal to say. It is clear from the debate that the Opposition did everything in its power to support the Government in Canberra and the wrecking of this nation. The Opposition gave every indication that it agreed completely and utterly with what the Federal Government has done up to this point of time, which has resulted in the rapid rise in unemployment, the loss of job opportunities, high interest rates and high taxation. The Opposition gave its full and complete support and backing to the Federal Government in every respect, and that fact became quite clear and evident when the Opposition moved an amendment to cover something entirely different, such as breathalyser testing, the dole and all the rest. The Opposition did that in an attempt to camouflage. This is a typical socialistic way of doing things, and the Labor Party does it in Canberra by trying to get off onto another track in order to dodge and cover up the issue with innuendoes and other matters.

The Opposition cannot escape the consequences. They are there for everyone to see from the by-election results at the week-end in New South Wales. That by-election showed what people think of the Labor Party, the party that the Opposition in this Chamber represents. In spite of that result, the Opposition did everything in its power to support, encourage and back the Federal Government, and said nothing at all about the state of the nation or what ought to be done to get Australia back on the right track. The Opposition is not interested in anything of that nature at all, and, as usually happens, got down to gutter politics with all the innuendoes.

The Leader of the Opposition forgot to mention something of his own personal background in regard to ballot-rigging when he became Leader of the Opposition. He knows all about it. I know the history and can give the House a very interesting story

about that. The Leader of the Opposition did not mention that matter when he talked about his own background. We know the whole story.

Mr R. J. Gibbs: There was no ballot, you fool.

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: There was no ballot?

Mr R. J. Gibbs: He was unopposed.

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: He was unopposed. The way it happened was very clever.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Wolston will withdraw the comment "political moron". I am sure that the honourable member would not like it.

Mr R. J. Gibbs interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member will withdraw the comment or I will deal with him.

Mr R. J. GIBBS: I withdraw it.

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: By and large, this afternoon we have seen and heard a great deal that does not do the Opposition any credit whatsoever. Opposition members have stated clearly what they stand for and where they are going. Many Opposition members will not be returned after the next election. Obviously they must know that now. It does not matter how much they try to camouflage the matter, there is clear, cold, hard evidence that most of them will not be returned after the next election. The ALP wants to run the economy of this State and ruin it in the same way as the economy has been ruined federally.

The honourable member for Lytton (Mr Burns) attacked the rural community. As he is not in the Chamber, I promise him sincerely that I will have his speech distributed to every rural electorate. His forthright speech about dole bludgers, whingers and all the rest of it will read very well for the Labor Party.

Mr Wilson interjected.

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: It will be distributed in Townsville, too. The honourable member will be able to read it every second day and wherever he goes.

This afternoon it was made quite clear that the members of the Labor Party, the socialists, have no sympathy or feeling for country people. About 40 tax concessions and budgetary items have been taken from the primary producers. They make up the only section of the community that the Labor Party taxes from the first dollar. Members of the Opposition ought to be ashamed of themselves. Judgment will be passed on them at the State election, which is not too far away.

I can understand why the Leader of the Opposition is worried. He referred to a settlement on a writ. He should tell his colleagues to keep quiet so that they can hear what I have to say. I want the Leader of the Opposition to hear what I have to say, because he is the next cab off the rank. It is no wonder that he is worried. It is no wonder that he kicked up a fuss earlier. He is the next cab off the rank and he will go right to the end.

As everyone knows, I was defamed. As Premier of this State, and in my own right, I have the right to defend myself. If I am defamed, I intend to defend myself. I did that. The terms of settlement were that there be no comment on the settlement. That was not my wish. I could not care less whether Opposition members know or do not know the terms of settlement. However, they were the terms of settlement arrived at by the legal people.

I stick to my word and I abide by that. I paid my own costs. I paid all my own legal fees, which were very considerable. Any person is entitled to defend his good name.

Mr WARBURTON: I rise to a point of order. I heard the Premier say that he pays all his legal fees in defamation actions. If that is what he said——

Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen: No.

Mr WARBURTON: If that is what he said, I suggest that he is misleading the House.

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

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: To reiterate what I said, I was talking about this particular case and I said that I paid all my own legal fees and expenses. In this particular case, I did. Of course I did!

Mr Warburton: Did Sir Edward Lyons's daughter defend you?

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: The Leader of the Opposition is digging down into the gutter again, trying to create and suggest something. That, of course, is beside the point and totally incorrect. Why did he not suggest somebody else defended me? One thing is for certain: I would never allow the Leader of the Opposition to defend me. He does not have a good name to defend, nor does he seem interested in defending his name. All honourable members are aware of the background of the Leader of the Opposition.

The Leader of the Opposition sought to attack a man who was not in this House, Mr Alan Bond. He also implied all sorts of completely untrue things. I say that on Mr Bond's behalf. The decision was a purely legal one and that is the answer to the whole question.

Mr Warburton: What was the amount? You have a responsibility to tell the people of Queensland.

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: This is quite common, as the Leader of the Opposition would be aware.

Mr Warburton: You have got to prove it was not the biggest rort in the history of government in this State.

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: I promise the honourable member that when his case is finished I will supply him with the terms of settlement. I am quite happy to do that, and there will be no argument then about the terms of settlement in my case. It is as simple as that.

Hon. C. A. WHARTON (Burnett—Leader of the House): I move——

“That the question be now put.”

Honourable Members interjected.

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

Mr CASEY: Mr Deputy Speaker——

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Mackay will resume his seat. The question is that the amendment be put.

Opposition Members: Aye!

Government Members: No!

Mr CASEY: As the amendment has now been lost, I would like to draw the attention of the House——

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the House moved that the question be put. Did any honourable member call “Divide!”?

Opposition Members: No!

Mr CASEY: Mr Deputy Speaker——

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I must assume, then, without a call for a division, that the answer is in the affirmative, and I will now put the question.

Question—That the words proposed to be omitted (Mr Warburton's amendment) stand part of the question—put; and the House divided—

AYES, 48		NOES, 30	
Ahern	Lane	Braddy	Warner, A. M.
Alison	Lee	Burns	Wilson
Austin	Lester	Campbell	Yewdale
Bailey	Lickiss	Casey	
Bjelke-Petersen	Lingard	Comben	
Booth	Littleproud	D'Arcy	
Borbidge	McKechnie	De Lacy	
Cahill	McPhie	Eaton	
Chapman	Menzel	Gibbs, R. J.	
Clauson	Miller	Goss	
Cooper	Muntz	Hamill	
Elliott	Newton	Kruger	
FitzGerald	Powell	Mackenroth	
Gibbs, I. J.	Randell	McElligott	
Glasson	Simpson	McLean	
Gunn	Stephan	Milliner	
Gygar	Stoneman	Palaszczuk	
Harper	Tenni	Price	
Hartwig	Turner	Scott	
Harvey	Wharton	Shaw	
Henderson	White	Smith	
Innes		Underwood	
Jennings	<i>Tellers:</i>	Vaughan	<i>Tellers:</i>
Katter	Kaus	Veivers	Davis
Knox	Neal	Warburton	Prest

Resolved in the affirmative.

Honourable Members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Order! Order!

Mr Burns interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I warn the honorable member for Lytton under Standing Order No. 123A. I have called "Order!" three times.

Mr CASEY: Mr Deputy Speaker——

Hon. C. A. WHARTON (Burnett—Leader of the House): Mr Deputy Speaker, I move—

"That the question be put."

Mr CASEY: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order.

Mr WHARTON: I move—

"That the question be put."

Mr CASEY: I rise to a point of order. Mr Deputy Speaker, I presume that your ruling allowing the Premier and Treasurer to speak involved the Premier and Treasurer's actually speaking to the amendment that was before the House at the time. Therefore, the provisions of Standing Order No. 113 in relation to closure of the debate do not apply. Insofar as the original motion is concerned, I presume that the debate can now proceed, and I desire to speak to that motion.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I advise the honourable member for Mackay that the Leader of the House (Mr Wharton) has moved that the question be put.

Mr CASEY: I rise to a further point of order, and I draw your attention to Standing Order No. 106, which clearly states—

“When two or more Members rise to speak, Mr Speaker shall call upon the Member who first rose in his place.”

Clearly, I rose long before the Leader of the House rose.

Mr WHARTON: Mr Deputy Speaker, I move—

“That the question be put.”

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! No point of order has been made out. The question was determined by a process that is invoked under Standing Orders.

Mr WHARTON: I have already moved about six times that the question be put.

Question put; and the House divided—

AYES, 41		NOES, 37	
Ahern	Lester	Braddy	Palaszczuk
Alison	Lingard	Burns	Price
Austin	Littleproud	Campbell	Scott
Bailey	McKechnie	Casey	Shaw
Bjelke-Petersen	McPhie	Comben	Smith
Booth	Menzel	D'Arcy	Underwood
Borbidge	Miller	De Lacy	Vaughan
Cahill	Muntz	Eaton	Veivers
Chapman	Newton	Gibbs, R. J.	Warburton
Clauson	Powell	Goss	Warner, A. M.
Cooper	Randell	Gygar	White
Elliott	Simpson	Hamill	Wilson
FitzGerald	Stephan	Hartwig	Yewdale
Gibbs, I. J.	Stoneman	Innes	
Glasson	Tenni	Knox	
Gunn	Turner	Kruger	
Harper	Wharton	Lee	
Harvey		Lickiss	
Henderson		Mackenroth	
Jennings	<i>Tellers:</i>	McElligott	<i>Tellers:</i>
Katter	Kaus	McLean	Davis
Lane	Neal	Milliner	Prest

Resolved in the affirmative.

Question—That the motion (Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen) be agreed to—put; and the House divided—

AYES, 48		NOES, 30	
Ahern	Lane	Braddy	Warner, A. M.
Alison	Lee	Burns	Wilson
Austin	Lester	Campbell	Yewdale
Bailey	Lickiss	Casey	
Bjelke-Petersen	Lingard	Comben	
Booth	Littleproud	D'Arcy	
Borbidge	McKechnie	De Lacy	
Cahill	McPhie	Eaton	
Chapman	Menzel	Gibbs, R. J.	
Clauson	Miller	Goss	
Cooper	Muntz	Hamill	
Elliott	Newton	Kruger	
FitzGerald	Powell	Mackenroth	
Gibbs, I. J.	Randell	McElligott	
Glasson	Simpson	McLean	
Gunn	Stephan	Milliner	
Gygar	Stoneman	Palaszczuk	
Harper	Tenni	Price	
Hartwig	Turner	Scott	
Harvey	Wharton	Shaw	
Henderson	White	Smith	
Innes		Underwood	
Jennings	<i>Tellers:</i>	Vaughan	<i>Tellers:</i>
Katter	Kaus	Veivers	Davis
Knox	Neal	Warburton	Prest

Resolved in the affirmative.

PAPERS

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

Reports—

Public Accountants Registration Board of Queensland for the year ended 31 December 1985

Net Surplus Profits of the State Government Insurance Office (Queensland) for the year ended 30 June 1985.

The following papers were laid on the table—

Proclamation under—

City of Brisbane Act 1924-1986

Orders in Council under—

Public Service Act 1922-1978

Finance Administration and Audit Act 1977-1985

State Housing Act 1945-1985

State Housing (Freeholding of Land) Act 1957-1984

State Housing Act 1945-1986

State Housing Act 1945-1986 and the Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Act 1982-1984

Firearms and Offensive Weapons Act 1979-1986

Firearms and Offensive Weapons Act 1979

Explosives Act 1952-1981

Mining (Fossicking) Act 1985

Mines Regulation Act 1964-1983

Petroleum Act 1923-1985

Small Business Development Corporation Act 1980-1983

Industrial Development Act 1963-1981 and the Local Government Act 1936-1985

Industrial Development Act 1963-1981 and the Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Act 1982-1984

Urban Public Passenger Transport Act 1984 and the Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Act 1982

City of Brisbane Act 1924-1986 and the Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Act 1982-1984

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

Regulations under—

Public Service Act 1922-1978

Public Accountants Registration Act 1946-1975

Land Tax Act 1915-1985

Soccer Football Pools Act 1976-1982

Stamp Act 1894-1986

Casino Control Act 1982

Golden Casket Art Union Act 1978-1984

Lotto Act 1981-1984

Builders' Registration and Home-owners' Protection Act 1979-1983

Firearms and Offensive Weapons Act 1979-1986

- Traffic Act 1949-1985
- State Transport Act 1960-1985
- Motor Vehicle Driving Instruction School Act 1969-1985
- Motor Vehicles Control Act 1975-1985
- Tow-Truck Act 1973-1985
- Motor Vehicles Safety Act 1980-1985
- Urban Public Passenger Transport Act 1984
- Local Government Superannuation Act 1985
- Sewerage and Water Supply Act 1949-1985
- Clean Waters Act 1971-1982
- Racing and Betting Act 1980-1985
- Rules under—
 - Coal Mining Act 1925-1981
- Notification under—
 - Casino Control Act 1982
- Ordinances under—
 - City of Brisbane Act 1924-1984
- Trust Deed under—
 - Casino Control Act 1982.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Delegation of Authority: Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing

Hon. Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN (Barambah—Premier and Treasurer) (5.8 p.m.), by leave: I desire to inform the House that His Excellency the Governor, by virtue of the provisions of the Officials in Parliament Act 1896-1982, has authorised and empowered the Honourable Martin James Tenni, MLA, Minister for Water Resources and Maritime Services, to perform and exercise all or any of the duties, powers and authorities imposed or conferred upon the Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing by any Act, rule, practice or ordinance on and from 4 August 1986 and during the absence of the Honourable Russell James Hinze, MLA.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Protests over Subsidised Wheat Sales

Mr WARBURTON: In directing a question to the Premier and Treasurer, I refer to the protest made yesterday by Australian wheat-growers outside the American Embassy in Canberra against the invasion of subsidised United States wheat into Australia's export markets in the Soviet Union, in particular. I ask: Does the Premier and Treasurer or the State Government support Australia's primary producers in their efforts to defend these very important export outlets? I ask further: What protests have been lodged by the Premier and Treasurer or by the State Government to the United States Government on behalf of Queensland wheat-growers?

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: I have lodged a protest in what I think is the correct place in the first instance, and that is to the Federal Government, which has increased costs of primary production astronomically. The price of petrol has been increased to a figure that is now at least four or five times what it was a year or so ago, and interest rates have been increased to three times what they were previously. All sorts of taxes, such as the capital gains tax, have been imposed on primary producers. The Federal Labor Government makes them pay taxes on the first dollar that they earn. The primary production sector of the community is the only sector that has to pay those

kinds of taxes. Everybody else is provided with a threshold of approximately \$5,000, but not primary producers.

I have protested loudly and in the clearest possible terms in all media outlets in Queensland. I have asked that the message be passed on to the Labor Government in Canberra, because that is where the real problem started.

My response to the second part of the problem is that, although the Queensland Government is unhappy about wheat-growers running into this problem, Australian wheat-producers are not the only ones in the world who can claim the particular market referred to. It is certainly not fair that our growers have to compete with subsidised wheat, but, on the other hand, because of the way in which the primary producers have been burdened by the Federal Government, they are behind scratch in the race to sell their wheat.

Mr Warburton: You have not protested to the United States?

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: I have not protested to the United States Government. In similar vein, I might ask what the Leader of the Opposition has done about protesting to the Federal Labor Government on behalf of primary producers? The Leader of the Opposition has not done anything, and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition (Mr Burns) calls primary producers "dole bludgers" and "whingers". That is what the Leader of the Opposition and his deputy think about primary producers, and, of course, that is typical of the attitude of the Australian Labor Party.

The main problem is that an over-supply of wheat has occurred. Unfortunately, that has caught up with primary producers in Australia. It is regrettable; but it has happened, and the only other way that assistance can be provided is by reducing costs associated with primary production. The cost of fuel should be cut by half, and primary producers should also be charged interest at half the current rate. The unions also should get off their backs about capital gains tax and superannuation.

There are a hundred and one ways that the Australian Labor Party could do something to help primary producers, but it has not done anything except criticise them.

Itemisation of Ministerial Expenses Incurred During Overseas Visit

Mr WARBURTON: I cannot miss out on asking a question of the "\$32,000-man", and in directing a question to the Minister for Employment and Industrial Affairs, I refer to the 10-day, \$32,000 Asian ministerial trip.

Mrs Chapman: You have not looked at Mr Hayden's, have you?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I draw to the attention of honourable members that when questions are being asked and answered, there should be much less noise in the Chamber.

Mr Casey: Send her out.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I refer to the honourable member for Mackay.

Mr WARBURTON: I will not repeat what I have just said, but I refer to the trip in the Minister's own words. The Minister said that he was so "wrecked" that he needed a few days to recover. In view of the fact that the cost of the trip is reported to have been \$3,200 a day, I ask: Has the Minister prepared an itemised account of that ministerial trip? If he has not done so, will he have one prepared so that it can be tabled in the House tomorrow?

I have heard enough rubbish about the Auditor-General's approving it, and I would like the Minister to answer this most important question: Will he advise now as to what expenses were incurred in China? If the Minister's claim about accepting an invitation is correct—and I believe him in respect of that particular matter—I point out that in all cases that I know of, the bill is met by the Chinese Government.

Mr LESTER: I am most interested to hear this question, because I represented Australia to support its young people in the Work Skill Olympics. I ask honourable

members: Where was the ALP? Where was Mr Willis? Where was Mr Crabb? In fact, where was Mr Pat Hills? They could not be bothered attending. They were not even interested in the youth of this country. I had to represent the lot of them. Here is the Opposition questioning what I am trying to do. The ALP should be totally ashamed of itself. It has written off the young people of this country; it really has. It is not interested in them.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr LESTER: I suggest that Opposition members settle down and allow me to finish my answer. While I am on my feet I will not give up.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr LESTER: If honourable members opposite will show the decorum that is expected in this Chamber, I shall continue.

Today I was somewhat amazed to read a statement about the Federal Minister for Tourism (Mr John Brown). I will not go into all the nitty-gritty and the nice, funny little things of his account, which he seems most reluctant to release, but I will refer to a few things now, and I might keep a few for a bit further down the track. In one trip Mr Brown visited London, Rome, New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Italy and several other places. Honourable members opposite might remember that I have only had one trip, and it was a representative one.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr LESTER: One trip! I have had only one trip while I have been a Minister, and I was representing Australia and supporting the youth of our nation.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr LESTER: I will return to the facts surrounding Mr Brown's trip. He and his wife and secretary hired two Mercedes motor cars for use between Rome, Florence and Milan. For that four-day trip, the cost of car hire alone was \$2,907.18.

A Government Member: Weren't they talking to one another?

Mr LESTER: A colleague asks me, "Weren't they talking to one another?" I do not know whether they were talking to one another or what the situation was.

While in London, Mr Brown hired big, luxury, chauffeur-driven cars for four days at a cost of \$1,264.60. Then he went to New York and apparently needed a chauffeur-driven car overnight to go from the airport to the hotel and back. The cost on that occasion was \$607.73. In San Francisco, he needed a car just for a few hours—at a cost of \$597.19. He went to Los Angeles and hired a car for 10 days. The cost of that was \$10,476.21. Need I say any more about what is being spent? I have done my duty. I have looked after the people of this country. I have looked after the young people. The Leader of the Opposition could not care less, and that is why he asked the question.

Liberal Party Attitude to Bond Corporation University

Mr NEAL: In asking a question of the Premier and Treasurer, I refer to the vitriolic attacks on the proposed Bond university by various academics, the Federal Minister for Education (Senator Susan Ryan) and others. I now ask: Is he aware that the State Liberal Party education spokesman (Mr Innes) said that the Bond university could become an enclave for low-achieving little rich kids who bought themselves a place? Is he also aware that that statement by the member for Sherwood is in conflict with the policy of the Federal Liberal Party, whose spokesman, Mr Shack, said that the Liberal Party supported the concept of a private university and would consider making private education expenditure tax deductible if it were in Government?

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: Yes, I did read that statement. Perhaps in hindsight the honourable member for Sherwood would feel very much ashamed of himself. The honourable member is a strange mixture. He adopts one attitude towards private enterprise on the one hand and on the other he goes the other way. Both he and the former president of the Queensland Teachers Union, Mr Schuntner, have adopted the same attitude, but their Liberal Party counterparts in Canberra support the Government's concept very strongly. I just cannot work out the honourable member for Sherwood. In very many ways he is a real mystery. I will leave it at that. I am quite aware of those statements and, quite naturally, I am sure many other people will regret that those statements have been made.

Mr P. Keating

Mr NEAL: In directing a question to the Premier and Treasurer, I raise a matter of concern about the so-called world's greatest Treasurer, Mr Keating, whose stewardship has seen this nation drifting rapidly towards the economic status of a third-world country. I now ask: How did Mr Keating enter Federal Parliament? In 1968, at the time of pre-selection for the safe ALP seat of Blaxland in New South Wales, were efforts made to rig the preselection vote in favour of Mr Keating? If so, does Mr Keating, who now holds one of the highest offices of responsibility and trust in this nation today, owe his original endorsement, and therefore his seat in Parliament, to actions of dishonest vote manipulation that are entirely unacceptable to the people of Australia and the rank and file members of the ALP?

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: The answer is rather long and involved. I know the history of this matter very well. However, I ask the honourable member to put the question on notice so that I can answer it correctly tomorrow.

Mr NEAL: I do so accordingly.

Extractive Industry Payments Outstanding to Albert Shire Council

Mr LINGARD: In asking a question of the Acting Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing, I refer to media reports that, as part of its budget process, the Albert Shire Council will be required to publicise in its statements for the financial year 1985-86 a list of outstanding payments under agreements relating to extractive industry operations. I now ask: Is that correct? Is he aware of any outstanding payments relating to extractive industry operations in that shire?

Mr TENNI: I heard that radio report this morning and have prepared an answer on this matter. I am reliably advised that the Albert Shire Council, acting on the advice of its legal advisers, considers that there are no outstanding payments relating to extractive industry operations in that shire. Accordingly, no items dealing with this will be contained in the council's financial statement; nor is that necessary.

I am also advised that, on the advice of its legal advisers, the Albert Shire Council believes that the present procedures for the receipt of moneys payable under various agreements relative to extractive industry operations are adequate and reasonable.

Milk Industry Over-production

Mr LINGARD: In asking a question of the Minister for Primary Industries, I refer to the definite steps taken by the Queensland Government in the dairying industry to rationalise the amount of milk produced by ensuring that over-production does not occur. Clearly, that has not occurred in Labor States such as Victoria and, as a result, the Federal Government needs to introduce national marketing legislation. I now ask: What effect will the Kerin plan have on the Queensland dairying industry? Is it simply a plan to prop up the industry in other States of Australia at the expense of Queensland?

Mr TURNER: The State Government and the dairying industry have reluctantly agreed to enter into the National Dairy Marketing Plan, which is commonly referred to as the Kerin Plan. Unfortunately, nowhere in that particular plan are constraints placed

on increased production. Over a long period that was put forward by the Queensland industry under what is commonly referred to as the Rowley plan.

The national dairy marketing arrangements weigh heavily on the dairy industry in Queensland. In effect, Queensland will be paying in the vicinity of a 1.5c a litre levy on all milk, virtually as a subsidy for the milk-manufacturing State of Victoria, which exports most of its product. At present, the export market is not viable. That certainly creates a climate in which one could say that the Queensland industry is directly subsidising the over-production of other States.

Of course, in the event of a break-down in domestic market milk arrangements across the board, a comfort clause is inserted in the legislation that can be triggered so that action can be taken against paying that levy. Recently, in Adelaide, at the Australian Agricultural Council meeting, I was advised by the industry that, in the event of any break-down in domestic market milk arrangements by an intrusion of milk from other States to the Queensland market, the industry would immediately and unilaterally take action to resist paying the levy and the matter would be raised with the Federal Government. In Adelaide, I indicated that to Mr Kerin.

Sugar Industry Funding

Mr STONEMAN: In directing a question to the Minister for Primary Industries, I refer to the long-running procrastination by the Federal Government to decide on funding vital to the sugar industry of this nation and to the thousands of farmers, farm-workers, mill-workers, mill-operators, service towns and business people who are dependent on support in the form of positive decision-making as well as finance. I ask: Has any money flowed yet from the Federal Treasury to the sugar industry? Following agreement on financial support for the industry, what payments have been made by the Queensland Government? Has the Federal Minister indicated any practical means by which cane-farmers—and, I might say, primary producers generally—might survive the crippling imposition of incredibly high interest rates under the Hawke/Keating monetary policies?

Mr TURNER: The simple answer is, "No." No Federal Government money has flowed through to assist the sugar industry in its time of crisis. That is regrettable. In fact, the Queensland Government has sought from the Federal Government ratification and signing of the arrangements under which joint arrangements can be entered into to provide financial assistance to the sugar industry. I understand from Mr Kerin that that has received approval from the Federal Department of Primary Industry and that, at present, it is being held up at Treasury level. One can only ask why that hold-up has occurred.

The State Government has put many, many millions of dollars into lifting the first delivery advance. At present, the Government has provided money to assist the sugar-mills during their crisis. It is a matter of regret that, to date, the Federal Government has put forward no money to assist the ailing sugar industry.

Comments by Member for Townsville West in *Townsville Bulletin*

Mr STONEMAN: In directing a question to the Minister for Northern Development and Community Services, I refer to a report in today's *Townsville Bulletin* stating that the Labor member for Townsville West (Geoff Smith) is taking a positive stance in respect of Labor's Townsville electoral chances at the State election, in spite of the resounding message given by polls conducted last week-end in New South Wales and Victoria. He is reported as re-emphasising his support and that of his party for the infamous fringe benefits tax by saying that it can be positively promoted. I ask the Minister: In view of a comment reported at the end of today's *Townsville Bulletin* editorial, that is, "If Geoff Smith thinks this tax can be 're-sold' to the electorate, then we suggest he should think again. The results of the by-elections in NSW show a fundamental concern.", does the Minister believe that a very strong chance exists that the ALP will be wiped out by the National Party in Townsville?

Mr KATTER: I thank the honourable member for Burdekin for this question. It is rather a curious statement by the honourable member for Townsville West (Mr Smith). He states that there is certainly a message in the results for the Federal Government, namely, that its policies must be sold more persuasively, not that they are wrong. This would indicate that Mr Smith is in agreement with the Federal Government's policies, and believes that any volatile swing in the State election would be concentrated in the larger metropolitan areas, with only a marginal backlash on provincial vote patterns. Hope springs eternal!

I ask honourable members to recall that all the council, State and Federal positions in 1975 were held by the anti-Labor forces. The National Party looks forward very much to the swing that is coming in 1986, which will restore the party to the position it occupied in 1975. The National Party has been battling, and, in answering this question, I should bring to the attention of the House that whereas the ALP in north Queensland has had nine full-time professional media people working on its behalf, until very recently the National Party had nobody in north Queensland working for the Queensland Government. For the last two years the National Party has had only one person working for the Queensland Government, and although the number of people working on its behalf has been small, those people have been extremely effective. The National Party now has one of the top political operators in the State and a full secretariat, small though it might be, operating out of Townsville. The party can look forward very much to overcoming the sort of problems that it has experienced in the past.

The forthcoming election will be most unfortunate for the Labor members in north Queensland. I am actually trembling in my shoes because the honourable member for Townsville South (Mr Alex Wilson) is running against me in this election. The extraordinary statements by the honourable member for Townsville West were outshone only by the extraordinary statements by one of the other candidates in Townsville, who gave the developers at Magnetic Quays carte blanche to do exactly as they pleased there, without any restraints or qualifications whatsoever. This was a most extraordinary commitment by this candidate, and one that I very much regret. I am sure a number of his councillors must also regret that commitment.

That statement was beaten by another statement in which he said it was a pity that a new hospital had been built in the Thuringowa shire, because the people of Townsville cannot get to the hospital. This is an extraordinary statement. What must the people in Thuringowa shire think about a statement that indicates that they should not have any hospital at all, whereas the people of Townsville should have two hospitals? In this candidate's opinion, the Townsville people should have two hospitals and the people in the Thuringowa shire should have no hospital at all.

The National Party looks forward very much to the forthcoming election. It has three excellent candidates in all seats in Townsville and a media machine that, in spite of its small size, is second to none. I thank the Opposition very much for its Federal colleagues who have given the National Party such an excellent campaign to look forward to. The party is surprised and elated by the fact that all of the ALP members in north Queensland are strongly backing and standing behind the Federal policies of the ALP.

Coalition for Democratic Rights

Mr CAHILL: I ask the Minister for Education: Is he aware of a leaflet circulating on the campuses of some higher-education institutions entitled *Crocodile Democracy is Coming Again*, which announced a picket to protest at the opening of Parliament today? Can he report to the House as to the status of the Coalition for Democratic Rights, which is responsible for the leaflet, and whether any of the compulsorily levied student union fees at Queensland higher-education institutions have been used for the purposes of that coalition?

Mr POWELL: I was handed a copy of the pamphlet entitled *Crocodile Democracy is Coming Again*, which is published by an organisation named the Queensland Coalition

for Democratic Rights. What an amazing name for an organisation that pickets the gates of Parliament House on the day that Parliament opens! One would have thought that the organisation would applaud the fact that Parliament was sitting. However, it seemed to want to stop Parliament sitting.

I am interested in the honourable member's suggestion that there is a possibility that some of the fees that are levied compulsorily on students in tertiary institutions could have been used to compile and print that scurrilous piece of literature. I will do what I can to find out about the so-called Queensland Coalition for Democratic Rights, because I suspect that its promoters are not promoting democratic rights at all.

I noted in the pamphlet that the organisation was very concerned that Parliament might have the temerity to discuss the compulsorily raised fees of students' unions in Queensland. When that legislation is ready, it will be presented to Parliament. However, I do not expect that to occur during this session.

I note that the organisation is worried about an attack on 4ZZZ. One would have thought that an FM or AM radio station would be able to stand on its own two feet and would not require funds from students' unions or from students in tertiary education centres in order to operate. I would hope that the investigations that I will put in place through the Board of Advanced Education and the Joint Advisory Committee on Tertiary Education will be able to give some accurate information about the source of that pamphlet and the people behind it.

Queensland Cultural Centre Car-parking and Power Supply Facilities

Mr CAHILL: I ask the Minister for Tourism, National Parks, Sport and The Arts: Is he aware of dissatisfaction expressed by the patrons of the Queensland Cultural Centre about inadequate car-parking facilities and worries that the situation will worsen with the staging of Expo? Are there any plans to overcome the problem? What plans does the Government have to allow for a greater load on the power supply at the centre when the museum and library are commissioned?

Mr McKECHNIE: I do not think that there is any doubt about the success of the Queensland Cultural Centre, including the recent opening of the Performing Arts Complex. It has been accepted by the people of Queensland. More than half a million people visit the art gallery each year. At a ministerial council meeting somebody said that the visitation to a touring exhibition was lower in Queensland than expected. I discovered that the organisers had reckoned on a higher proportion of Queenslanders' population visiting the centre than that in the other States. Queensland has a much higher visitation per head of population than the other States. The car-parking problems must be viewed in that context.

I can assure honourable members that people appreciate arrangements that the Queensland Government has made with the Brisbane City Council for park-and-ride facilities to augment the existing car-parking facilities. Active negotiations are continuing with private enterprise and with the Expo authority to see what can be done to improve the present car-parking facilities.

The honourable member referred also to the electricity loading at the Queensland Cultural Centre. Originally, an alternative source of power supply was installed for use in an emergency or if something went wrong.

Sitting suspended from 6 to 7.15 p.m.

Mr McKECHNIE: Prior to the dinner recess I was in the middle of answering a question about the emergency power supply at the Performing Arts Complex.

When the complex was planned, emergency power was installed. That emergency power supply operates very efficiently. Of course, although the museum and library are not yet on stream, the emergency power supply can be used to keep performances going at the Queensland Cultural Centre. Since the centre was opened, the major power supply problem has been due to strikes. However, the emergency power supply has been able

to keep the centre operating during Electrical Trades Union strikes. The Queensland Cultural Centre Trust is doing all it can to increase the supply of emergency power. However, because the Government has guaranteed that the lights will be kept on and that the unions will no longer dominate this State, that probably will not be necessary.

Catco Holdings; Redbank Plains High School

Mr R. J. GIBBS: In directing a question to the Minister for Works and Housing, I refer to the Sydney-based company, Catco Holdings, which has recently been placed in liquidation. I ask: How many projects is Catco currently engaged in on behalf of the Queensland Government? Are those projects still being carried on by Catco contractors? Is work still in progress at the site of the Redbank Plains High School? What is the estimated completion date for work at the Redbank Plains High School?

Mr WHARTON: Catco Holdings had 13 Queensland projects. However, it does not have that number of projects now. The contract for the Redbank Plains project has been taken from the company. The one at Roma is currently under consideration. It also may not go ahead. A contract in Sydney for Canberra was also taken away from Catco. That job involved \$7m, so it is really a matter of funding. Catco had approximately \$30m worth of work. However, it experienced financial difficulties and could not complete the work.

Mr R. J. Gibbs: What about the Redbank Plains High School?

Mr WHARTON: The Redbank Plains High School project was taken out of the hands of Catco, through its actions, because it went into receivership. The contract was then awarded to a person by the name of Dickinson, who employed the subcontractors previously working on the job. That project is due for completion by the start of the new school year. I need not say more about that.

The failure of the projects was not the fault of the Department of Works. Catco ran into financial difficulties. Obviously, another contractor had to be found to complete the job.

Pumicestone Passage National Park

Mr R. J. GIBBS: In directing a question to the Minister for Tourism, National Parks, Sport and The Arts, I refer to the proposed Pumicestone Passage national park and to the 5 000 ha of land held as an occupational lease by the Turnbull brothers. I ask the Minister: What stage have negotiations reached with the Turnbolls over the relinquishing of the 5 000 ha? Is it true that, in return, his department has promised the Turnbull brothers 500 acres of prime freehold land on Bribie Island? On an annual basis, what moneys are paid by the Turnbolls for the lease of the 5 000 ha? What is the location and market value of the 500 acres of freehold land which his department proposes to hand over?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I point out that four-part questions are being asked. It is up to the Minister, of course, to answer as he wishes. I point out, however, that a question without notice should be precise and to the point.

Mr R. J. Gibbs: Could I simply say that it is because I respect the brilliance of the Minister?

Mr McKECHNIE: I note that the honourable member for Wolston has acknowledged the brilliance of the Minister. However, I regret to inform the House that the honourable member is not brilliant, because he should be aware that such negotiations are handled by the Minister for Lands, Forestry, Mapping and Surveying. I hope that I have taught him something tonight.

The Turnbull brothers have done a lot on the island over a lengthy period. Members of the Turnbull family have been there for generations. In recent times, they have been very co-operative and have performed quite a public service in the prevention of drug problems on the island.

I am sure that the honourable member for Wolston has learned something. He has asked the wrong Minister the question. The negotiations are handled by the Minister for Lands.

Mr R. J. GIBBS: I redirect my question.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Wolston will resume his seat.

Bond Corporation University Proposal

Mr BAILEY: In directing a question to the Minister for Education, I refer to the extraordinary and orchestrated campaign against the private university proposed to be built on the Gold Coast. In view of the comments made by some academics on the proposal, I ask the Minister: Does he have any reservations about the Bond Corporation university proposal?

Mr POWELL: The Opposition obviously is not keen to hear about good news and major investment and development in this State. I draw the attention of the House to a few facts. Firstly, in 1971, when university funding was a State responsibility, this State had the highest per capita rate of university participation in Australia. Now, after a little more than 12 years of federal tertiary education funding, Queensland has the lowest per capita rate. That is a commentary on the centralised funding that has occurred through both Liberal and Labor administrations.

Last year, 19 530 students of this State applied for and were refused a place in tertiary education. If Queensland's participation rate were to be brought to the same level as that in other States of Australia, this year the Federal Government should have funded an additional 6 000 tertiary education places.

A large section of the community supports the Bond university. It is quite clear that the people who oppose privatisation in tertiary education are those who fear the harsh glare of accountability moving into tertiary education. It is also perfectly clear that a number of people in tertiary education not just in this State but in Australia generally are embracing the proposition. The next step to be taken by the corporation is to form an advisory council, which it is currently doing. On that council will be people from the academic world as well as from the business world. The advisory committee will then set about advising on the programs that will be operating and also the academic standard that will be required. I am quite confident that the academic standard that will emanate from that university will be equal to if not superior to the academic standard in universities elsewhere, including overseas.

Although a private university is something that is strange to Australian academia, it is not strange to other countries of the world. For example, the Buckingham University in England is private. It operates particularly well, and has an extremely high reputation. Stanford, Harvard and other universities in the United States have an equally high reputation. I am confident that an organisation such as the Bond Corporation would not enter the university field without making sure that its academic standards were of the highest quality.

My advice to those people who wish to criticise private universities is to examine very carefully what is being undertaken, because, in academia in Australia today, many people whose performance must be questioned are hiding in tertiary institutions.

It is quite clear that the Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission is of a similar view because it has mounted evaluation committees for various faculties in universities throughout the country. That has evoked a strong reaction, because people in publicly funded universities who receive a tremendous amount of public money do not want to be examined by an evaluation committee. They believe that they have a professional right to spend tax-payers' money as they see fit. I disagree. I believe that the competition that a university set up by the Bond Corporation will bring into tertiary education in this country will be positive and very good indeed.

I draw the attention of the House to the public support given by the Liberal Party at the Federal level to the notion of a private university. It is worthy of note that the Liberal Party candidate for the electorate of Mount Coot-tha in the State election this year is the immediate past president of the Queensland Teachers Union. In the Queensland Teachers Journal of October 1985, he had this to say—

“Private universities, and the decision to set aside tertiary places for full-fee-paying overseas students, ought to be resisted with all our vigour. The freedom, standards and very lifeblood of our universities and colleges are at stake.”

I wonder whether the Liberal candidate for the seat of Mount Coot-tha has had a major change of mind since 23 October 1985 so that he now fits in with Liberal Party policy that favours the privatisation of tertiary education, which is clearly the most sensible and positive policy for this nation.

Public Accounts Committee; Kirwan Hospital

Mr MACKENROTH: In directing a question to the Minister for Health and Environment, I refer to an article titled “Scandal of the Ghost Hospital” which appeared in *The Courier-Mail* on 31 July and quotes the Liberal member for Stafford (Mr Gygar) as supporting the establishment of an all-party public accounts committee and describing as “incredible” the decision to build an alternative hospital at Kirwan. I ask: As it is true that the decision to build a maternity hospital at Kirwan was made in 1983 by the Minister, at that time as the Liberal Minister for Health, is it also true that the concept was enthusiastically supported by the then Liberal member for Townsville, Dr Norman Scott-Young? In view of Liberal Party support for the project when it was part of the coalition in 1973, does the Minister believe that members of the Liberal Party who form a future coalition will be able to prevent the Government of the day from making similar “incredible” decisions? Does the Minister believe that an all-party public accounts committee would be beneficial to the operation of the public health system in Queensland?

Mr AUSTIN: In answer to the rather lengthy question posed by the honourable member for Chatsworth, I must say that it appears now that the Liberal Party in Queensland is the only party that does not support the establishment of Kirwan Hospital. It has been a difficult process to open the hospital, and I must say that I was quite intrigued by the article to which the honourable member refers. The article was written by Tony Koch in cahoots with the honourable member for Stafford (Mr Gygar). One has to question the integrity of that article and the integrity of the two gentlemen involved in the writing of it, because at no stage was I contacted in relation to Kirwan Hospital.

For the purposes of the article it was probably convenient that Mr Koch forgot to include in it that the Townsville Hospitals Board has been supplied with funds to employ all the staff that is required—and I repeat “all the staff required”—to operate that hospital.

Mr De Lacy: That did not take very long.

Mr AUSTIN: It was approved in the Budget last year. If the honourable member for Cairns had kept his ears open, he would have realised that in this House I had answered a number of questions on the subject.

The funds are already approved and the staff have been appointed. The opening of the hospital has been delayed because the hospital has been boycotted by a couple of medical practitioners; it is as simple as that. Even my colleague the Minister for Water Resources and Maritime Services (Mr Tenni) knew that. Certain political overtones were apparent in that article, and if Mr Gygar and Mr Koch had bothered to check with me, Mr Koch would not have written the article in such a manner. I must say that the Liberal Party now has its foot on the sticky paper.

The colleague of the honourable member for Stafford, the honourable member for Nundah (Sir William Knox), was Minister for Health prior to my becoming Minister

for Health. He has a great record in Townsville; he built a chimney. Everyone knows about the famous chimney. He appeared on talk-back radio in Townsville and he was asked by one of the journalists from that talk-back radio station what he thought about the chimney. He said, "Some people like chimneys." That was his response. So the honourable member for Stafford ought to start looking in his own back yard to see the performance of his present leader in relation to the health sphere.

I have here an article from the *Townsville Bulletin*. I figured that I would be asked this question, but I suspected that it would have been by the honourable member for Stafford instead of the honourable member for Chatsworth.

Mr Mackenroth: I love to see you bucket the Liberals.

Mr AUSTIN: I have not finished yet.

No doubt the honourable member for Townsville (Mr McElligott) knows of the open day at the Kirwan Hospital. I would like to read this article into *Hansard*.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr AUSTIN: If honourable members opposite haven't heard it, I will read it so everyone else can hear it. The article is headed, "Hospital wins user approval".

Bear in mind that the Liberal Party has now said that hospitals should not be built. I will get to the Labor Party shortly. The article states—

"The Kirwan Hospital for Women appears to have won its most important stamp of approval from many of those who will be using it.

Among the thousands who attended the \$6.4 million hospital's open day yesterday were many pregnant women, something which pleased Townsville Hospitals Board acting chairman . . ."

I will not read the complete article. If one reads the whole article it will be seen that it has nothing but praise for the establishment of the hospital.

Even Alderman Mooney of the Townsville City Council—I like to call him "Marijuana" Mooney because he is on record as saying publicly that he supports the "grow-your-own marijuana" policy and is not a great admirer of the Government—says that he must admit it is a good hospital. It could be said that the people in Townsville are entitled to know that the Liberal Party is the only party that does not support the concept of the Kirwan Hospital.

Mortgage Relief

Mr YEWDAL: I ask the Minister for Works and Housing: Can he advise how much of the \$7m available for mortgage relief in Queensland in 1984-85 was actually used for mortgage relief? Can he confirm that his Government has matched the \$3.5m supplied by the Federal Government for mortgage relief? Is he aware that the New South Wales Government paid out \$2m on mortgage relief in comparison with this Government's meagre contribution of \$86,000?

Mr WHARTON: It might be appropriate to point out that the State Government has matched the Commonwealth funds last year, so that \$7.3m was available. All of that money was spent. I make the point also that \$45,000 was used for mortgage relief. All the funds were used and my department provided housing—

Mr Yewdale: For mortgage relief, was it?

Mr WHARTON: No. The honourable member did not listen. He asked me how much was made available for mortgage relief and I told him it was \$45,000. I hope that he does not want me to continually repeat things.

All of the available money was used, 50 per cent to provide accommodation for the different types of housing required by disadvantaged people. That enabled the

Government to put roofs over people's heads. The remainder of the money was expended on rent relief, bond assistance and similar help. All of the money was used to provide accommodation for disadvantaged people.

The honourable member for Rockhampton North should understand that the reason why the money was not availed of for mortgage relief is that applications were not lodged. Under the present system, the lender is expected to make the arrangements necessary for relief to be given to the borrower. The borrower must first discuss with the lender whether suitable adjustments can be made to the document so that the borrower can survive. If that cannot be done, an approach may be made to the Housing Commission, which deals with the lender. The lender is provided with \$2,000 and no repayment is required for at least two years. Repayments are then made at a reduced rate. The onus is on the borrower to approach the lender for an adjustment. Only then may the Housing Commission be approached.

Many more applications have been made since June, the great majority of which will be approved. The money has been available, but the borrowers must approach the lenders as quickly as possible so that they do not get too far behind the eight ball.

The honourable member for Rockhampton North mentioned what is done by the New South Wales Government. If it spent \$2m on mortgage relief, it must have spent a great deal less on something else. That it had to spend \$2m on mortgage relief is an indication of how bad things are in that State and how many people are in trouble there, in contrast to circumstances in Queensland, where the demand for assistance has been limited. As applications are made, the Housing Commission will cater for them. I repeat that applications should be made as quickly as possible through the lender. If the honourable member for Rockhampton North thinks that that is a bad state of affairs, I feel very sorry for him.

Mortgage and Rent Relief Scheme

Mr YEWDAL: I ask the Minister for Works and Housing: What initiatives has the State Government introduced in an effort to advise the public of the availability of assistance under the mortgage and rent relief scheme, which is a component of the Federal Government's public housing program and is administered by him on behalf of the National Party Government? Have any pamphlets or brochures been published and made available to make the community aware of any assistance available through the State Government?

Mr WHARTON: Yes, a great deal has been done. When the program was announced, advertisements were placed in various newspapers. If the honourable member did not read them, that is too bad. The first step was to advertise it very widely indeed. As a matter of fact, the Government was criticised for spending money on advertising instead of on housing.

It is no use having lenders who are unaware of what is available. Two or three conferences were held with the lenders. Recently, advertisements were run again. In August another meeting with the lenders will take place. At that meeting, which is at the request of the lenders, the whole matter will be fully considered.

Unquestionably, people have been informed. I am surprised that Opposition members do not know about it. People are applying, which demonstrates that they are aware of it.

Fruit and Vegetable Irradiation Plant

Mr LEE: I ask the Minister for Primary Industries: Will he inform the House whether any plans exist to construct a fruit and vegetable irradiation facility for use in association with the Brisbane Markets?

Mr McPhie: Irradiation.

Mr LEE: That is what I said.

If such plans are in existence, will the Minister indicate the stage that the plans have reached and the likely progress of the plans? Who will operate such a facility? Will it involve the use of cobalt 60? If so, how will the cobalt 60 be transported to the plant and how will it be contained at the plant? Did the Minister see last night's *Four Corners* program? How factual is that report?

Mr TURNER: If the honourable member said "eradication plant", I point out that it is an irradiation facility. However, on a more serious note, I indicate that a good deal of investigation has taken place into the possibility of constructing that type of facility in Queensland. To that end, a number of study tours have been undertaken overseas, including one by representatives of those industries involved, that is, the COD, the Wheat Board, the Fish Board and the Department of Primary Industries. Last year, during a tour relative to health matters, the Minister for Health (Mr Austin) also examined irradiation facilities in Japan and America. Honourable members would be aware that, earlier this year, I travelled to Europe and to England to examine that type of facility. Two particular methods could be adopted. At present, no firm decision has been made despite what may have appeared in recent media reports.

Mr Lee: What about the earthworks there?

Mr TURNER: I know that the honourable member for Yeronga is an earthmoving contractor from way back. However, I am unaware of any earthmoving works that have taken place.

No decision has been made on whether the plant will be of the linear accelerator type or a cobalt 60 type. A great deal of emotionalism surrounds the possibility of cobalt 60 being used. That is unfortunate, because for decades Australia has had three cobalt 60 plants for irradiating medical supplies. I wonder how many people who use bandaids realise that those bandaids have been through a cobalt 60 irradiation plant, which is used for the irradiation of cosmetics, wine corks and many other items that are widely used in the community. People who receive radiation treatment in hospitals receive it with cobalt 60.

A great deal of ill-informed emotionalism exists in the community about the use of that source for irradiation. Cobalt 60 has widespread application in the foodstuff industry, particularly for fruit and vegetables, and would eliminate the need for the use of EDB for the destruction of fruit flies and mango seed weevils.

As question-time is running out, I say to the honourable member that no firm decision has been made by the Government about whether it will develop and run such a facility or whether the facility will be operated by private enterprise. It is fair to say that numerous discussions have been held on the subject.

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

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Appropriation Bill (No. 1)

Hon. C. A. WHARTON (Burnett—Leader of the House), by leave, without notice:
I move—

"That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as would otherwise prevent the constitution of Committees of Supply and Ways and Means, the receiving of Resolutions on the same day as they shall have passed in those Committees, and the passing of an Appropriation Bill through all its stages in one day."

Motion agreed to.

SUPPLY

Vote of Credit—\$3,280,000,000

Mr SPEAKER read a message from His Excellency the Governor recommending that the following provision be made on account of the services for the year ending 30 June 1987—

- (a) From the Consolidated Revenue Fund of Queensland, the further sum of \$1,300,000,000;
- (b) From the Trust and Special Funds, the further sum of \$1,900,000,000; and
- (c) From the moneys standing to the credit of the Loan Fund Account, the further sum of \$80,000,000.

Committee

Hon. Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN (Barambah—Premier and Treasurer): I move—

“That there be granted to Her Majesty, on account, for the service of the year 1986-87, a further sum not exceeding \$3,280,000,000 towards defraying the expenses of the various departments and services of the State.”

Motion agreed to.

Resolution reported, received, and agreed to.

WAYS AND MEANS

Committee

Vote of Credit—\$3,280,000,000

Hon. Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN (Barambah—Premier and Treasurer): I move—

“(a) That, towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty, on account, for the service of the year 1986-87, a further sum not exceeding \$1,300,000,000 be granted out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund of Queensland exclusive of the moneys standing to the credit of the Loan Fund Account.

(b) That, towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty, on account, for the service of the year 1986-87, a further sum not exceeding \$1,900,000,000 be granted from the Trust and Special Funds.

(c) That, towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty, on account, for the service of the year 1986-87, a further sum not exceeding \$80,000,000 be granted from the moneys standing to the credit of the Loan Fund Account.”

Motion agreed to.

Resolutions reported, received, and agreed to.

APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 1)

First Reading

A Bill, founded on the Resolutions reported from the Committee of Ways and Means, was presented and read a first time.

Second Reading

Hon. Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN (Barambah—Premier and Treasurer) (7.54 p.m.): I move—

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

This Bill appropriates a total amount of \$3,280m for expenditures for the normal services of the Government until the passage of the Budget legislation itself. An amount of \$1,300m is provided for the Consolidated Revenue Fund, \$1,900m for the Trust and Special Funds and \$80m for the Loan Fund. This amount is in addition to an amount of \$2,290m which was appropriated by the Appropriation Act (No. 2) 1985.

The Bill provides for the necessary expenditure authorisations for the Government sufficient for its requirements to the end of November. A further Appropriation Bill will be presented at a later stage incorporating the allocations approved by the Parliament as part of the Budget approval process. The Bill is therefore a very necessary piece of legislation to ensure that the ongoing activities of the Government can be maintained.

In presenting this Appropriation Bill (No. 1), I point out that it has been usual for Treasurers of the day to report on matters of economic significance. I do not propose to depart significantly from that practice.

Australians are facing the most serious threat ever to their living standards and way of life because of the apparent incapacity of the Commonwealth Government to realise the error of its ways and to change its high-tax policies.

I hope that the Leader of the Opposition and Opposition members will join with me in condemning the Commonwealth Government's failure to adequately respond to the serious economic position in which Australia currently finds itself.

The Commonwealth Government is not encouraging the productive sectors of the economy, including farmers, manufacturers, miners, entrepreneurs in every industry, developers and others.

On the contrary, the Federal Government seems determined to stifle initiative and restrain growth. There are many illustrations of this, such as high levels of inflation, high interest rates, the fringe benefits tax, the capital gains tax and union superannuation claims. The list goes on. Indeed, until last week's knee-jerk reaction to the fall in the Australian dollar, I could have added withholding tax to that list.

Fortunately, on this aspect at least, the Federal Government has seen sense, even if it took the international money markets to drive home the reality of the foolish things the Federal Government was doing in this regard.

How must it look to our major trading partners overseas when they see a Commonwealth Government that lurches from crisis to crisis introducing a new policy one day and withdrawing it the next? The sad reality is that the Commonwealth Government seems unable to see its actions in a broader perspective. It has become so caught up in its own survival that it has lost touch with the economic problems facing the nation.

As I said at the Premiers Conference in June, Australia is facing the greatest threat to its economic well-being since the Great Depression of the 1930s. Nothing has occurred since that conference that would change my view.

Mr Davis: Who said that? You?

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: Yes, I said that, and that was a correct forecast.

It is quite easy to see how, being a branch of that Government in Canberra, Opposition members here demonstrate their inability to understand the position.

The crisis in the Australian dollar in recent weeks has been further evidence of this, reflecting a deep-seated international concern for Australia's economic future.

The world markets recognise that Australia is no longer an internationally competitive nation. Only strong action can correct this problem. Action is necessary in three areas, quite apart from throwing the Federal Labor Government out at the next election. Those areas are wage costs, incentives to work harder and Government expenditure. They are all items that need attention. Whatever its fine words, the Commonwealth Government's actions seem to run directly counter to those goals.

How can a Government that supports wage indexation and increased superannuation hand-outs hope to reduce labour costs? How can a Government that adds fringe benefits and capital gains taxes to already high income taxes expect people to work harder for less reward? How can a Government expect people to believe it is aiming to cut expenditure when it continues to duplicate State functions in the areas of education, health and so forth?

With regard to wages, the Commonwealth Government should institute a 12-month wages freeze, as the Prime Minister indicated he was going to do, and not just talk about it. Discounting wage increases and deferring wage hearings only nibble at the edge of the wage spiral. Only a complete break in that spiral can lead to a new start in this area. The Commonwealth Government should take steps now to override any implementation of the 3 per cent productivity-based superannuation scheme.

After the wages pause, the Commonwealth Government should ensure that the discounting for devaluation and Government charges becomes a permanent part of the wage-setting system. What does it do? Absolutely nothing!

Mr De Lacy: All you ever do is cut into the workers. What about cutting your own Government's expenditure?

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: I will start in the honourable member's electorate if he wants me to.

As to the incentive to work—the Commonwealth should replace its emotional calls on Australian pride with real action and do something instead of merely talking about it. The taxation system needs a total restructuring—one geared to a return of incentive and not just revenue collection. My views on a single rate of taxation are well known. It is a logical way to go. Some of the best brains in the country support the concept and it can work. The goal should be to reduce taxation, not to find new ways of imposing it.

As to expenditure restraint—the Commonwealth Government's record in regard to expenditure restraint also runs counter to its rhetoric. Restraint in Government spending is an essential ingredient in achieving national economic recovery. My Government accepts fully the need for restraint in the current economic circumstances, and we practise it. We are also prepared to play our part in sharing the burden of restraint—and we indicated that quite clearly at the Premiers Conference—provided that it is shared equitably across all sections of the community. However, it does not appear that this will be the case.

The States have already accepted substantial restraint in recent years. Queensland has had to do so. The evidence shows that, over the last three years, because of Commonwealth Government policies, the burden of fiscal restraint has been carried by the States rather than by the Commonwealth. In that period, Commonwealth spending on its own functions has increased by 5.6 per cent per annum in real terms. Payments to the states in that period have been held to an average annual increase of only 2.1 per cent. What these figures highlight is the double standard adopted by the Commonwealth.

The Commonwealth has “placed the screws” on funding of the States but has not been prepared to apply the same standards of fiscal discipline to its own expenditure responsibilities. In other words, when it comes to cutting back Government spending, it is a case of “Do as I say” not “Do as I do”.

If the Commonwealth had applied to its own spending the same restraint as it has applied to payments to the States in the three years it has been in power, the Commonwealth Budget deficit in the year just concluded would have been almost wiped out.

If the increase in Commonwealth spending in real terms since the Labor Government was elected three years ago had been only 6.2 per cent, as is applied to payments to the States, and not the 17.5 per cent increase that it actually gave its own expenditures, there would have been an expenditure saving in 1985-86 of \$4.6 billion, which is almost exactly the 1985-86 deficit as originally estimated.

Mr De Lacy: You are very wise running the Commonwealth's business when you cannot run your own.

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: The honourable member for Cairns would be the last person from whom I would seek advice. The people in Canberra must ask him for advice.

My Government has long recognised the need for fiscal restraint. Unlike the Commonwealth, we balance our Budgets. Can the honourable member's mates in Canberra do that? His mates have not even got a clue what it means.

My Government understands the need to live within our means. By careful management, we have been able to do this while remaining the lowest-taxing State. It is worth noting again that our operating result in 1985-86 was a surplus of \$213,000 in a Budget of \$5 billion.

Since the creation of the State in 1859, Queensland's total overall Consolidated Revenue Fund Budget position has been a small accumulated surplus of \$379,000. Also, by careful management, we have been able to divert \$1.2 billion from our recurrent Budget into capital works in the last decade. Unlike the Commonwealth, we practise what we preach.

State restraint has not just been in the recurrent area. The States have also had to exercise restraint in regard to borrowings in the last two years.

Since 1983-84, total borrowings by the six States and their authorities have declined by almost 9 per cent in real terms. Queensland has more than played its part, as our borrowing requirements have declined by over 17 per cent in the same period.

If the Commonwealth Government is serious about restraint, there are plenty of examples of areas where it can make major inroads into its expenditures. I have never understood why the Commonwealth needs to duplicate so many functions capably and efficiently provided by the States. After all, it is the States that provide so many of the basic services in the community, especially in the fields of education, health and welfare. It is the States that are closest to the needs of those who use these services and are best able to judge how resources should be used. What is becoming increasingly obvious, however, is that the Commonwealth cannot stop meddling in State affairs. From its ivory tower in Canberra, the Commonwealth seems determined to interfere with the way the States carry out their constitutional obligations. There are many illustrations of this, such as the Home and Community Care Scheme, the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program, the Natural Disaster Arrangements, the Rural Adjustment Scheme and the Family Support Program. Although on the face of it, in each of these cases the Commonwealth is providing funds to the States, in each case onerous conditions are forced on the States.

In many cases, to take advantage of Commonwealth funds means that the State must accept Commonwealth priorities as to what is important in the eyes of the Commonwealth, however irrelevant these priorities may be to a particular State. In effect, then, the Commonwealth is using these schemes to undermine the States' constitutional rights in these areas by taking away from the States the ability to provide assistance in areas they regard as having a particular priority.

The problem goes further than this, however. In each of the schemes I have mentioned, the Commonwealth has an army of public servants watching over the shoulder of the States. These people are not providing services to anyone. They are simply making the task of the States doubly difficult because not only do the States have to provide the services, they also have to provide volumes of unnecessary paperwork to the Commonwealth, explaining their every action.

This paper battle has reached absurd proportions in regard to some of these schemes involving State and Commonwealth officers in an endless round of largely pointless correspondence, simply to satisfy the whims of Canberra. All the paper in the world will

not improve services and reduce costs, but a cut in this duplication of effort most certainly will.

In 1985-86, the Commonwealth Department of Health was expected to spend nearly \$115m on administration alone, without caring for even one patient. In 1985-86, the Commonwealth Department of Education was expected to spend over \$50m on administration alone, without providing schooling for one child. These funds could be far more positively used by increasing funding for the States that provide the services, rather than by maintaining a duplicate Federal bureaucracy.

I have already commented on the impact of the proposed fringe benefits tax on individual and business initiative. What should not be forgotten, however, is that this tax will have a marked effect on both State and Commonwealth Governments.

Mr Vaughan: You have a hide as thick as a rhinoceros. How you can stand up in this place and say that, when in fact you proposed it——

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: The honourable member still has not got over last week-end yet. I can understand why he is so irritable.

Mr Vaughan interjected.

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: Look out, because you are getting close——

Mr Vaughan: It is your document.

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: It is not the same thing.

Mr Vaughan: Do not mislead the House. How can you stand in this House and say that, and tell blatant untruths? That is what you are doing. You are telling blatant untruths.

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: Did the honourable member have a little bad dream just now?

Mr Vaughan: You are misleading this House.

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: Is the honourable member finished?

Mr Vaughan interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row): Order! The honourable member for Nudgee has made his point. He should not persist for the rest of the evening.

Mr Vaughan: The old goat is deceiving the House.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: Mr Deputy Speaker, I feel sorry for the honourable member for Nudgee. He has just had a nightmare. I do not know what he had for dinner, but he——

Mr Vaughan: It is absolutely shocking.

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: At a later date—at an appropriate time— I will explain to the honourable member exactly what that means and he will say, “What a fool I was to think otherwise.”

It should not be forgotten that the fringe benefits tax will have a marked effect on both the State and the Commonwealth Governments themselves. Given that this matter will be resolved by the courts, I do not propose to dwell at length on it. I must make the point, though, that, if the Commonwealth is successful in levying the tax on the States, the cost to the States will be far beyond the cost of the tax itself. Scarce State resources will need to be diverted from productive areas into form-filling simply to satisfy the insatiable desire of the Commonwealth. Officers who could be providing services to the public will be grappling with this absurd impost.

The Commonwealth must be aware of the waste. After all, the proposal to pay the tax to itself will require an army of public servants to assess a tax that is being paid from one part of the Commonwealth to another. Federal Government does not seem to understand the pointlessness of the exercise. When I see and hear honourable members opposite, I can understand why the people in Canberra think that way. To me, their actions reveal that their statements about the need for restraint are nothing more than hollow, empty words.

What is needed in the forthcoming Commonwealth Budget is an end to all the high-flying talk, an end to using the States as scapegoats. Queensland is willing to do its share. I assure all honourable members that the State Budget, which will be introduced on 26 August, will have restraint as its hallmark. The Queensland Government will again present a balanced Budget. It will do so without a financial institutions duty, without a petrol tax, without a tobacco tax and without the other taxes that are imposed by the Labor States.

The nation as a whole desperately needs the Commonwealth to follow the Queensland approach. The Commonwealth cannot just pass the buck again. It must accept its clear responsibility to reduce its own expenditures. However, it seems to be completely incapable of overcoming the problems that confront it and that it has created. In the current economic and financial environment, hard decisions need to be made. This Government has never shown itself to be afraid to make those decisions. It is the turn of the Commonwealth to shoulder its share of the burden. I hope that it will wake up and realise what it is doing to this nation by destroying so many people's livelihoods and businesses.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Mr BURNS (Lytton) (8.13 p.m.): I can understand the anger of the honourable member for Nudgee (Mr Vaughan) at the continual attacks by the Premier and Treasurer on the fringe benefits tax, when the Queensland taxation reform package, including the single-rate tax proposal, presented to the national taxation summit in Canberra from 1 to 4 July 1985 by the Premier and Treasurer of Queensland (Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen) contained a proposal to impose a fringe benefits tax on the beneficiary, employers being required to record such benefits on group certificates. Very clearly, the reason is the National Party's very bitter hatred of the worker. The Premier and Treasurer is in favour of a fringe benefits tax as long as the worker pays. He has now changed his mind about such a tax. When it became apparent the business people and others who support the very heartland of the National Party would have to pay it, he opposed it. All of a sudden, he is travelling the State campaigning against the very thing that he proposed as part of his flat-tax package 12 months ago. Nothing is more hypocritical than that. Tonight it is clear that the Premier again suggests that the workers are the villains—that they are guilty of all the wrongdoings—and that their wages should be frozen.

It is always wages that should be frozen for 12 months; it is never prices. The Government of this State is in charge of price control. Day in and day out prices increase. As shoppers in any supermarket in the State will verify, prices rise regardless of whether wages go up. When wages are frozen, that does not seem to stop the changing of the price stickers on articles in supermarkets.

The prices of goods continue to rise. The Premier and Treasurer does not a thing about that. He has never proposed a price freeze. He has never done anything in that line at all. What the Premier and Treasurer proposes is that workers are being paid too much. The simple answer from the Premier and Treasurer to all of the problems of this world is to screw the worker into the dirt.

The Premier has many other proposals that he is not game to put forward at the moment. One of them is his proposal to do away with overtime; another relates to the holiday loading. The Premier and Treasurer will not raise them before the coming election. However, if he is returned, he will take action. He wants workers to work between 40 and 60 hours a week and he wants to deregulate the labour market so that

annual auctions will be held at which workers will have to bid for their jobs. That is the policy that the Premier and Treasurer has proposed when he has been talking to his mates in the bush all round the State. He says to them that the workers are being paid too much. When they ask, "What is wrong with us? We are not cost effective?", he says that it is the wages that are the problem; that it is the fault of the workers who keep on wanting to feed their kids, pay their housing interest rates and pay the prices that he and his Government will not control.

It is the workers whom he does not like. The Premier's view of the poor old worker and his family is that they are the rotten villains who are bringing this country to its knees. He is talking about the people who live next door to honourable members, whose kids go to the local school and who will attend the Brisbane Exhibition, pay the high prices and spend as much as they can afford to try to give their kids a little bit of enjoyment in these times.

What do they get out of the Queensland Government? A continued attack on their pockets! Today in this House the Premier proposed a subsidy on interest rates for farmers. He did not say anything about building society interest rates, which he controls, or anything about a subsidy for all those people who are losing their homes because of increased building society interest rates, which he controls and which he can do something about. Why did the Premier not propose an interest rate subsidy for them? Apparently in the National Party philosophy they do not count. They certainly do not count for the Premier. He is a millionaire's man. He is interested only in the bloke with the big bucks. He is not interested in the little, ordinary bloke—that decent, ordinary family man who is the backbone of this country.

Government Members interjected.

Mr BURNS: None of those noisy fellows over there would know what the backbone of the country is all about. They do not seem to realise that, if the workers of this country have not got a quid, most of the shop-keepers of this State will not make a buck.

The plain facts of the matter are that it is the working man who goes down to the store and pays the retail price for his goods. It is his family and his kids who pay top price. It is not the discount merchants on the Government side, who are always dealing with their business mates and buying on the cheap. They are the ones who are demanding that the Government subsidise their fuel and subsidise their interest rates.

Mr Cooper interjected.

Mr BURNS: The honourable member and his mates are always at it. They continue to whinge and whine, wanting subsidies and other assistance. They are the ones who always want the workers to pay more tax so that they can be assisted all the way along the line.

I wish to speak about Queensland's poor economic record. The honourable member for Barambah (Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen) has been the Treasurer of Queensland since the last State election. As Treasurer of this State, he has been a walking disaster. No-one has made a bigger mess of the best State in this nation than Joh Bjelke-Petersen.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row): Order! I have asked the honourable member for Lytton to refer to honourable members by their correct titles. If he does not refer to the Premier and Treasurer by his correct title, I will warn him under Standing Order No. 123A.

Mr BURNS: For the first time, the people of Queensland will judge the honourable member for Barambah on his performance as Treasurer. For that reason, I will consider his performance. Of the 18 economic indicators released to July 1986, Queensland had the worse results in seven and the second-worst results in a further seven. That means that this rich State of ours, with all of its great natural assets—all of its coal, all of its minerals, its marvellous climate, which makes it a great tourist State, and its great, rich

rural lands—has very poor results in 14 of the 18 economic indicators. The Premier and Treasurer has turned this State into a disaster. It has been the Premier, and the Premier alone. He cannot blame the Liberals for his performance as Treasurer and he cannot blame anyone else. He is the one to blame.

For June 1986, Queensland had the highest rate of unemployment, that is, 9 per cent. The Australian average was 7.5 per cent. Unemployment is high. The Queensland Government has done nothing about it. This Government proposes to help people by a 12-month wage freeze, discounting wage increases and a complete break in the spiral. That is the proposal of the Queensland Government.

The member for Condamine (Mr Littleproud) says that all of the workers in his electorate should get no more. The member for Fassifern (Mr Lingard) and the member for Burdekin (Mr Stoneman) want the wages of the workers in their electorates to be frozen. That is on the record. Those honourable members want the worker to get no more in his pocket for 12 months. That is their argument.

Queensland—this rich State—has the highest unemployment rate in this country. The answer to that, according to the National Party, is to freeze the wages of the workers. What does the worker receive? In February 1986, Queensland had the lowest average weekly male earnings, \$391.40, 7.4 per cent below the Australian average. Queensland workers are paid less than workers in other States. Queensland has more people out of work than any other State. Government members take pride in that. Some pride! Government members are proud of the performance of the Treasurer. They ought to be ashamed of themselves. They ought to hang their heads in shame.

Queensland also has the lowest weekly earnings for females, \$250.50, 9.4 per cent below the national average. Queensland men are paid less than those in other States; Queensland women are paid less than those in other States. Queensland has more people out of work than any other State. And this Government is proud of it!

Queensland has the highest rate of industrial disputation in Australia. For the year ended March 1986, 249 days were lost for every 1 000 employees. That is 22.7 per cent above the Australian average. Queensland has the highest drop in the number of new dwelling units approved for the three months to May 1986. That is a fall of 34.6 per cent compared with the same period in the previous year.

If Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen is such a good Treasurer, I invite the little sycophants on the Government back benches to explain to me why Queenslanders are not building houses, why Queenslanders are receiving lower wages than their counterparts in other States, why more people are out of work in this State than in other States and why more people go on strike in this State than in other States. If the Queensland Treasurer is such a good leader, why would that be so? Government members have plenty of opportunity tonight to put their money where their mouths are.

For the three months to May 1986, Queensland had the highest fall in the number of new motor vehicle registrations, a decline of 28.2 per cent. Queenslanders do not have the money to buy new motor vehicles. Fewer cars are sold in this State than in any other State; fewer houses are built in this State than in any other State; more people are out of work in this State than in any other State; and the workers of this State are paid less than those in the other States. Government members are proud of that.

For the three months ended April 1986, Queensland had the highest fall in the number of new telephone connections. Queenslanders cannot afford to have the telephone put on; they cannot afford to build a house; they cannot afford to buy a car; they do not receive the same wages as workers in other States; and Queensland has the highest unemployment of any State. Government members are proud of it.

The Treasurer is the man who brought this State to its knees. Given another couple of years, he could put it right back into the Dark Ages. He would then be able to eliminate overtime and holiday loadings and introduce deregulated wages into the marketplace so that workers have to bid for a job. The lowest bid would get the job. It could be \$2 or \$1.50 an hour. The job would be up for sale again within three months.

Another proposal of the Queensland Government is that young people should receive less money; that the juniors should receive a pittance, as they did in the old days. What would happen then? The millionaire friends of the Premier and Treasurer would sack all the oldies and employ kids. When the kids reached the ages of 16, 17 or 18, they would be sacked because they are too old and could not be employed cheaply. The employer would start again. The result would be a society of oldies out of work and young kids being exploited. That is the National Party's way of doing things. That is its policy. That is the way the National Party Government in Queensland is doing it.

In addition to having the highest fall in telephone connections and the lowest number of new-car sales and houses being built, Queensland had the highest rate of growth in bankruptcies. For 1984-85, the number was 15.6 per cent greater than for the previous financial year. Although Australia recorded an overall drop of 3.7 per cent, the number of bankruptcies in Queensland rose by 15.6 per cent.

The Treasurer has been in charge of Queensland and, while other States are going forwards, Queensland is going backwards. It is the Bjelke-Petersen-led downturn that is created in this State.

In May the job vacancy rate was the second worst in the country. Even if a person is out of work and looking for a job, this Government cannot create one. Bob Hawke is the Prime Minister for the whole of Australia, and this State is part of it. If the other States are doing all right, why is Queensland going so bad? The other States' figures are better than Queensland's. Queensland has the highest unemployment, the lowest average wage, the highest rate of industrial dispute, the highest drop in the number of new dwelling units, the highest fall in the number of new motor vehicle registrations, the highest fall in the number of new telephone connections and the highest number of bankruptcies. Queensland has all of those things.

I realise that Government members are dense and slow and that it will take a while, but if I keep saying it to them, at the end of the night they will say to themselves, "I do not think the Treasurer is very good." That is what honourable members will say.

Let me go a bit further. The number of overtime hours for an employee was 6.5 hours in May 1986 in Queensland, which was the second worst result in Australia. The household income per capita for 1984-85 was \$10,410 in Queensland, which was 9.8 per cent below the national average and the second worst result in Australia. The Queensland Government fixed capital expenditure in the year to the September quarter in 1985 was 8.4 per cent compared with the same period the year before, whereas the national growth rate was 15.2 per cent. That is under the leadership Queensland has now.

The number of new residential buildings under construction in the December quarter of 1985 had dropped by 4.7 per cent, compared with the same period a year earlier, while the national total increased by 4.1 per cent. The number of new residential buildings commenced in the March quarter of 1986 dropped by 6.3 per cent, compared with the same period a year before. Queensland was below the Australian average in the growth of the number of tourist guest nights in hotels and motels with facilities.

Queensland is the best State in the world for tourism. What is wrong? The weather or the great facilities here in Queensland cannot be blamed. Queenslanders have the most magic State. When people were coming across the border the Queensland Government took the credit. Now that people have stopped coming, the Queensland Government says it is Bob Hawke's fault, it is Canberra's fault, it is anybody's fault but the Queensland Government's. The Queensland Government contains the greatest mob of shysters I have ever met in my life.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row): Order! I consider that remark unparliamentary. I think the honourable member for Lytton should withdraw that remark.

Mr BURNS: I will withdraw that remark.

The Queensland Government has this cargo-cult mentality—give a bit away to some big millionaire somewhere, give another piece of the beachfront away so that the

tourists cannot get there unless they pay big money. It is plain to see the hypocrisy of this Government. The more people look at the Government and the closer people look at it, the more people realise what sort of recovery there is in Queensland. It is a big propaganda-led recovery. Queensland has to spend millions of dollars telling people how well they are going. The Minister for Transport (Mr Lane) spent \$1.9m advertising himself. Queensland has to spend millions of dollars on all kinds of advertising to convince people that everything is hunky-dory. While people are eating cat food and dog food in some places, the Queensland Government wants to screw their wages.

Mr Newton: No it doesn't.

Mr BURNS: Yes it does. If the honourable member thinks people are not poor in this State, and that everybody is as rich as he is, and everybody is living as high on the hog as he is, he is wrong. There are a lot of people living well in this State, such as the former headmaster in Fassifern who lives high on the hog. A lot of people would like to have the honourable member for Fassifern's fat salary and money to spend.

The hypocrisy and double standards of the Premier are highlighted when he has the gall to talk about the deficit, public spending and the national debt. I could have written his notes today because I knew what he was going to say. He says the same things every time. In fact, I do not know why the House is having this debate tonight.

What he said in his speech this afternoon is what he said again tonight, "It is Canberra's fault. It is all Canberra's fault. The country is going to ruin. It is Canberra's fault. They won't give me enough money. They want to put up the taxes. It is a shame. It is a scandal. It is terrible." We hear the moans, groans and whinges. Honourable members have never heard anything like it. It is always somebody else's fault.

I will take the deficit first—that is, the difference between total revenue received and total expenditure. The Queensland State Government, through its Budget, had the largest deficit of any State Government and, since 1980, had the largest increase in any State deficit.

If one compares the State Budget deficits in 1985-1986 on a per capita basis, one finds that the deficit of the Queensland State Budget was \$449 per person, which was higher than that of any other State and was indeed higher than the Federal Budget deficit, which was \$314 per person.

Because of the Queensland Government's deficit, every person in Queensland is up for \$449. The Premier and Treasurer talked about a well-managed Budget. The size of and increase in the State Budget deficit are of such huge proportions that a massive burden is placed on future generations. Everyone must pay for it, and sooner or later we must face up to it. The Queensland Government does not recognise quangos; it got rid of all of them. One of its policies during the last election campaign was that it was going to clean up the quangos. The numbers have been reduced; they do not exist any more. I do not notice them around the place. Or am I dreaming? I must be, for if one takes into consideration the deficit generated by quangos, one finds that Queensland's total State Government deficit for 1985-86 jumps to \$1,703m. Again, by far, that is the largest deficit of any State in per capita terms. It is the height of financial and economic irresponsibility for any State Government to rush headlong into debt on such a massive scale. That is what the Queensland Government has done. Not that it knows exactly what its debt is; that is very difficult to determine on an examination of the figures.

The latest figures show that the total State Government and semi-Government guaranteed debt as at 30 June 1985 stood at approximately \$10,800m. Unfortunately, the State Treasury is not in a position to refine that estimate down to a net debt figure, so in reality we do not know precisely what our total net debt is. As admitted by Treasury some time ago, the debt is sometimes included under travel expenses and

incidentals, and I can only hope that Treasury has, since that admission, put its financial house in better order.

Mr Hamill: Mr Lester has helped that along just recently.

Mr BURNS: He has. He had a fear of heights on a 20-ft-high wall in China. He said that the height was worrying him. He is called Humpty Dumpty.

The deceit and distortion by the State Government were exhibited by the Deputy Premier and Minister Assisting the Treasurer (Mr Gunn) when he tried to argue in *The Sunday Mail* on 25 May that Queensland had a public debt of only \$2,100m. He did not say that that was simply the net public debt incurred in the 1927 financial agreement with the Commonwealth. He forgot to say that it did not include additional departmental borrowings that have blown out in the last few years and the gross contingency liability of the Government, which largely covers the quango borrowings. It is irrelevant to argue whether Queenslanders pay for this huge debt as tax-payers or consumers; we pay it. Most tax-payers are consumers, and vice versa. So whether they pay for the debt directly as tax or indirectly through high charges is irrelevant; all of it still comes out of the pockets of Queenslanders.

The Premier and Treasurer also likes to suggest that Queensland is a Government that believes in the small public sector. Nothing could be further from the truth.

In 1985-86, Queensland recorded the largest increase in Budget sector current outlays of any State while total public sector outlays jumped by a massive 18.1 per cent. They are the Government's figures, not mine. Far from being restrained, Queensland Government expenditure exploded. Queensland does not have a small Government, it has a big Government, which is a big-spending Government.

Queensland came out of the Premiers Conference with perhaps the best deal of all the States. The States received the promised 2 per cent increase in real terms in their financial assistance grants. In per capita terms, Queensland received \$823 per person, which was \$145 more per person than the six-State average of \$678. In addition to that, it must be remembered that we are always arguing for restraint, so we cannot argue for restraint on one hand and then go crook when some restraints are imposed. Only Western Australia and Tasmania did better out of the Premiers Conference. All honourable members will remember the Premier's coming home quite happy at the end of the Premiers Conference.

Mr Vaughan: Like a lamb, they said.

Mr BURNS: Like a lamb, they said. I do not know whether it was roast lamb or leg of lamb, but he was home like a lamb.

Queensland, with 16 per cent of the national population, received 22 per cent of the total borrowing allocation and 18 per cent of total funds. One certainly cannot blame the Commonwealth Government for any particular financial problems Queensland may face in the future. I sometimes wonder whether the Commonwealth Government realises what it is trying to do to State Governments. If it is always the Commonwealth Government that should be raising money and paying for it—putting more money into roads, doing this, and doing that—what is the argument for having the State Government here? Just to pass it on? Just to filter it through? The Queensland Government does not want to raise taxes; it wants the Commonwealth Government to raise them. It wants the Commonwealth Government to give the money to the State, which, in turn, will filter it on. The State Government wants to do the easy bit and none of the hard work.

The areas in which problems will arise relate largely to interest payments and the redemption of loans which have blown out considerably in recent years because of the irresponsible and unjustified borrowing spree of the Queensland Government and some of its statutory authorities.

Let me have a closer look at the Premier's so-called commitment to reducing Government spending. No doubt those figures will show a further significant increase by the Premier.

Figures available for the first nine months of 1985-86 show that the cost of running the Premier's Chief Office had already reached \$8.7m, which is significantly higher than the \$6.7m expended for the entire 1983-84 year.

I am speaking now of the person who is setting the example. The Premier is talking about restraints. Let me have a look at his commitments to Budget restraint.

The Budget Estimates list spending under the Premier's ministerial jurisdiction. These include the Premier's Department, the Public Service Board, the Auditor-General's Department, the Ombudsman's Office and the Agent-General's Office in London. Money is no object when it comes to the running of these operations.

In 1981-82, spending in areas under the Premier's administration ran to \$18.2m. By 1984-85 this amount had doubled to \$36.4m, representing an increase of 100 per cent over a three-year period. For the same three-year period the cost of running the Premier's Chief Office rose from \$2.1m to \$11.3m, representing an increase of 460 per cent. That is the saver. What would honourable members think if the Premier and Treasurer was wasting his money? He increased the cost of running his Chief Office by only 460 per cent in that three-year period! That is not a bad effort at restraint—an increase of 460 per cent! The Premier continues to tell the battler, "Get less wages. Do away with your overtime. Do not go for it. Tighten your belt. Things are tough."

The figures relating to spending by the Premier for the 1985-86 financial year are not yet available. No doubt these figures, when available, will show a further significant increase in spending by the Premier.

This is the year when the Premier is tested in the Budget. As I said earlier, the figures available for the first nine months of 1985-86 show that the cost of running the Premier's Chief Office has already reached \$8.7m, which is significantly higher than the \$6.7m expended for the entire 1983-84 year. The Premier has already spent \$2m more in nine months than he did during the whole of the previous financial year.

The Premier would have Queenslanders believe that he runs a lean and hungry department and that his administration costs have been pared to the bone. However, in reality, the opposite is the case, and I believe the figures bear repeating. There was a 100 per cent increase in spending by the Premier between 1982-83 and 1984-85, and a 460 per cent increase in the cost of running his Chief Office during that same period. Yes, the Premier runs a lean and hungry operation, as lean and as hungry as Billy Bunter!

Let me return to some of the things the Premier spoke about tonight. The National Party is saying that the workers of this State—the little family men, the ordinary battlers, the ones who live in the ordinary Labor electorates, not in the electorates of National Party members who do not want them—have to bear the brunt of the economic restraint. What the Queensland Government is saying is that those workers have to pay for the problems of this nation.

Today, the Premier said, "Let us handle the wheat farmers' problems. We will reduce their interest rates and we will give them cheaper petrol." No-one can tell me that the price of petrol in this State could not be controlled and reduced. When service stations can fluctuate the price of petrol within a range of 8c to 10c a litre and more, any Premier worth his salt who wants to do something to keep the cost of living down for the people of his State could do something about it. Nothing has been done. Why is that? Because the oil companies are big donors. They sling. All honourable members know it.

Mrs Chapman: You have a hide to talk like that. You cannot stand there and talk like that when Hawke does what he does.

Mr BURNS: Another example of how the Premier operates is how he put the honourable member for Pine Rivers (Mrs Chapman) in charge of welfare services. She is the most vicious anti-working-class woman who has ever been in this Parliament.

Mrs Chapman: Absolute garbage. I couldn't believe a word you said, because you're talking about Hawke the whole time.

Mr BURNS: She violently hates the workers.

Mrs Chapman: I know what the workers want. You go out amongst the workers.

Mr BURNS: Listen to her. I have heard fishwives who would not perform like that. She is the soft-hearted mother hen the National Party put in Cabinet. Have a listen to old mother hen. She would lay cast-iron eggs.

Mrs Chapman interjected.

Mr BURNS: Something needs to be done about the housing industry.

Mrs Chapman interjected.

MR BURNS: She just doesn't stop. That's the old mother hen over there. Away she goes. That is the soft-hearted dear who is going to look after the starving and the poor of this country. No wonder the Welfare Services Department is a disgrace under her control. It was bad in preceding years, but the honourable member has made a mockery of it. She is a disaster as a Minister and will continue to be a disaster. If she were my mother, I would be disappointed with her and ashamed of her.

Mrs Chapman interjected.

Mr BURNS: They are the honourable member's words. She wanted to be the mother hen to all these poor kids who are dispossessed. There are more people out of work than before, more people with less money because prices are going up and the cost of living is rising, yet the honourable member for Pine Rivers has done nothing about it. She is the Minister in charge. What has she done about it? I could count on the head of a pin what she has done.

I now want to talk about housing interest rates. This Government has the right to control building society interest rates. The building societies are controlled by the State Government. The Federal Government did something about interest rates of banks, which controls it. The Western Australian Government and the South Australian Government tried to do something, but the Queensland Government did nothing at all. Tonight, the Minister for Works and Housing (Mr Wharton) tried to explain away the fact that it has done nothing to try to help people with mortgage money that the Commonwealth raised. It was not even money that the Queensland Government had to raise with its own taxes; it was money that was given to help people with mortgage problems. The Queensland Government ran away and used most of the money for other things. It misused the money and failed to help those people in need.

The housing industry is one of the shocking examples of the way in which the Government of this State has treated people. If the Queensland Government had been spending the money that is necessary and had been helping people with interest rate repayments, some growth in housing could have occurred and Queensland would not have had the worst growth in housing figures for the last three months. If there had been work in the housing industry, more people would have been back at work. That is the area in which growth can be generated, and nothing has been done about it. No matter what else has happened, this State is still the branch manager State.

Everyone will be waiting with bated breath to hear the Premier tell us that no taxes are going up, but there are about five pages of charges that have gone up in the last three months and they are not talked about. The Premier will tell us that rail fares, boating fees and registration fees do not go up. They have gone up. The Government sneaked them through when the House was not sitting. It will be interesting to listen to

the Budget speech and dream of days of Hans Christian Andersen and other tellers of fairy-tales.

Mr FITZGERALD (Lockyer) (8.45 p.m.): It is with pleasure that I rise to join in this debate this evening and to support the motion moved by the Premier and Treasurer (Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen) seeking an appropriation of funds for the Queensland Government. It is also with pleasure that I support the Queensland Government, and I believe that this House should approve the funds to enable it to continue its work.

This evening, honourable members have listened to the greatest tirade of pub talk that one could possibly get from the honourable member for Lytton (Mr Burns). The people in the electorates of Bass Hill and Rockdale in New South Wales have shown their approval or disapproval of the Federal Labor Government. I realise that the speakers who have preceded me have referred to the interdependence of the economies of Queensland and Australia. Obviously, the electors of Bass Hill and Rockdale blame the Federal Government for what has happened to the economy of New South Wales, and have taken appropriate action. One seat has been lost by the Australian Labor Party, and that electorate had never previously polled less than a 16 per cent margin in favour of the ALP.

It is no wonder that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition got to his feet and acted so defensively in the House tonight. He has not used the figures that he has available to the best of his ability. He has got down to the worker, the person in his electorate who is likely to re-elect him. He has kissed goodbye to his colleagues, because he knows that when the Queensland people pass judgment on this Government, they will pass judgment on the Federal Government as well, and his colleagues will not be returned to this House. The next State election will present an opportunity for the people of Queensland to pass judgment on the Australian Labor Party. Whether the honourable member for Lytton likes it or not, he will have to suffer the consequences of wearing the tag of the ALP and of being seen as part of the worst team of money-managers in Australian history since the Whitlam Government.

Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen: Members of the Opposition will have a pretty dirty name after the election.

Mr FITZGERALD: Only those who are returned.

The figures quoted by the honourable member for Lytton are all percentage decreases, and it is obvious that he has sent them to the press. He quotes figures that refer to one quarter and a percentage decrease. I think that that is one of the most irresponsible ways of quoting figures. Queensland's percentage of Australia's population is 16.1, and when account is taken of the number of houses built and the amount of money spent on housing in Queensland, the percentage of population is the dominant factor. Comparisons should not be made on the basis of peaks in population when an influx has occurred because of migration of people to Queensland. As a result of that influx, a great deal of housing construction was undertaken, which was by far the most house-building activity that was carried on in Australia. Owing to a number of economic factors, a downturn in housing construction has occurred since, but in spite of that, on a per head of population basis, the number of houses being built in Queensland is the same as in any other State.

Mr De Lacy: Give us the same criteria for unemployment.

Mr FITZGERALD: The honourable member speaks about unemployment. When the latest figures on unemployment were released, his colleague the best treasurer in the world said that one should have regard not only to figures on unemployment but also to employment opportunities and the creation of jobs. Straight away, the Federal Treasurer (Mr Keating) started to refer to the number of jobs that had been created by the Federal Labor Government. In contrast, the Queensland Government continually expounds its theory, states the number of jobs that have been created and what the unemployment figure really is, and demonstrates the number of people who have migrated to Queensland

during the past three years. I realise that the honourable member has such a limited mentality that he is unable to digest those figures.

It is impossible to examine the Queensland economy in isolation. Responsibility for the severe downturn that occurred in the Australian economy can be levelled at the Hawk Labor Government. It has been a disaster, and the Australian people are waking up to that fact now.

I draw the attention of honourable members to the summit conference at which trade union leaders met with elected representatives in the House of Representatives Chamber in Canberra. Honourable members will remember how Queensland's Premier and Treasurer (Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen) stood out, and how he was the odd man out. They will remember what the leaders of industry and of the trade unions said and how the Prime Minister (Mr Hawke) went crawling to the president of the Australian Council of Trade Unions at night-time to see whether the final agreement would be approved by him.

Many of the leaders of industry to whom I have referred are now starting to say, "Mr Premier, you were right. I am afraid it was a mistake to go along with the accord. They were wrong, and it has been a disaster." Since the prices and incomes accord was agreed to, it has been obvious, in spite of the tough talk, that the Federal Labor Government is trying to serve two masters, the ACTU and the electorate.

The policies of the Federal Labor Government are a disaster, and that factor affects the performance of the economies of all States, including Queensland. It makes me realise how good it is to live in a State in which, although the economy is slow, it is still possible to claim that, in many important areas, Queensland is performing better than the other States. Honourable members must not allow their judgment of the Queensland economy to be clouded by the numbers that are used so freely by the Labor members of this House—I have previously mentioned the honourable member for Lytton (Mr Burns)—and other critics of the National Party Government's performance. Those figures are trotted out because they give Labor members something to say; but they should also tell the house that those figures bear very little relationship to the operations of the Queensland economy.

Any debate on the Queensland economy should be based on pertinent facts. The figures used by the Opposition spokesman show a lack of understanding of the State Government's role in the overall process of the economic development.

The Federal Government has direct and indirect responsibility for monetary policies. Interest rates on savings accounts affect housing interest rates, too. We all remember the steps that were taken to allow interest rates on savings accounts to increase. That action put more pressure on building societies. The honourable member for Lytton (Mr Burns) had the hide to blame this Government for the high interest rates charged by building societies. I shall explain a simple little fact of life. If this Government chose to keep the interest rates of building societies at an artificially low level, people in this State who invest in building societies have the right to withdraw their money from them. The Government does not dictate to people where their money should be deposited. If people were to withdraw their funds from building societies, the societies would have no funds to lend. They would be in financial strife. The Federal Government determines its policies and the building societies are forced to follow those policies. As I said, the Federal Government has direct and indirect responsibility for monetary policies including interest rates, exchange rates, trade balances and, as everyone is painfully well aware, people's taxes.

It is the policy of the Queensland National Party Government to create an atmosphere that will encourage the maximum possible expansion of the private sector, but, in the face of high Federal Government taxes, high interest rates and exorbitant wage claims this is becoming increasingly difficult.

Did anyone hear the Federal Government say anything about the superannuation claim? It is not going to provide any leadership at all by saying that all workers in

Australia should qualify and should be able to claim a prosperity bonus of 3 per cent for their superannuation. At the same time, the dollar is going down and, of course, the standard of living is going down. As the dollar goes down the standard of living goes down, because everything that is imported goes up in price.

Firstly, the Queensland Government does not impose the taxes that are imposed by other States. They include tobacco tax, petrol tax and the financial institutions duties. It comes as no surprise to learn that, annually, Victorians pay \$338.50 more per capita in State taxes than do Queenslanders. People in New South Wales pay \$254.73 more, people in South Australia pay \$227.90 more, and people in Western Australia pay \$117.96 more.

Under the National Party-led Government, Queensland has grown and prospered for 28 years, and it will continue to do so.

A recent report by Brisbane-based consultants Strategies Pty Ltd clearly shows that the Queensland economy has consistently out-performed Australia's economy over the past 25 years. It has grown at an annual rate of 4.7 per cent which is considerably faster than the overall Australian average of 3.9 per cent. The report also shows that, at the end of last year, Queensland's growth rate had slowed to 3.4 per cent but the national average had fallen to 2.2 per cent. This Government is taking every opportunity to ensure that the Queensland economy continues to grow. The latest figures indicate that this State continues to make a major contribution to Australia's wealth.

I now refer to some of the indicators that have a real connection with the economic performance of this State. While considering these figures, it must be remembered that Queensland has only 16.2 per cent of Australia's population.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr FITZGERALD: I will refer to employment and unemployment shortly. I hope when I do so that honourable members opposite will get the message straight this time.

For a start, Queensland consistently is Australia's leading export State. In May this year, Queensland produced 26 per cent of Australia's export trade, which was valued at \$719m. In the 11 months to the end of May, Queensland's exports amounted to \$7,062m, or 23 per cent of the nation's exports.

Employment—or perhaps unemployment—is a thought occupying the minds of a lot of people. The Hawke Government seems to be doing its best to destroy each sector in turn, with high interest rates, taxes and increased costs. Companies that manufacture cars or build houses are severely cutting the number of people they employ as part of the process of trying to save themselves. The latest trick that the Federal Government has come up with—I refer to the fringe benefits tax—has many business people scared stiff. Under the scheme floated by the Federal Government, businesses that are not profitable will still have to pay enormous taxes.

At this stage I should point out that Queensland still recorded 16 per cent of the motor vehicle registrations for the 1985-86 financial year. How does the honourable member for Lytton (Mr Burns) justify his claim that people cannot afford to buy cars? He quoted figures that showed a very high percentage drop in sales. As Queensland has only 16.2 per cent of the nation's population, obviously it does not have as many cars as the other States, but in the financial year 1985-86 Queensland recorded 16 per cent of the motor vehicle registrations in Australia. I do not think that stacks up with the figures that the honourable member gave, but I suggest that his figures are phoney and are not a true indication of what has happened.

That does not mean that the economic woes caused by Labor in Canberra have not left the car-manufacturing industry in trouble. For the one month period May/June 1986, Queensland's registration of new motor vehicles fell by 5.1 per cent, while new registrations Australia-wide fell by 5.4 per cent.

In the building industry, Queensland registered 19.5 per cent of the total number of dwelling units approved in Australia for the 12 months. That is not a small, selected

period; it is for the 12 months to the end of May. With 16.2 per cent of the population, Queensland registered 19.5 per cent of the total number of dwelling units approved in Australia. Cop that one! In fact, Queensland had 16.6 per cent of the total value of buildings approved for the 12 months to the end of May. This converted into 20 per cent of the dwelling units commenced for the 12 months to the end of March. To be added to that is the 20.2 per cent of the non-building construction commenced for the 12 months ending March this year.

Let me return to the jobs that have been lost in every industry and sector because of the economic mismanagement in Canberra. Last year, Queensland created more jobs than any other State in Australia. That may not be welcome news to the members on the Opposition benches, but surely it is welcome news to the large number of people who are still migrating to Queensland. This State has the second highest population growth of all the Australian States. Last year, Western Australia topped the Australian growth rate, with 1.98 per cent. With an annual population growth of 1.62 per cent, which is well ahead of Australia's population growth of 1.3 per cent, Queensland was not far behind.

This State now has a population of more than two and a half million people. One of the main reasons for that is jobs. In 1985, 70 300 jobs were created in Queensland. That is 28 per cent of all the jobs created in Australia. Honourable members should not forget that Queensland has 16.2 per cent of the population but had 28 per cent of all the jobs created in Australia. As I said earlier, even Mr Keating is starting to quote job-creation figures. He finds that they are more of a true indicator of economic growth than counting the number of unemployed who have moved from one State to another. These figures mean that last year Queensland had the fastest annual labour-force growth of all the States, at 5.7 per cent, compared with a national average of 3 per cent.

Just in case honourable members opposite think that I am speaking of past glories, I point out that the high job-creation rate has continued in Queensland, with this State registering the highest employment growth rate of any Australian State for the 12 months to the end of June this year. Queensland's figure was 4.9 per cent, which is higher than the national increase of 4.5 per cent. Queensland created 51 200 jobs, which is 16.9 per cent of all jobs created in Australia.

The Government admits that unemployment in Queensland is 9 per cent, which is unacceptably high. However, there is no doubt that it has been accentuated by problems in the sugar industry in particular. This morning, reference was made to the importance of the sugar industry to Australia. Those members who represent northern electorates should know what the sugar industry means to the nation. Until now, Queensland has had the three Cs facing trouble, but now it is the four Cs that are facing economic downturn—the copper, coal, cane and, now, cotton industries. No doubt these things indicate that the State is having economic problems. However, Queensland created more jobs than any other State in Australia.

Queensland's unemployment figure has been boosted also by a gain of 12 406 net in the unemployment benefit transfers through jobless people moving to Queensland over a period of three years. Those people are already registered for unemployment benefits and are coming to Queensland. Over the past three years this has added approximately 1.1 per cent to the State's rate of unemployment. If that was taken off our present figure, honourable members would see a proper comparison of Queensland's performance with that of the other States.

With this very pleasing job growth in Queensland, it would be expected that the State would have above average performances in some other areas. Honourable members do not have to look very far to find further indications that Queensland is performing better than the other States and better than the national average. For instance, in 1984-85 this State produced 21 per cent of the gross value of agricultural commodities produced in Australia. In the same period Queensland contributed 22 per cent of Australia's value gained from mining operations. In 1985-86, a record 64.07 million tonnes of saleable

coal was produced. That is an increase of 18.01 per cent over the 1984-85 figures. Record exports of 50.8 million tonnes represent an increase of 11.63 per cent.

The biggest success story in the mining area is the increase in gold bullion from 6 708 kg in 1984-85 with a value of \$65,674,432, to a total production in 1985-86 of 17 925 kg with a value of \$70,510,356, which is an increase of more than 62 per cent. That expansion in gold production, which was referred to by the honourable member for Mulgrave (Mr Menzel), is threatened by the proposal of the Federal Labor Government to impose a gold tax. That is one of the most ridiculous things that I have ever heard of. The Federal Labor Government will tax anyone it can. It will whip up a gold tax.

What would happen to Australia if a gold tax were introduced? It would stifle another industry that has been in the doldrums for many years, an industry that plays a vital part in the world scene. Gold is certainly a great export-earner. The introduction of this tax would have a devastating effect on gold mine development. Both Australia and Queensland would lose the income that will be generated if gold mines are not given the incentive to go ahead. North Queensland would be especially hard hit. I do not hear anything on that issue from the honourable member for Cairns (Mr De Lacy).

One method suggested for applying the tax is to take away the royalty rights of the State. A gold tax would also adversely affect Australia's balance of payments. However, considering its record while it has been in office, the Federal Labor Government does not seem to care a hoot about this country's balance of payments. By introducing a gold tax, the Federal Labor Government would harm its own interests. That just shows how fuzzy the economic thinking of that Government really is.

The Queensland Labor Party spokesmen also show fuzzy thinking in the economic indicators that they pull from under their hats. Queensland has the second-highest annual retail sales growth in Australia, with an annual growth rate of 11.3 per cent, which is higher than the national average of 10.7 per cent. Business confidence in the continued growth in the retail area is indicated by the decision of Coles New World to spend \$40m on eight new supermarkets in Queensland within the next 18 months, creating 2 100 new jobs. The Myer organisation is to open a big new store in the \$360m top-of-the-mall redevelopment, while David Jones will operate a two-level store in the \$60m Toowong village development.

The Queensland tourism industry continues to outperform the tourism industry in all other Australian States, with an average annual growth rate of 8.5 per cent between 1978 and 1985, compared with 4.8 per cent for the rest of Australia. These figures contrast markedly with the figures that were quoted by the honourable member for Lytton (Mr Burns).

The Queensland tourist industry has been a boom industry. It is a very important industry. The speech by the honourable member for Lytton was just a bit of pub talk. He quoted the statistics for an extremely short period. I quoted the statistics for a long period, between 1978 and 1985.

During the last seven years, employment growth directly related to tourism increased by 73 per cent. Currently, tourism contributes \$9 billion to the economy, or double the figure of three years ago. These are some of the indicators that have a true bearing on the state of the Queensland economy. Labor's rubbery indicators do not give the true picture.

The Queensland National Party Government will continue to work to expand this strong base to ensure that economic growth continues into the future.

At the beginning of this financial year, the Queensland Industry Development Corporation began operations to help entrepreneurs create more jobs to boost exports and to help small business grow into big business by providing finance for viable enterprises when it is not available from more orthodox channels.

The QIDC has taken over debt reconstruction in the rural sector. Already, interest rates for rural borrowers holding old Agricultural Bank—now QIDC—advances over

\$100,000 have been lowered by 1 per cent, from 18.5 per cent to 17.5 per cent. That is a real indication of what the QIDC is all about. It provides assistance where assistance is really needed. It owes no apologies for the 1 per cent interest rate drop that has been given to the holders of Agricultural Bank loans. From 12 September this year, that interest rate will fall further to 16.75 per cent.

In 1963, the Queensland Government established the Department of Industry Development when the percentage of the State work-force employed by manufacturers was 4 per cent. Now it is 12 per cent. To encourage more manufacturing enterprises, the department offers a financial assistance package aimed at reducing the costs of starting up a factory in the first five years. Fully developed land is provided for approved manufacturers. If a manufacturer meets certain criteria, the department may construct the factory building.

In 1983, the first Minister for Small Business in Australia was appointed in Queensland. That has been a success story. The Queensland Small Business Development Corporation has two main roles. Firstly, it helps small business gain access to the knowledge, skills and resources required to obtain the best possible results. Secondly, it evaluates small business opportunities and makes recommendations on appropriate courses of action to the Government.

Excluding the rural sector, Queensland has 113 000 small businesses, or more than 95 per cent of the business enterprises of this State. The sector employs more than half the work-force in construction, transport, storage, wholesaling and retailing, and contributes more than half of the value added in the construction and retail sectors.

The QSBDC offers front-line business development services and small-town self-help programs. It organises small business weeks and it administers the small business supplementary loan scheme. Pittsworth is one of the towns that are presently benefiting from this scheme. Between June 1983 and December 1985, the level of work-force employed in the small business sector increased by a staggering 34.8 per cent, and those figures should be emphasised. The Queensland total work-force increased by 8.7 per cent in the same period.

The Queensland economy is still strong in Australian terms and the State Government has taken measures to ensure that it stays that way. The time has come for the knockers on the benches opposite to start supporting Queensland and make a positive contribution to Queensland's economy.

I wish to raise several other matters. Opposition members have referred to the regular increases in State Government charges. Do they recall what is happening with Federal charges and excise duty on beer and petrol? Do they realise that those charges are increasing all the time? Those charges have been indexed, and every three months they are automatically increased.

One further matter that concerns me—it has been referred to previously in this House—is the trade war between the European Economic Community and the United States of America relative to the sale of wheat and other commodities that are marketed around the world. These practices are seen as unfair by Australian primary producers. Despite what the honourable member for Lytton has said, Australian primary producers are not subsidised in the same way as Australia's secondary industries are. I am not saying that Australia's secondary industries should not receive some assistance to enable them to grow and to provide a work-force in Australia; but only those industries that promise to be viable should continue to receive the benefits of any subsidy scheme. I would prefer to see bounties paid.

Australia has to stand up and fight its own economic battles in the real world. When the dollar was floated, or allowed to sink—that is the correct term—by the Federal Government, Australia's worth was discovered and has been re-evaluated by every trader buying or selling Australian dollars throughout the world. Australia has been checked out against the world.

I cannot stand hypocrisy, and I have been very critical of those nations that have used sporting events in order to voice political opinions. The United States boycotted the Olympic Games in Russia. It was only tit for tat that the Russians should boycott the Olympic Games in Los Angeles. Some countries boycotted the Commonwealth Games that were recently held in Edinburgh.

The American wheat-farmers are being subsidised by their Treasury to enable them to export those huge surpluses that have been accumulated over a number of years. They are taking traditional markets in Russia and China away from countries such as Australia.

The Federal Government now says that it will place a trade ban on South Africa. That would be the most ridiculous thing that any trading nation could do. It would be a ridiculous trading practice for a person who owns a shop that is full of goods to start discriminating between white or black people or members of religious sects.

Australia is now going to say that we will not trade with the South Africans because we do not like the colour of their skin, their politics or the way in which they conduct their business on the world front.

Australia is saying, "We believe this is going to help the rest of Africa." The Australian wheat-grower will be damaged by the imposition of sanctions. It will also hurt people in small towns and in cities.

Do honourable members opposite realise that, in 1984-85, Australia imported \$137,292,000 worth of goods from South Africa and exported \$204,988,000 worth of goods to South Africa? Wheat represents approximately a quarter of the value of all the goods that Australia exports to South Africa. In 1984-85—

Mr Davis: What year?

Mr FITZGERALD: I repeat the year for the honourable member: 1984-85. He would not know the difference between wheat and barley. Although he has very limited experience in that field, I inform him that I am talking about wheat. The tonnages are set out. The value of 369 123 000 kg of wheat was \$55,796,000. That money came into Australia from the sale of wheat to South Africa. The Federal Government has said that Australia is now going to moralise and that it will not trade with South Africa. However, at the same time America will trade with Russia. Although I do not like communism, Australia trades with Eastern Europeans and the Russians and has started to trade with China. Australia trades with socialist countries. I believe that we should open our doors and trade with whomever we can. We can use our economic base to better the Australian life-style so that everyone can live in a free and democratic society and to show the rest of the world where we stand. It is most hypocritical to say, "We have goods for sale but we are going to select to whom we sell them." The goods that we have for sale are of high quality. The Australian farmer is beginning to fight his competitors overseas with one hand tied behind his back, and he is copping heaps. The Federal Labor Government is tying the hands of Australian farmers behind their backs.

Interest rates are currently at a high level. We are selecting our trading partners. The Australian dollar has dropped. The cost of imported machinery is increasing constantly, and we are copping heaps. It is no wonder that the National Farmers Federation has sprung into existence and that \$15m has been donated by people who can afford to donate the money. However, there are many people who cannot donate money to the National Farmers Federation. Although the National Farmers Federation may not become a political organisation, after the Mudginberri dispute and things like that, people can see that the union movement has been screwing the Federal Labor Government and, in turn has inflicted the consequences of its actions upon the Australian people.

It is about time that a movement sprang up in Australia that stood up for a fair deal for all Australians and allowed Australia to battle on the world scene. We will face fair competition. The problem is that a person who is allowed to export only to those

countries for which permission is granted has one hand tied behind his back, and he cops heaps. Next, the unions will be trying to control everyone's life.

Small business in Australia has woken up to what is happening. That is why there is a resurgence of public support for the organisation that has been established. It will sweep the Hawke Government out of power. The members of the Labor Party will go out in the same fashion as those two candidates who suffered the great reversal of form at Bass Hill and Rockdale in New South Wales last week. It is no wonder that members of the Opposition entered the Chamber today with an Unsworth look about them. It was certainly a lighter shade of pale. It is no wonder that Opposition members are very quiet. There is no doubt that they can see the writing on the wall.

I agree that this session before the election may be short. The sooner we go to an election, the happier I will be. It will allow the people of Queensland to decide whether or not they will support the Labor Party.

It is with great pleasure that I support the Bill and the Premier and Treasurer of Queensland in asking this Parliament to pass the appropriation for the Queensland Government.

Mr CASEY (Mackay) (9.14 p.m.): Usually, in this type of debate I do not comment on the remarks of other members. Some of the matters referred to by the honourable member for Lockyer are typical of the perverse thinking of National Party members today. Firstly, the honourable member referred to wheat sales and sanctions. He said how terrible it was that Australia should be imposing sanctions. However, this week his Federal deputy leader (Mr Hunt) accompanied Mr Kerin to the United States in an endeavour to instil some sense and sanity into the United States Government about its wheat sales and to impress upon it how it was destroying the wheat industry in Australia. The honourable member is out of kilter with those members of his own party who know what they are talking about on these subjects.

The honourable member said that he was against all those stinking things and that, if sanctions were to be imposed, Australia should not be selective. He said that if a person owned a store, he should not say, "Only black people or only white people can buy items from my shelves." Surely that is what the row with South Africa is all about. That is the problem. It is at the very core of apartheid in South Africa that people, because of their colour, are debarred from entering particular shops and particular communities to do things that every free Australian is able to do whether he is black, white, or even a red-headed member of the National Party.

Three years ago, at about this time in this Chamber, honourable members saw some amazing scenes. Let me reflect on the cause of those particular scenes which brought about the downfall of a coalition that had been in existence for almost 26 years. The very thing that brought about that downfall was the view expressed by people within that coalition that they wanted proper accountability from their Government. It was all to do with a public accounts committee; in other words, proper accountability within Government in Queensland.

Following the downfall of the coalition Government, the Premier tried to keep the issue alive by pleading with the electorate, "Give us a go to govern in our own right. Give us a three-year term of National Party Government without those terrible Liberals hanging on to our coat-tails." Of course, I need not reflect on the result of that election and how, because of the gerrymander and with only 30 per cent of the voting public of Queensland supporting it, the National Party Government was returned to power. However, the State Government has now had three years in office.

Today the Premier, who has also undertaken the role of Treasurer, made three major speeches, although only Government members would call them speeches. On three occasions the Premier had the opportunity of defending his own stewardship of the money that had been given into his Government's hands by the people of Queensland during the last three years for it to spend on their behalf. Yet at no stage would the

Premier have spent half a minute on State budgetary matters; not in the motion he moved without notice this morning, his reply to the debate on that motion or in his remarks when moving the second reading of the Appropriation Bill this evening. Honourable members perusing those speeches will find that they are full of criticism of the Federal Government and nothing else. The Premier spoke of how those "terrible" federals have upset things.

It is about time the State Government realised that Australia is a federation and that 85 years ago the six Crown colonies of this island nation formed a Government and said, "We are going to have a nation—one nation—Australia. We shall have six separate States and each will be treated equally by the Federal Government." That has always been the case.

The Premier has not given any account whatsoever of his stewardship. He has not said exactly how he has spent the money of the people of Queensland over that period.

The Federal Government also controls New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia. The people of those States suffer the same problems with the Federal Government as Queenslanders, but they are not found on every corner whinging, crying and bellyaching about the Federal Government as one hears members of the Queensland Government complaining about the Federal Government.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition has pointed out tonight that Queensland's economy is the worst of all Australian States. The reason for that is the attitude of the Bjelke-Petersen Government in regard to confrontation with the Federal Government rather than co-operation for the benefit of all Australians.

Surely the Premier should have been in the Chamber this evening to explain why Queensland has the most expensive third-party motor vehicle insurance scheme in Australia. Why has Queensland the highest electricity tariffs in Australia when it has Australia's largest coal deposits? Surely the Premier should be telling Queensland workers why they have the lowest incomes in Australia. The Premier wants to lower those incomes. He wants to take more money out of the workers' pockets. That was the view expressed by him this evening, supposedly a National Party solution to Australia's economic problems. Already Queensland workers have the lowest average incomes in Australia. Queensland has the lowest housing construction rate in Australia. Queensland has the lowest per capita spending on education, health care and industry promotion, just to mention a few of Queensland's problems.

Mr Davis interjected.

Mr CASEY: As the honourable member for Brisbane Central has pointed out, Queensland also has the dearest milk in Australia.

All Australians are aware that the nation has problems which will only be solved by pulling together, as instanced by the Federal Government's gesture of sending an all-party delegation to fight for Australia's wheat exports. The Prime Minister did not send only Labor members, he sent members of all parties so that Australia could show a united front. Australia can never present a united front when the hypocritical Premier does not give two hoots about the people of this State.

The Premier and Treasurer spent half a minute speaking about Queensland's supposed balanced Budget. I would call it a bodgie Budget rather than a balanced Budget. I have positive evidence that the State Government deliberately withheld payment for goods, services and entitlements until after the end of the current financial year so that the State's balance sheet would not truly reflect its current financial position.

Mr Alison: Rubbish.

Mr CASEY: The honourable member for Maryborough (Mr Alison) says, "Rubbish". I suggest that he will find contractors in his electorate who were not paid until after the end of the financial year so that the money would not come out of the 1985-86 financial year's Budget. He will find that payments for apprentices undertaking block release

training were withheld until after the end of the financial year so that they would be paid out of the funds made available under the Appropriation Bill that is being debated this evening.

School-book allowances were all late. Payments of small business accounts were held well and truly over 30 days. Some were made to wait over 60 days, and sometimes 90 days, before they were paid.

The Works Department, under the control of the Minister for Works and Housing (Mr Wharton), who is about to leave the Chamber, would be the worst offender in that regard.

Mr WHARTON: I rise to a point of order. That is not the case. The Works Department has paid its bills in due time within the 30 days.

Mr CASEY: Complaints have been made to the Minister's department and other departments about the way in which this Government rigged the books to make sure that everything balanced by the end of the financial year. Yet, surprisingly, the Premier admitted in a statement at the end of the financial year that some of the unexpected windfall of \$140m accrued to the Consolidated Revenue Fund for the year because of interest payments on the huge amounts that the State Government has stashed away on the short-term money market. It could have used that money to pay the traders and small-business people in the community referred to earlier by the honourable member for Lytton (Mr Burns) as the victims of the Bjelke-Petersen Government's moves.

Instead of talking about all those matters, the Premier criticised the Federal Government. He said that it should not be interfering in any way with the home and community care scheme. It is just as well that the Federal Government did start doing something about those schemes in Queensland, because they would have received nothing whatsoever from the State Government. The Federal Government set up the Community Health Program. It provides all the money that the Minister for Welfare Services dishes out all round the State. She does so with a happy smile on her face, as though the money is coming out of her own pocket, and she is generously providing for people.

Mrs Chapman interjected.

Mr CASEY: The Minister tries to indicate that she is generously providing for people. There she goes again, this supposedly caring Minister for Welfare Services. The other day when somebody referred to the two million people in Australia who are on the poverty line and are finding it very difficult to eat a decent meal, the Minister for Welfare Services said, "Let them eat stew."

Mrs CHAPMAN: I rise to a point of order. I suggested how they should eat stew and how they should make it. That is an absolutely deliberate lie by the honourable member for Mackay (Mr Casey).

Mr CASEY: If one cooks stew then one has to eat it. The Minister said, "Let them eat stew." The answer to that interruption was very concise and precise. Last week, in *The Catholic Leader*, which is a very worthy publication,——

Mrs Chapman interjected.

Mr CASEY: There she goes again. I think that Marie Antoinette was the one who said, "Let them eat cake." Somebody came to her and said, "The people have no bread." She said, "Well, let them eat cake." Of course, honourable members know what the people eventually did to Marie Antoinette. They put her head in a basket.

The Minister for Welfare Services said, "Let them eat stew." She sent the recipe out to various people who conducted a small experiment. *The Catholic Leader* records the comments of Mrs Jan Hunter, who is a single parent—one of the mothers so often criticised by the Minister for Welfare Services.

Mrs Chapman: No, she is not. She is divorced. Read it again. Where is her husband?

Mr CASEY: She is still acting as a parent and is trying to bring up a family alone, which is a very, very difficult job that causes significant problems throughout the community. She was not helped very much at all, of course, by the Minister for Welfare Services. Incidentally, the article states that the Minister's nickname is "Eve", and everyone knows what Eve fed to Adam and the trouble that we have all been in ever since!

The recipe for stew given by the Minister was found to be not even nutritional and to be far more expensive than the meals the family had already been providing. It was not even a good recipe, because all the nutritional value of the vegetables was boiled out of them.

Mr Davis: How much did the ingredients cost?

Mr CASEY: An enormous amount. It cost about three times more than it would cost anyone to cook up bit of mince and spaghetti, which the woman in question suggested was equally as nutritious and would help the family.

The community service schemes provided by the Federal Government are the kinds of schemes that the Queensland Government has started to be critical of. The Minister for Works and Housing (Mr Wharton) would have to admit that if it were not for the Support Accommodation and Assistance Program and the funds provided by the Federal Government for that program, he would not have been able to do half of the things he has been able to do through his department during the last financial year.

The Premier and Treasurer has been critical of the natural disaster arrangements, yet as soon as cyclone Winifred hit far north Queensland, he flew up to the area. His feet had scarcely hit the tarmac—Beryl had not even turned off the plane's engines—when he said that Queensland would have to get more money from the Federal Government: yet he criticises the Federal Government because of its schemes for natural disaster relief.

The Rural Adjustment Scheme is a rort engaged in by the States, if ever there was one. It is one of the best schemes ever introduced. It has been designed to help the primary producers of this country, and is directly funded by the tax-payers' money, as the Deputy Leader of the Opposition (Mr Burns) so rightly pointed out earlier this evening. What happens to the money provided by the Rural Adjustment Scheme? I ask all honourable members to examine the figures that are set out in the Budget this month. I will bet any honourable member now that at the end of the financial year, under the category of accumulated funds for the various rural adjustment schemes that operate in this State, at least \$30m will be shown to be stashed away earning interest that is accruing to the Consolidated Revenue Fund. It will be used for other purposes instead of being applied where it is needed, on the farms.

Farmers in my electorate have informed me of another practice occurring under the Rural Adjustment Scheme. Wealthy farmers who own six or eight farms might receive financial assistance whereas a poor, struggling farmer, a worker who is determined to get on in the world but only owns one farm, is being told to sell out—that his type is not wanted in the industry. The single family farmer who is working his farm is the best type of farmer to have in the industry, but it is the old, old story with this Government: the rich are getting the rewards, and the poor are getting the boot in the backside.

The attitude of this Government towards family support programs is to let the children on the poverty line starve. This Government takes even more money out of the pockets of parents who are providing the finance for this Government. It is then given away elsewhere. That is typical of the attitude of the Queensland Government to the very grave problems that confront this nation today. Every man in the street knows that Australia's problems relate to export earnings.

The honourable member for Lockyer (Mr FitzGerald) spoke earlier about the floating of the Australian dollar. Earlier today, the Minister for Industry, Small Business and

Technology (Mr Ahern) said that that was a wise decision. Again, the back bench of the National Party is completely out of kilter with the front bench. What is happening to the Australian dollar? What is the score?

The floating of the Australian dollar simply means that export-oriented rural industries are now receiving 50 per cent more for their products than they did at this time last year. The floating of the Australian dollar has been the saviour of many of Australia's rural industries.

I realise that Government members do not know very much about economics and that they have been tied to a farm-gate philosophy for a very long time by their party organisation, but what I have said correctly describes the position. Today in Australia my dollar buys me just as much as it did this time last week, despite the fluctuations in between. If I want to buy Australian, if I want to help my own country and if I want to kick my own people along and help to find them jobs in this nation, I will spend my money on Australian goods, and Australian materials and Australian services. My suit is even made of Australian wool.

Government Members interjected.

Mr CASEY: It has the "pure Australian wool" mark on it, as honourable members can see. That is where it is manufactured, unlike the suits of several National Party back-benchers and even Ministers who float round the countryside. My underwear is Bonds—I could show that, too—made in Australia.

If people want to buy imported French wines, they can pay for them. If they want to buy Italian furniture for their homes, they can pay for it. I do not care how much they have to pay for it. If people want to drive imported cars, as several Ministers do, instead of buying Queensland-manufactured cars, they must pay for them. That is what is happening. Because of the value of the Australian dollar, if I want to have a holiday, I will have a holiday in Australia. I will not worry about holidaying overseas. I am happy that the drop in the value of the Australian dollar is encouraging more overseas tourists to visit our nation. They can now afford to holiday in Australia, which they could not afford to do previously.

Australians are getting a better price, relatively, for their sugar, their wool, their beef, their coal and their other exports. For such a long time, Queensland was Australia's export leader, mainly because of its coal, sugar and beef exports. They were the ones that really earned the money for the State. At the moment, one of the nation's biggest problems is that the big three have low prices. Consequently, the Government can no longer continue its farm-gate philosophy. It must encourage downstream manufacturing of our produce. Value-added industries help to increase the returns from overseas exports. The Government completely neglects that potential. In 29 years of Government, the National Party has done absolutely nothing.

Mr Cooper: Ha, Ha!

Mr CASEY: The honourable member for Roma says, "Ha, Ha!" He should go back out to Roma and see how industries in his own town have closed down since his party came into power. The Roma meatworks, Bassetts Winery and various other industries have declined considerably in that time. People have moved out of the western areas of Queensland. If he looked at the figures for the surrounding shires—the Bungil shire and others—he would realise the extent of Queensland's population decline over that period. Huge declines in population have occurred right throughout western Queensland and also in some of the northern shires and towns. Where have those people gone? They are to be found in the south-east corner of the State. This has been the greatest Government of centralisation—

Mr Neal interjected.

Mr CASEY: The member for Balonne is completely wrong. The figures for New South Wales and Victoria show that, because of the regionalisation policies of those

State Government's, their regional population is increasing, to the betterment of those States.

The necessary expansion of Queensland's manufacturing sector and the focus required on our potential export industries have to come from the Queensland Government. Easier access to risk capital is required, as well as the Government infrastructure and training back-up that are necessary. When the Premier spoke tonight about what is going to happen in the State, nothing like that was mentioned. When one compares what has been done in Queensland with action taken by the other States, especially Victoria, one clearly sees that Queensland's approach lacks planning and it lacks thrust. Queensland will move forward again only if it moves away from the declining rural and mineral base and ensures that its strategy for growth is in the manufacturing sector. That can be done with investment and reinvestment. In fact, that is the only way.

What has happened in Queensland? Trends in investment are very difficult to turn round. Queensland is on the slide. The net fixed capital expenditure in Queensland manufacturing is declining rapidly. For the financial year 1982-83, it was \$541m. In 1983-84, it dropped to \$396m. In 1984-85, the last year for which statistics are available, it dropped to \$199m, which is a decrease of 50 per cent in one year. The slide is accelerating. This State is going downhill faster; yet the Government does nothing whatsoever to reverse that.

Mr Randell interjected.

Mr CASEY: The member for Mirani says that that is not right. All the Queensland Government does is blame everything on the Federal Government.

Government members cannot blame the Federal Government for the lack of capital expenditure in manufacturing industry in this State. Members of the Government see the Federal Government as the cause of all problems. Recently this State has experienced droughts, cyclones and floods that have caused havoc to our primary industries. Some people claim that those problems have been caused by the "terrible" Feds in Canberra. While this State continues to export raw and unprocessed goods onto world markets, with all of their historical fluctuations, it will continue as a price-taker and not a price-maker.

If Queenslanders examine the State's weather records, they will find that droughts, cyclones and floods are the norm and that perfect seasons are a rarity. I bet that the Minister for Lands, Forestry, Mapping and Surveying (Mr Glasson) would agree with me on that. He is a man who has battled against those adversities all of his life. Perfect seasons are a rarity.

As I have already mentioned, it is 85 years since Federation; so surely by now this State should have learned how to live with the other States. Canberra is no new phenomenon.

On half-yearly figures to the end of last year, Queensland lost to New South Wales its place as Australia's major exporter. A close examination of the figures shows that the reason is the leadership of New South Wales in the manufacturing sector. Queensland is the greatest food-producing State in Australia, yet it still sends all of its surplus production overseas or interstate in its raw or unprocessed form. I ask honourable members to examine the goods on the shelves of their local supermarket or hardware store. They will quickly perceive that most of the processed products and manufactured goods have been imported from either interstate or overseas. The shame is that so much of the contents in their primary form originated in Queensland.

Unfortunately for a long time this State has continued to follow the National Party farm-gate mentality, which has not taken into account the change in world trade and in world consumer demand. For a long period Queensland prospered in a protected environment. The sugar industry is a classic example of that. However, I will comment on that in another speech at another time in this session. This State has rested comfortably in its cocoon and has not perceived the changes taking place in the outside world. The

outer shell of that comfortable cocoon was provided by capital investment, both foreign and local, in our industries and the warm inner lining by growth and expansion. The State did not really take much notice of Great Britain's entry into the European Economic Community about 12 years ago, which was destined to change the State's entire pastoral and agricultural export industries for evermore. The State did not really believe that the oil prices of the mid-1970s, which sent the rest of the world into a spin, would have any effect. Consequently, the State failed to recognise that world trade was swinging towards manufactured goods rather than raw materials.

What position does the State find itself in today? Its imbalance in interstate trading is now something like \$3,000m. Why is the State's interstate trade so bad? I refer to a few figures from the 1984-85 year, which are the latest available and were quoted by the member for Lockyer (Mr FitzGerald).

All honourable members know that this is, and has been for a long period, a cow-cocky Government. It has always been very protective of the dairying industry, which has a powerful influence on the Government. Last year, Queensland imported \$96m worth of dairy products from interstate, including fresh and processed milk, butter and cheese. That was a 25 per cent increase on the previous year. So it will probably go up again next year.

Mr Wharton interjected.

Mr CASEY: The Minister for Works and Housing is the member for Burnett, which is one of the most deprived areas of the dairying industry in this State. It is one of the areas that have suffered most during the last 10 to 15 years under this Government. The electorate of the Minister for Works and Housing is one that has lost more cow-cockies than almost any other. The Minister has got a hide to even open his mouth.

When people think of Queensland, they dream about its coastline and reef, which is teeming with fish just waiting to get caught—or so everybody says. It is a beautiful description of Queensland. It is one that Queensland tries to sell to tourists from the rest of Australia and from around the world. Yet, last year, Queensland imported from the other States \$65m worth of fresh, canned or simply preserved fish or seafood. I will repeat that. Queensland imported \$65m worth of seafood from the other States of Australia and an additional \$33m worth from overseas.

For years, Ministers who have held the Primary Industries portfolio and Ministers who have had responsibility for fishing—I think that the honourable member for Burnett (Mr Wharton) at one stage had that responsibility—have been saying that they would fix up the fishing industry in Australia. I am afraid that I can think of a word that would describe what has been done to it, but I cannot use it in this House. Last year a total of \$98m worth of fish was imported into Queensland.

I know that back-benchers love to represent the beef-producing areas of this State. The great beef-producing State of Queensland imports \$27m worth of preserved or canned meat and meat preparations from interstate. That is for food preparations. It is not Pal or any of the kangaroo meat that is used for dog food.

This State imports \$21m worth of fresh or frozen vegetables. Where is the honourable member for Lockyer (Mr FitzGerald) now? Supposedly, the best vegetable-growing area in this State is in his electorate. Queensland still imports \$21m worth of fresh or frozen vegetables from interstate.

Queensland imports \$27m worth of tea from interstate. Of course, not one leaf of tea is grown interstate. It is imported, broken down, and then up it comes to Queensland. I am sure that the people of the Innisfail region would not be very happy about that.

Queensland produces the nation's sugar as its main agricultural crop. Incidentally, the manufacture of raw sugar in Queensland is the single biggest manufacturing industry in this State.

Mr FitzGerald interjected.

Mr CASEY: The honourable member for Lockyer is in the Chamber. He would be better off growing a few more vegetables and trying to sell them in Queensland so that there is no need to import them from interstate.

I will return to sugar. Each year, other States supply Queensland with jams, marmalades and fruit jellies, which are all chock-a-block with sugar, worth \$14m and confectionery worth \$88m. Goodness gracious me! \$88m worth of confectionery from interstate! And what is the main ingredient in it? Queensland sugar!

Is it any wonder that, on behalf of the Labor Party, I have taken the bit between the teeth and am moving round the State saying, "How can we set up a major confectionery industry in this State to give us value-added downstream manufacturing for our sugar industry?"

Queensland also imports from interstate approximately \$86m worth of food preparations that are not individually specified in the trade figures. Those food preparations include every can of baked beans eaten by Queenslanders, despite the fact that navy beans are grown in Queensland. In fact, those beans are grown in the shadow of the Premier's own electorate of Barambah.

Time expired.

Mr RANDELL (Mirani) (9.44 p.m.): I have pleasure in supporting the Bill. Before I proceed any further, I must say that I wish that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition (Mr Burns) was in the Chamber. The vitriolic attack that he made this afternoon on the farmers of Queensland must be deplored. The honourable member must be ashamed of himself. As a matter of fact, I am alarmed at what he said. I will have to check *Hansard* tomorrow to make sure that what I heard with my own ears is correct.

Mr Stephan: I don't think he understands the rural industry.

Mr RANDELL: I do not think that he does. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition is just a hypocrite. He talks about the workers. Does he think that the farmers are not workers? The farmers work with the workers on a farm. They work together. Farmers ensure that the first people paid are the workers who work for them. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition is just a hypocrite. The people who will get this State and this nation out of the hole that they are in are the farmers. Not one Opposition member is prepared to dispute the figures of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. I do not believe that he thinks about the workers at all. He just uses them for political advantage.

He might just stop and think who has been in power in this country for three years. Who has got Australia in this hole? Bob Hawke and his Government have made a mess of it. Australia started going down the chute 10 years ago. And what is the reason? The Messiah, Bob Hawke, was president of the ACTU from 1970 to 1980. That is the time we had the industrial trouble in this country and the time Australia started to slide. When Bob Hawke got into power in Australia, that is the time the country really went down the chute. If honourable members opposite look at some of the figures and the country's debt, they will see that up to 1980, where it was on a level, the figure shot up. I will give those figures to the House later on. Honourable members opposite are just a mob of hypocrites and should face up to the facts and start fighting for Queensland. I have been a farmer and a worker and I understand what it is all about. Honourable members opposite have never, ever worked in their lives. With these hands I have raised and supported a family, been on a farm, worked, and dug holes. I am here today and can hold my head up in any part of this House. I can look honourable members opposite in the eye. What is wrong with this country is that there are too many academics and theorists. Let's get back to the men who work, such as the honourable member for Nudgee (Mr Vaughan), who understands what it is all about. The Federal Government is guilty of the most blatant discrimination possible against the Queensland Government because Queenslanders have the temerity to vote against Labor.

Mr Scott: You are going back to the Minister's speech, are you?

Mr RANDELL: I am going back to my own speech. I think that the honourable member for Cook had better get more than speeches ready, from what I have heard from his electorate.

Mr Scott: The Minister wrote it for you.

Mr RANDELL: The honourable member has his work cut out there. He is not a bad bloke, but he certainly will not be with the Labor cricket team when Parliament resumes next year. I have some good friends in his area and good friends in Mackay who came from his area. They are aware of what is going on. The honourable member for Cook had better get his speeches ready, because he will need everything he can get.

Mr Scott: Will you promise you will come up and campaign for me?

Mr RANDELL: I would not campaign for the honourable member for Cook; there is no doubt about that. Hawke and Keating are furious that since the National Party assumed office in its own right, the Queensland Government has been able to present a balanced Budget, contrary to what the honourable member for Mackay (Mr Casey) stated. That is something the Federal Government does not have a ghost of a chance of accomplishing. Mr Hawke is determined to make the people of Queensland suffer for sticking to a non-socialist Government that gives every possible encouragement to private enterprise. The ALP does not want private enterprise and wants to nationalise so that the ALP can get all the profits in Australia. Private enterprise is the only thing that is getting Queensland out of its hole, and that achievement is unattainable in other States.

An Opposition Member interjected.

Mr RANDELL: I will come to the honourable member in a minute.

It is that encouragement of private enterprise that puts Queensland in such a sound economic position, a position that is acknowledged and accredited by the International Finance Authority. For example, the Japan Credit Rating Agency has given Queensland a long term AAA credit-rating, which is the highest rating available. Closer to home, detailed studies by the National Institute of Economic and Industry Research indicate that Queensland has outperformed all other States in the last 15 years. These are not my figures. At the Federal ALP conference the State Opposition Leader, who is not game to hold a conference himself this year in this State, had the affrontery to declare that Queensland has been dragging the chain economically and that this Government has been stumbling along. I did not realise that the Queensland branch of the ALP was at the conference, until I heard that the honourable member for Kurilpa (Ms Warner) raised some resolution. That is the only information the National Party received in the State. I do not think the Leader of the Opposition was at the conference. What a load of rubbish it was! What a pathetic attempt at political face-saving by yet another Leader of the Opposition in Queensland! The Opposition is still unable to get sufficient seats in this House to govern, and on the Leader of the Opposition's current performance, it is never likely to. He will not remain in that position much longer.

An Opposition Member interjected.

Mr RANDELL: Would the honourable member just wait a minute? The discrimination against Queensland became apparent at the 1985 Premiers Conference, when the Federal Government set out to rein back its deficit at the expense of the States in general and Queensland in particular. That discrimination cost Queensland many millions of dollars to which it was justly and clearly entitled. Queensland is entitled to that money, and at no stage did the Federal Government attempt to control its own spending. It has not done so since then and it has no intention of doing so in the future.

The Leader of the Opposition talks about the loss of jobs. He can count the jobs that are lost by the Federal Government and the ACTU policies. Let me talk a little about the discrimination.

The Federal Government altered its tax-sharing formula, cutting Queensland out of about \$135m from the total tax pool. It chiselled Queensland out of its proper entitlements

in identified health grants, robbing Queensland of a further \$8m. Honourable members opposite are not listening. I ask them to listen to what I have to say.

Queensland was rorted out of \$82m to which it was entitled in Medicare funding. Consider this superb piece of discrimination. I think that the honourable member for Mackay referred to Medicare and how Queensland was doing so well. I ask him to listen to the figures that I will quote. Queensland received \$29 per capita in Medicare funding, whereas South Australia, a Labor State, received \$81 per capita; Western Australia, \$63; Victoria, \$63; and New South Wales, \$67. If that is not discrimination, I do not know what is. That is more jobs lost. The Opposition has referred to the number of jobs lost. Overall, the Federal Government, whilst giving Queensland \$362m, deliberately took the decision to cut back payments to Queensland. That figure is quite apart from the long-standing short-changing of Queensland by the Commonwealth on education, housing and roads, which cost Queensland about \$160m. More jobs were lost. Later, if sufficient time is available, I shall refer in greater detail to roads.

Not only did Queensland balance its Budget, it finished the last financial year with a small surplus of \$387,000, while Hawke and Keating tried to explain away a deficit of \$5.7 billion.

Mr Hamill: Which fund were you talking about in the Queensland Budget?

Mr RANDELL: The honourable member for Ipswich should listen to this. The deficit of \$5.7 billion was a blow-out of \$825m on the estimate the Federal Government announced last August.

Mr Hamill interjected.

Mr RANDELL: The honourable member cannot explain it except to say that it is total and utter incompetence.

Compared with other States, Queensland is underfunded by \$42m in tertiary education assistance. If Queensland received its rightful share, there would be tertiary places for an additional 5 000 students in Queensland.

Compared with other States, Queensland was underfunded by \$21m in housing assistance this year. If Queensland received the same per capita amount as other States, an additional 1 600 people could be housed each year.

Mr Hamill interjected.

Mr RANDELL: The honourable member will have his chance later. He should be quiet and cop it.

This year, despite the fact that Queensland has 34 per cent of the nation's Aboriginal and Islander population, Queensland is underfunded by \$4.8m in Aboriginal housing grants. One needs only to ask the Minister for Northern Development and Community Services (Mr Bob Katter) about that. The honourable member for Cook (Mr Scott) might be interested in those figures. He should learn them. Although Queensland has 34 per cent of the nation's Aboriginal and Islander population, this year it will receive a lousy \$4.8m in Aboriginal housing grants. So much for all the Labor talk about a fair deal for Aborigines!

Queensland is underfunded by \$30m under the Bicentennial Road Development Program. Queenslanders pay their 1 per cent Medicare tax in the same way as all Australians pay it, yet Queenslanders receive only \$32 per person in Medicare funding. That compares with over \$60 per person in New South Wales and Victoria and a massive \$81 per person in South Australia.

Mr Hamill: How do we compare in tax-sharing grants?

Mr RANDELL: I will get to that in a moment.

If Queensland was funded on the same basis for hospitals as the other States, it would have received a further \$88m this financial year. Opposition members should stick up for Queensland to get some of that money that Queenslanders paid in taxes and to which they are entitled. Opposition members should speak for Queensland and Queensland workers, because they are the ones being penalised by the Federal Government.

Queensland receives only a 13.3 per cent share of general purpose capital grants, which is well below its population share of 16.6 per cent. This adds up to a shortfall of \$23m this year. Those examples are stark proof that moneys rightly due to Queensland are being diverted to prop up other States that have Labor Governments that are unable to attract private enterprise in the way Queensland can.

Mr Price: Can you grow sugar?

Mr RANDELL: I am going to devote a section of my speech to sugar. The honourable member will know all about sugar when I get to that. Does he know that the Federal Government has not yet given Queensland one cent towards the sugar industry? The honourable member should not get me started on sugar.

Queenslanders are battling uphill against the enormous tide of anti-achievement policies and negative thinking as well as economic mismanagement pouring out of the socialist machine in Canberra. Unfortunately, the machine is running out of control. This nation now has had a very sour taste of life under Labor and of how Hawke and Keating manage the economy—if that is how one describes a series of gigantic blunders!

The stage has been reached at which the dollar is down; interest rates and taxation are at record levels; and Australia's overseas debt is out of control at \$85 billion, increasing at \$1 billion a month. Since the Federal ALP conference, union-leaders are still trying to run the economy of this nation. The persons who were elected as the leaders of this country should govern the country. Let them have the intestinal fortitude to get out there and tell the unions where to go. Let those persons run the country. They are hell-bent on sending Australia stone motherless broke. The ordinary union worker is wide awake. The honourable member for Lytton is not in the House. He would know all about the workers because he is awake to what is happening. Opposition members should ask Mr Unsworth what happened in a Labor seat in New South Wales. There was a 22 per cent swing against the Labor Government, and the poor old Queensland Opposition is trying to find out what happened.

Inflation is running at 9.2 per cent per annum, which is three times the average of other member countries of the OECD, four times that of the United States, and eight times that of Japan. Interest rates are significantly higher than those of our principal trading partners, and more than three times those in Japan. Ask the farmers of Queensland about interest rates. Unemployment is running at approximately 8 per cent, and youth unemployment at more than 20 per cent. Youth unemployment has remained high since the much ballyhooed Priority One campaign began. Australia's balance of payments deficit averaged more than \$1,000m a month during the last financial year. That figure was not recorded once throughout the entire term of the Fraser/Anthony coalition.

I recall, as most honourable members would, the headlines nine months ago which ran, broadly, "Prime Minister and Mr Keating not alarmed by balance of payments outlook". That was when the Australian dollar stood at 63.4 on the trade-weighted index basis against the world. What was it this morning? It has been down to about 54c.

On 30 June 1983, just after the present Federal Government came to office, Australia's gross indebtedness abroad amounted to \$35.6 billion. Australia's net indebtedness at that time, after deducting the Reserve Bank's foreign assets and some foreign debts to Australians, was \$23 billion. The figures for the year ended 30 June 1985 are not yet available, but all the signs are that our gross indebtedness at that time will have amounted to approximately \$85 billion and our net indebtedness to around \$65 billion.

Let us look at those figures in another way. Honourable members opposite should listen to these figures and take them in. In the first 82 years of the life of the

Commonwealth of Australia, all previous Governments of all political persuasions allowed Australia to accumulate a net debt of \$23 billion. In just three short years the Hawke Government—allegedly with the greatest Prime Minister ever seen in the world, and the greatest Treasurer—has almost trebled that figure, adding approximately a further \$42 billion.

This is the Government that the Prime Minister had the gall to claim in Hobart last week has brought Australia through the greatest economic crisis since the days of the Chifley Government. So appalling is this performance by the Federal Government that among the OECD countries only Greece is doing worse than Australia.

With an international debt of \$85 billion at the end of the financial year, the \$9,000m-plus a year interest bill is the third-highest expenditure item in the Federal Budget, ahead of defence, and absorbing 40 per cent of our falling export income. How long can we afford to have a Federal Government dominated by the ACTU? There is no doubt that it has to go.

Mr Borbidge: A magazine that said Mr Keating was the world's greatest Treasurer gave the award to the Treasurer of Mexico this year.

Mr RANDELL: That is good.

I said I would get back to roads. Let us look at funding of the Main Roads Department and the real hiding the Federal Government has given to the States and Queensland in particular. All honourable members would be aware from the figures available that the Federal Government collects \$5.9 billion in fuel tax this year. Out of that amount of fuel tax the States of Australia receive a paltry \$1.25 billion for road construction. That is a miserable 20.8 per cent. The rest goes to consolidated revenue. Just imagine what sort of roads Queensland would have if it could get a fair share of that money. Imagine the jobs that would be created and retained. Imagine the economic mess the Federal Government would be in if that was all taken away from the Federal Government, which uses that money to fund its own policies. It would go down the chute without that sort of money.

The Queensland Government has received advice that in the coming financial year it will receive \$260m for road-funding. The Federal Minister for Transport (Mr Morris) said that. These figures were published in Mackay. I ask the honourable member for Mackay to listen to them because he put out these figures.

Queensland has been advised that this financial year it will receive \$260m for road-funding. The honourable member for Mackay (Mr Casey) knows that Mr Morris said that. The honourable member published these figures in Mackay, so he should sit there and listen to them. That \$260m for road-funding is a miserable increase of \$3m. That is \$13m less than the amount that should have been passed to Queensland under Federal legislation.

Honourable members might recall that Mr Morris gave all kinds of promises just one year ago, when his Government introduced the Australian Land Transport Program, saying that an assured indexed sum would be received each year. A year later, that promise has already been broken—but I am not surprised. That is just one more to be added to the list.

Mr Morris made a claim recently that, since 1981-82, road funds have been increased by 90 per cent. He compared Commonwealth funding for roads in 1986-87 with that under the coalition Government.

Mr Casey: What are you trying to do? You are biting the hand that feeds you.

Mr RANDELL: The honourable member for Mackay is talking about national roads. The Federal Government has taken funds from arterial roads and rural roads and put them into national roads.

Honourable Members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Booth): Order! Persistent interjections will not be tolerated. I suggest that the honourable member for Mirani address the Chair.

Mr RANDELL: I have been addressing you, Mr Deputy Speaker, but I was provoked by the honourable members opposite who cannot cop the true figures.

Mr Casey: You are doing all right out of Hawke for your electorate.

Mr RANDELL: That is because of competent representation.

The present Queensland allocation of \$260m is an increase of nearly 90 per cent since the last year of the coalition Government. That \$260m, of course, includes \$94m in Australian bicentennial road development funds. However, the truth is that in 1981-82 the Commonwealth allocated \$139.4m to Queensland under the Road Grants Act. If that amount were increased by the CPI adjustments, Queensland's present basic entitlement under the Australian Land Transport Program would be \$188m. Instead, Queensland receives only \$166m in 1986-87. The additional \$94m from the Australian Bicentennial Road Development Fund comes from the levy of 2c a litre on fuel. It is not tied to a Federal tax. I might add that the 2c a litre was the initiative of the Federal coalition Government. Once again, Queensland has been short-changed. Last year from Queensland motorists the Federal Government collected an estimated \$1,014.5m in fuel tax. It is about time Queensland received its true entitlements under the road-funding system.

Following the Self report on local government in Australia, in May 1986 the Local Government Financial Assistance Bill was passed by the House of Representatives, laying the foundation for Federal assistance for local government for the next five years.

The main change is from a percentage of personal income tax to a guaranteed payment each year, which will increase by a percentage based on the CPI. Even though that might sound quite good, honourable members will be aware that once again the Federal Government has been guilty of a con trick. In the transition from an arrangement based on personal income tax to the new financial assistance grants, in May 1986 the personal income tax distribution to local Government was reduced from 2 per cent to 1.8 per cent. That was done because the Federal Government contended that local government was receiving too much money. Therefore, when the guaranteed grant was calculated, the basis used was 1.8 per cent, not 2 per cent. In other words, \$28m has been cut from the 1985-86 allocation. The result will be more rates, more hardship for councils and rate-payers and more jobs lost. The honourable member for Mackay (Mr Casey) should talk to the council representatives in the Mackay area. They will tell him that the Federal Government could not care less. This is typical of what is happening throughout Australia. The Federal Government breaks election promise after election promise. It attempts to be subtle and tries to cover up its actions.

I turn now to the cost of the fringe benefits tax to local authorities in Queensland. The payments will be \$2m, but the cost of the paperwork involved in collecting that money will also be \$2m. What will it cost the Federal Government to collect that \$2m? More jobs will be provided in Canberra, which is what the additional \$2m will be spent on. It will be spent in Canberra and the rest of the golden triangle. That is what the fringe benefits tax is all about. If the Deputy Leader of the Opposition (Mr Burns) were in the House, I would tell him that the workers will not get anything out of fringe benefit taxation. The cost of products in Australia will have to rise to cover the cost of collecting the tax. The worker will have to pay more.

I give honourable members an example of the effect of a fringe benefit tax on the worker. In Mackay, a worker had a permanent job with a farmer. He was an ordinary working man, and he and the farmer worked together as friends. As many members on the Government side would verify, many farmers and workers work together as friends. When the sugar crisis worsened, the farmer said to the worker, "I cannot employ you in the slack season. Get a job somewhere. I can keep you for cutting operations only, but you can live in my cottage free of charge." What will happen under the fringe benefit tax? The farmer will be penalised by the tax. The farmer went to the worker and said, "I am sorry, but I just cannot afford to pay it because I do not have any money. You

will either have to pay me or get out." The worker will be penalised, yet not one complaint has been made by members of the Opposition. Members of the Opposition are not worried about the workers in this country, in spite of the fact that the workers will be the ones who will get the short end of the stick.

As my speaking time is limited—the Government Whip has indicated that I should conclude my remarks—it is with pleasure that I support the Bill.

Mr PREST (Port Curtis) (10.6 p.m.): All day honourable members have listened to propaganda by the State Government in an attempt to hoodwink the people of Queensland into believing that all is well in Queensland except for the "terrible" socialist Government in Canberra. The State Government contends that the Federal Labor Government has caused all of the ills in Queensland.

The honourable member for Mirani (Mr Randell) said earlier that the imposition of the fringe benefits tax would cause a great deal of paperwork in the collection of millions of dollars in tax. However, I have a copy of a letter from the State Licensing Commission about changes that had been made to the operations of the Liquor Act. All publicans and liquor licence-holders are now required to keep books of account and records that show the amount of liquor that is being purchased. They must comply with the requirements laid down by section 50A of the Act. To do so, they must purchase books that have been printed especially to comply with the requirements that are available from Zions Pty Ltd or Kalamazoo. The letter points out that licensees can benefit from maintaining an up-to-date liquor purchase register.

The honourable member for Mirani contended that the introduction of the fringe benefits tax would create more jobs in the Commonwealth Public Service because more people would need to be employed. Part of the letter I have mentioned states—

"Arising from the enactment of Section 50A, the Commission has now added to its staff several qualified accounting personnel, appointed as investigators for the purpose of conducting throughout Queensland, regular examinations of the accounting records of licensees and permit holders, to ensure compliance with Section 50A of the Liquor Act."

In order that more revenue can be obtained from licensees through the operations of the Liquor Act, the State Government will impose requirements that will lead to a great deal of paperwork being done by licensees. It could amount to anything from 15 to 20 hours a week. The purpose of keeping the records of purchases made is to enable the State Licensing Commission to collect its dues. The State Licensing Commission will employ more staff, including qualified accountants and investigators, to travel round the State at regular intervals. No doubt that letter will be of use to members of the Opposition at some future time.

I turn now to the Queensland economy. At the present time, it is not all peaches and cream. Those sentiments are not merely mine. On 26 May 1986, Sir Roderick Proctor said, "Queensland was in some ways being outperformed by some Labor States." He went on to say that the Queensland economy was "not in good shape" and that at the moment, in some respects, Queensland did not compare well with the other States, "which just happen to have Labor State Governments." Sir Roderick is one of Queensland's leading businessmen, and he moved quickly to prevent the remark from being interpreted as praise for a Labor State Government. An article relating to his comments states—

"But in doing so, his views contrasted with the National Party pre-election claims that Queensland's economic success was a result of having a National Party Government.

He said that when he had compared Queensland's economic performance to other States he was not saying 'that the particular party in Government of the day makes much difference to the economy.' Sir Roderick said the Queensland economy was performing at a level below that of Victoria and New South Wales."

On 21 June 1986 a newspaper article indicates the State's record number of bankruptcies. That reflects the state of the Queensland economy. The article states—

“Federal statistics released yesterday indicate Queensland could be heading for a record number of bankruptcies.

Provisional figures, released by the bankruptcy Registrar's office in Canberra, showed 925 bankruptcies were recorded for Queensland in the first nine months of this financial year.

A search of the department's records in Brisbane show a further 188 bankruptcies were filed for April and May, to give a total of 1 113 for the 11 months to date a jump of 102 on 1 011 for the whole of the 1984-85 financial year.

Queensland recorded 865 bankruptcies in the 1984-85 financial year and 706 in the year before.”

More of that will follow, because Queensland lags behind the other States in wage rates. According to the latest average weekly wage statistics, Queenslanders are at the bottom of the earnings ladder. Queensland male employees earn \$31.30 a week less than the national average, while Queensland women earn \$25.90 less. I do not know where Queensland is heading, as prices for goods and services continue to rise unrestricted, as wage increases are restricted and as more and more people in this State lose their jobs.

At 30 June this year, Queensland, with 9 per cent unemployment, again topped the Commonwealth. The Australian average was 7.5 per cent. The Government has nothing to boast about.

A newspaper article dated 10 June 1986 states—

“Queensland was responsible for most of the national unemployment increase last month, according to Social Security Department figures.

The figures showed the number of people on unemployment benefits jumped 1 300 in Queensland last month.

The New South Wales figure dropped 800, Victoria remained unchanged, South Australia rose 500 and Tasmania rose 300. Western Australia and the Northern and Australian Capital Territories rose a total of 270.”

It can be seen from that that there was a big increase in the number of people in Queensland who are unemployed and receiving benefits. What is the reason for that? A newspaper article on 17 April reported that the casino on the Gold Coast was to retrench 47 staff. It was reported also that about 850 people were sacked from SEQEB. That is alleged to have saved SEQEB approximately \$31m. I am quite certain that that \$31m saving was not reflected in the electricity charges to domestic consumers. Consumers' electricity bills have not fallen. They have continued to rise.

In 1983 Ipswich miners employed on the Moreton coal-fields were told that, because of the cheap coal that was being made available for the generation of power at Tarong and other power stations and because of the expense of recovering coal from underground, their jobs were in jeopardy. Again, in 1986, as Tarong comes on line, more miners—approximately 250—are being threatened with job losses. Those people have lost their jobs because the coal that they mine is too dear and because it is cheaper to build power stations on the coal-fields, where electricity can be generated more cheaply. The consumer, however, does not reap the benefit.

I will continue to examine why Queensland has the highest rate of unemployment of any State in the Commonwealth. Only yesterday morning I spoke with the Assistant Commissioner for Railways (Mr Ross Dunning) in Gladstone about the projected dismissal of railway workers resulting from electrification and the introduction of two-man crews. When the electrification of railway lines in Queensland was first announced, the House was told that it would be a wonderful thing and would provide job opportunities for railwaymen. For them it was to mean job opportunities and job promotions, Alas, now that the electrification is close to being commissioned, the Assistant Commissioner is telling Queensland railway workers that their jobs are in jeopardy. In fact, many jobs

will be lost. When the electrification project was announced, the Government claimed that it would be self-funding, would not be a cost burden on tax-payers, would create a great deal of employment and would pay for itself through savings in fuel and maintenance costs. However, now it is the railwaymen who are paying for the electrification through loss of their jobs and loss of income for their families.

On 4 September 1984 a press article stated that PA Australia, which had investigated the railways, had decided upon drastic reductions in railwaymen's working conditions. Conditions contained in agreements that they had been working under for many years were lost. The Commissioner for Railways claimed that that would bring about an annual saving of \$30m. Again, the railwaymen have paid through the loss of wages and working conditions. Even those who have continued in the employment of the Railway Department are paying for the capital borrowings for the electrification project.

A newspaper article of 7 June 1984 stated that the following day the Queensland Railway Department would sack 47 employees from its Northgate workshop. Another 58 railwaymen were sacked, resulting in a saving of \$1m. In October 1984 the Minister for Transport (Mr Lane) told the House that redundancy notices had been served on 58 railway employees. He said that 45 of the employees were from the Maryborough workshops and 15 were from Gympie. Honourable members should not forget that many others in the goods sheds and on the portering staff lost their jobs. On 11 November 1984 an article appeared in the press stating that the jobs of 20 shunters at Roma Street Station were to be abolished as part of a plan to wipe out 60 jobs at Roma Street.

Just how many more jobs are to go? On 20 November 1985 the Minister for Transport said that the crews that haul 148-wagon trains were enthusiastic about the electrification of the railway. He said also that it was debatable whether the concessional tariffs, if granted, would benefit the miners after the Government's interest and redemption payments were met. Once again, the Railway Department will save money by using fewer men to shift the coal from the mines to the port. In addition, the Government claimed that, because of the reduction in maintenance and the reduction in fuel cost, concessions would be given to the mines so that they would be competitive on the world market. However, that has not proved to be the case.

The Minister said the department would electrify not only the whole of the section between Gladstone, Rockhampton and the coal-fields but also the line between Brisbane and Rockhampton. In addition, the new line being built to the Gold Coast at a cost of about \$136m, plus the \$700m for the start of the main line electrification, meant that a great deal of money had to be borrowed.

What the department has come up with is a plan to sack railwaymen or to do away with the jobs of railwaymen who have given service to the department for a long period. As a result of the adjustment made in the main line electrification in the first year, a reduction of two drivers will occur in 1986-87. A further reduction of 23 drivers will occur in 1987-88, nine drivers in 1988-89 and another 48 drivers in 1989-90.

Many of these jobs will be in areas that are represented by members of the Labor Party. I cite the instance of Rockhampton, which will be hit very hard. Rockhampton will have quite a number of surplus railwaymen.

For every driver there is a fireman. In the first four years, there will be a reduction of 69 firemen in the railways in my area. Further adjustments caused by two-man crewing will mean that 98 fewer firemen will be required in the area between Gladstone, Bluff and Mackay. That is a big loss. It is another 108 people all told.

I turn to the guards. As a result of the electrification, approximately 70 guards will not be required. A further adjustment to two-man crewing also makes a difference of another 111. It does not stop with the running section, that is, the driver, the fireman and the guard. Conductors, too, will be affected. The number of conductors will be reduced. As a result of the rearrangements, other traffic personnel will become surplus. Seventeen electrical fitters will be surplus in 1987 and another nine will be surplus in 1988.

Fitters will become surplus. A total of 24 fitters will become surplus in 1987 and another 11 will become surplus in 1988. In 1987, 35 non-tradesmen will be surplus and, in 1988, 25 will be surplus. It goes on.

The Minister for Transport (Mr Lane) says that no permanent employee will lose his job. However, he states—

“It is not anticipated there will be any problem of placing surplus employees in vacancies, but perhaps not of their own choosing in all cases.”

These persons could be offered other employment within the railways. They could be offered other employment in other areas of the State. If those persons are not agreeable to that, they will be granted leave without pay for up to 12 months in order to secure other employment.

In addition to the hundreds of jobs lost in the railways because of the electrification and the hundreds more because of two-man crewing, the promotional opportunity will be very limited for a number of years. In particular, job opportunities for school-leavers are virtually non-existent for anything up to 10 years.

Mr Scott: Do you see that leading up to the situation where they then won't have trained people in a few years' time?

Mr PREST: That is so. As I said yesterday to Mr Dunning, many people in the railways today are disenchanted. In many areas the morale of railwaymen is very low.

Mr Dunning said, “We have a lot of people taking early retirement. They are retiring before time.” I said, “Yes, years ago railwaymen, when they attained the age of 65, had the opportunity of applying for an extension of time of six months.” Mr Dunning said, “We do not have that now. They get out early.” I said, “Yes, the reason why they get out early is disenchantment within the railways. They are concerned as to which way the railways are going at the present time.”

Although the commissioner and the Minister have told this House on more than one occasion that the electrification will provide job and promotional opportunities for railwaymen, just the opposite applies. The Queensland Government should be very, very concerned as to just what will happen in the long term in relation to railways. With all these things going on, it is quite realistic to envisage that Queensland will maintain its record of the highest percentage of unemployed in the Commonwealth.

The matter does not finish there. Although at this time he was talking only about the running men or people in the traffic section of the railways, Mr Dunning stated also that there will be across-the-board redundancy of cleaners and that four signalmen from Gladstone will become surplus when the signalling system is rearranged in that area.

Mr Alison: They are not getting the sack.

Mr PREST: They are not getting the sack? Where are they going? Will they be offered a job in Timbuctu? Mr Dunning said, “We will not sack you. The jobs that we offer you may not be to your liking. It is not anticipated there will be any problem in placing surplus employees in vacancies, but perhaps not of their own choosing in all cases.”

Mr Borbidge: What about teachers or policemen when they have to be relocated and shifted?

Mr PREST: I do not believe the classification of teachers is taken away. They retain that classification no matter where the positions are offered. Section 10 of the Displacement/Redundancy Agreement Terms says, “Leave without pay for up to 12 months to secure other employment.” I asked Mr Dunning how they were to live for that 12 months without pay and would they be entitled to unemployment benefit? He said that they would. I said I did not think they would be, because once they put in their application for unemployment benefit for that 12 months, they would be showing that they had taken leave without pay, and therefore they would not be paid at all.

I have known Mr Dunning over a long period, and I do not think he was quite in control of all the questions or the answers that he provided me with. In 1983, three months before the State election PA Australia was appointed as consultants. At that time railwaymen were very concerned, but controlled, and took no direct action. This attack on the railwaymen, their wages, their working conditions and their jobs again comes just three months before an election. I am quite concerned, as was stated in 1983, that this is a continuation of the provocation. It is something that the Opposition does not entirely agree with.

When Mr Dunning said some conductors were to go, I asked him what he was doing about the passenger service. He said that nothing could be done with the passenger service, that the expenditure of money on new passenger cars and sleeping cars for the public was only a secondary consideration.

He said, "We cannot cope. People travel by bus, private car or plane." I said, "Yes. The reason is?" He said, "Why?" I said, "You are not providing the service that those other forms of transport are providing. You are not providing the alternative. You are not providing a service that the people require." If the department cannot compete with the private motorist, bus lines or the airlines, it should conduct an inquiry into the reasons why that is so.

Mr Alison: The new electric service will be, I understand, a daylight service from Rockhampton to Brisbane.

Mr PREST: It cannot be daylight all the way.

Mr Alison: It will take only eight hours.

Mr PREST: Does one alight from the train and walk the rest of the way from Rockhampton?

Mr Alison: Rockhampton to Brisbane is only eight hours.

Mr PREST: Yes.

Mr Alison: You obviously do not have your facts sorted out.

Mr PREST: I am certain that the Government has not.

Mr Alison: You haven't.

Mr PREST: I have mine sorted out. Does the honourable member want to throw off the passengers at Rockhampton where the electrification finishes? I am talking about going through to Cairns and Townsville.

Mr Alison: I am talking about Rockhampton to Brisbane.

Mr PREST: I am talking about providing encouragement to the tourist industry in this State. The honourable member should go back to sleep or grab his little dilly bag and run along and do some more tax returns. He is noted as a tax-dodger—a bottom-of-the-harbour man. People call him the diver—the bottom-of-the-harbour man.

I will return to the railways. On 9 July, it was reported that PA Management, under the direction of the Minister for Transport (Mr Lane), was going to make another determined attack on railwaymen. At present, the Railway Department employs 3 000 fitters and labourers. The department intends to halve the maintenance gang by investing in capital equipment. It is estimated that the annual savings would be \$35m. It can be seen that it is the intention of the Minister for Transport and his henchmen to attack even the fitters and the labourers within the service and to do away with 1 500 employees in the maintenance gangs. Where will it all end?

The Minister for Transport has always said that redundancy or the reduction in the number of railway employees will not in any way affect permanent employees. I am concerned that job opportunities will be taken away from school-leavers and those persons seeking promotion.

Another attack will be made on the Ipswich workshop. In a recent newspaper article, it was reported that the Amalgamated Metal Workers Union Ipswich organiser, Mr Kev Dwyer, said that the State Government's priority should be creating jobs to reverse high unemployment. However, it is not. The Government is trying to dismiss railway workers. The Minister for Transport has said that no workers would lose their jobs and that he is just taking a job out of existence. I think that everyone should be concerned about that matter. I do not believe that we have heard everything about redundancy or the reduced working hours and working conditions of railwaymen.

Owing to main line electrification, something must be done to protect train drovers. The train drover is a very important person, especially during droughts when weak stock is being transported. Drovers must climb on top of K wagons or the cattle wagons to use their jiggers to get a beast onto the wagon. However, drovers will now be issued with a manual and told—

“Some of the lines over which you will be travelling are electrified. For your own safety, please read the following very carefully.

- (1) The Queensland Railway overhead line system carries 25,000 volts which is an extremely dangerous voltage.
- (2) All overhead line equipment must be regarded as being alive at all times and potentially dangerous to life.
- (3) It is dangerous for anyone to touch or to come within 2.75m (9 ft) of overhead line equipment, similarly it is dangerous to allow any object to touch or to come within 2.75m (9 ft) of overhead line equipment. Particular care is necessary with whips, sticks and streams of water from hoses.
- (4) It is forbidden to climb above floor level of any rolling-stock, including K wagons on a running line or siding, equipped with overhead line equipment.
- (5) When in doubt, consult with Railway personnel who will advise what action should be taken.

Remember—Forgetfulness may be fatal.”

I do not know how drovers are ever going to work stock when that stock is in a weak condition and is being transported over electrified sections of railway lines. That is a problem that the stock and station agents, graziers and others will have to cope with. I am certain that when drovers are unable to properly care for stock, major legal claims will be made upon the Railway Department in relation to the loss of dead beasts.

I believe that through his report regarding the electrification of the railways and job opportunities for railway workers in Queensland, the honourable member for Methyr (Mr Lane) has hoodwinked this House.

Mr BORBIDGE (Surfers Paradise) (10.37 p.m.): In supporting the Appropriation Bill before the House tonight, I commend the State Government on completing the financial year with a small accumulated surplus of \$387,000 in the Consolidated Revenue Fund.

It is interesting to note that the State Government's other funds, the Loan Fund and the Trust and Special Funds, were also balanced or in surplus. This is a very real achievement and clearly demonstrates that Governments can live within their means and achieve balanced Budgets.

It is a great tragedy for Australia that the Federal Government in Canberra cannot follow Queensland's lead.

Mr Henderson interjected.

Mr BORBIDGE: As the honourable member for Mount Gravatt points out, the track record of the Federal Government in private enterprise ventures such as Bourke's Store and Solo, and half a dozen other enterprises, has not been terribly good.

At a time when Australia is facing bankruptcy, when the value of the dollar has reached an all-time low, when we are facing the biggest balance of payments crisis in the history of Australia, the highest interest rates on record and record levels of taxation, the performance of the Queensland Government is all the more creditable and commendable.

It is appropriate, in a debate such as this, to canvass once again the particularly poor deal that Queensland is receiving in regard to our just entitlement from the national taxation cake.

The Federal Government is consistently denying Queenslanders many millions of dollars to which they are justly entitled. In the key areas of general revenue assistance, Grants Commission recommendations, identified health grants and Medicare, the Commonwealth Government short-changed Queensland an estimated \$362m last year. This figure is quite apart from long-standing reductions by the Federal Government in Canberra in relation to housing and roads, which cost \$160m last year. The Federal Government in Canberra has decreed that all States will have to carry the burden of its massive financial incompetence. The Federal Government has been supported in this strategy by the lack-lustre union hacks and Bollinger bolsheviks on the opposite side of this Chamber who are completely subservient to their big government, high-tax comrades in Canberra.

The Leader of the Opposition even had the gall to call upon the State Government to reduce its overseas borrowings in an effort to aid the national economy. That was the contribution by the Leader of the Opposition to this Government's efforts of securing a fair deal from Canberra. He again displays his abysmal lack of economic knowledge and the shop steward mentality that is destroying Australia.

Since the Hawke Government came to office, borrowings by the States have declined by almost 9 per cent in real terms. The Queensland Government has more than played its part by reducing its borrowings by 17 per cent over that same period. Unlike Canberra, we have adopted a responsible approach with a low level of debt and high coverage of that debt serviced through revenue.

Mr Price interjected.

Mr BORBIDGE: If the honourable member for Mount Isa would listen, he might manage to learn something.

This financial year, the servicing of Queensland's public debt will require just 5.1 per cent of consolidated revenue receipts, while the servicing of the Federal Government's deficit and overseas borrowings will drain off nearly 13 per cent of Commonwealth Government revenue—the entire export income earned for Australia by Queensland.

In the past decade, Federal Government expenditure has increased at a real annual average of 4 per cent, compared with an increase of payments to the States of 0.5 per cent.

Last year, Canberra changed the Commonwealth formula for distributing money to the States, which resulted in Queensland's suffering a 4 per cent reduction in funding, compared with only 1 per cent less for New South Wales and 2.4 per cent less for Victoria.

Last year, Queensland held public service growth to 0.3 per cent, whereas in Canberra it was increased by nearly 5 per cent. Labor in Government in Canberra is spending more than \$700m a year paying 16 000 public servants to police red tape and controls on business. Now that the fringe benefits tax is law, that figure will increase dramatically.

What does the Labor Party in Queensland say? What does the Opposition in this Parliament offer to the people of this State? It says, "Vote us into Government here and you will get more of the same treatment. We will do to Queensland what we are doing to Australia."

It never ceases to amaze me how silent the Opposition in this Parliament continues to be in regard to the massive under-funding of Queensland by Canberra. It can only be assumed that this deliberate Labor strategy is supported by members of the Opposition in this House as part of their conspiracy to undermine political stability in this State and the Queensland economy. If that is the case, they have betrayed their own constituents.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr BORBIDGE: I cannot recall the honourable members who are interjecting ever standing up in this place and supporting this Government's efforts to secure a fair deal in a return to this State of national taxation revenue.

Mr Alison: Mr Warburton is on record as saying that the fringe benefits tax is fair.

Mr BORBIDGE: As the honourable member for Maryborough said, the Leader of the Opposition thinks that the fringe benefits tax is fair.

The policy of this State Government to secure its just share of the tax cake should receive bipartisan support and not be the province and struggle solely of the National Party in Queensland.

In the last financial year, this State was under-funded by \$105 for every man, woman and child. In key areas such as tertiary education, Queensland received only \$134 per head of population compared with Victoria's \$166 per head. Queensland is down \$42m on its entitlement.

In regard to Commonwealth funding, Queensland receives \$32 per head for Medicare, whereas the other States receive \$67 per head. Queensland is down \$89m.

Honourable members opposite mentioned road-funding. Queensland's allocation for road-funding from the Commonwealth is down \$42m.

The fact remains that against this background Queensland remains the lowest-taxed mainland State and has been able to balance its Budget.

For the benefit of honourable members who seem to have some difficulty with the statistics, I table the Australia Bureau of Statistics *Taxation Revenue Australia 1984-85*, which confirms what I have said, what the Deputy Premier has said and what the Premier has said.

Whereupon the honourable member laid the document on the table.

The following indicators include official Australian Bureau of Statistics figures for the latest 12-month period and they show that Queensland created more jobs than any other State in Australia, with a total of 51 200; that it had the highest employment growth rate of all States, a rate of 4.9 per cent; that it recorded the second-highest annual population growth rate and the second-highest growth in retail sales of any State. Brisbane recorded the lowest inflation rate of all State capitals.

In addition, Queensland continued to play a leading role in export earnings, accounting for 24 per cent of the nation's export trade. As well, Queensland is accounting for 40 per cent of the value of major tourism projects either planned or under way in the nation.

Mr Vaughan: What do your figures show for average weekly earnings?

Mr BORBIDGE: Government members have been bored to tears all afternoon by Opposition members who would sell out their constituents, sell out their voters, support the fringe benefits tax and introduce all other taxes that exist interstate. They will just have to sit there, listen, and just cop it.

Following the Premiers Conference, the Western Australian Government announced increases in State Government taxation, power and electricity charges, third-party motor vehicle insurance fees and public transport fares. The Tasmanian Government had to recall Parliament to bring down a mini-Budget. In contrast to that, there is little doubt that when the Queensland State Budget is handed down later this year, Queensland will

be the lowest-taxed State in the Commonwealth by miles, because the Queensland Government is able, through sound economic management, to come home from the Premiers Conference and get on with the job.

The Queensland Government, because of its own competent economic management—unlike the States of New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia—has been able to take on board the cut-backs imposed by the Federal Government.

One point that deserves emphasis is that the Commonwealth Government's deficit of some \$13 billion could be virtually eliminated if Canberra applied the same restraint to its own spending as it applies to the States. However, the Federal Government has one rule for itself and another rule for the States. A great deal of nonsense has been spoken by members of the Australian Labor Party and, I regret to say, by some elements within the Liberal Party, about the state of Queensland's economy.

It is significant that as Australia's international credit-rating is being placed under review, Queensland has secured the highest possible AAA long-term credit-rating from the Japan Credit Rating Agency. For some time, Queensland has also held the A1 plus P1 credit-rating in the United States. I submit to the House that it is a fair bet that board-rooms in Tokyo and New York possess far greater economic expertise than the combined financial knowledge of every member of the Australian Labor Party and the Liberal Party.

In the words of the Japan Credit Rating Agency in its report on Queensland's long-term credit-rating—

“The Queensland Government, through its efficient administration, has demonstrated the best performance in balancing the Budget.”

I now wish to comment briefly on the incredible growth being experienced by the tourism industry in Queensland. The Queensland Government is subjected to criticism from Opposition members about its overall administration of industry and the policies it has pursued. Criticism of the Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation continues as, indeed, has criticism of leading members of that body. Tourism's economic importance to Queensland has now broken the \$9 billion barrier, which is double the figure of three years ago. I refer to a statement on Queensland tourism that was released by the Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation and shows that between 1978 and 1985, Queensland's tourism industry experienced an annual growth rate of 8.5 per cent, compared with the national average of 4.8 per cent.

Employment growth that is directly related to tourism has increased by 73 per cent over the last seven years. Directly and indirectly, tourism is accounting for 146 000 jobs in Queensland. Nearly \$1,060m was directly spent by tourists who stayed in paid commercial accommodation throughout Queensland during the last financial year. The industry's contribution to the gross State product is now estimated at 12 per cent. As at December 1985, the value of major tourism developments in Queensland under construction that were either firmly committed or at the proposed or planning stages stood at \$5,160m.

The inane criticism persists that the Government is paying too much attention to the tourist industry. It is significant that last year in the Gold Coast statistical district 2.35 per cent of Australia's population created 12.5 per cent of all new jobs in the country. Any objective observer would be naive enough to expect that such a performance would at least earn some congratulations from the Opposition benches, but the politics of envy played by the hacks of Trades Hall dictate that that will not occur.

I comment briefly on the bankruptcy figures that have been mentioned in this debate and also, I understand, outside by the Liberal Party. I will examine the claim that Queensland is recording the largest number of bankruptcies. I refer to the *Commonwealth of Australia Gazette*. Successive gazettes show that in the financial year just ended Queensland had the second-lowest rise in bankruptcy rates of all the States and that Victoria had by far the largest increase—a rise of 45 per cent, or 293, over the

previous year. The increase in South Australia was 28.5 per cent, followed by New South Wales, with 25.4 per cent, and Tasmania, with 25.3 per cent. The Queensland increase was 22.4 per cent. The lowest increase was recorded in Western Australia. Bankruptcies are not necessarily an indicator of economic performance. Those figures clearly show that the political propaganda being directed against this Government lacks integrity and honesty.

I refer also to a call by the honourable member for Stafford (Mr Gygar) that hospital boards in Queensland be abolished. This is now apparently Liberal Party policy. Bodies such as hospital boards and fire brigade boards serve very real purposes in our community. They allow a decentralised system of decision-making involving residents in the areas involved, instead of Brisbane-based bureaucrats running local affairs. In most instances the costs involved are minimal. The views of the member for Stafford are very effectively countered in the following letter to the editor of the *Gold Coast Bulletin* published on 23 July 1986—

“There has been quite a deal of interesting news reporting over recent weeks about the Liberal Party, Qangos and hospital boards in Queensland.

This has followed some specific analysis of State expenditure on Qangos by the Liberal Waste Watch Committee under Dr David Watson, MP for Forde.

Terry Gygar, the Liberal Health spokesman, has proposed abolition of the hospital boards across the State because of cost and a feeling that their role is ineffective and subordinate at all levels to the Department of Health.

I have been on the Gold Coast Hospital Board since 1975 and deputy chairman for the past 18 months.

I must say at the local level that the board has a vital and important role in the management of the Gold Coast Hospital.

There is a reasonable level of autonomy which has improved dramatically recently and the responsibility of the board in handling day-to-day staff problems, planning for the future, and other varied aspects relating to executive decisions, are real and increasing each year as the hospital facility expands.

On the matter of costs—last financial year total costs were about \$15,000 in board fees with an overall budget of \$30,000,000, a proportion of 0.05 per cent total costs.

I can assure the general public that this represents very good value for expert and very hard working members of the board who spend many hours a month actively engaged in board business.

There may well be a case for considering some restructuring of small boards, especially in country areas, but the need for continuing activity along traditional lines and growth areas such as this is in my opinion unassailable.”

It was signed by Dr Robert McLaughlin, Southport, who is a dedicated member of the Gold Coast Hospitals Board. He is also the local area chairman of the Liberal Party.

Mr Price: Of the National Party.

Mr BORBIDGE: No, of the Liberal Party.

As the time allotted is short, I comment briefly on the continuing calls from the Opposition for a parliamentary public accounts committee and all the rest of it. For the benefit of honourable members opposite, I have some figures showing that the Federal Government and State Labor Governments have diverted millions of dollars of public money to left-wing organisations. I instance the People for Nuclear Disarmament, which received \$8,000; the Amalgamated Metal Workers Union—that is Halfpenny’s mob—\$63,000; and the radical radio station, 3CR, which is run by Hartley and Crawford and is a front for the PLO, \$49,000.

Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen interjected.

Mr BORBIDGE: I take the point from the Premier and Treasurer; members of the Opposition have gone very quiet all of a sudden.

Members of various Roxby Downs blockade groups were given \$413,000. The Building Workers Industrial Union was given \$110,000. The left-wing Pax Christi was given \$71,000. That is absolutely disgraceful. Despite all that, honourable members opposite have the gall to speak in this place about public accountability for tax-payers' funds. Throughout Australia the Labor Party has been diverting millions of dollars to its left-wing mates, extremists and trade union hacks. Mr Deputy Speaker, I would like to continue, but I understand that we have a time limit. I support the Appropriation Bill.

Mr INNES (Sherwood) (10.57 p.m.): The trouble with a banana republic is that already too many monkeys have been eating the green bananas.

The public sector in Australia is far too large. Whether it be Federal, State or the extent of private borrowings overseas, the debt burden carried by this nation.—

Mr Scott interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row): Order! I ask for the member for Cook to be silent. If he continues to ignore me, I will warn him under Standing Order No. 123A.

Mr INNES: Mr Deputy Speaker, we have to excuse him. He wants to make a noise before he leaves this place.

There is an obligation on people in all elected assemblies in Australia, be they local government, State Government or Federal Government, to combine to do something about a difficult problem. There is no doubt that the Federal Government bears an enormous responsibility for the creation of that problem. The direction of its policies, which are, and have been, deliberately socialist in intent, are a major problem for this nation. There is also an obligation on the State Government to look at the available figures objectively, to be honest about them and to arrive at some course of action which is consistent with the national and the State interest.

I will look at the broad aspects. Half the revenue of this State is provided by income taxation receipts. So the taxation about which we complain is, of course, taxation which comes back to the State. I support the calls for the cessation of duplication of Government services, but let us look at its effect in Queensland. In this State only 6 per cent—I say “only”; but I should rephrase that—of the work-force of this State is employed in the Commonwealth-based public sector, although 25 per cent are employed by the public sector overall. Obviously 19 per cent are employed by the State Government and local government. As local authorities weigh in with about 2 per cent, 17 per cent of employment is State Government based. Even if duplication is removed, one in four of the people in this State, as opposed to one in five at present, would still be employed by the public sector.

Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen: Even you are employed by the Government, aren't you?

Mr INNES: That is absolutely right. The Premier and Treasurer has given me a perfect opening. That is why we in the Liberal Party oppose the increase in the number of members of this House and the increase in the full-time city council and why our Federal colleagues opposed, unlike the Premier's party, the increase in the size of the Federal House. Relative to public spending, all members of Parliament, of whatever party, have a responsibility to restrain themselves.

I turn to an issue that has been raised by both the Government and the Opposition, that is, the creation of new jobs. It is an obsession. It is the last resort of a party in trouble. The Federal Labor Party uses it because the unemployment figures remain so high. It takes a figure that it thinks is positive and it lights upon new jobs. The National Party in this State lights upon new jobs because the unemployment figures are terrible.

It is perfectly obvious that, if unemployment is not going down and many new jobs are being created, jobs are being lost as fast as they are being created.

Mr FitzGerald: No, net increase.

Mr INNES: A net increase according to the increase in population.

Sir William Knox: Double counting.

Mr INNES: Of course it is double counting. If the Government ends up with 9 per cent unemployment in the State this year and it had 9 per cent unemployment last year, it really has not kept up with the growth in population. It has done nothing except keep line ball. If the population is increasing, of course the employment has to keep increasing to stay in line.

Mr Vaughan: You can produce the figures to prove anything.

Mr INNES: It is all done with mirrors, and the mirrors are distorted.

The crucial figure is the unemployment figure—the percentage of the total population who cannot find work, assuming that the majority of them want to find work.

Mr FitzGerald: Are there barriers across the Tweed?

Mr INNES: Honourable members have heard the allegation that 10 000, 5 000 or 4 000 people a week are coming across the border. The colleagues of the honourable member for Lockyer use the same figures as they used five years ago.

The reality is that migration from other States has dropped off dramatically. Most significantly, Queensland is the only State with an emigration of young people between the age of 16 and 25, people looking for work and people looking for tertiary admission in other parts of Australia. That is partly a Federal responsibility.

Today, the Minister for Education (Mr Powell) made the point that the——

Mr Littleproud interjected.

Mr INNES: The honourable member should check the figures.

Mr Tenni: There are 5 000 on the dole in Cairns and no farmer can get a person to plant cane or tobacco.

Mr INNES: I assume that a significant number of those people are dole bludgers.

Mr Tenni: They don't want to work.

Mr INNES: Those people exist at Yamba and round northern New South Wales.

Mr Tenni: They are up here because the weather is good.

Mr INNES: Every State has places where people congregate when they want to make hay at the expense of the tax-payer.

Mr Tenni interjected.

Mr INNES: I would not pay those people unemployment benefits.

The realities are that the whole nation, including this State, is in economic trouble. Both sides so far have claimed that they are better than the other side. I will say a bit for my side.

When Liberal Treasurers such as Sir William Knox and Sir Llew Edwards controlled this State and the Federal scene, Queensland was a top-performing State in a top-performing nation. Three short years later, Queensland is the bottom-performing State in a bottom-performing nation.

Honourable Members interjected.

Mr INNES: Queensland has gone from the top to the bottom of the heap in the majority of economic performance areas.

Honourable Members interjected.

Mr INNES: It hurts! I can tell I have struck pay dirt. I can hear the noise.

The Premier does a marvellous job travelling round the State doing the PR work, but somebody has to be at home looking after the Treasury. Because Government members are given prepared speeches and Dorothy Dix questions nobody has been groomed to ask the right questions in order to keep this State on its toes. Government members have been cowed and subdued. They receive so many prepared speeches that they cannot keep anybody on their toes. That is their problem.

Mr Davis: What about Sir Llewelyn Edwards? Was he a good Treasurer?

Mr INNES: When Sir Llewelyn Edwards was the Treasurer, the Queensland Government was top of the heap, the top-performing State. I understand that the honourable member for Nundah (Sir William Knox) was also a top-performing Treasurer.

The reality is that all members of Parliament in this nation have an obligation to exercise their critical faculties and require restraint in public spending in the interests of reducing the tax burden on this country, in the interests of creating incentive for performance and for the creation of new jobs and businesses.

The honourable member for Surfers Paradise (Mr Borbidge) adverted to other examples of the appalling manner in which public moneys are expended. Some \$40,000 was given to the Australian operation of the Italian Communist Party for new offices and staff. The Victorian Trades Hall has been very generously treated on a number of occasions for such things as cataloguing industrial information and an eight-month-long employment program for 12 people on working art and trade union life programs to produce even more non-performance.

It is significant that this nation has a Prime Minister who has never, never started a business and never employed a person. For a couple of minutes at least, an ex-union boss has been the Premier of the biggest State in this nation, an ex-union boss who never won a contract and never employed a person. The Leader of the Opposition in this House is another ex-union boss. They are people who do not know what basically creates the wealth and employment opportunities in this nation. That is the reason why Australia is heading for major problems.

If honourable members look at the types of programs on which money is wasted, they will understand some of the reasons why fringe benefits became so extensively used in this nation, and why the Labor Party is in trouble. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition talked about the workers and suggested that anybody who received fringe benefits was roting the system and was somehow a tax-evader. What is the reality? It is that the rot started in the Whitlam era, when the Federal Government said, "We are going to make the Federal public service the pace-setter of wages and conditions in this nation." That is a sleight of hand operation, because half of everything the Federal Government pays out in increased benefits, is deducted and comes straight back into the taxation hurdy-gurdy. It is robbing Peter to pay Paul.

People in private enterprise have to pay the full dollar, including the tax. They have to pay the lot. They watch this dishonesty and deception. What are the State Governments' reactions to the fringe benefits tax? The State Governments do not suggest that people will not have fringe benefits, but that the tax-payer will pay for them. People in private enterprise have to make the bed-rock decisions, the hard decisions. They cannot levy taxes to recoup the additional costs, but have to look at cutting their costs. The politics of envy fostered the illusion of businessmen spending five hours a day in plush restaurants. The reality is that few benefits were given to employees right down the line. A boiler-maker or a maintenance man might have been given a utility to take home at the week-end, a telephone might have been provided for call-outs, and if he made a couple of personal calls, that did not matter.

Mr Vaughan: You scratch my back and I'll scratch yours..

Mr INNES: The honourable member for Nudgee has raised a very interesting point. When this debate about the fringe benefits was taking place, a couple of powerful unions were able to negotiate special deals to suggest that, because their fringe benefits were part of an award, they were not fringe benefits. Only industrial muscle and logical dishonesty could arrive at that conclusion. Even though it happens to be part of an award, it is just as much a fringe benefit. There should be equal dealing for equal situations.

Fringe benefits were used extensively throughout Australia at every level of employment to give an employee some real incentive that was not robbed by taxation deductions. It was a real benefit. It began because of an excessive taxation structure and the dishonesty of a Federal Government that knows that whatever it gives by way of pace-setting benefits, it takes back half.

Mr Price: British people have a fringe benefits tax. They have had it for years. America has a fringe benefits tax.

Mr INNES: The tentacles of fringe benefits in this country are so extensive and in many cases so minor in their application that there is an enormous political backlash. The people who are most affected are the people on the lower and lower-middle incomes—the leading hand, the foreman and the fellow receiving a terribly modest benefit because he performs slightly better than other people or provides a special service.

One of my colleagues said today that an age pensioner in his electorate was given a flat for \$35 a week because he keeps an eye on a building. He is now to be charged \$70 or \$80 a week, which is the full rental.

What about the people in the bush? I heard the debate on the fringe benefits tax in the Federal Parliament. Some idiot in the Federal Parliament who has never been 5 miles out of a city referred to the assessment of the electricity component paid by people living in remote homesteads. Anybody who has lived in the bush knows that once the generator is started, every light is turned on and all appliances are used because the cost is not greater in terms of the amount of diesel that is used.

Mr Vaughan: That's what they do in the Executive Building.

Mr INNES: As the honourable member for Nudgee well knows, once the generator is going, all the power is turned on. It is of no benefit to a person in the shearers' quarters or a person living in a cottage on a property. Some people adopt unrealistic attitudes. They do not know how the majority of people in Australia live.

Mr De Lacy: Do you say that benefits should not be taxed? Is that what you are saying?

Mr INNES: Things of very small benefit are being taxed and a structure is being created that is so cumbersome that people with legitimate——

Mr De Lacy: Are you saying that people who pay the fringe benefit should not be taxed?

Mr INNES: The principle was this: the Government that presides over the imposition of this fringe benefits tax does not suggest that it should apply to its own employees; the tax-payer picks that up. It regards itself as a pace-setter for conditions and pays the \$10 a week more, if there is to be a price rise, and takes \$5 back. However, the employer in private enterprise has to pay the whole \$10—the tax as well. I say that there is a deception and dishonesty involved in the whole exercise. It is unreal. A structure has been set up to deter people from claiming their legitimate deductions. Who is going to fill in a log book every time he drives 1½ or 2 km round a town?

Mr Price interjected.

Mr INNES: The honourable member is affected. In busy lives and with short trips, how can one keep a log book and every detail of what he spends? The result is that a

person will have to pay tax because his vehicle is being used for business purposes. That imposition is falling on small business everywhere in this country. The fringe benefits tax is a gross and iniquitous tax.

Mr De Lacy: You still have not answered my question. Is it OK to pay salary in a non-cash form and then not have a tax?

Mr INNES: I see people in the Commonwealth Public Service and in the State Public Service about whom there is no question of whether the Governments pay tax on it; they will not pay tax on it. The tax-payer will pay tax on it. I see people struggling to stay alive in free enterprise. Those people are attempting not only to provide some modest incentives to increase the performance of their work-force, but also to remain in business. I believe that is inequitable, but that is the reality of the situation.

It is absolutely necessary that taxation be reduced in Australia. In order to achieve that, the demand for Government services needs to be reduced. The responsibility for that lies with the Federal Government and the State Government.

The State Government has a heavy obligation as well. It has to curb demands in all sectors. We must have accountability and control of Government spending.

Self-control and restraint were exercised by the present State Government, in the teeth of an election, in reversing a previous decision and buying \$1.25m worth of shares in a foundry already on the brink of collapse. Those shares were purchased contrary to the advice of officers of the public service and others. Six months later that foundry went broke and \$1.25m was lost to the people of Queensland. That amount represented in excess of four times the total sum expended during that year on the small-business sector.

It also equalled the total expenditure for the current year of the Small Business Development Corporation.

A State election is imminent and Opposition members do not want to see that lack of restraint, especially by a Government that claims to be a free enterprise one. If free enterprise exists, there should be small Government, and there should be accountability, restraint and responsibility. I hope no part of the money being appropriated at this time will be used on such endeavours. I hope nothing more is spent on the obscenity of the disgraceful current advertising program, which has no economic intent but merely a political intent. It is not right, not restrained, irresponsible, and does not represent what free enterprise Government should be about.

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: Mr Deputy Speaker——

Mr SCOTT: Mr Deputy Speaker——

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row): Order! I give the call to the Premier and Treasurer.

Hon. Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN (Barambah—Premier and Treasurer) (11.18 p.m.), in reply: I would like to express my appreciation to all honourable members——

Mr SCOTT: I rise to a point of order. Mr Deputy Speaker, my name was on the list of speakers and I believe that I have the right to speak. I am prepared to move accordingly.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I have given the call to the Premier and Treasurer. I will need a motion that the member for Cook be heard.

Mr SCOTT: I move——

“That the honourable member for Cook be heard.”

Question put; and the House divided—

AYES, 29		NOES, 47	
Braddy	Warner, A. M.	Ahern	Lee
Burns	Yewdale	Alison	Lester
Campbell		Austin	Lickiss
Casey		Bailey	Lingard
Comben		Bjelke-Petersen	Littleproud
D'Arcy		Booth	McKechnie
De Lacy		Borbidge	McPhie
Eaton		Cahill	Menzel
Gibbs, R. J.		Chapman	Miller
Goss		Clauson	Muntz
Hamill		Cooper	Newton
Kruger		Elliott	Powell
Mackenroth		FitzGerald	Randell
McElligott		Gibbs, I. J.	Simpson
McLean		Glasson	Stephan
Milliner		Gunn	Stoneman
Palaszczuk		Gygar	Tenni
Price		Harper	Turner
Scott		Harvey	Wharton
Shaw		Henderson	White
Smith		Innes	
Underwood		Jennings	
Vaughan	<i>Tellers:</i>	Katter	<i>Tellers:</i>
Veivers	Davis	Knox	Kaus
Warburton	Prest	Lane	Neal

Resolved in the negative.

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: I thank my colleagues on the Government side of the House for the contributions they have made. Some very, very good speeches have been made by them, and I appreciate their support and comments.

The member who preceded me, the honourable member for Sherwood (Mr Innes) seemed to make a hash of his speech when he spoke about how well the economy performed under the Liberal Party administration in Canberra and when members of the Liberal Party formed the coalition Government in Queensland. Apparently he has forgotten that one Liberal Treasurer was sacked while he was attending his mother's funeral and that another was virtually sacked by the Liberal Party. Because of lack of forethought, he completely spoilt a good story. That was his bad luck. Today, many comments have been made about the fringe benefits tax. The proposal put forward by the National Party was that all income should be taxed at a single rate of 25 per cent. The proposal did not provide in any shape or form for a fringe benefits tax to be imposed on housing provided for policemen, public servants or workers who live in country areas or indeed on the use of motor vehicles by workers. Nothing of the kind is contained in the Appropriation Bill; nor has it ever been mentioned.

Mr Burns: You did not have any of those exemptions in that document of yours.

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: The honourable member for Lytton (Mr Burns) has misconstrued the whole thing. Let me tell the honourable member how stupid he was when he spoke.

The honourable member for Lytton spoke about a huge debt owed by the Queensland Government and the accumulation of vast sums of money. He overlooked the fact that much of the loan-raising is for city councils and local authorities and the provision of electricity throughout the State. That is not a burden on the resources of the State Government because, in their turn the city councils, local authorities and regional electricity boards are responsible for the maintenance of their respective services. What the honourable member referred to is not a deficit but real assets—water supply systems, sewerage systems, railway facilities, electricity supply, port facilities and so on. Those

assess pay for themselves, as the honourable member for Lytton well knows. What the honourable member referred to has nothing to do with the State Budget at all. It is a separate matter. If the honourable member gave the matter a second thought, I am sure he would agree that the Government ought to undertake infrastructure, which provides a tremendous amount of employment. A billion dollars has been spent on electrification alone. I could refer to other expenditure on infrastructure. However, the honourable member for Lytton has tried to make out that what the Government is doing constitutes a terrible crime; that the Government is not balancing the Budget. The honourable member is completely wrong in his assessment because the Queensland Government applies the same principles that are applied in all other States. It does so because the principles work well.

The honourable member for Lytton completely misrepresented the increases in budgetary allocation for the Chief Office of the Premier's Department since 1981-82. He chose to ignore the fact that, during the year 1981-82, the Chief Office did not include the office of the Co-ordinator-General and other sections of the department that have, since that time, become part of my department. I will provide the figures for the benefit of the honourable member. For the year 1981-82, the allocation was \$5.3m; for the year 1982-83, it was \$6.5m; for the year 1983-84, it was \$7.6m; and for the year 1984-85, it was \$11.4m. It should also be pointed out that the figures for 1983-84 and 1984-85 included a substantial number of one-off payments that distort the figures between the years.

Mr Burns: None of the figures you are quoting are your figures.

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: The honourable member was completely wrong.

Mr Burns: The \$5.3m and the \$11.4m are exactly the same figures that I quoted.

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: No. I quoted the figures for each year, and the honourable member has completely distorted the whole matter.

Mr Burns: Oh, get out.

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: I will not get out.

The honourable member for Lockyer (Mr FitzGerald) replied to the false economic impressions created by the selective use of statistics by the honourable member for Lytton.

The honourable member for Mackay (Mr Casey) made the claim that the Government has resorted to not paying its debts at 30 June and letting them spill over to the next year. Obviously he did not consult his leader, who made exactly the opposite statement, claiming that the Government has huge surpluses hidden away somewhere. Heaven help Queensland if the management of the State Budget ever got into the Opposition's hands. The statements by the honourable member for Mackay and the Leader of the Opposition are contradictory. I cannot see the honourable member for Mackay in the Chamber at the moment. He did not pay his debts. He should be the last person to speak about the Government overrunning its payments, it should be remembered that he overran his payments.

An Opposition Member interjected.

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: I will keep going. The honourable member who interjected should know what happened during the contracting days of the honourable member for Mackay. I know a number of people whom he did not pay. They came to me in those days to see if I could do something about getting their money from him. Honourable members opposite know what he did with his air ticket money. He did not pay it back. The Auditor-General has given me a letter saying he should pay it. Opposition members cannot get out of that, no matter how much they try to shout and yell.

Mr Deputy Speaker, at this late hour, and because of my failing voice, I will not go further into the facts. If the honourable member opposite is prepared to leave it at that, I will leave it at that.

Motion (Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen) agreed to.

Committee

Clauses 1 and 2, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

Third Reading

Bill, on motion of Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen, read a third time.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. C. A. WHARTON (Burnett—Leader of the House): I move—

“That the House do now adjourn.”

Johnstone Shire Council

Mr MENZEL (Mulgrave) (11.34 p.m.): I draw attention to the serious misappropriation and misuse of tax-payers' funds by the Johnstone Shire Council. It is openly said that the Johnstone Shire Council is an ALP council and that it strictly abides by ALP policies. Everything passed by the Labor majority accords with what the ALP wants to be done.

Recently the Johnstone Shire Council received approximately \$2.4m from the Federal/State disaster relief funds to restore roads and other public property and to assist in the cyclone clean-up. My understanding is that many thousands of metres of fill and top dressing for the new sports complex at Innisfail were paid for from disaster relief funds that should have been channelled in other directions.

I am aware that just after the cyclone the council was given permission to install pipes and do other work to provide an access road to an expanded dump in order to dump cyclone debris. At the conclusion of my speech I will table a document that shows that, until last Friday, 1 August, the road had not been used. In fact, a barricade had been erected across the road and no cyclone debris had passed over it. The new street, which is called Leichhardt Street and leads to the new sports complex, was partly or totally paid for with disaster relief funds. That is totally illegal.

Mr EATON: I rise to a point of order. Not all the money can be used straight away. The job has been planned——

Mr MENZEL: That is not a point of order. I rise to a point of order. The honourable member is debating what I am saying.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row): Order! I will take one point of order at a time.

Mr EATON: Innisfail was the town most damaged in the cyclone. The roads that are being completed now were commenced before the cyclone.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! As there is no personal reflection, I rule the point of order invalid.

Mr MENZEL: On top of that, Councillor George Pervan, who is a prominent Labor councillor and chairman of the works committee of the Labor-controlled Johnstone Shire Council, has just built an industrial complex in Innisfail. After having council staff cut down trees to enable the building to be seen more clearly from the road, the Johnstone Shire Council filled a council reserve near that complex so that it could build a roadway to the complex. I understand that all this work was paid for out of disaster relief funds. I understand that, when Councillor Pervan ordered council staff to carry out that work, he was challenged by them; but he intimidated the staff by threatening them with the loss of their jobs if they refused to carry out the instructions.

Another document that I will table at the conclusion of my speech shows clearly that a huge amount of filling was carted to that area to help one of the Labor boys—George Pervan—but that the cost came out of State and Federal Government funds that were administered by the Labor council. I understand that an order has now been made for the work to stop, but it is almost completed.

The Johnstone Shire Labor Council has been involved not only in the misappropriation of funds but also in threatening staff with the loss of their jobs if they do not carry out illegal work. That is typical of union stand-over tactics.

The Johnstone Shire Council owns a quarry from which it has purchased crushed metal filling for stockpiling. That, too, has been paid for from disaster relief funds.

The whole matter should be investigated by the Auditor-General or the Co-ordinator General. Better still, a committee of inquiry should be set up to investigate fully the gross misappropriation of tax-payers' funds. Charges should be laid against those councillors responsible. Obviously Councillor Pervan is feathering his own nest by using tax-payers' money to further his business interests round the town.

Councillor Pervan is also a member of the Far North Queensland Electricity Board. I wonder whether staff of the FNQEB were intimidated and forced to connect electricity for nothing or at a minimum charge.

Another matter of concern is that the ALP council authorised the staff to buy a new car for the shire clerk before that was authorised by a council meeting. I wonder how much in fringe benefits tax the rate-payers of the Johnstone shire will pay on that car. On 29 July, however, that action was ratified.

Another ALP man, Don Brook, receives \$33 an hour as a publicity officer. He also worked for the ALP election campaign. That was one of Labor's jobs for the boys. He works also for the Innisfail cane-growers' executive. Apparently that is furthering ALP interests in Innisfail. Don Brook writes press releases for the ALP councillors only. The independent councillors cannot use his services. I understand that not even the shire chairman, who is an independent, can use Don Brook's services.

Time expired.

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

Closure of Jefferis-Turner Maternal and Child Health Home

Mr HAMILL (Ipswich) (11.39 p.m.): This is Queensland's Year of the Parent. What a farce! The decision of the Minister for Health (Mr Austin) on 8 September to close the Jefferis-Turner Maternal and Child Health Home in Ipswich illustrates clearly the hollow propaganda exercise that Queensland's Year for Parents has become.

For more than 30 years the home has served the needs of the Ipswich community on a 24 hour, seven-day-a-week basis. However, now the Minister for Health is depriving mothers and babies—these families—of a much-needed part of this State's health services. It certainly does not sit well with all the pious outpourings of those National Party members who wax lyrical about their commitment to the family. Where is that professed commitment when it counts?

Even the Deputy Premier (Mr Gunn), whose electorate is serviced by the home, has supported its closure, despite the fact that hundreds of his constituents have signed the petitions opposing the decision of the Minister for Health. Such is the contempt of this Government for public opinion and its indifference to community needs.

This morning, when the Minister for Health was asked to talk to a deputation of parents about this issue, what was his attitude? He refused to see them. He refused to speak with mothers and their children. He was not prepared to defend the indefensible.

But what of the alternative use for the home as proposed by this uncaring Minister, that is, as a respite care facility for the intellectually handicapped? Undoubtedly, a need exists for additional respite care facilities for the intellectually handicapped. However,

many people harbour serious doubts about the suitability of the building for that purpose. A letter from a parent of such a child reads as follows—

“We need another respite home in Ipswich. At the moment the one we have has six beds. Two of these must be kept for emergencies.”

No-one denies that the need exists. However, the same parent makes the following point—

“The fact that it is a two-storey home must make it very dangerous for a lot of people (the intellectually handicapped) who are also physically handicapped.”

Without extensive structural modifications, this historic home is simply not suitable for its intended purpose.

A key issue remains, that is, that the extension of one service should not be at the expense of the provision of another much-needed service. The Minister should not dismiss the legitimate needs of mothers and their babies. He needs to explore the alternatives to his ill-advised plan to close the maternal and child health home, and he needs to do that in order to satisfy the needs of the mothers and babies as well as of the families of the intellectually handicapped.

Despite my letter of 17 April and my urgent telegram of 16 May seeking urgent information from the Minister for Health as to what alternative facilities would be available to parents should the existing maternal and child health home be closed, I had to wait until mid-July for what purported to be a reply to my representations. The key passage of the Minister's letter reads as follows—

“I would also advise that the Division of Child Health operates Mothercraft Homes at Clayfield and Fortitude Valley and referrals may be made to these homes from any part of the State.”

More than 6 000 people have now taken the trouble to tell the Minister that that is simply not good enough. Tomorrow morning, a petition will be presented in this House.

Health services must be readily accessible to those who need them. Those services must be decentralised. It is not good enough to have them concentrated in the capital city. I should think that country members would appreciate that point.

In conclusion, I will quote from a letter by Dr H. S. Patterson, a gentleman who was for 23 years the medical officer to the home. For 12 of those years, Dr Patterson was the paediatrician to Ipswich General Hospital. That letter appeared in *The Queensland Times* on 14 June 1986. It stated—

“There must be real and continuing support for the home from the people of Ipswich—both by groups interested in the welfare of mothers and babies and by the public generally.”

I pledge myself to the cause of ensuring that some alternative facility is made available to those parents who need that facility. I hope that the Minister for Health will consider the alternatives to his decision that do exist. I say to the Minister: Let us have both services, services for mothers and babies and services for the intellectually handicapped. Surely those two types of services are not incompatible.

Funding of Tertiary Institutions by Federal Government

Mr LINGARD (Fassifern) (11.44 p.m.): I will quote from a copy of the Queensland University magazine, *University News*, and refer to an article written by the Vice-Chancellor of Queensland University, Mr Brian Wilson. It reads—

“In terms of tertiary places relative to demand Queensland is in the most difficult position in Australia.”

The figures show that Queensland is in the worst position of all Australian States.

As the university is completely funded by the Commonwealth Government, every Queenslander is entitled to ask why it is that Queensland is singled out for such shabby

treatment by the ALP Federal Government. Why does the Queensland ALP sit back and accept this disgraceful situation and ridicule the desire by the National Party Government to rectify the situation?

In 1971, when the university was controlled and funded by the State, taken as a percentage, more Queenslanders in the 15 to 29 years age group attended universities than did people in that age group in any other State. In 1986, when the university is funded by the Federal ALP Government, fewer Queenslanders per head of population attend Queensland universities than do people in any other Australian State.

Professor Wilson in his article stated—

“The most difficult fact for Queenslanders to accept is that if they had lived in Victoria their school results would have gained them entry to university, whereas in Queensland they missed out.”

No wonder many Queensland students have to go south.

Recent comments made through the media by members of the ALP in Queensland have shown a complete lack of concern about the situation in Queensland. Surely they are aware that Queensland has 16.1 per cent of the population but receives only 12.7 per cent of recurrent funds for universities, 14.9 per cent for colleges of advanced education and 11.4 per cent for TAFE colleges.

These facts have been known for a long time. At the beginning of 1985 Professor Wilson advised the 3 500 students who were starting the year that they were very lucky to have survived the toughest entry requirements in the whole of Australia. He advised that 32 900 people applied for 13 500 first-year places in Queensland's nine tertiary institutions. The final result was that 19 400 people missed out.

I repeat Professor Wilson's comment that for many the greatest insult was that if they had lived in Victoria many who missed out on places in Queensland would have gained entry to universities in Victoria. This clearly shows a disgraceful bias by the Federal ALP.

In 1986, the Queensland Government has moved directly to relieve the situation by creating a private university. In 1986, in this State, 19 530 students failed in their desire for tertiary education. Clearly the establishment of a private university is an attempt by the State Government to overcome the victimisation of Queensland by the Federal ALP. The 1986 figures show that by share of population, Queensland has 3 970 fewer places in its universities, 1 760 fewer places in its colleges of advanced education and 5 710 fewer places in its TAFE colleges. If Queensland were given an equal share, a further 11 440 places would be available for Queensland's young people.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition has criticised the decision to build a private university. The Federal Education Minister says that the ALP will not support a private university. The private university in Queensland will cater for an ultimate target of 10 000 students.

I repeat that in 1971, when tertiary education in this State was controlled by the State, Queensland had the highest percentage in the 15 to 29 years age group at universities. In 1986, under the ALP Federal Government control of universities, Queensland has the least number per head of population. In addition, the Federal Government has set a ceiling on tertiary education in this State. The situation in Queensland is made worse because no allowance is made to compensate for the vast population growth in this State. As well as providing capital costs for extra facilities, an extra 6 000 places should be provided at tertiary institutions.

Narbethong School for the Visually Handicapped

Ms WARNER (Kurilpa) (11.49 p.m.): I rise to continue the education debate. It is interesting to see the Minister for Education is in the House, albeit asleep.

The future of the Narbethong School for the Visually Handicapped situated at Buranda is in serious doubt. This year 20 children have been removed from the school.

If the current policies are pursued, the number of children attending the school will continue to decline. The school, which has excellent facilities for the visually handicapped, now caters for only 35 full-time students, plus part-timers who are equivalent to 15 full-time students. Thus the total number of students at the school is 50.

The school was built to cater for 150 pupils. Only as recently as December 1985 a new manual arts wing of the school was completed. The school now has only 50 pupils and it seems that the building of the additional wing was an utter waste of public money.

The 20 children who have been removed from Narbethong this year have been transferred to Mount Gravatt West or to Strathpine special units. Those establishments are less well-endowed with special facilities. The reason for those changes is said to be a policy of decentralisation or integration.

Whilst that general policy may be appropriate in some circumstances, it needs to be explained to the parents of visually handicapped children. They need to be reassured that their children will not suffer from under-resourced centres and that the resources of Narbethong will not be wasted. What appears to be happening is that explanations are not forthcoming from the Director of Special Education or from the Minister for Education.

Recently I attended a p. and c. association meeting at Narbethong that was addressed by three departmental officials, Mr Cowen, Mr O'Brien and Mr Jim Renshaw. They tried to field questions from the parents, but it became quite clear during the meeting that either they did not know what the future of Narbethong was or they were not at liberty to divulge such sensitive information. They said that they were not able to discuss that as it was a matter of policy and that it would have to be raised somewhere else. So I am raising it in this Chamber.

If no plans exist for the future use of the school, that represents a gross wastage of public resources. If plans exist, surely the p. and c. association and the general public should know what they are. The p. and c. association has had a meeting with the Director of Special Education, Mr Ken Robertson. He promised a written transcript of what transpired at the meeting, but that has never eventuated. On several occasions the p. and c. association has requested a meeting with the Minister for Education. That has never eventuated. He has neither made himself available nor seen fit to inform the p. and c. association of his department's plans for the school. In fact, nobody in the department seems to be able to do that, because it involves a matter of policy.

Mr POWELL: I rise to a point of order. I have listened to this diatribe now for two minutes. I am amazed that the honourable member cannot understand that the department has answered the letters from the people concerned. They have been assured that the education of their children is the department's main concern.

Ms WARNER: I rise to a point of order. What is the Minister's point of order?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row): Order! I cannot listen to two points of order.

Ms WARNER: He is just taking up my time. That is typical.

Anyway, the matter requires urgent attention. I ask the Minister to reveal whatever secrets are currently being withheld by the Department of Special Education.

A special report on the decentralisation of visually handicapped children was commissioned by the previous Director of Special Education, Mr Gerald Ashby. The present Director of Special Education, Mr Ken Robertson, has seen fit not to make that report available. It was available in Braille before it was available in print, and only 20 copies are now available, and they have not been distributed widely.

Why is there such secrecy? If the policies of the department are educationally sound—they may very well be—they should be aired so that the parents and the public will know what is happening. The present uncertainty and confusion may then be cleared up. Given the limitation on available resources, a genuine fear is that the resources of

Narbethong, which are considerable and excellent, will be wasted and not replicated in other establishments round the State.

I ask the Minister to tell the House of his plans and to make all relevant reports on decentralisation and integration available to the public and to people working in the education profession so that they can examine and discuss the wisdom of the current policies. This cannot be done without the information being made available. I am asking only for information. It is not diatribe. I simply ask the following questions: What number of children will Narbethong cater for in the future? What will be the nature of their disabilities? How many of the resources of Narbethong will be transferred elsewhere, and where will they go? What will happen to the extensive buildings and grounds at Narbethong? Will visually and multi-handicapped students receive any specialised care? If so, where, and at what establishments? What are the respective costs of the new scheme compared with the old scheme?

Time expired.

Liberal Party

Mr FITZGERALD (Lockyer) (11.54 p.m.): I rise in the Adjournment debate to bring to the attention of honourable members and the general public some of the tripe that has been perpetrated by Liberal Party candidates, particularly in National Party electorates. The Liberal Party in Queensland is no longer the great party that it once was. At present, there is a great difference between the Queensland Liberal Party and the Federal Liberal Party.

It is interesting to note that not one of the six members of the Liberal Party, commonly known as the six-pack, happens to be in the Chamber. I think they have already gone to bed. However, the Liberal Party candidates continue to speak of a coalition. Many conservative voters in Queensland believe a coalition is the ideal government for Queensland.

I wish to direct the attention of Queenslanders generally to the recent voting pattern of the Liberal Party in this House. It is completely separate from the National Party. In fact, it is one of the Opposition parties.

In 1986, prior to the commencement of the Fourth Session of the Forty-fourth Parliament this year there had been 56 divisions in this House. According to my calculations, the Liberal Party voted with the National Party in 24 of those 56 divisions. They voted against the National Party on 32 occasions.

At the commencement of 1986 it became obvious that the Liberal Party had made the decision to be seen to be friends of the National Party and to vote with it. In fact, in the first nine divisions of this year they voted with the National Party. Since then they have voted with the National Party on 15 occasions and with the Labor Party on 32 occasions. As I said, they are not even present to enable me to draw this matter to their attention.

I have great respect for all members of the Liberal Party, including their present leader. I know that he has been recycled and I presume that he is going to be turned over again. Although I have great respect for Sir William Knox, I think the public should be made aware of the fact that the Liberal Party walked out of the coalition. The National Party did not ask them to leave. In fact, the Liberal Party walked out of government, never to return.

After the debacle at the last State election the Liberal Party sacked its president because it realised it was on the wrong track and had taken the "White" road—the wrong road. Dr John Herron was sacked, as was Terry White. As a result, the Liberal Party assumed its future would be stable.

The engineers of that great debacle were the honourable members for Stafford, Redcliffe and Sherwood. Those three engineered the great electoral defeat. Of course, the honourable member for Stafford lost his seat. However, when the Liberal Party

decided not to change direction, Mr Gygar was re-endorsed as a candidate and re-elected to Parliament.

It is regrettable that the current State president of the Liberal Party, Mr John Moore, has become an extremely bitter man. He was formerly a president of the party, and took over from Dr Herron, whose policy of attacking the National Party led to the demise of the Liberal Party. Mr John Moore now attacks the National Party on every possible occasion. While he has a right to do so, it is wrong for candidates to go around saying they want to sneak back into coalition with the National Party. The Liberal Party is a separate entity and has every right to remain so. All the stirrers who were defeated at the last election are seeking re-endorsement. I am aware that Mr Scassola, Mr Hewitt, and other former members have already been re-endorsed.

Queensland does not need a coalition Government. The six-pack on the other side have not learnt anything from the Liberal Party's record. The honourable member for Ithaca (Mr Miller) had to leave the Liberal Party when Mr Gygar was re-endorsed, because Mr Miller was of the opinion that the party had changed direction, or was going to change direction, but then realised there was no intention on the part of the Liberals to change direction. I think it is regrettable that this once great party has sunk to such depths.

I thought it was also interesting to note that the Federal Liberal Party, at its recent Adelaide conference, came up with National Party policies with regard to freezing Government spending and limiting the maximum personal taxation rate to 40 cents in the dollar.

Mr Howard is now in favour of a flat tax. I am not aware of the origins of that idea, but it may have been mentioned before in this House by the leader of the National Party. The Queensland Premier is leading the way so far as Australia is concerned.

Wednesday, 6 August 1986

Dumping of Uranium Waste at Mary Kathleen

Mr PRICE (Mount Isa) (12 midnight): I would like the House to know of the incredible series of events that occurred in the last two weeks in Mount Isa because they typify the attitude of the National Party Government, which is living in its own rarified atmosphere with absolutely no sense of feeling for the people of this State, particularly those in the north west of this State. By sheer neglect and disdain this Government relegated the 25 000 people of my electorate to the equivalent of fleas on the posterior of Queensland.

One month ago, the Government announced by media release that some 730 tonnes of radioactive waste taken from the grounds of the University of Queensland would be dumped in the old disused open cut at Mary Kathleen. The announcement was by press release in the south-east corner of this State and a small paragraph in *The Courier-Mail*. In Mount Isa *The Courier-Mail* does not exactly enjoy the widest circulation at \$1.10 a copy. So honourable members can imagine the cover that that release got.

Nevertheless, concern was recorded. Following telephone calls, I set in train a series of events that led to the condemnation of this Government by two public gatherings in the city of Mount Isa. It started out with that initial press release and was followed up by many telephone calls. I made statements on radio with both the ABC and the local radio station. Two weeks later, I read a lot more information about it in *The Sunday Mail*, in particular that there would be 730 tonnes of radioactive waste that would make up 30 semi-trailer loads and that this harmless material that had to be shifted from the Queensland University grounds 2 000 km by road would be dumped in the open cut at Mary Kathleen.

I then made inquiries at the office of the Minister for Mines and Energy and spoke to the press secretary, who could only tell me exactly what the press release had been.

He could not give me any more information and I could not contact the Minister himself.

That press release mentioned that Mary Kathleen Uranium Limited was getting ready to give its leases back to the State Government and that the State Government and the University of Queensland had been involved in the decision.

The people of Mount Isa had not been consulted at all, nor had anybody else in the region surrounding Mary Kathleen. Yet this so-called harmless material was being sent all that distance at an expense of \$150,000 to the University of Queensland, which is money that the university could ill afford and that could be used to increase the availability of some of the tertiary places that were mentioned earlier.

A responsible body in Mount Isa named the Union of Western Women issued a press release on 30 July in the local paper asking the leaders of the community to call a public meeting to allow the public to express concern at the possibility of this material coming into the region.

The National Party member for Kennedy, Mr Bob Katter, Snr, the mayor of Mount Isa and I got together and had a discussion. We contacted Professor Wilson, the Deputy Chancellor of the University of Queensland. Each one of us attempted to contact the Minister again, but we received no information from his office.

The result of this was a public meeting that afternoon and the reading of a telegram that was sent by the Director-General of the Mines Department, whom we contacted. He endeavoured to give us a decent explanation.

As time does not permit me to read the telegram, I will table that telegram because it mentions some very disturbing things, including the fact not only that that ore was the ore that originally came from the north west of Queensland but also that it contained tailings and that leaching had occurred.

Whereupon the honourable member laid the document on the table.

The Mines Department would not take responsibility for the ore. The Health Department in Brisbane refused to take responsibility. It wanted the material shifted out of the Brisbane region because of the danger of leaching and it insisted that the university should shift it.

Although the university insisted that it had the technology today to treat that ore to get rid of the radioactivity and leave it exactly where it was, the Mines Department and the Health Department could not agree on the matter, and the Health Department insisted that this harmless material be sent 2 000 km from Brisbane to be dumped with the other radioactive waste at Mary Kathleen.

The complaints at those public meetings came not only from the people of Mount Isa but also from the rural people around Mary Kathleen. Several families live downstream from Mary Kathleen, where spillages of up to 1 million litres of water have occurred when there has been excessive rainfall in the region and water has spilled down into the catchment areas of the Cloncurry River and the Corella River.

Time expired.

Motion (Mr Wharton) agreed to.

The House adjourned at 12.5 a.m. (Wednesday).