

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 16 SEPTEMBER 1986

Electronic reproduction of original hardcopy

TUESDAY, 16 SEPTEMBER 1986

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

ASSENT TO BILLS

Assent to the following Bills reported by Mr Speaker—

Ipswich Trades Hall Bill;
Motor Vehicles Securities Act Amendment Bill;
Port of Brisbane Authority Act Amendment Bill;
Reciprocal Enforcement of Judgments Act Amendment Bill;
Sale of Goods (Vienna Convention) Bill.

PETITIONS

The Clerk announced the receipt of the following petitions—

Central Queensland Cement Company Mine, Mount Etna, Relocation

From Mr Yewdale (22 signatories) praying that the Parliament of Queensland will relocate the Central Queensland Cement Company mine, Mount Etna to another local area and declare the site a national park.

Police Station, Marsden

From Mr Goss (1 895 signatories) praying that the Parliament of Queensland will take steps to acquire a site in the Marsden area to establish a police station.

Soft-bill Birds in Captivity, Changes to Legislation

From Mr Stephan (81 signatories) praying that the Parliament of Queensland will not proceed with changes to legislation allowing soft-bill birds to be kept in captivity.

Petitions received.

PAPERS

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

Reports—

Data Supplement of the Water Quality Council of Queensland for the year ended 30 June 1986
Queensland Film Corporation for the year ended 30 June 1986
Queensland Recreation Council for the year ended 30 June 1986.

The following papers were laid on the table—

Proclamations under the Diseases in Plants Act 1929-1972

Orders in Council under—

City of Brisbane Act 1924-1986 and the Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Act 1982-1984
Urban Passenger Service Proprietors Assistance Act 1975-1978
The Banana Industry Protection Act, 1929 to 1937
Water Act 1926-1986 and the Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Act 1982-1984
Harbours Act 1955-1982

Regulations under—

Meat Industry Act 1965-1984

Factories and Shops Act 1960-1985

Reports under—

Queensland Coal Board for the year ended 30 June 1986

Downs and South-western Queensland Racing Association for the year ended 30 June 1986

Queensland Turf Club for the year ended 30 June 1986

Central Queensland Racing Association for the year ended 30 June 1986

Queensland Harness Racing Board for the year ended 30 June 1986

Chicken Meat Industry Committee for the year ended 30 June 1986

Queensland Milk Board for the year ended 30 June 1986.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Commonwealth Government Grants to Organisations and Projects

Hon. Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN (Barambah—Premier and Treasurer) (11.5 a.m.), by leave: Over recent weeks, honourable members have seen members of the ALP in this place and in the public forum descending to the gutter of politics. The ALP has wallowed in the mud of innuendo and character assassination with broad-brush accusations of favouritism, so-called cronyism and even corruption. No evidence of any standing has been tendered in support of the claims, and the opportunity now awaits the ALP to prove the substance of its accusations in a court of law, in which the tactics of unsubstantiated smear have no place.

The standards adhered to by the ALP of old are long since dead. They have been replaced by other standards that would make people like Vince Gair and Ned Hanlon ashamed. The good name and reputations of innocent people count for nothing in the eyes of the ALP's new breed of mud-slingers. I regard those actions with contempt and do not propose to follow the standards set by members opposite.

However, I do propose to take the opportunity to place on record some of the activities of the ALP in looking after its mates and fellow-travellers on the left wing of Australian society. The record speaks for itself and brands members opposite as complete hypocrites in their unfounded criticisms of the Government.

If anyone is interested in evidence of favoured treatment because of political influence exerted by the ALP, I invite them to examine the following list of grants, approved by the Labor socialist Government in Canberra. The grants come from the pockets of the productive sector of the community to finance projects and programs of groups and organisations openly supportive of the ALP and the socialist cause. The list is by no means exhaustive. It is only a tiny section. It contains many more pages than I will include. It contains just some of the examples of how the ALP operates in this field, yet it totals some \$5.1m in tax-payers' money given to Labor's friends. I will read only a few.

Mr Mackenroth: Nearly as much as you spent on your plane last year.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I remind the honourable member for Chatsworth that the Premier is on his feet making a ministerial statement. I warn the honourable member under Standing Order No. 123A.

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: The list includes the Women's Centre coffee shop, \$145,640; Women's Electoral Lobby, \$17,931; the Arab Women's Federation, \$23,324; Central American and Caribbean Resource Centre, \$51,979; Chain Reaction Collective, which is one group of The People for Nuclear Disarmament, \$34,696; Italian Community

Party, \$13,267; Friends of the Earth, which is another anti-nuclear group, \$23,697; Hunter Workers Research Co-operative, \$68,896; Intervention Publications Collective, Social Issues Publications, \$41,085; Resistance Script Workshop, \$89,659; and another, Nuclear Disarmament Project, \$35,022.

I will miss out part of the list and mention the following: International Development Action, \$41,788; Union of Australian Women, \$35,631; Radio Station 2NCR-FM, \$10,125; another radio station, \$17,022; Ryde Regional Radio Co-operative, \$51,312; *Girls in Print* magazine, \$81,072; the lesbian community, \$15,070; Women's Abortion Action Campaign, \$24,139; another community radio station, \$60,546; Women's Phone Information Service, \$20,895; Australian Union of Students, \$31,810; Ballarat Community Radio Co-operative, \$81,049; and Congress for Co-operation and Disarmament, \$47,568. The list goes on and on.

As I do not wish to take up more time of the House, I seek leave to table the list, and I ask that it be incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

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

Some Examples Grants

Sponsor/Project	Amount \$
Canberra Rape Crisis Centre Collective Inc. Research Officer	41,714
Canberra Women's Refuge Inc.	103,577
The Woman's Centre Inc. Licensed Coffee Shop	145,640
Women's Electoral Lobby	17,931
Actors Equity of Australia Radio Announcer representation "Eliminate current exploitation of announcers by employers"	15,446
Australian Arab Women's Federation Assist Arab Women to enter workforce	23,324
Central American and Caribbean Resource Centre Information and Resource material on Central America	51,979
Chain Reaction Collective Magazine Editorial/Promotion (People for Nuclear Disarmament)	34,696
Coalition on Employment (Transport Information)	230,906
Coalition on Employment (Economic Dev. Project)	110,948
Coalition on Employment (Community Bureau)	117,609
Coalition on Employment (Handyman service)	136,571
Elsie Women's Refuge Oral History project	42,199
FILEF Cultural Committee (Italian Community Party) Promotions Officer and Administrative Assistant	13,267
Friends of the Earth (Sydney) (Anti-Nuclear Group) Research into job creation in recycling	23,697
Hunter Workers Research Co-operative	68,896
Intervention Publications Collective Social Issues Publications (4)	41,085
Macau Resistance Script Workshop—feature film script	89,659
Newcastle Out of Workers Ltd. Community Graphics Service to "Community organisations sympathetic to their objectives"	66,307
Nuclear Disarmament Co-ordinating Committee Co-ordinating Palm Sunday rallies	6,330
Nuclear Disarmament Projects Administration of Nuclear Disarmament Projects	35,022
Conservation Council of Victoria Information Bureau	37,143
Conservation Council of Victoria Research—environment centre library	32,781
Ecumenical Migration Centre (Indo-China Ethnic Association project)	37,790
Ecumenical Migration Centre Community Education/Migration Resources	54,462
Ecumenical Migration Centre Documentation of Turkish Migration experience	71,226

Some Examples Grants—*continued*

Sponsor/Project	Amount \$
Ecumenical Migration Centre Ethnic Employment and Youth Development	79,756
Employment Working Effectively Publishing and Offset Duplication/ Garden Improvements	189,468
Employment Working Effectively Employment Media Group	30,368
International Development Action Pacific Peoples Support Project.	41,788
Migrant Resource Centre Information Bureau for Ethnic Agencies.	69,704
Pax Christi Australia Peace Education.	71,061
Reel Woman—Film production and Distribution Women's film project.	31,796
Tasmania Wilderness Society Wilderness Centre: commercial services.	66,616
Union of Australian Women (Vic. Section) History of UAW. . . .	35,631
Women's Information and Referral Exchange Information Bureau	115,420
Women in Theatre Inc. Women's community theatre.	198,035
Women's Festival Community Program Committee, 35 Collins Street, Melbourne. Women's Festival Field Work.	310,747
Women's Health Resource Collective Women's Health Access Project	257,672
Women's Studies Association Committee Information bureau and publication.	43,991
People for Nuclear Disarmament Disarmament Education	15,392
People for Nuclear Disarmament Peace Bus	78,482
Radio Station 2NCR-FM Clerical and Information Assistance . . .	10,125
Radio Station 2RSR-FM Technical librarian co-ordinator	17,022
Redress Co-operative Ltd. Packaging of women's publications . .	20,821
Ryde Regional Radio Co-operative Staff for 2RRR-FM (Sydney) .	51,312
Shopfront Theatre for Young People Co-op. Ltd. Expand community activities of Centre	121,208
South Sydney Women's Centre "Girls in Print" magazine	81,072
Sydney City Council Research lesbian community	15,070
Sydney City Council Research gay male community	15,170
Sydney Educational Broadcasting 2SER-FM to provide, present and co-ordinate magazine programs	37,083
Trade Union Committee for Aboriginal Rights to train Aborigines in aims, activities of unions.	62,403
Unemployed Peoples' Union To provide employment in UPU drop- in centre	42,081
Wollongong Out of Workers Union To establish buying and distri- bution co-op	51,378
Wollongong Women's Centre Mobile Information van for liaison activities	82,187
Wollongong Workers Information and Research Centre Organise first National Depressed Regions Conference	100,624
Women's Abortion Action Campaign Layouts, Artwork, production of magazine	24,139
Women's Employment Rights Campaign Information and Resources for Leichhardt women.	48,390
(Community Radio) 2RSR-FM Community Radio news service training	60,546
Brisbane Women's Health Centre Migrant Women's Health Project (No further details)	70,604
Brisbane Women's Health Centre Women's Health Centre Project (No further details)	104,709
FILEF Inc. Information Bureau	16,422
FILEF Inc. Construction—New Office Area	7,067
Working Women's Centre Inc. Information bureau development officer	27,783
Working Women's Centre Inc. Sexual Harrassment Support Service	36,040

Some Examples Grants—*continued*

Sponsor/Project	Amount \$
Northern Tasmanian Unemployed Workers Union Inc. UWU	
Wholefoods Co-op. Store.	32,658
Tasmanian Wilderness Society TWS Information Bureau (Hobart)	38,767
The Wilderness Society Information Bureau (Devonport)	11,790
The Women's Coalition The Women's Place (Southern Tasmania)	45,066
Unemployed Peoples Union UPU Shop Project (Materials Hand- ling)—Hobart	22,140
Unemployed Peoples Union Producing, copying video material. Dis- tributing resource material.	40,791
Women's Phone Information Service Research and compilation of information for women	20,895
Australia Asia Worker Links Information Bureau.	58,895
Australian Conservation Foundation Inc. ACF Youth Group.	16,328
Australian Union of Students TAFE Student Unions Project.	31,810
Australian Union of Students Graphics Media.	21,075
Ballarat Community FM Radio Co-op. Society Community Radio Development.	81,049
Coalition Against Poverty and Unemployment. Unemployment and Poverty Information Exchange.	155,975
Collective of self help groups Counselling bureau.	125,372
Congress for Int. Co-operation and Disarmament (CICD). CICD 245th Anniversary Project.	47,568

Australia Council Funding

Community Arts Board—Some examples of funding, as per Artforce No. 51 1985

FILEF Cultural Committee	NSW	11 000
United Ethnic Communities	SA	12 000
Australia Workers Union	NAT	7 000
FILEF Cultural Committee	NSW	6 000
Queensland Teachers Union	Qld	8 989
Redletter Community Workshop Inc.	Vic	14 450
South Coast Labour Council	NSW	20 000
Trades and Labour Council	WA	11 200
Amalgamated Metal Workers and Shipwrights Union	Vic	4 500
Australia Asia Worker Link	Vic	2 450
Palestine Information Office	Vic	5 000
South Coast Trades and Labour Council	Qld	12 000
Gippsland Trade and Labour Council	Vic	11 000
FILEF	NSW	3 980
Queensland Teachers Union	Qld	4 960
Trades and Labour Council of Western Australia	WA	8 588
United Trades and Labour Council	SA	3 000

Security of Tenure for Retail Tenants, Hamilton Island

Hon. M. J. AHERN (Landsborough—Minister for Industry, Small Business and Technology) (11.12 a.m.), by leave: It was widely reported in the media yesterday, and has been again today, that the State Government has moved to afford the retail tenants of Hamilton Island security of tenure and protection under the law.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I remind honourable members—I have done so on practically every day I have been in the Chamber, but apparently I have to keep repeating myself—that I will name any member who interjects repeatedly when a Minister is on his feet during the course of a ministerial statement.

Mr AHERN: I believe that the Government's action is of sufficient importance and significance to warrant an explanation to the Parliament.

Honourable members will recall that in the past there has been media exposure given to the concerns of some tenants of Hamilton Island and the Retail Traders and Shopkeepers Association following the island management's application for exemption from the Retail Shop Leases Act.

Earlier this month, I visited the island and spoke to all but a handful of the 26 tenants individually and privately and to the resort-owner, Mr Keith Williams. As Minister responsible for the Retail Shop Leases Act, I had to satisfy myself that, before consideration was given to an exemption, the principal activity of the applicant was not retailing and that any arrangement entered into between landlord and tenants was appropriate under the circumstances.

I am indeed satisfied that Hamilton Island's main activity is not retailing and therefore it is not appropriate that the recreation resort be subject to all the provisions of the Retail Shop Leases Act. However, I did discern some anxiety amongst the tenants regarding security of tenure and their ability to protect their investments on the island in the event of a change of management or any other unforeseen event.

As a result, I have taken action that, I am certain, will give the tenants on the island protection.

I am proposing that Hamilton Island's application for exemption be granted and that each of the retail tenants be issued with a five-year licence that will give them security of tenure and protection under the law. A model licence form has been drawn up that details the specific obligations of both the lessor and the lessee. This proposal has been agreed to following negotiations between the retail shop leases mediator and the island management's solicitors. I am certain that it will be welcomed by the tenants.

In brief, it will give the tenants legal protection and security where there was none previously and, at the same time, give recognition to the fact that Hamilton Island's main source of revenue and main business is not retailing, and it would be therefore inappropriate that the special provisions of the Retail Shop Leases Act apply to it.

I would further point out that the exemption proposal will be subject to the scrutiny and disallowance of this House. However, I am sure that my proposals will be recognised as just, fair and sensible and in the best interests of all parties concerned.

AIDS

Hon. B. D. AUSTIN (Wavell—Minister for Health and Environment) (11.15 a.m.), by leave: I refer to reports during the past few days arising out of a meeting in Brisbane at the week-end of a body called the Australian Federation of AIDS Organisations. A number of homosexuals from southern States attending that meeting made several inaccurate and insulting remarks about Queensland's campaign against AIDS. Regrettably, those comments went unchallenged in local news media reports, casting a slur on all those involved in Queensland's highly effective AIDS prevention campaign.

This State has consistently led the nation in the introduction of measures to deal with AIDS. Queensland was the first State to declare AIDS a notifiable disease, the first State to establish an expert AIDS advisory committee and the first State to implement legislation to protect blood banks from AIDS contamination. Queensland produced the first AIDS information sheets for general distribution and the first detailed booklets on the management of AIDS for doctors, nurses and other health professionals. An AIDS information pamphlet has already been distributed to all high schools in Queensland, and moves are presently under way to revise that pamphlet for redistribution.

Queensland is still the only State with an effective contact-tracing program to enable trained health professionals to discreetly and confidentially trace persons who, after contact with a potential carrier, may be at risk from AIDS.

Queensland has embarked upon a vigorous and comprehensive AIDS campaign under the expert guidance of highly qualified medical experts. At present, a special program is being conducted as part of that campaign to screen a large number of persons

in the at-risk group. The results of that program have been very encouraging. Out of 300 at-risk persons tested to date, 30 have been positive, which indicates an infection rate of approximately 10 per cent. That compares more than favourably with the results of similar programs in Sydney where the infection rate is of the order of 50 per cent. Overall notifications to my department of persons who have returned a positive result to the AIDS screening test since its inception now stand at 299. That includes a total of 33 Category A cases, that is the fully developed disease, of whom 18 are deceased. I understand that in New South Wales more than 10 000 positive notifications have been received. In Queensland the rate of increase of AIDS notifications has been generally below the national average.

It is nothing but deliberate scaremongering for homosexual activists from the south to come to this State and forecast an upsurge in AIDS cases. There is no evidence whatsoever to support such a contention, irrespective of the deviant behaviour in which those individuals may have been personally involved during their visit.

Those extremists claim that unless Governments pay for the production and distribution of so-called safe sex manuals, the AIDS problem will worsen. In fact, experience elsewhere has shown that quite the reverse is the case. The so-called safe sex manuals, such as the one from Victoria, a copy of which I have in my possession, delude those at risk from AIDS into believing that they can safely indulge in some types of deviant sexual behaviour with carriers of the disease. That is totally irresponsible and misguided, and can only hinder efforts to prevent the spread of the AIDS infection throughout the community.

This Government will not—and I repeat will not—support in any way the production or distribution of material which advocates and promotes homosexual activities. In particular, this Government will not advocate or promote indecent and hazardous sexual behaviour involving potential carriers of the AIDS virus such as the so-called safe sex practices advocated by some homosexual activist organisations.

In the interests of the entire community, this Government will continue to rely on the expert advice and guidance of those people best qualified to determine programs and policies to deal with AIDS. Self-interested homosexual activists have no right to influence or determine policies in dealing with this disease and will not be allowed to do so.

Tick Fever Vaccine; Enzootic Bovine Leucosis Virus

Hon. N. J. TURNER (Warrego—Minister for Primary Industries) (11.19 a.m.), by leave: I wish to advise honourable members that officers of my department have advised me that they suspect that one batch of tick fever vaccine prepared by the department's Tick Fever Research Centre may have been carrying the enzootic bovine leucosis virus. Their suspicions were aroused following check-testing of cattle inoculated with this batch. Further testing is in progress to confirm the suspicion and to identify, if possible, the source of the virus.

Enzootic bovine leucosis, or EBL as it is called, has been recognised in Queensland since the early 1960s. The virus responsible for EBL is world-wide and the infection occurs in herd and geographical aggregations. Many overseas countries, for example the EEC, Japan and the USA have taken or are taking steps to eliminate EBL and will no doubt use this to their advantage in world dairy markets.

It is well known that the infection is more prevalent in dairy cattle than in beef cattle. Only a very small percentage of infected cattle show the clinical signs of the disease, which are ill-thrift and lowered production or visible changes in the tissues at slaughter. It results in only occasional deaths of cattle. However, when the whole herd is infected it can cause loss of production from the clinically infected animals in the herd.

There is no evidence of transmission of the virus to humans. Pasteurisation of milk has been shown in laboratory trials to kill or inactivate the virus.

In order to eliminate this disease from the State's dairy herd, my department, in close liaison with the dairy industry organisations and dairy breed societies in this State, and with their willingness and agreement, established a voluntary bovine leucosis accreditation scheme for the dairy industry in 1983. The scheme has the ultimate aim of freeing the dairy industry of this infection.

In older animals it is now generally accepted that close physical contact is the single most important prerequisite for infection. Separation by a distance of 100 metres appears sufficient to prevent infection. There is no evidence of transmission of infection from sire to progeny using artificial insemination. It is extremely rare for the calf of an infected cow to become infected in the uterus. Calves can become infected by drinking the milk of another infected cow but it appears calves of infected dams are protected by antibodies in the colostrum of their dam. However calves of clean cows have no such protection which, after all, is only temporary.

The incubation period of the infection is usually several months. Once infection is established, antibodies in the blood can be detected in laboratory serological tests.

The voluntary accreditation scheme is based on regular blood-testing of dairy cattle in herds and culling positive animals to suit the farmer's requirements. In addition, segregation of cattle is being practised and other husbandry practices introduced to prevent the spread of infection.

Field-sampling is done by private veterinary practitioners for a fee by arrangement with my department. All laboratory testing is done by my department's laboratories free of charge.

Several show societies support the scheme by requiring dairy cattle entries to be tested before showing.

The Queensland Government has recognised the importance of the scheme by extending the Dairy Adjustment Scheme to make advances available to participating dairy-farmers for the purchase of livestock used as replacements and for improvements for restructuring of dairy farms. Those special loans were requested by the Queensland Dairymen's Organisation to cover instances where farmers might have difficulty raising funds to meet eradication costs through normal commercial sources. In addition, the Stock Act has been amended to effectively compel sellers to give a warranty with cattle offered for sale. If such an animal gives a positive test for EBL within 14 days of purchase, the sale is voided. I should emphasise that this does not apply to cattle purchased interstate.

Since the scheme began in 1983, the response of the dairy industry has been excellent. I am advised that to date some 91 dairy herds have been accredited free and several hundred more are on test programs to that end. During the last year my department's laboratories tested more than 87 000 blood samples for the scheme, highlighting the Government's and the industry's big financial investment in the scheme.

My department continues to undertake research to develop a vaccine to control EBL. However, it is projected that that will take several years, if ever, to achieve.

With a large part of Queensland infested with the cattle tick and the remainder clean of this external parasite, the control of tick fever is important to both the dairy and beef industries.

My department is the only organisation in Australia producing tick fever vaccine and has done so since the turn of the century. It is conservatively estimated that our tick fever vaccine saves cattle-producers in this State more than \$5m each year. Despite considerable research, which is continuing both in my department and elsewhere to produce synthetically tick fever vaccine, it is still necessary to produce it in young cattle. Because of the techniques involved in using blood, procedures have been in place for many years to ensure that the vaccine contains no disease agents other than the tick fever organisms necessary to protect against this disease. Those precautionary measures have now been tightened further.

I stress that only one batch of tick fever vaccine prepared in April is suspected of carrying EBL virus. Should some of those virus particles have survived the manufacture process and subsequent storage and transport to farmers' properties and were inoculated with the vaccine into cattle, the animals would react to the blood test now. My department's laboratories will undertake the necessary laboratory test on blood samples for EBL antibodies.

Our investigations have not shown evidence of the problem with subsequent or current batches of vaccine. Approximately 200 batches of tick fever vaccine are produced each year. My Director-General has written to producers who received doses of the one suspect batch of vaccine to advise them of the situation. They will receive further advice from the department as soon as the position is more clearly determined.

Visit by Navy Vessels to Brisbane to Celebrate RAN's 75th Anniversary

Hon. V. P. LESTER (Peak Downs—Minister for Employment and Industrial Affairs) (11.25 a.m.), by leave: The visit by a number of navy vessels to Brisbane this week has attracted a great deal of publicity.

The ships that are arriving in Brisbane to celebrate the Royal Australian Navy's 75th anniversary include ships of Australia, New Zealand, the United States and the United Kingdom.

This morning the United States ship Paul F. Foster berthed in Brisbane. On Friday the British aircraft-carrier *Illustrious* is due to berth in the Brisbane River.

This is an important event for the Navy and also for the people of Brisbane, Queensland and Australia. The overseas ships are coming here at the invitation of the Australian Government.

Unfortunately, the event has been marred by threats from the unions, particularly the Seamen's Union of Australia, that tugs may not be available to berth the vessels. Honourable members will appreciate fully that a large vessel such as the *Illustrious* needs the assistance of tugs to berth safely in the Brisbane River.

The Seamen's Union has adopted a policy of not servicing vessels that are nuclear-powered or may be carrying nuclear weapons. The policy of the United States and United Kingdom Governments is to neither confirm nor deny that their ships are carrying nuclear weapons.

Because of the importance of this event, yesterday I requested my department to arrange for all the parties involved in this matter to meet and endeavour to bring some sanity to the situation.

Mr McLean: What rubbish! You were trying to cause a war all week-end.

Mr LESTER: If the honourable member for Bulimba would listen——

Mr McLean: It didn't work, did it?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Bulimba!

Mr LESTER: Representatives from my department conferred for three and a quarter hours with representatives of the Trades and Labor Council of Queensland, the Seamen's Union, the Merchant Service Guild and the Institute of Power Engineers. The meeting included representatives of the navy, the Commonwealth Government, the tug company and the Department of Harbours and Marine.

The unions have agreed to recommend to their members that they should co-operate on a one-off basis to provide labour requirements necessary for the 75th anniversary celebrations if such a request is forthcoming from the Federal Government.

Obviously, that request will be forthcoming because, in the national interest, it has no option but to back the strong Queensland stand. The ships are arriving in Australia at the invitation of the Australian Government.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The level of conversation in the Chamber is far too high.

Mr LESTER: These problems should have been foreseen by the Australian Government, and a situation in which the matter is now being resolved with the help of the Queensland Government should not have arisen.

It is insulting to overseas nations for the Commonwealth Government to invite them to Australia to participate in a special celebration and for those nations to find that their way is barred by unions that are applying policies that are not in conformity with the laws of the land. Just imagine a small group of unions holding to ransom the three major navies of the world, that is, the navies of the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia! There is no way that that can be allowed to happen.

It is pleasing to see that the union officials have come to their senses in this matter and will ask their members to co-operate. It is now up to the union-members to accept the recommendation and to carry out the work for which they are paid.

The berthing of the ships in Brisbane will take place this week with or without the co-operation of the union movement; I guarantee that. The Queensland Government will do all in its power to ensure that events such as this can proceed in the normal course. It is the right of the people of Brisbane, its surrounding areas and Queensland generally to see that these ships are extended full hospitality. Nothing should stand in their way.

I take this opportunity to thank my colleague the Minister for Water Resources and Maritime Services (Mr Tenni) for his assistance and that of the Department of Harbours and Marine in ensuring that common sense was brought to bear in this matter.

Misappropriation of Funds by Employee of Department of The Arts, National Parks and Sport

Hon. P. R. McKECHNIE (Carnarvon—Minister for Tourism, National Parks, Sport and The Arts) (11.30 a.m.), by leave: I wish to make a statement in regard to an occurrence in my department that has been blown up out of all proportion. The Leader of the Opposition (Mr Warburton) claims credit for unearthing this issue, but his claims are false and nonsense. As usual, the Opposition has been a willing repository for confidential information that has been leaked to it and is living up to its reputation as a receiver of stolen goods.

The facts of the matter are that late last month the accountable officer in my department became aware of a possible misappropriation of funds——

Mr Warburton: I rise to a point of order. I object strongly to the words used by the Minister that I am a receiver of stolen goods. That is absolutely incorrect and I demand that that statement be withdrawn.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition has asked that those allegations against him be withdrawn.

Mr McKECHNIE: I withdraw those remarks, but I would state there is no doubt that he is a dealer in stolen goods. There is no doubt about that.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The remarks have been withdrawn.

Mr McKECHNIE: The facts of the matter are that late last month the accountable officer in my department became aware of a possible misappropriation of funds by a relatively junior officer of the department. Within a matter of hours he had interviewed the officer and called for a full explanation. Subsequently, the accountable officer had discussions with a bank official and the Solicitor-General. Those discussions were followed up by letters before the matter was raised in this House, and I stress that point. Any suggestion of a cover-up—which is what the Leader of the Opposition has suggested—is totally without foundation. The correct public service procedures were being followed and will be followed until the matter is finalised.

An amount of \$9,100 was purportedly paid——

An Opposition Member interjected.

Mr McKECHNIE: Yes. The Leader of the Opposition has a different figure from mine, and I know where he got the figure from.

An amount of \$9,100 was purportedly paid to the Golden Valley Tennis Club. That money has been recovered by the department. The accountable officer has received the officer's resignation, which has been accepted.

Mr De Lacy: What about your resignation?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I warn the honourable member for Cairns under Standing Order No. 123A for constant interjection.

Mr McKECHNIE: The Solicitor-General advised that the apparent misappropriation should be referred to the police, and that has been done.

It has been reported in the media that the officer concerned had a gambling problem. That does not excuse him for what he did. The Leader of the Opposition stands condemned for trying to make political capital out of an issue such as this. How hypocritical! It is his party and he personally who continues to argue for the introduction of poker machines throughout Queensland. That is ALP policy. Those machines have wrecked countless lives in New South Wales, and wherever else they have been allowed to operate.

The ALP is not worried about that. It is not concerned for the well-being of Queenslanders. It wants to spread that form of gambling and its associated problems all over Queensland. All it wants to do is make political capital out of the misfortune of those Queenslanders whose lives are wrecked as a result of excessive gambling.

There are no judges, politicians or ex-politicians before the courts in Queensland, and the Leader of the Opposition should be the last person to talk about cover-ups. The Leader of the Opposition concerns himself about a matter of a few weeks during which the proper procedures were in train, while his party has seen fit to suppress the facts of the Murphy case for 30 years. Talk about a cover-up! What about the Opposition?

The Queensland Government's Sports Assistance Scheme is acknowledged by all to be the best in Australia. It has stood the test of time. Since 1972 more than \$34m has been distributed to organisations representing the 81 sports played in the State. That drive, direction and purpose must continue, and this sad episode should not be allowed to interfere with Queensland's impressive track record.

Mr Speaker, I reaffirm that the matter is now in the hands of the police, and justice will be done. I intend to continue with my job of creating growth and development in Queensland, rather than have time taken up with negative, hypocritical bleatings of an ex-ETU official who masquerades as the Leader of the Opposition.

PRIVILEGE

Use of "MLA" in Advertisement by Mr Turner in *The Bowen Independent*

Mr BURNS (Lytton) (11.35 a.m.): Mr Speaker, I rise on a matter of privilege. I draw your attention to an advertisement in *The Bowen Independent* by a National Party candidate named Turner, who claims in bold print that he is an MLA. As the letters "MLA" are used by members of the Legislative Assembly, who have been elected to this House, and as Mr Turner's parliamentary-election record is one of abject failure, will you investigate that blatant misrepresentation? Or will you accept the obvious explanation that, in Mr Turner's case, "MLA" really stands for "member of the liars association"?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I will report back to the House on the matter.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr SCOTT (Cook) (11.36 a.m.), by leave: During the debate on his Estimates, the Minister for Water Resources and Maritime Services (Mr Tenni), when referring to Cooktown harbour, said in reply to my speech—

“Tonight he said that a large vessel could not get into the harbour.”

I point out that I did not say anything about vessels entering the harbour. The Minister is not only deaf; he also treats the truth lightly. As usual, he has treated the truth very casually.

I spoke about the condition of the wharf. I know that it is against Government policy to effect improvements to wharf facilities such as those at Cooktown. Its policy is a very anti-northern development policy. I deplore the fact that a Minister of the Crown would tell an untruth in this Chamber, but it is an indication of the standard of integrity of the Government. However, the good people of Cooktown and all my electorate know that the Minister will say anything, and that so much of what he says has to be——

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I have repeated many times in this Chamber that, when making a personal explanation, a member must state how he has been affected personally or how he has been misrepresented. The honourable member is not doing that.

Mr SCOTT: The Minister's remarks affected me, because he is trying to tell the people of Cooktown that I said something about a vessel entering Cooktown harbour. I am quite perturbed about that. There was some truth in his own statement that there is chaos in Cooktown harbour. I remind honourable members that he is the man who is responsible for that bad state of affairs.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member is not making a personal statement. I cannot allow him to continue.

QUESTIONS UPON NOTICE

Questions submitted on notice were answered as follows—

1. Agricultural Bank Loan to Mr M. Behan

Mr WARBURTON asked the Minister for Primary Industries—

“With reference to applications for financial assistance to the Agricultural Bank by the Behan family of Bilbah Downs, Isisford, headed by Mr Michael Behan, a prominent National Party member—

(1) Did the Agricultural Bank write in January 1986 to the Behan family advising that their applications for \$70,000 under the *Agricultural Bank (Loans) Act* and \$40,000 under the Drought Relief Scheme were refused but that it had approved a \$15,000 loan for carry-on purposes and to enable the presentation of the Bilbah Downs property for sale?

(2) Did Mr Behan apply in February to the Agricultural Bank for a further \$145,000 which was over and above the \$15,000 that he received by cheque on 24 January and did he also advise the bank of a proposed application to the Rural Reconstruction Board for another \$50,000?

(3) Was it estimated by the Agricultural Bank at the time that the further advance of \$145,000 sought by Mr Behan would take his borrowings to \$787,000?

(4) Was it further estimated by the Agricultural Bank that the Behan family's equity in their property was being eroded by interest charges in excess of \$2,000 a week and was it the shared view of the Agricultural Bank, the Rural Reconstruction Board, the finance manager at Elders to whom Behan owed money, and Behan's trading bank manager that the property be sold before the family's equity was totally lost?

(5) Did the Agricultural Bank advise the Behan family in March that their application for \$145,000 in financial assistance had been refused?

(6) Was he, as Minister for Primary Industries, officially advised by the Agricultural Bank in March that, despite Mr Behan's earlier personal approach to him, his application for \$145,000 in financial assistance had been refused?

(7) Was he provided at the time with a complete explanation of the reasons for the Agricultural Bank's decision?

(8) Did he, against the advice and information available provided to him, direct that Mr Behan's application for \$145,000 be approved?

(9) Did he further intervene in April to set aside a condition of repayment set by the Agricultural Bank regarding the advance of this money?

(10) Is Mr Michael Behan of Bilbah Downs, Isisford, the same Mr Michael Behan who was appointed in April as the National Party's northern director and is Mr Behan also president of the National Party's Kennedy divisional council as well as being a member of the National Party's state management committee?

(11) Did he direct the Agricultural Bank to approve this \$145,000 loan to Mr Behan on instruction from the Premier?

(12) On what grounds did he override the decision and advice of the financial experts in this Behan loan affair?

(13) Is this yet another case of political interference and intrusion on behalf of friends and supporters of the National Party State Government giving them preferential treatment in the form of ready access to public funds?"

Answer—

(1 to 13) In terms of the provisions of the Co-ordination of Rural Advances and Agricultural Bank Acts 1938-1982, I, as Minister for Primary Industries, was constituted as a corporation sole by the name of the Corporation of the Agricultural Bank.

As such, I had authority to approve advances to primary producers under the Agricultural Bank (Loans) Act 1959-1981. In the exercise of my discretion, I approved an advance of \$145,000 to the Behan family of Bilbah Downs, Isisford, which area had been severely drought stricken for three and a half years.

This advance had been previously declined by the general manager of the Agricultural Bank but had been recommended by another senior officer of the bank in a document dated 10 January 1986.

In a further memo from the same officer on 20 February 1986, again recommending the loan, the officer said—

"The only major difference between this submission and the previous one is that the possibility of achieving viability is far better documented and, in the case of NDA application, the purpose for which funds are sought comes within the general guidelines of the scheme.

Although the applicant/borrower's position is critical, I believe it is 'largely' attributable to drought, and I further believe it is retrievable provided the area concerned does not revert in the short term to drought conditions.

Mr Behan believes he can achieve success with the proposed assistance provided the seasons are favourable, and he also understands that this would be a last ditch effort and failure to achieve the proposed target would result in the absolute need to proceed to sale.

This country suffers badly in bad times and can recover rapidly in good times, and I personally believe that the assistance requested could be the means of returning to viability, and I therefore again support the request for further funding."

On the basis of budgets provided by Mr Behan indicating that the debt could be serviced, plus the fact that he had indicated a commitment to selling a portion of the

property, which would substantially reduce the debt structure, and in exercise of the discretion allowed to me under the Act, an advance of \$145,000 was approved to the Behan family to enable them to reduce their indebtedness to their pastoral house and to provide carry-on and restocking finance to assist them to overcome the effects of what has probably been the most disastrous drought ever to affect central-western Queensland.

I remind the Leader of the Opposition that the advance is not a grant, but is a repayable loan that is secured by land mortgage. The earlier parts of the loan, amounting to \$60,000, were at commercial rates of interest, and the subsequent loans, totalling approximately \$85,000, were at disaster-relief rates because of the drought situation.

Those disaster-relief loans consist of State and Commonwealth finance, and the initial rate of interest, namely, 4 per cent per annum, is set having regard to the rate estimated by the State to cover administration costs and bad debts. That condition is imposed—I reiterate, imposed—by the Commonwealth. So any allegation that it represents favoured treatment to Mr Behan is arrant nonsense.

To show in the clearest possible terms that the decision to lend money to Mr Behan was not a case of political interference, intrusion, or preferential treatment, I will provide the House with details of approvals for substantially larger amounts to other land-holders—all approved by the Agricultural Bank.

There are in existence no fewer than 12 loans, made since March 1986, and approved under normal lending procedures, ranging from \$200,000 to \$820,000. The total amount involved in those 12 loans is \$5.13m, the average individual amount being just under \$430,000.

Furthermore, since March 1986, under the heading of Natural Disaster Assistance, there are loans to seven land-holders, totalling \$2.11m and ranging from \$170,000 to \$500,000, the average being approximately \$300,000. As I said a moment ago, those financial arrangements were approved by the Agricultural Bank.

However, I again draw the attention of honourable members to the discretion and responsibility conferred on the Minister to make a final decision where differences of opinion exist. Who but the Minister—the man responsible to Parliament and the people—should be required to make a decision in such cases?

Surely the Leader of the Opposition and his party do not support the concept that such decisions should be left to public servants who bear no such responsibility or accountability? The Opposition Leader quite wrongly implies that the Behan incident was a case of a Government-supporter getting preferential treatment in the form of ready access to public funds.

Let me take just a few moments to quote from Federal *Hansard* some instances of outrageous waste of public money by the Commonwealth Government for some very dubious organisations and projects, at a time when our deficit is a national tragedy and an international scandal.

The Commonwealth Government gave—let me reiterate, gave—the ACT Trades and Labor Council nearly a quarter of a million dollars to employ 13 people for a year; it gave—I say again, gave—the Printing and Kindred Industries Union over \$170,000 for nine people to investigate the extent of sub-award employment practices; it gave the Gay Publications Co-operative and one of its affiliates more than \$123,000 for activities including production of their homosexual magazines *Outrage* and *Gay Community News*; it allocated nearly \$335,000 to the Australian Broadcasting Corporation to employ young people of non-Anglo-Celtic backgrounds and to provide an opportunity for accented voices to be heard on air and win acceptance within the community—at a time when the ABC will be forced to drastically rationalise its best-patronised rural radio session, *Country Hour*, because of financial cut-backs.

Those are just a few examples, Mr Speaker; yet Opposition members have the audacity to criticise me personally, and this Government generally, for lending a man money to save his pastoral holding. The hypocrisy defies description and belief!

I should like the Leader of the Opposition to be in no doubt at all about the contempt in which I hold him for this second challenge in the House to my integrity. As the earlier part of my answer indicates, I have elected to be positive and truthful and I reject and condemn his malicious implications of impropriety.

Since entering Parliament 12 years ago, I have carried out my duties as a member and a Minister to the best of my skill and ability—often in extremely difficult and trying circumstances. More importantly, I have always endeavoured—and I believe succeeded—to do my job with fairness, honesty and impartiality.

In spite of this second vicious and baseless attack on my reputation, I steadfastly refuse to be drawn into a gutter-fight. I have approximately two more days to serve in the House, and I will leave with my head held high—not like the Leader of the Opposition, whose head will roll off the chopping-block when the Labor Party carries out its usual post-election hunt for scapegoats.

Mr Scott: He will be here with his head held high as Premier.

Mr TURNER: The honourable member should listen to the answer. He might learn from it. His head is there only to hold his ears apart.

Answer (continued)—

I have always believed in and cherished the institution of Parliament and everything it stands for. I will have no part of the shameful tactics of the Opposition Leader and his followers who have so often brought the proceedings of the House into disrepute.

I refer particularly to attempts at character assassination under the protection of parliamentary privilege, and I again remind him that such privilege is a corner-stone of the parliamentary system. However, parliamentary privilege carries a responsibility to ensure that honourable members have their facts and figures right before they embark on character assassination. I am proud of my record in this House and intend to maintain my high standard to the end—something that Mr Warburton, the Leader of the Opposition, shall never be able to do.

2. State Government Insurance Office, Shares in Castlemaine Tooheys

Mr BURNS asked the Deputy Premier, Minister Assisting the Treasurer and Minister for Police—

“With reference to the State Government Insurance Office board’s decision to dispose of its entire shareholding in Castlemaine Tooheys in favour of the Bond Corporation—

What was the date of the SGIO board meeting where the decision to divest the entire shareholding was made?”

Answer—

The timing sequence in 1985 for the matters raised by the honourable member was as follows—

August 27—Australian directors of Castlemaine Tooheys Ltd unanimously recommended to stock-holders acceptance of the offer by Actraint No. 15 Pty Ltd.

August 28—Chairman of Castlemaine Tooheys Ltd by letter to stock-holders strongly recommended acceptance of the offer as early as possible.

August 28—SGIO board approved the sale of its Castlemaine Tooheys Ltd shareholding.

3. Senator Button; Left-wing Control of ALP and Federal Government

Mr JENNINGS asked the Premier and Treasurer—

“(1) Is he aware that the Socialist left-controlled Victorian ALP intend to dump Senator Button from the top of its Senate ticket to the bottom and replace

him with the left wing, former Communist, metals union boss John Halfpenny who has made numerous public statements in the 1970's that he was all for disruption of the industrial law and order in the country and the destruction of our form of democratic Government?

(2) If so, does he consider this indicates a further serious move down the trail to extreme left wing socialist control of the Labor Party and the Federal Government?"

Answer—

(1 & 2) The election of John Halfpenny to the Commonwealth Senate would be an unmitigated disaster for this country and for the Australian Labor Party, and I know that ALP members know that. As a union official, he had no respect for the rule of law. He could not care less if workers lost their jobs as a result of businesses being closed because employers could not meet excessive wage demands from unions. Time and time again he thumbed his nose at decisions of the industrial commissions, and the more turmoil and unrest he caused the more delighted he was as he looked forward to the day of a socialist republic brought about by his efforts. That is the type of person for whom Senator Button is being demoted. To think that the ALP would dream of putting a man like John Halfpenny in the Commonwealth Senate to replace a man like John Button is just unbelievable. It just shows how the left wing runs the Labor Party.

Of course, here in Queensland, the member for South Brisbane and the member for Murrumba are examples of the rewards handed out by their Queensland colleagues for their loyalty to the ALP. They, too, were given their marching orders by the socialist Left. The Leader of the Opposition played a leading role in their non-endorsement as candidates at the forthcoming election.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Agricultural Bank Loan to Mr M. Behan

Mr WARBURTON: In directing a question to the Minister for Primary Industries, I refer to the guide-lines used by the Rural Reconstruction Board in considering applications for financial assistance—the main requirement being that the applicant has the ability to service commitments and the potential to be commercially viable—and I ask: Is it not a fact that in April this year the Rural Reconstruction Board, after further consideration of Behan's request for \$50,000, refused Behan's application because the board was of the same view as the Agricultural Bank, that is, that the prospects of commercial viability under Behan's huge debt load did not exist? What is the position about the \$15,000 that was advanced by the Agricultural Bank upon Behan's request, on the clear understanding that no further advances would be made and that the \$15,000 would be used mainly to get the property ready for sale?

Mr TURNER: The Leader of the Opposition refers in part to the \$15,000 that was given to Mr Behan earlier in the year. I have in front of me a copy of a letter from the Agricultural Bank that clearly indicates that the \$15,000 was not given only to get the property ready for sale. I understand that the Leader of the Opposition has made statements in the media to the effect that Mr Behan still has that money, but I point out that the money was banked on the day Mr Behan received it.

The letter sets out clearly and categorically that the approval was made to provide basic carry-on finance and to assist in maintaining the property so that it could be presented in a reasonable state for sale. The point I make is that the advance was made for the purpose of providing carry-on finance. At no stage did Mr Behan indicate a preparedness to dispose of his property during a drought.

Mr Behan made another application. In my previous reply, I indicated that that application went to the officer who was second in charge of the Agricultural Bank, who investigated the matter and approved that the loan be granted.

I believe I have indicated clearly my position in the affair, and that Mr Behan had demonstrated a capacity to trade out of his difficulties. Bearing in mind the attitude adopted by the Government to the forced sale of properties, even by trading banks—

Mr Warburton: What about the Rural Reconstruction Board?

Mr TURNER: I believe that I have adequately answered the question of the Leader of the Opposition. I reiterate that Mr Behan had demonstrated a capacity to trade out of his difficulties.

Loans Advanced by Agricultural Bank

Mr WARBURTON: In directing a further question to the Minister for Primary Industries, I refer to the Minister's explanation of his use of ministerial powers in directing the Agricultural Bank to make payment of what has been described by the Premier as a "lousy" \$145,000 to the National Party's northern director, Michael Behan, and I ask: Would the Minister advise the House how many previous occasions he has directed—and I emphasise "directed"—the Agricultural Bank to advance money to an applicant after the bank has point-blank refused an application?

Mr TURNER: Whenever I have considered it necessary.

Regulation of Flea Market Trading; Protection of Small-business Operators

Mr NEAL: I ask the Premier and Treasurer: As many small-business operators are already under pressure because of high interest rates, high wages and high taxes, will the Government ensure that they are provided with protection from the unfair competition of a growing number of flea markets? Does the Government intend to look at claims that assert that there are too many shopping centres?

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: At the annual conference conducted by small-business operators on the Gold Coast last Saturday, I outlined very clearly the attitude adopted by the Government. Approximately 1 000 people who are engaged in small and medium-sized businesses gathered at the conference. As the Minister for Employment and Industrial Affairs (Mr Lester) has stated and as I outlined last Saturday, the Government has commenced action to restrict the nature of selling engaged in by flea market operators which will prevent their selling of larger items such as refrigerators. The conference readily accepted the Government's approach.

I also outlined to the conference the source of the main problems being experienced by business operators these days. I referred to the policies of the Federal Labor Government that have imposed high interest rates and fringe benefit taxes on business operators and allowed the trade union movement to press heavy demands on the business sector. The Federal Government is also responsible for devaluing the Australian dollar. I pointed out that, notwithstanding that all of those factors create difficulties for business operators, the main problem is the policies adopted by the Federal Labor Government. Not only are small-business people affected, but also all business people throughout the State.

I highlighted that point, just as I did to the grain-growers at their annual conference in Rockhampton. I pointed out to them that long before the United States or the EEC was selling subsidised wheat, 40 000 grain-growers went to Canberra and told the Commonwealth Government that they were in dire straits—desperate—just as the small-business people are desperate. The problem is here at home in Australia. It has been caused by the people in Canberra, the colleagues of Opposition members. Never once have I found Opposition members supporting the abolition of the fringe benefits tax and all the other taxes. The Opposition supports them all. I pointed that out to the small-business people. I said that certain conferences would be held and I outlined the details of the discussions that would take place so that the problem of big shopping centres could be assessed before construction of shopping centres began and before people spent large sums of money. That was accepted.

Drug Education

Mr NEAL: In directing a question to the Minister for Education, I refer to world-wide concern being expressed about the illegal use of drugs, particularly by young people. I ask: What steps are being taken in Queensland to combat the drug menace?

Mr POWELL: I thank the honourable member for the question because the problem of drug abuse is one that should exercise the minds of all honourable members. Now is probably the right time to report to this House what is being done about the drug problem in Queensland.

For some time a drug and alcohol unit has been established within the Department of Education. That unit has made teachers aware of the problems that they will perceive in children. One of the most insidious problems in identifying drug problems in schools is recognising when children are involved. The drug and alcohol unit has been working with teachers trying to make them aware of what is going on so that they can intervene early and recommend remedial attention for those children. It is also hoped that that will rub off on parents. Parents need to be deeply involved in the fight against drug abuse. Parents know their children best of all. They need to be actively involved with and know what their children are doing in order to see change in the way in which their children do things. Parents should be alerted to what is going on.

Earlier this year—I think it was in July—the Minister for Health (Mr Austin) and I took a submission to Cabinet with regard to drug education in this State. Yesterday Cabinet agreed to the setting up of a committee. The terms of reference of that committee are: firstly, to describe drug education programs; secondly, to describe the aspects of drug education programs currently being used elsewhere in Australia and overseas; thirdly, to develop a rationale for evaluation; and fourthly, to evaluate the current programs in Queensland. The committee has wide-ranging representation. The chairman of the committee is the Director of the Division of Planning and Special Programs in the Department of Education, Mr John Tainton. The members of the committee are: from the Department of Health, Mr L. P. Lumsden, who is the Deputy Director (Prevention and Co-ordination), Alcohol and Drug Dependence Services; from the Alcohol and Drug Foundation of Queensland, Mr R. K. Aldred, who is the Executive Officer; from Drug-Arm, Mr G. Maskelyne; from the Life Education Association, the Reverend Ted Noffs; and from the Teacher Education Institution, Mr J. Cook, who is a senior lecturer, Carseldine Campus, of the Brisbane College of Advanced Education. The school representative is Mr Terry Cooley, who is the principal of the Toowong State High School. Other members are: Mr R. J. Handyside, the Director of Life Line, Ipswich; Professor Brownlea, of the School of Australian Environmental Studies, Griffith University; and Mr Rod Ballard, who is the Co-ordinator, Alcohol and Drug Programs Unit of the Department of Education.

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

VOTE ON ACCOUNT, 1987-88

Mr SPEAKER read a message from His Excellency the Governor recommending that the following provisions be made on account of the services of the year ending 30 June 1988—

From the Consolidated Revenue Fund, the sum of \$940,000,000;

From the Trust and Special Funds, the sum of \$1,550,000,000;

From the Loan Fund, the sum of \$70,000,000.

Message referred to Committee of Supply.

At 12.1 p.m.,

In accordance with the provisions of Standing Order No. 307, the House went into Committee of Supply.

SUPPLY**Resumption of Committee—Estimates—Fifth and Sixth Allotted Days****Estimates-in-Chief, 1986-87****Welfare Services, Youth and Ethnic Affairs****Chief Office, Department of Welfare Services**

Hon. Y. A. CHAPMAN (Pine Rivers—Minister for Welfare Services, Youth and Ethnic Affairs) (12.2 p.m.): I move—

“That \$5,875,200 be granted for ‘Department of Welfare Services—Chief Office’.”

The amount contained in that motion, Mr Row, is a decrease of \$68,550 on the appropriation for the Chief Office of my department in 1985-86, representing, of course, the transfer of sections of the department's administration to the newly created Department of Corrective Services and Administrative Services. The total allocation to my portfolio this financial year from the Consolidated Revenue and Trust Funds is \$67.7m, compared with \$56.7m in 1985-86, or an increase of 19.4 per cent.

As honourable members are aware, my department provides a wide range of services to promote and support family life and the well-being of the community generally, with particular emphasis on children and youth, to facilitate the settlement of migrants, to assist disabled persons to participate fully in community life and to promote recreation and leisure programs.

These are, of course, highly sensitive and complex areas, and since being appointed to Cabinet I have spent a considerable amount of my time in getting out and meeting people, particularly my own officers, the staff and management of welfare organisations and the thousands of volunteers who are providing magnificent support services in the community. I believed it was my responsibility to learn, at first hand, the problems being faced in the community and to play my part in strengthening the partnership between my department and the non-Government sector, a partnership which the Government values immensely.

I also wished to hear and see for myself the difficulties confronting my staff and, in this respect, I might add that, wherever I have visited, I have been impressed with what I have seen. The officers of the department are working in many very difficult areas, often with people in conflict with their families or the law, and therefore cannot hope to please everybody all of the time. They are only human, and difficult decisions have to be made one way or another. Whilst at times it may appear that mistakes have been made or the wrong advice has been given, no-one can challenge their professional approach to their tasks nor their dedication to assist those in need in the community. I take this opportunity to publicly thank them all for their contributions.

All honourable members would agree, I am sure, that the well-being of families and individuals, the care of children and the development of youth are of vital importance to the future of this State. They concern the very fabric of our way of life. Whilst my department and the Government are committed absolutely to the strengthening of family life and development of community well-being, it is recognised that direct intervention into the lives of families because of unforeseen problems is necessary at times. The latter action is always considered very carefully; but, unfortunately, it is becoming necessary far more often than the Government would like.

This is a product of modern society in which values, and consequently social trends, have changed dramatically. I will touch on aspects of these later, but, coupled with the national downturn in the economy, they have presented my department and me, as a relatively new Minister, with a great challenge—a challenge that simply cannot go on being met alone by increased resources provided by Governments.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber.

Mrs CHAPMAN: Today in Australia there is a great need for a lot of re-thinking.

The chickens have come home to roost in Canberra, and it is absolutely amazing to see the arrogant Labor Party "big spenders" change their tune and pirate the policy of the National Party, which always balances its Budgets.

The welfare state mentality has got Australians by the throat, and things have got to change. It will be too late after the final squeeze. The answer lies in two words—responsibility and accountability. People must be made more responsible and accountable for their actions. Then this country will get back to a sane and sensible welfare scene where self-help is important and where those genuinely in need and those struck by misfortune can be helped to overcome their problems.

I am pleased to say that there is a growing realisation of this necessity and an appreciation that community welfare programs such as those administered by my department are neither the sole responsibility of government nor that of the voluntary sector. Just as the tax-payer cannot go on picking up the tab indefinitely, government is not likely to have sufficient resources in the future to provide the services required to resolve every problem for every individual in every community. A more comprehensive range of programs must be provided through mutual support; in other words, through the partnership that I mentioned earlier, as well as through local neighbourhood support networks.

It is up to government in this situation to give the lead, and I am happy to say that this year my department has grasped the nettle and at present is undergoing a major review—possibly the largest and most comprehensive ever undertaken in recent times in the Queensland Public Service.

To date, the progress has been most encouraging, and I am pleased to inform the Committee that several major decisions have already been made. These include the consolidation of my Department of Welfare Services with its major subdepartment, the Department of Children's Services, into one department under the statutory control of my permanent head. The consolidation will include also the Department of Youth and Ethnic Affairs, the Disabled Persons Service, the Queensland Recreation Council and all other sections under Chief Office control.

That step will maximise effectiveness and efficiency in the use of resources, eliminate any duplication of services and administrative processes and enable the combined resources of the departments to be directed towards our top priorities, such as child protection.

A new name for the consolidated department will be incorporated in legislation to be introduced in the first session of Parliament after the approaching election. That legislation will not only establish the department but also cover important aspects of its activities, such as its relationships with the non-Government sector and some other sections of the draft family and community development legislation that was introduced into Parliament previously. Steps are being taken to obtain sufficient accommodation to house the new total department.

The review encompasses future strategic direction, the delivery of services, the functioning of institutions and corporate issues. The major elements will be completed by 31 December, after which I expect to be in a position to announce the new structure and other changes that not only will make better use of the welfare dollar, but also will improve effectiveness and efficiency of the department. The current and future needs of Queenslanders are uppermost in our minds, and emphasis will, of course, be given to the Government's very strong belief that the family is the best environment in which to bring up children.

Chief Office, Department of Welfare Services

As a prelude to this, an allocation has been made again in my department's Estimates for this financial year for the promotion of Queensland's Year for Parents following on

Queensland's highly successful Year of the Family in 1984 and International Youth Year in 1985. The year is being observed on a State-wide basis and a very comprehensive program is being co-ordinated by a State planning committee, under the chairmanship of Senator Lady Florence Bjelke-Petersen, and my department. The activities are an example of the partnership I have mentioned already, in which communities and government are working hand-in-hand successfully to highlight the needs and responsibilities of parents, with the theme "Parents are special people". Some really spectacular promotions will take place during the coming months.

In spite of the destructive and cynical comments often made by honourable members opposite, the impact of the year has been quite significant and it will not be lost. Initiatives are in hand which will ensure ongoing benefits for all Queensland parents and their families, and not only those who come under the formal notice of my department. Apart from the seeding grants made available under the Year for Parents, my department's Chief Office allocation includes direct financial support towards the provision of numerous community services through grants and endowments. The disbursement of this expenditure is listed in the Estimates.

The Queensland Government's concessional rail travel scheme, which provides two free return rail journeys per year to eligible pensioners and their dependants, continues to be administered by the Relief Assistance Branch of my department, and during 1985-86 no fewer than 57 804 people took advantage of it.

The department's library is offering the best service in its field in Queensland and this is reflected in its record usage and loans last year. It provides an established, economical, and widely used range of services and, apart from the departmental use, is available to community organisations, consultants, and staff and students of academic institutions in the areas of welfare and recreation.

Queensland Recreation Council

I now turn to the recreation and leisure pursuits of Queenslanders. These are being catered for in a practical way by the Queensland Recreation Council, which is another very positive aspect of a diverse portfolio. This council is firm in its belief that enjoyment and social involvement are the corner-stones of recreation activities, and it has developed Australia's most fully integrated, decentralised State Government recreation service, operating through 24 branches.

The budget for the Queensland Recreation Council is approximately \$3m, representing a 10.4 percent increase on 1985-86 expenditure. This increase will enable the Government's regionalisation plan, announced at the last election, to be completed.

This financial year will be the first full year of operation of the Lake Perseverance Recreation Lodge, the opening of which brought the number of camps operated by my council to 13. It is anticipated that income from the lodge, which accommodates 130 persons, will substantially contribute to ensuring the financial viability of the regional policy initiatives.

Further planning for redevelopment and expansion of the council's recreation and camping facilities, based on market research and user requirements, will take place during the 1986-87 financial year. These facilities operated by the council are the largest chain of Government facilities of their type in Australia, and their marketing potential was reflected in last financial year's results. Their usage, totalling 238 048 camper nights during that period, represented a 7.9 per cent increase on the 1984-85 usage—a highly satisfactory result, considering the general economic conditions.

Another milestone for the council in the foreseeable future will be the bringing into reality of the Queensland portion of the national trail from Cooktown to Melbourne—arguably the world's longest recreation trail. Apart from its pure recreational benefits, this project will improve the accessibility of many of the State's scenic and heritage features for Queenslanders and visitors. Ongoing community involvement in the trail will be possible through a planned network of committees vested with the general responsibility for local aspects of development, maintenance and supervision.

One automatically thinks of the young when discussing recreation, but, as the theme for next month's Senior Citizens' Week tells us, "Age Is No Barrier". Significantly, the Queensland Recreation Council has been promoting its own slogan for older adult recreation, which is, "Age is no barrier—you can do it."

Mr Davis: We'll be right.

Mrs CHAPMAN: That includes the member for Brisbane Central.

To this end, strategies based on State-wide community consultations with older adults during the past year will soon be presented to private and community-based recreation agencies so that they might be encouraged to modify their programs in the interests of our increasingly ageing population.

The research and planning division of the council now undertakes a range of recreation needs surveys and feasibility studies for local authorities and community organisations contemplating facility development. Its expanding computerised data base of recreation information about Queensland contributes significantly to rational recreation-planning with obvious economic as well as community benefits.

Department of Youth

As I indicated earlier, the well-being and encouragement of our youth is vital to the State's future, and our Government fulfilled its promise during the 1983 election campaign to establish a Department of Youth. That initiative came into being in 1984, and we have continued to demonstrate our commitment to the young people of this State through greater resources and a variety of programs designed to assist its youth and the organisations that serve them.

The total budget for the Department of Youth this financial year is approximately \$3.2m, a rise of 24.4 per cent over last year's allocation and a 63.9 per cent increase in two years. These additional resources have made it possible to take several positive steps to provide ongoing meaningful assistance to youth in pursuance of their ambitions, goals and expectations as well as to tackle their problems.

The department undertakes an important liaison role with non-Government youth organisations that provide a variety of needed services and resources for young people and, in respect of matters affecting youth, other departments.

During 1985, the International Youth Year, the department provided a secretariat to service the various IYY committees and the non-Government youth sector. The year was a resounding success in Queensland. IYY initiatives in regional areas were co-ordinated by 58 local committees. In addition, more than 60 youth projects were funded for the year, including arts and theatre presentations, surveys of youth needs, youth drop-in centres, seminars and conferences. As another feature of IYY, Queensland's first State-wide youth conference in Caloundra contributed greatly to the drafting of a new youth policy that has now been approved by Cabinet as departmental policy. It should prove to be invaluable in the years ahead, and arrangements are being made for its release once the major departmental project has progressed.

In spite of what some people might have us believe, the Government's spending in all areas in the interests of youth compares more than favourably with that of the other States, and the Department of Youth administers more programs of assistance to young people than any other State youth bureau in Australia.

A very important initiative amongst those programs is the Youth Employment Support Scheme, the expansion of which is yet another of our Government's successful policy commitments. The scheme, which is one of several prongs of the Government's attack on youth unemployment, provides a personalised service to disadvantaged young people who cannot find employment, by preparing them for a job, helping them to find one and then aiding them to retain a position in the labour-force. Its effectiveness is illustrated by the fact that of the 2 426 YESS clients in 1985-86, 969 were placed in full-time jobs and 336 were found part-time, casual positions. In other words, almost 55 per

cent of the clients were found work, which would make the scheme among the most successful of its type in Australia.

In keeping with its promise at the last State election, the Government opened new YESS centres in Beenleigh, Cairns, Mackay, Maryborough, and Roma in 1985-86, complementing existing centres at Salisbury and Zillmere in Brisbane. Four more centres will be in operation in the very near future, in Townsville, Toowoomba, Maroochydore and Mermaid Beach, and funds have been provided this financial year for another three. Those centres will be in Brisbane, Rockhampton and the far north west.

Last year, the YESS grants program was renamed the youth and community grants program with new guide-lines being developed to widen support to community organisations that provide practical assistance to youth in a range of areas. No fewer than 51 community bodies received grants under that program and the allocations to my department for this year will allow additional funds to be made available for that purpose.

In 1986-87, the Department of Youth has received \$1,555,800 for distribution to youth organisations. Under the long-standing Youth Assistance Scheme, subsidies and grants totalling \$897,800 will be available towards the capital costs incurred by organisations in providing youth and community recreation facilities as well as towards the costs involved in sending representatives to, or in hosting, youth conferences.

That particular scheme has made a major contribution towards the needs of youth and those working in their interests over the years and communities in all corners of the State have benefited.

A further program that is playing a vital role in strengthening youth organisations and assisting them to upgrade their services to youth is the Sports and Youth Fund Subsidy Scheme, which provides subsidy towards administrative and training costs. A total of \$444,000 will be paid in the current financial year to at least 30 organisations that have qualified for that assistance.

The department is playing a vital role in the training of youth-leaders and, apart from conducting three youth-leadership training schools itself annually, it provides grants to community bodies to train youth-leaders or potential youth-leaders. The distribution this year under that grants scheme will amount to \$214,000.

There have been some major developments in the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, including the formation of the Queensland foundation of the award, through which it is hoped to obtain substantial financial support from the business community and the public generally. This initiative will make it possible to promote the benefits of the program more effectively and widely. At the present time the scheme, which offers a personal incentive and challenge to young people to take part in balanced programs of adventurous, cultural and practical activities, has approximately 4 000 participants supported by approximately 10 000 voluntary helpers.

Disabled Persons Service

Since the establishment of the Disabled Persons Service in 1982, my department has continued in its State-wide commitment to people with a disability, their families and disability organisations. Officers of the service conduct consultations with communities throughout the State, including those in isolated areas. That ensures proper planning and delivery of service.

As most honourable members would be aware, it is imperative that the disabled person has every opportunity to live independently and that family members have respite from constant caring. In recognition of that need, the department appointed a senior resource officer to specialise in respite care. This officer assists in making families aware of respite care services available in the community, in educating families to use respite care as a preventive rather than an emergency measure, and in working with groups endeavouring to initiate a respite care facility in their locality.

Officers of the Disabled Persons Service also recognise the necessity to ensure that all people with disabilities and their families have access to programs and to information

on the wide variety of available services. The information needs of the disabled community is given a very high priority. This service is equally available to all disabled persons in Queensland, as well as to their families and others inquiring on their behalf, by the use of the service's 008 line.

An increased emphasis has been placed on the production of helpful publications, community education programs, media presentations and the service's weekly radio program on 4RPH. The Disabled Persons Service's consumer resource centre assists non-Government disability organisations maintain a flow of information and news to their members. It is a valuable program. Approximately 60 organisations currently enjoy, and are highly appreciative of, the provision of free printing and postage of newsletters and other materials.

Blind and visually impaired people receive, and will continue to receive, support through the Disabled Persons Service. A report on a survey of needs and services for blind and visually impaired people was released last December. Issues such as library services, public transport and mobility raised in the report are being carefully considered. Forums held in Bundaberg and Townsville provided sight-disabled people with an opportunity to draw departmental officers' attention to their needs.

During the last financial year, sales of goods produced at the Queensland Blind Industrial Centre showed a 10.6 per cent increase over record sales established in the previous year. Staff of the centre have played an important role in the assessment of the needs of sight-disabled people and in the provision of assistance to enhance their daily living. Sections of the centre's premises now form part of the Yeronga College of TAFE campus, and sight-disabled students who have undergone woodwork training at the centre have the opportunity to obtain work-experience placements and, sometimes, employment. An invaluable talking-book library offers over 3 000 titles to sight-disabled people.

I believe that the Disabled Persons Service is an effective liaison and co-ordination agent amongst people with a disability, Government departments and community organisations in all parts of the State and steps will be taken to improve this even further in the foreseeable future.

Department of Ethnic Affairs

The next important section of my portfolio with which I would like to deal is ethnic affairs. Honourable members would be aware, of course, that Queensland's society is multicultural, with 14.4 per cent of the population having been born overseas.

The Government recognises the need for people of different cultures to participate fully in our way of life and to receive assistance to retain their cultural identity. The Department of Ethnic Affairs supports the Government's commitment to meeting the needs of all residents, regardless of language or cultural differences. Its central objectives are, firstly, to assist in satisfying the requirements of immigrant families and, secondly, to encourage and facilitate a deeper understanding and awareness of the many cultures that make up our Queensland society.

The department acts also as a resource centre for many ethnic groups, and its headquarters at Yungaba is a meeting place for cultural and other groups. Accommodation and support facilities are provided there also for the ethnic communities' council of Queensland and the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters. Key initiatives by the department in its attempts to achieve its overall objectives have been the appointment of a research and information officer, a community welfare consultant, and the diversification of services.

The department has an important part to play in translations and its special Translating and Interpreting Services Unit carried out a record number of translations last year—a total of 3 917, which was a 20 percent increase on the previous year. These were in 13 languages, whilst a panel of contract translators continued to assist in more than 50 other languages. A major review of the Translating and Interpreting Unit has been carried out in the areas of public health and the courts.

I am pleased to report in relation to the State Government's translation services that all respondents in the review were highly satisfied. Unfortunately, this was not so with the interpreting services provided by the Commonwealth Government. Many health care professionals and court officials were either unaware of the existence of the Commonwealth services or were unable to obtain an interpreter when required.

Mr Davis interjected.

Mrs CHAPMAN: I point out to the honourable member for Brisbane Central that the Queensland Government is just helping the Commonwealth Government to clean up its back yard.

On top of this, the Commonwealth Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs (Mr Hurford) has advised that he is not prepared to commit the Commonwealth to any new or renewed cost-sharing arrangements for State language services beyond 30 June next year.

Mr Yewdale: Things are tough.

Mrs CHAPMAN: Yes, but the Commonwealth Government should not let people down. Therefore, the State Government will be forced to consider picking up the tab for the Commonwealth, as has happened in other areas in recent years.

To help new settlers understand the law, assistance was provided to the Police Department for the publication of a booklet *You, the Law and Society*, which recognises the difficulties experienced by some of Queensland's migrant population in understanding the operation of the law in their new country. It also ensures that all Queenslanders receive appropriate legal information in a culturally relevant form. Translations are available in eight community languages: German, Chinese, Greek, Polish, Vietnamese, Italian, Spanish, and Croatian.

Apart from receiving the personal advice and support of my officers, new-comers to Queensland from overseas are provided with friendship and advice on local community facilities through the Queensland Migrant Welcome Association, which is housed and co-ordinated by the department. Last year, 1 910 migrant families received initial and follow-up assistance from the association through its network of 90 volunteers in the metropolitan area, and a further 134 in provincial and country regions. Almost half of those families moved into country areas.

Assistance to ethnic communities to become established and to develop programs aimed at self-sufficiency is provided through the Community Welfare Consultancy Service. The Queensland Government is anxious that policies relating to migrant families in this State be developed in close consultation with members of ethnic communities. To that end, the department places great emphasis on research into migrants' needs. In the research, particular emphasis is being given to the generation of data bases, information papers and the documentation of the history of immigration to Queensland. In that regard, work has begun on the preparation of data bases relating to women and immigration arrivals.

A departmental reference library offers collections on community and ethnic affairs, migration and multiculturalism, along with periodicals and newspapers in community languages. That facility is in constant and increasing demand by members of ethnic communities and researchers. It is a much-valued addition to the department.

Brisbane's ethnic radio station, 4EB, is being relocated on an area of land at Yungaba and I express my appreciation to my colleague the Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing (Mr Hinze) for facilitating that significant move.

In its brief history, the Department of Ethnic Affairs has improved services to new settlers quite appreciably. Aided by research and very close links established with the various ethnic communities throughout the State, I am positive that the department will be able to make an even greater contribution to the needs of migrants in the years

ahead. Community education programs aimed at creating greater understanding between people of different cultures will be continued.

Department of Children's Services

The largest area of my portfolio is the Department of Children's Services, which delivers a vast variety of services and programs, including—

- services for the protection of children;
- alternative care services for children whilst families are unable to provide appropriate care;
- corrective services for juvenile offenders; and
- services to secure family placements for children available for adoption.

The department, which is regionalised to ensure that services are provided as closely as possible to the point of delivery, operates through 37 area offices throughout Queensland and a number of residential care facilities. Our Government is committed to continuing the process of regionalisation and, during 1986-87, two new area offices will be opened, one at Warwick and one at Charleville.

The department also administers grants and subsidies to non-Government organisations and local authorities towards the costs of their locally based and much-needed services.

The department's budget allocation from consolidated revenue in 1986-87 is \$54.3m, an increase of 23 per cent on the previous year's allocation. After allowing for increased expenditure relating to the department's administration of Commonwealth funds, that represents a rise of 15.6 per cent in State funds over last year's figure. As honourable members would appreciate, that is well above the general CPI escalation figure.

Child protection

That significant increase in difficult economic times gives recognition, of course, to the sad and distressing fact that extensive child abuse and neglect are a reality in the community today. During 1985-86, the number of notifications received by the department increased markedly, involving 9 378 children compared with 5 784 in 1984-85—a 62.1 per cent upsurge. It must be realised by all that the protection of children requires a co-ordinated effort by families, the community and the Government. The Government is responding to the challenge through the department in a number of ways, including the allocation of additional staff to investigate child protection notifications and to participate in additional SCAN teams. During 1985-86, the staffing establishment of the department was increased by 40 positions and I expect that the field staff will be strengthened even further in the foreseeable future as a result of the departmental review that I mentioned earlier.

As a further positive approach to the problem, in Brisbane, only last week, I opened Australia's first centre for prevention of child abuse, which will encourage the development of programs and initiatives aimed at reducing the incidence of child abuse. The centre has been provided with a budget of \$150,000, \$50,000 of which has been earmarked to assist locally based community groups to conduct their own programs. The remainder will be expended on the centre's own programs, including promotional campaigns. None of the allocation will be spent on salaries or administrative costs, as alleged by some of the knockers opposite.

Payments to foster parents have been increased by 17.8 per cent this year. In addition, payments to licensed residential care and related support services have increased from \$3.9m in 1985-86 to \$4.7m in 1986-87—an increase of 18.8 per cent this year and 47.5 per cent in two years. That is further evidence of the Government's commitment to strengthening the partnership with the non-Government sector.

Juvenile corrective services

There is, and unfortunately will be, a need for secure detention centres, and in this respect the department operates three remand and holding centres, the Sir Leslie Wilson

Youth Centre, the Westbrook Training Centre and the Cleveland Youth Centre, Townsville. Teachers are now employed at each of these facilities and provide activities in a varied, challenging and motivating manner. The Outlook, at Boonah, provides a special program aimed at diverting youth who are offending away from custodial care.

The new John Oxley Youth Centre at Wacol, which will be opened later this year, represents a major new initiative in the provision of secure custodial care and programs for young offenders. Its design and programs will maximise opportunities for resident young people and encourage youth through a variety of processes and activities to participate in new experiences designed to have them constructively re-think their previous offending ways. This centre will draw children from the Sir Leslie Wilson Youth Centre, where the very nature of the structure of the older buildings has caused some accommodation problems in the past.

A Community-based Adolescent Support Scheme completed its pilot phase on the Gold Coast during 1985-86. An evaluation showed the scheme to be efficient and effective in its objectives to provide community placements for offending adolescents as an alternative to secure custody. In view of this, the program is to be extended to the far-north district of the State in the current year.

Alternative care

I would like to pay tribute to more than 1 050 foster families who provide care to approximately 1 700 children in their homes. In 1986-87, in response to a suggestion from the Foster Parents Association of Queensland, a new scale of payments will be introduced, which provides additional recognition of the costs associated with the foster care of adolescent children.

I have already referred to the significant increase in funding that has been provided for licensed institutions in 1986-87. Such additional funding and the new basis which was introduced earlier this year will allow denominational and other bodies concerned to better respond to the need to provide a wider range of residential care and related support services to children with special needs. I want to place on record my appreciation of the work of the governing authorities and residential-care workers who provide this care.

Adoption

With the decline in the number of babies who have become available for adoption in recent years, increased emphasis has been placed by the department on the adoption of children with special needs and available children from foreign countries. Special needs children are placed through the Be My Parent program, which is administered by the adoptions registry and matching branch, and through the special needs unit.

Funds have been provided for the implementation of the Adoption of Children Act amendments, which will enable the establishment of separate adoption lists for persons wishing to adopt different categories of children and the adoption contact register. In addition, because of the backlog of outstanding adoption assessments that have accumulated in the department, an amount has been provided for the completion of an additional 100 assessment reports by departmental agents.

Family and individual support services

During 1985-86 expenditure on emergency relief from area offices and approved police stations increased by \$290,500 over the previous year's expenditure—an increase of 104 per cent. This supplements the expenditure on grants to non-Government organisations for the provision of emergency relief, which in 1986-87 will amount to \$344,700.

Surveys have shown that up to 90 per cent of emergency relief recipients are Commonwealth pensioners or beneficiaries. It is therefore disappointing to see that, in the 1986-87 Federal Budget, the Commonwealth has indicated that it proposes to reduce its overall real level of expenditure on payments to community organisations for emergency relief by approximately 15 per cent.

Crisis Care continues to provide a 24-hour counselling service for persons in crisis situations. Through its 008 telephone number, the service is readily available throughout the State.

The department's home-maker program continues to provide families at risk with emotional support and help in developing skills in home management and child care. Funds have been provided to extend this service to an additional area office in 1986-87.

The Government has again entered into co-operative arrangements with the Commonwealth for the joint establishment of additional child-care centres in 1986-87 and 1987-88. In addition to providing significant funding, the State accepts responsibility for the identification of and acquisition of suitable land and the design and tendering of the facilities. These aspects are co-operatively managed by the Department of Children's Services and the Department of Works. During 1986-87 a further nine centres will be established, and State funds of \$1.65m will be involved under the arrangements.

The department continues to approve senior staff employed in child-care centres and to license family day-care schemes in terms of the relevant regulations.

Community grants and subsidies

Consistent with Government policy to encourage the delivery of non-statutory welfare services by community organisations and local authorities, there has been a marked expansion in recent years in grants and subsidies administered by the department.

In 1985-86, excluding licensed institutions, grants and subsidies totalled \$9.2m—an increase of 47 per cent over the previous year. In 1986-87 funds of \$14,129,000 have been allocated for this purpose—an increase of 53 per cent over the previous year's expenditure. These funds are distributed under a variety of State, Commonwealth and joint programs.

Of the total amount, State funds will be increased by 29.7 per cent over the last year's figure. This amount will be increased further should the department administer the proposed family support program, which will provide assistance to families to develop their coping skills and thus their competence to provide an adequate child-rearing environment. The Government has agreed in principle to cost-share this program with the Commonwealth on the basis that Queensland organisations receive approximately a per capita share of total Commonwealth funds for family support services.

In terms of the latest Commonwealth offer, this State would receive only approximately 11 per cent of total Commonwealth expenditure—thus denying Queensland families \$386,000 less than the State's fair share of total Commonwealth funds. That is to be deplored, and I will do all in my power to rectify the imbalance.

The Commonwealth response to the Queensland Government's condition is to unfairly discriminate against Queensland by allocating to Victoria, South Australia and other States Commonwealth funds that rightfully belong to the people of Queensland.

The Queensland Government is concerned about the needs of the homeless, young and old. Under an agreement with the Commonwealth, the Queensland Government is committed to funding the matching proportion of Commonwealth expenditure under the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP)—which has absorbed the former Commonwealth Homeless Persons Assistance Program—by the end of 1988-89. State funding under that program increased by 33 per cent in 1985-86 and a further 30.1 per cent in 1986-87.

The department also administers a scheme under which a subsidy is paid on the salaries of social workers employed by approved agencies. The funds allocated in 1986-87 represent a 15 per cent increase over comparable expenditure in the previous year.

A significant increase in funds has also been provided under the Family Welfare Community Development Worker Program, which assists organisations and local authorities to employ workers to initiate and develop community-based services for isolated and disadvantaged families. The program has fostered self-help initiatives and

supportive networks among families in their communities. The 1986-87 allocation represents an 118.5 per cent increase over the previous year's expenditure.

Grants are also provided to family day-care schemes and others for the provision of emergency 24-hour care for children at risk who are not under the statutory care of the department. This involves the payment of subsidies for care-providers and grants for the employment of supervisory staff to recruit, train and support the care-providers. The allocation in this area in 1986-87 represents an increase of 33.3 percent over 1985-86 expenditure. I would like to place on record my sincere appreciation to the various family day-care schemes who provide this much-needed service.

The Government is very concerned about the provision of services to this vulnerable category of children. Honourable members opposite may not be aware that their Federal counterparts have decided to enforce priority guide-lines which have the effect of denying children at risk access to Commonwealth-funded child-care services. This is becoming an issue of major concern. Only in the last fortnight, a public meeting, which was called in Townsville in response to community concern about this Commonwealth insensitivity, passed a resolution calling on the Commonwealth Minister for Community Services to ensure that children at risk are not denied access to these services.

The department also administers a number of other State-funded grants programs, including the Volunteers Training Program, the Emergency Relief Program, the family Emergency Accommodation Program and the Consumer Credit Counselling Scheme, the allocations for which have either been substantially increased or maintained in real terms in 1986-87.

The department also administers the Vacation Care Program, under which the Commonwealth provides Queensland with 15.6 percent of total Commonwealth expenditure, although this State has 17 per cent of Australian children aged 5 to 12 years. This is another case of the Commonwealth's treating Queensland unfairly and denying children in this State access to vital services.

All grants are subject to approved accountability procedures. On request, my department also assists funded organisations with selecting and training of staff, establishing management procedures and conducting self-evaluation projects.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Mr Row, I am sure that members of the Opposition will parade their same worn-out assertions that Queenslanders fare poorly in welfare expenditure in comparison with other States. It is appropriate for me to point out at this stage that all published interstate comparisons contain difficulties. These are caused by the varying components of the respective welfare systems in each State. Even the comparisons produced by the Grants Commission were limited in certain categories and did not recognise aspects of welfare spending in Queensland and in some of the other States.

This problem of comparisons is further highlighted by the fact that the most recent publication of the Australian Bureau of Statistics, *State and Local Government Finance, Australia 1984-85*, indicates clearly that Queensland spends twice as much per capita as either New South Wales or Victoria.

Finally, I would like to pay tribute to all those people in all walks of life who support my department and, through their own activities, complement our services. As I said earlier, no Government can be expected to do the whole job on its own and our Government gives the highest possible priority to the encouragement of the non-Government sector.

I pay a special tribute to the denominational and other organisations across the wide spectrum of the community who conduct facilities for disadvantaged children and youth, as well as what is often termed structured youth. These are vital to the development of Queensland's younger generations, who, as all honourable members know, are the State's future.

My ministerial responsibilities have given me the privilege to meet many of our younger folk in many aspects of their lives. I can assure honourable members that, from what I have seen, our future is in very good hands indeed. However, it is important to maintain, expand and improve the range of services and facilities that are available to young people, and this will be achieved through the Government's partnership with the voluntary sector.

I thank the members of my ministerial advisory committees for the time that they devote to their duties and for their contributions towards policy-making within the department.

I place on record also my thanks to my ministerial colleagues and their officers, without whose assistance my department could not achieve all of the things that I have mentioned, and more.

I owe a great deal of gratitude to my personal staff, my Under Secretary, Mr Alan Pettigrew, and other officers of my department for the support and assistance they have given me since I took office.

As I have indicated earlier, my department's budget is one of which the Queensland Government can feel justly proud, and I am delighted to have had the opportunity to introduce the Estimates for it. I look forward to the contributions from honourable members.

Sitting suspended from 12.57 to 2.15 p.m.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr Booth): Order! I desire to inform honourable members that on the Vote proposed I will allow a full discussion on all of the Minister's departmental Estimates (Consolidated Revenue, and Trust and Special Funds). For the information of honourable members, I point out that the administrative acts of the department are open to debate, but the necessity for legislation and matters involving legislation cannot be discussed in Committee of Supply.

Mr D'ARCY (Woodridge) (2.15 p.m.): It is fortunate indeed that the Estimates of the Department of Welfare Services are one of the three ministerial Estimates being debated in 1986, as no other department in Queensland has more to answer for to the Queensland Parliament and the public than the Department of Welfare Services. Its gross failure to bring down suitable legislation to utilise its resources and the resources of the Federal Government for the benefit of the people of Queensland is nothing short of scandalous.

One cannot entirely blame the Minister for the great number of inadequacies that are showing up in the welfare system in Queensland. After all, in the last decade there have been many Ministers who failed to come to terms with the problems facing welfare recipients in Queensland.

I was disappointed to hear the Minister again blame the Federal Government and quote the two areas of responsibility and accountability. When one looks at the political patronage that arises in the expenditure of money on areas of interest to the State Government, one realises that the Government lacks accountability. The people of Queensland are desperate for accountability, both within this Parliament and within the Government. The establishment of a public accounts committee has continually eluded the Queensland Parliament. Queensland is probably the only State that does not have a public accounts committee; it has become a true banana republic.

A recent book edited by A. Patience and titled *The Bjelke-Petersen Premiership 1968-1983 Issues in Public Policy* contains a whole section on welfare that highlights the fact that up to 1983, the last three Liberal Ministers in this portfolio had high public profiles but produced only moderate changes. According to that book, they were hampered by the limitations of bureaucracy itself. It was also stated that that was highlighted by the fact that the Welfare Services portfolio is yet to produce a final Bill on new family welfare legislation, and that that underlines a real malaise in the Queensland Government.

The history of family, community and welfare services legislation is interesting. In 1974 a community services White Paper was produced by Graham Doulton of the Corrective Services Department. That paper was the background to what was probably to become the Bill that never was.

When Geoff Muntz was the Minister, he presented a Bill to Parliament in 1985. Its shortcomings were obvious, even to the community itself and to the Parliament. The legal profession reacted rather bitterly and strongly to that Bill, which never became law. I understand that, at this late stage, the Bill is now being broken up by the department, and that legislation is still forthcoming. If that is what the Minister alluded to in her second-reading speech, she alluded to it in such an offhand manner that one could again believe that the Minister and her department still do not know what they are about. It is obvious that piecemeal legislation will be introduced with no long-term effects. It is an indictment on the Government that Queensland still has no major welfare legislation upon which to base any real policies. It will still be a hit-and-miss situation. Who are the bumblerers? Do they exist within the bureaucracy, or within the Minister's own staff?

As I said, the community services White Paper came down in 1984. It made certain suggestions. The then Minister (Mr Muntz) made great play of the fact that there would be a large increase in the number of officers in the Children's Services Department, which is the largest department within the Minister's portfolio. However, it became obvious that the department did not know how to obtain the 40 additional officers that Mr Muntz promised. They could not be trained properly, nor could they bring the situation under control. At present those 40 officers are largely a myth within the department. The report stipulated that almost 100 officers would be appointed to meet the real need and to combat the problems within the department.

The new Minister's attitude became obvious when she was in the job for five minutes and announced another inquiry, which she has been crowing about today. She says that she will bring forward some legislation. I listened carefully to the Minister, and it is obvious that that legislation is nothing but a bit of window-dressing of the old legislation. In other words, it will be a chip out of the old Bill that the previous Minister presented.

Today, the Minister has shown that the National Party is not prepared to face the welfare problems in Queensland. It is obvious that its decision will be made after the election. It is then, the Minister says, that she will implement those decisions. Well, she may not be in a position to, because it is fairly obvious that she will not have the job.

The inquiry into staffing arrangements within the department is supposed to receive a considerable input from the Public Service Board. Perhaps I know a little more than the Minister, but in my opinion the Public Service Board has a vested interest that is not the same as that of the Department of Welfare Services. One receives reports from various places, including the POA and other unions, but the Minister says she has received reports from the inquiry. As I understand it, it is a totally secretive inquiry; that the people on the committee have been sworn to secrecy. I would like the Minister to inform me whether that is true.

Mrs Chapman: Is it worrying you because you are not getting any leaks?

Mr D'ARCY: I do not want any leaks. Based on what is being said about the department by the media generally and from what goes on, the department is a failure and the Minister is a failure. She realises that Queensland is a State with no welfare policy. Queensland is the lowest-spending State. The Minister tried to justify the figures. It is said that there are lies, bloody lies and statistics. The Minister used statistics today. Towards the end of her speech, she replied to the allegation that Queensland spends the least of all States on welfare. Her statement was ineffectual. Every major publication of any quality in the country shows that, compared with other States, Queensland spends less money, is less efficient and is the most incompetent. That is the Queensland Government's performance in welfare. Other States are making one-off grants for specific

welfare items and putting other areas of responsibility under more important Ministers. In New South Wales, for example, the Premier has taken on that responsibility.

The Minister does not really know what she is about. If she is any good in the job, she has not shown it. She is being hoodwinked by the public servants, who have worked under four or five Ministers, who have no confidence at all and who should be thrown to the wolves.

The Minister spoke about a reorganisation within the department. That is one thing that it will need. The people of Queensland are desperate to see a reorganisation, because that is the only way in which Queensland would have an efficient department. The Minister certainly does not have a grasp of the department.

The child care officers in the department are operating under virtually impossible conditions. They are not only short-staffed, but also being let down by the top echelon. Morale is terribly low. The Minister says that she moves among her staff, but that is rubbish. She should talk to the staff individually and ask them what is going on. As everyone is aware, they are shocked by the task that they are facing in the community. The Minister should read what the Sturgess report says about her.

The Minister has a lack of consideration for office accommodation in the department in the city and the country. The Woodridge office is a damned disgrace. The Corinda office is a mess. The Minister knows that. The Gympie office has insufficient space even for confidentiality of interviews to be preserved.

The Government should be looking at more than legislation and more window-dressing. The Opposition is disappointed at its inaction. The people who are suffering most in Queensland are those who are in need of, and receive, welfare services. The average family-unit income in Queensland is lower than that in any other State in Australia. Families are suffering, because of either the bungling of the bureaucracy or the bungling of the Government. The Minister can put the blame where she likes, but the problems remain. The buck stops with the Minister. The problems being experienced reflect upon the Minister's administration of the portfolio.

The Minister for Welfare Services, Youth and Ethnic Affairs delights in being photographed by the press and television stations. The Minister pushes the image of the family as she sees it in Queensland, yet makes statements that have a totally destructive effect on the family unit. The Minister has no idea of what a real family is. Her idea of a family is parents who have a marriage certificate nailed to the wall, which bears no relationship to real life in the Queensland community. There exists in Queensland a social network that is not perceived by the Minister. A broadly based family unit exists which, for the children, provides real love and proper attention. To the children, it is not necessary that a marriage certificate be nailed to the wall for them to constitute a family unit.

Mr Comben: There would not be one decent marriage on the Government side of the Chamber, would there?

Mr D'ARCY: Probably not.

A tremendous waste of funds is involved in publications and other promotional activities within the Minister's departments. However, those expensive campaigns have resulted in contact with very few Queenslanders. Members of the public see plenty of photographs of the Minister, but that is about all. Launches such as for "Parents Are Special People", Kids Day at Work Week and Grandparents' Week, the publication of a special Mother's Day card and the construction of a float for Year for Parents have done little to alleviate the severe social problems that exist in Queensland.

I turn my attention now to the ministerial advisory committees that have been set up. One ought to ask the Premier to enter the Chamber and hear about some of the people who are members of the committees, because I do not think he would be very happy about them. For example, there is Alderman Chris Gibbs, who will obviously follow the example of his father, Mr Ivan Gibbs, and play a political role for the National

Party. The same committee, on youth affairs, has a member of the Liberal Party, Mr Santoro, who is the Liberal candidate for Merthyr in the forthcoming State election. One wonders how Mr Santoro found himself on the same committee as Mr Gibbs and several public servants. I cannot accept that the department could possibly derive any advantage from the appointments that have been made. It is a shame that the Government is not more in touch with the people who need welfare services.

I will outline policies that the Government should adopt in Queensland that would cement the provision of proper welfare services in this State. The Australian Labor Party recognises, which is more than can be said for the Government, that there exists in Queensland an unprecedented crisis. Socio-economic conditions are such that Queensland has the highest rate of youth unemployment and the lowest level of wages of any State in Australia, which tend to exacerbate problems associated with providing welfare. Currently, Queensland spends only 72 per cent of the national average on welfare.

A Labor Government would integrate all welfare services. I gather from the remarks made by the Minister when presenting the Estimates that her idea of integration is to change the name of the departments, which will result in nothing. A Labor Government would integrate the welfare services supplied by the Federal, State and local authority levels of Government in Queensland, as well as those provided by voluntary organisations. At present, Queensland is controlled by a Government that desperately wants to blow its own trumpet and is not interested in a welfare policy at all. Unless there is some advantage involved in a photograph of the Minister being published or an article that shows the Government in a favourable light, the Government does not want to know about welfare.

As an alternative, a Labor Government would consider integrating non-Government agencies as well as other services to operate within the system at a grassroots level. At the moment, too many different services are operating, and none of the benefits filter down to the people who are in dire need. On paper, the services are being provided and all of the formal arrangements exist for them, but the benefits are not filtering down to the people in the community.

It is essential that welfare recipients maintain a useful role in the community. The Queensland Government, however, prefers a policy of forcing them into easily organised institutions. That is one of the reasons why the State Government, through the various departments under the Minister's control, favours placing people in institutions rather than accepting financial assistance from the Federal Government. If it were to co-operate with the Federal Government, people at the lower end of the socio-economic scale would be able to lead useful lives in the community. Recent findings have shown that the aged, the mentally and physically handicapped and delinquent youth stand a better chance of playing a useful role if they are able to remain in the community. A Labor Government would be committed to the prevention of welfare problems instead of trying to apply band-aid treatment in an attempt to deal with a crisis that has already occurred.

The Sturgess report has been compared to the work of a first-year psychology student. In spite of that, it points out that children who are not placed under the care of the State and who are not placed in institutions lead more fruitful lives; moreover, the cost to the Government is much less. The report stated that departmental institutionalisation cost \$1,000 a week and that licensed institutions cost \$112 a week, whereas fostered children cost the department only \$48 a week. The Proctor Program costs \$390 a week.

The immediate steps that should be taken are the setting up of a full ministry of welfare and community and the introduction of a one-stop welfare service by regional welfare officers to replace the present merry-go-round of services and visits to numerous agencies. That could be gone into in great depth in electorates such as mine, where people use those services. The con artists manage to use departmental services much better than do the people who really need them.

The Labor Party has also indicated that there should be a change in the policy regarding child care officers. It is ridiculous to have child care officers promoted out of

the department. I take it that that is one of the changes planned by the Minister. An increase of up to 100 in the number of child care officers, as proposed by the original White Paper, is necessary. As I have said, the Minister for Corrective Services, Administrative Services and Valuation (Mr Muntz) indicated that some 40 officers should have been employed, yet today they cannot even be found.

The Budget gave a measly increase to the fostering allowance. That should have been increased substantially. In his report Sturgess said that the remuneration of foster parents was insufficient. He also said that it was a carpet under which many of the community services were swept.

I was shocked by a reply given by the Minister for Welfare Services, Youth and Ethnic Affairs (Mrs Chapman) on 3 September, when in answer to a question by the former shadow Minister, the honourable member for South Brisbane (Mr Fouras), she stated quite openly that in the Sir Leslie Wilson Youth Centre children were given cigarettes by staff and that smoking was allowed. The Minister's actual words were—

“The department does not favour young people smoking, but it is faced with a very real and difficult management situation when young people who are well-established smokers are admitted with a craving for cigarettes.”

For some time psychiatrists have been complaining. I do not know whether the Minister has studied the health hazards of smoking. The Minister said in her reply that they were not smoking marijuana, even though it is supposedly not as addictive as tobacco.

Mrs Chapman: Tell the truth. You know full well what I said. I said that all the kids that are taken in there as smokers are taken off it gradually.

Mr D'ARCY: But they are given cigarettes in the centre.

Mrs Chapman: That's right. We don't stop it.

Mr D'ARCY: But they are being supplied with cigarettes.

Mrs Chapman: We take them off them gradually.

Mr D'ARCY: I would submit that the Minister is breaking the law of Queensland.

Mrs Chapman: I am not. Stop twisting the truth.

Mr D'ARCY: I am not. I want you and your departmental officers charged by the Attorney-General under the Juvenile Smoking Suppression Act of 1905, which is still on the statute-book of this State. I will read the penalties under this Act for supplying tobacco to persons under 16. The Act says—

“Every person who sells, gives, or supplies any cigar, cigarette, or tobacco in any form to any person under the age of sixteen years shall be liable to a penalty not exceeding ten pounds.”

That is a law of this State. It still exists. In 1905 the penalty was £10. Today the equivalent would be \$544.17. I am asking the Attorney-General to have you charged. Because the Department of Welfare Services has so little regard for the children of this State that it is handing out cigarettes to children in its care, you should be charged. You do not even understand the health hazards of cigarette-smoking.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr Booth): Order! The honourable member will address the Chair. There will be less cross-fire.

Mr D'ARCY: Thank you very much, Mr Booth. Obviously the Minister should be charged. The Act is on the books. Both today and previously in answer to a question she has admitted that she has broken the law, and that being the case, tomorrow morning, if I have the opportunity, I will ask the Attorney-General what he has done. I have made the allegation. The Minister for Welfare Services has crowed about it; she has admitted openly that cigarettes have been supplied to children. That reality is that she should be charged. Out in the community plenty of people are charged with offences

against all sorts of laws that are broken in this State. The offence to which I have referred is a very serious one. For admitting and crowing in this Chamber that she and her department supplied cigarettes to people within their care, the Minister should be charged under an Act that is currently on Queensland's statute-book, and the Opposition asks that she be charged. The Opposition wants such young people out of institutions. Young juveniles—young Queenslanders—are being supplied with cigarettes by the Minister and her Government, and for that she should be charged.

Mr LINGARD (Fassifern) (2.35 p.m.): As I have said many times in this Chamber, in 1985 the Queensland Government participated in International Youth Year. Not only did the Department of Welfare Services provide permanent personnel and finance for IYY, but also members of Parliament acted on the committees. I personally had the pleasure of being the deputy chairman. However, not one of the members of the ALP participated on those committees. That was not just a State Government organised activity; it was International Youth Year.

The official garden opening by the former Minister (Mr Muntz) was attended by 30 000 people. What about the ALP? I refer to an article in *The Courier-Mail* of 12 May this year, which gives an account of the launching by the ALP spokesman on youth matters of that party's YES scheme, which is that party's official youth scheme. The article states—

“The launching at Southport was attended by a disappointing turnout of 20 people.”

The member for Ipswich (Mr Hamill) would have delivered that speech. I have no doubt that, of those 20 people, 15 would not have even understood him. Therefore, only five people understand what the ALP is doing for youth.

Mr COMBEN: I rise to a point of order. The honourable member is obviously misleading the Chamber, because it is well known that the honourable member for Ipswich (Mr Hamill) travelled the length and breadth of this State talking to many hundreds, if not thousands, of people about YES.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! There is no point of order.

Mr LINGARD: The spokesman for the ALP, the member for Woodridge, stood and criticised the Government, and now he has walked out of the Chamber. On the week-end, he did not even attend the opening of the Youth and Family Centre for the Woodridge/Kingston area. That was an opening of a centre that is funded by the Department of Children's Services. Even though the honourable member represents that area and is the Labor Party's shadow spokesman on youth affairs, he did not attend.

I will tell the member for Woodridge and this Chamber what the Department of Youth is doing for this State and what that Youth and Family Centre is doing for the electorate of Woodridge. The Division of Youth Affairs was created in 1983 to co-ordinate existing youth programs, as was the ministerial advisory committee on youth affairs. In 1984 a Minister for Youth was appointed. Following the first State-wide youth conference, which was an initiative of IYY, a comprehensive youth policy has been adopted.

I refer to the Minister's presentation of her Estimates, which detailed the fact that this year the total Vote for the Department of Youth is approximately \$3.2m. That is an increase of 24.4 per cent over last year's allocation and a 63.9 per cent increase in two years. However, the ALP ridicules any thought of congratulating the former Minister (Mr Muntz) or the present Minister (Mrs Chapman). Of course, the group that should be sincerely congratulated is the department, which, as all honourable members have found, is efficient, well-organised and extremely approachable, especially when one considers the type of crisis management with which it is always involved.

There is no doubt that the department's Youth Employment Support Scheme has been a great success. As well as the centres already at Salisbury and Zillmere, new centres have been opened at Beenleigh, Cairns, Mackay, Maryborough and Roma. Townsville,

Bundaberg, Maroochydore and Mermaid Waters add to the program that will fulfil two areas. Firstly, it is assisting youth in preparation for finding and retaining employment and, secondly, it is assisting with the administration of the renamed Youth and Community Grants Program.

During the last 12 months I have had the pleasure of participating in some of these activities. The Youth Leadership Award Scheme at present finances three leadership training schools, one in each area of the State. I have attended the camps at Duckadang and have been impressed by the attitude of those who have been selected by local bodies to participate in the two-week program. Full credit must also be given to the support of the church groups and interested bodies, which give so much of their time.

Most Queenslanders are also aware of other aspects of the Youth and Community Grants Program. The Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme is open to all people between the ages of 14 and 24 years and is operated by registered operators comprising schools, colleges, youth organisations and industrial and commercial concerns. Seventeen area award committees provide a link throughout the State. In November 1985 a foundation was set up to become the fund-raising arm of the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme.

The department also administers the program for Outward Bound Australia, as well as the Youth Assistance Scheme, which allows payments of subsidies for capital costs incurred in providing facilities for youth and community recreation programs.

I have already mentioned the fact that the department supported IYY during 1985. As deputy chairman of IYY, I convey my sincere thanks and congratulations to all who assisted. The theme of the year was "A Year for Action". Great support was received from commercial enterprises, and youth and community organisations, as well as from individuals.

Mr Davis interjected.

Mr LINGARD: Fifty-eight local committees were set up—and there was not one in Brisbane Central—and the major activities included the official launch, IYY weekend, State youth conference, Warana and Christmas spectacles, and the Sun Newspapers and Suncorp youth awards.

More than 60 youth projects were set up and, most importantly, the special youth conference provided a report of what youth themselves believe is necessary. These thoughts are being followed up and will form part of the ongoing program for the Department of Youth.

In summary, IYY was a great year in this State. It was supported by the State Government, but rejected by the State ALP, even though IYY was promoted at a Federal level.

I must return to the Logan City Youth and Family Service and tell the member for Woodridge (Mr D'Arcy) what is happening there. It is a community-based organisation that aims to encourage local responses to the needs of its disadvantaged youth and families. Therefore, the committee of management conducts four main projects—

Mr Davis interjected.

Mr LINGARD: The socialist friends of the member for Brisbane Central are out at Kingston High School, and that is what is happening out there.

The first is a Youth Contact Program, which offers crisis counselling availability and an advocacy role for youth and families involved in the juvenile justice system of Children's Courts, police and custody. There is an after-hours solicitors' roster in Logan city, as well as an independent persons' roster for youth and families needing urgent legal advice and support.

Mr Davis interjected.

Mr LINGARD: They ought to take the member for Brisbane Central out there and give him an early breakfast.

The second part of the program is a Youth Accommodation Program, which offers services such as a family boarding program called Youthlink. That service offers young people who are unable to live at home a three to six-month placement with a local family, with the aim of being reconciled with their families. There are also a number of houses for students over 17 years of age. Funding in this area has been provided under the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program, which is joint State/Commonwealth funding.

The State Government provides regular payments under the Family Boarding Program.

Mr Davis interjected.

Mr LINGARD: The member for Brisbane Central would not get a spot in the Family Boarding Program. No family would take him.

In the area of youth employment and training, there are small workshops for unemployed youth, who can learn valuable work skills, earn income and meet others with similar difficulties. On 16 April we were successful in having the Department of Employment and Industrial Affairs, under the Minister (Mr Lester), approve a grant for \$30,500 to expand the workshop scheme.

The final part of the scheme is the Youth Education Program, which looks at assistance for youth over 15 years of age in areas such as literacy, numeracy, personal development, counselling and so on, as well as combating the problem of truancy in the area.

The centre about which I have spoken has great potential. Obviously, it is a difficult area to work in, and many of the decisions that are made will have to be value judgments. Because many people will be involved, much criticism will be aimed at the decisions that are made and the actions that are taken.

There is no doubt in my mind that the service is needed in the Logan area and deserves the support that it is receiving from both the State and Federal Governments. I trust that it will maintain a high standard and therefore receive wide support within the community. I hope that I have made the member for Woodridge aware of it.

Within the electorate of Fassifern is Boys Town, which is situated outside Beaudesert and is run by the De la Salle brothers. The director of Boys Town is Brother Paul, who was nominated for the award of Queenslander of the Year for 1986.

Boys Town enjoys an excellent relationship with the community of Beaudesert, and that is a credit to the care, control and strong discipline exercised by the brothers and teachers at Boys Town. The centre caters for 84 boys and receives support through the Children's Services Department. Half of its money has to be raised through raffles and other forms of fund-raising. There is no doubt that Boys Town needs more financial assistance, and I have spoken to the Minister about it.

The concept of Boys Town has changed considerably. As a voluntary agency, Boys Town was once very selective about the students it accepted. Now it is asked and is prepared to accept students who cannot be catered for in institutions such as the Sir Leslie Wilson Youth Centre. Boys Town has a wide variety of programs and accepts children through the court system. If children that cannot be handled in fully funded institutions are to be imposed upon Boys Town, then Boys Town must be paid similar expenses. There is a need to regard Boys Town as a special case. There is no doubt that it plays a significant and important role in the system and the Queensland Government needs to recognise that when funding is considered. Everyone has a very high opinion of what is happening at Boys Town and it must not be regarded in a similar light as a family group home.

Last year Boys Town had a deficit of \$594,037. That money had to be raised by raffles and special activities. Boys Town has an advantage in that people give generously to the centre, but, after having raised that amount of money, subsequently it had to pay

over \$110,000 to the Department of Justice. That is very annoying to the administration, which has to carry out teaching duties at Boys Town as well.

Another facility in the electorate of Fassifern is The Outlook, which is part of the Department of Children's Services program for young offenders. The department has developed a range of detention centres and community-based projects that are linked with the sentencing structure of the Court Services Unit located at the Brisbane Children's Court. Child care officers liaise with legal officers and the Serious Offenders Review Panel, which was formed in 1978, to review all cases of children charged with serious offences.

The Westbrook Training Centre and Sir Leslie Wilson Youth Centre are the two official detention centres for the most serious offenders.

Whilst the magnificent improvements that have taken place at Westbrook over recent years are clearly recognised by the public, the ALP Opposition is not prepared to give the Department of Children's Services credit in this area. Similarly, with the Sir Leslie Wilson Youth Centre, incidents have been taken out of context and used in questions to the Minister in this Chamber in order to gain attention for ALP back-benchers and, as has been seen this afternoon, front-benchers. No concern has been shown for the reputation of officers of the department or, for that matter, the credibility and reputation of the institution.

That is why both Boys Town at Beaudesert and The Outlook at Boonah are accepted by the community. The concept has been promoted positively. The Outlook centre deals mainly with the Youth Diversion Program, which is aimed at diverting youth offenders away from custodial care. Programs include wilderness living and city-based activities, and hundreds of young people are involved each year.

Mr Palaszczuk interjected.

Mr LINGARD: The honourable member for Archerfield has interjected. He has paid a compliment, but he has not realised what he was complimenting.

In addition there are initiatives such as the Cleveland Youth Centre at Townsville and the Community-based Adolescent Support Scheme at the Gold Coast.

The construction of the John Oxley Youth Centre at Wacol represents a new initiative in the provision of secure custodial care for young offenders. It will cater for approximately 30 offenders and will attempt to provide a caring and rehabilitative program.

When referring to young offenders, the great work of the officers involved in the supervision of care and control orders must be acknowledged. All of those people are required continually to make value judgments in specific areas. Those value judgments are open to criticism and scrutiny by the public and, in this State, an antagonistic ALP Opposition. It must be recognised that on reflection some incorrect decisions will be made, but they will always be part of the difficult task of counselling. The department must be prepared to admit such incorrect decisions and reassess them.

During my term as a member of Parliament I have had the pleasure of being the chairman of the National Party sports committee. In that role I have been made aware of the great work done by the Queensland Recreation Council. It has been retained in the portfolio of the Minister for Welfare Services.

Mr Davis interjected.

Mr LINGARD: The honourable member for Brisbane Central was never involved in any sport at all. He cannot kid me.

The Queensland Recreation Council, which was formerly called the Queensland National Fitness Council for Sport and Physical Recreation, was formed in 1982. Through its 22 area offices and area committees for recreation, the council administers programs such as "Life. Be in it", "Be Active—Stay Alive . . ." and FREEPS, as well as community recreation programs.

I have been most impressed with the Regional Sports Talent Identification Scheme, which provides financial assistance to young sportspeople living in inland and other non-metropolitan areas who have demonstrated potential in their chosen sport and who, given further exposure to training and competition, could expect to attain State age standard in that sport.

I thank the Queensland Recreation Council for providing an area recreation adviser to the Logan, Redlands and Beaudesert areas and for the approval of \$170,000 for improvements to the Christmas Creek recreation camp.

It is pleasing to see the Minister's \$3m budget commitment in the Estimates for the Queensland Recreation Council. That represents an 11 per cent increase on the 1985-86 expenditure. The concept of regionalisation, which has worked so well in the Education Department, has been accepted for this department.

Regardless of the criticisms of the ALP, and certainly of the member for Woodridge (Mr D'Arcy), Logan city has received great support from the Department of Welfare Services. A new area office opened there in 1985. The child-care centres at Kingston and Browns Plains have been funded jointly by the State and Commonwealth Governments. Under the Youth Assistance Scheme, Fassifern has received funding for three scout dens. As well, two officers—one at Boonah and the other at Logan West—have been appointed under the Family Welfare Community Development Worker Program. Both of those persons provide valuable assistance to the communities that they serve. In addition, my electorate receives great assistance under the Vacation Care Program.

I have much pleasure in supporting the Estimates.

Ms WARNER (Kurilpa) (2.51 p.m.): My first comment is that, if one listens to Government members for any length of time, one could quite easily think that Government members believe in fairy-tales. They talk about the wonderful welfare service facilities that are supposedly available in this State.

It is true that Queensland spends least of all States on welfare services. It spends \$102 less per person on welfare than the national average. Therefore, Queenslanders are the most under-serviced Australians. Given Queensland's highest unemployment and the lowest wages, Queenslanders are also among the poorest Australians. Although a section of the Australian public is in great need, because of the limitations of the Queensland Government no facilities are provided to meet those needs. Indeed, there is even an antagonism on the part of Government members towards those needy people. Their tendency to blame the victims is by far the worst in Australia.

Mr Milliner: This Government doesn't care about the underprivileged.

Ms WARNER: It does not. After all, the Queensland Government is a Government for rich graziers and multinational mining interests.

Statistics reveal that for welfare purposes Queensland devotes only 1.9 per cent of the State's annual allocation of funds from consolidated revenue. That is absolutely shocking.

In 1981-82, the Children's Services Department received 0.8 per cent of consolidated revenue for those services. In 1985, the figure was 0.97 per cent. The much-heralded increases are supposed to be of the order of 23 per cent. I hope that the Minister is listening carefully to these figures, because I would like her to explain them. Given the fact that the Queensland Government does not have the luxury of a public accounts committee or program budgeting, it is very difficult to work out where the figures come from, where the money goes, and how much of that 23 per cent is Commonwealth money. According to the Minister's own figures, the increase reduces to 15.6 per cent when one takes into account Commonwealth funding for the SAAP program. If one also takes into account the distinction between the money allocated for last year and the money expended, one will see that the figure of 23 per cent goes down to 18 per cent.

When one looks at the Estimates, it is very difficult to ascertain exactly how much is Commonwealth money and how much is State money. Inquiries that have been made of the Commonwealth department in relation to the SAAP program reveal that a figure cannot be placed on the amount of money that the Queensland Government is contributing to that program, because no-one can ascertain how the Government does its accounts. I suspect that the Government does not know how to do its accounts.

The Premier and Treasurer, in his Budget Speech, stated that the money to be allocated to the SAAP program would be increased by \$633,000-odd in the coming year. However, the figure of \$6,668,207 is quoted in the Estimates for the SAAP program. The figure of \$10,911,900 has been set in the projected expenditure for 1986-87. That represents an increase of approximately \$4m. The Premier and Treasurer has already stated that the increase is of the order of \$633,000, or just over half a million dollars.

I ask the Minister to explain what that means for the SAAP program. How much of that allocation is Commonwealth money? No-one can tell, because no program budgeting or public accounts committee exists. No-one knows what the Minister is doing within her department. However, what members do know is that the need for children's services within Queensland is absolutely astronomical.

When the previous report by Graham Zerk of the Children's Services Department was published at the end of 1985, Mr Zerk stated that the department was unable to fulfil its statutory obligations. An editorial that appeared in *The Courier-Mail* at that time stated that the Government should hang its head in shame because that situation existed.

In 1985 it was made clear by the Director of Children's Services that 136 new officers were required by the Department. However, what did it receive? Only 40 new officers were allocated. That was hardly a reasonable response to what was and is a crisis situation in terms of child protection within Queensland, right across the board from child abuse and neglect through to young offenders and a whole range of services that should be available to them. However, those services are unavailable, largely because of staffing levels and because the Minister cannot get her act together when it comes to welfare policies.

There was a great song and dance in Parliament when the last review was undertaken. Every social worker and every voluntary organisation in Queensland looked very carefully at the situation, analysed it and said whether or not it agreed with it. However, that review was shelved.

The Minister has now promised a further review. How can she be trusted? How can honourable members believe that another review will be undertaken? I believe that the second review will suffer the same fate as the last review and that nothing will be achieved.

I wish that the Minister was listening to the criticisms of her department. However, because she is so bigoted and pig-headed on the subject, she will not listen to them.

That was last year's report from the Director of Children's Services. The new 1985-86 report——

Mr McElligott: A glossy cover.

Ms WARNER: The 1985-86 glossy "election special" is now available. It contains no mention whatever of the fact that last year the department was unable to fulfil its statutory obligations and that the problem has been either ignored, cured, or left alone.

Has the Minister simply pulled the Director of Children's Services into line? Is that what she has done? Did the Minister say, "You have got to be good this year, because this is an election year and if you value your job you will not be saying anything about the real problems that exist in this State."?

In relation to child abuse—a most unenviable situation arose approximately a year ago, when the Minister for Justice decided to go off half-cocked and institute a public

inquiry into child abuse. The report of that inquiry, known as the Sturgess report, related to the abuse of young boys, despite the fact that the majority of children who are sexually abused are, in fact, girls. The report of the Department of Children's Services now indicates that.

There was no mention of that in the Sturgess report and no recognition of the fact that girls are the most sexually abused. The Sturgess report only concentrates on highlights and titillation, and has absolutely no real professional sociological answers to what is a grave problem in the community, particularly in relation to the need for the development of a proper community response to child neglect, child abuse and child sexual abuse. The Government comes up with the Queensland Centre for Prevention of Child Abuse.

Mr Lee: This is a valedictory speech.

Ms WARNER: That is hardly the case.

When honourable members see that a lousy \$150,000 will be allocated to that centre, they will realise that that amount would not go anywhere near providing the functions that that centre is supposed to carry out. It will not help in the long run to solve any problems for the victims of child abuse. If it is a preventive measure, it should be provided; but it should be matched by a proper departmental response to the problems of reported cases of child abuse, which are increasing at an astronomical rate.

By the Minister's own admission, the 40 new staff members seem to be all that the department will receive. The Minister says that the review will increase the staff further in the area of child protection, but she has made no real commitment in that area. I gather that, because of the appalling attitude that has been shown by the Government towards staffing, that that commitment will not be met.

When the previous Minister was asked to provide 136 staff members, he pointed out that the answer was not in increased staff but in greater parental responsibility and that the tax-payer cannot be asked to bear the brunt of the cost of parental neglect. The community is responsible for the well-being of children.

The honourable member for Fassifern (Mr Lingard) has left the Chamber, but I take up his point in terms of the Government's priorities. When it was discovered by a number of volunteers in the community that children were actually going hungry, and when steps were taken to find a solution to the problem, the Government had those people investigated. That is absurd. People try to help and look at the problems that exist on the ground, and the Special Branch comes round and says, "We suspect your politics because you are actually caring about people." To care about people in the State is to have politics that, according to the Government, are suspect. That is the principle that is involved.

I refer to the breakfast program that the honourable member for Fassifern described as an insult to the school. I cannot see why that is so. If people are living in poverty-stricken circumstances in his electorate, it is the Government's responsibility to do something about it and the responsibility of the community to try to help, and not to hinder, people find imaginative and innovative ways of dealing with social problems as they emerge.

The Minister is very good at saying that the voluntary sector should take over the responsibilities that the Government should be shouldering; but when people do that, if their politics are not in line with the Government's, they are investigated and intimidated.

The Minister is very proud of the fact that she assists a number of voluntary organisations in the State by providing social workers. Honourable members should look at the terms under which that is done. It is done in a way that harasses and intimidates those organisations. If the social workers come up with information that the Minister does not like, she starts instigating new methods of allocating funds for those social workers and threatens their jobs. That practice is rife throughout the public service and

the Minister's department. All those people are too scared to say what the real situation is in Queensland, because they know that, if their names are associated with the facts and the figures, they will lose their jobs.

The Minister is supposed to be running a welfare organisation, but all the indications show that it is a regime of terror. I am not sure whether the Minister refers to herself as the Iron Maiden or the Stainless Steel Matron, but I would suggest to her that the Welfare Services portfolio requires a degree of sensitivity not found in the Minister, because she is some kind of heavy-metal lady.

I turn now to the issue raised last week in the Chamber, and that is the Sir Leslie Wilson Youth Centre, which is a detention centre for children. The centre is supposed to cater for so-called uncontrollable children—a notion derived from the nineteenth century view of children as being uncontrollable and deserving of punishment merely for behaving as children do. Although the Minister boasted recently that the centre is educational, I remind her that that change occurred as late as 1985, and is not something that could be regarded as a break-through. Apparently, children can go to the centre and learn the three Rs, but that should have been the case in the past anyway. The honourable member for Woodridge (Mr D'Arcy) pointed out that they can also acquire some "social" skills, such as smoking.

The Sir Leslie Wilson Youth Centre caters for girls aged from 13 to 17 years and boys aged from 10 to 15 years who are either the subject of orders or are being held on remand. It is the case that people who are merely suspected of a criminal offence are often treated with the same degree of appalling deprivation as those who have been convicted. Another aspect of the policy administered at the centre is the detention of girls who have been sent by the courts to the centre as status offenders. As status offenders, they are regarded by the courts as being in some kind of moral danger. I point out that, by virtue of circumstances such as violence or physical or emotional abuse in the home that has been perpetrated upon them, they are locked away in this Dickensian institution. The girls have not committed any criminal offence.

Recently, a video recording was made of the Sir Leslie Wilson Youth Centre, of which the Minister may be aware. It is called *Open Tantrum*, and I invite the Minister to view the video as it is a particularly severe indictment upon the kind of practices that are carried on in that institution. It portrays the degree of deprivation of liberty, and illustrates the models that the institution invites the children to follow. Many of the children I have met who have attended the institution have told me about the dreadfully humiliating and abusive experiences they have endured that have only led them to suffer further psychological disturbances, such as depression, and to further incapacity to deal with problems that confront them in their lives. They have been led to believe that society cares little for them, has absolutely no use for them, and that they might as well engage in criminal activity at a later stage because the system had nothing to offer them. That is the message conveyed by the Sir Leslie Wilson Youth Centre. The centre should be closed down because it is a disgrace, and it is also a disgrace that, in this day and age, children who have not committed an offence are being treated as criminals. In spite of the fact that they have not committed an offence, they have been sent to this Dickensian institution and have suffered humiliation and deprivation. No attention has been paid to their prospects for the future. The Minister is responsible for young lives being thrown away.

I will take the Minister up on her invitation to inspect the centre, although I suspect the Minister will cover up what really goes on. I would like to show the Minister the video called *Open Tantrum* and provide her with the opportunity of opening her eyes to what is happening at the centre under the auspices of her departments. I suspect, however, that the Minister is no more prepared to view the video than she is prepared to examine the problems of domestic violence and the incidence of criminal assault that takes place in the home.

During the last year, an increase has occurred in what have been coyly described as family suicides. I inform the Committee that incidents so described really involve an unfortunate man who is unable to cope with his own life and decides to solve his

problems of family responsibility by killing his family. In my opinion, that constitutes the ultimate in wife abuse and child abuse, and provides an example of the ultimate in criminal assault that takes place in the home. What can only be described as murder is the end of the line.

I turn my attention now to the fact that women are frequently bashed in the home. Shelters and refuges are able to cater for women who finally escape from their appallingly depressing circumstances, but in spite of that, the major problem concerning domestic violence is that the police force and the social welfare services sector are incapable of responding in a proper way because the problem has never been properly examined. The police force is not sensitised to the problem of domestic violence. Police officers openly admit—probably with justification—that they do not wish to attend the scene of domestic brawls because they do not have the skills to deal with the problem. They are very sensitive problems because people have really come to the end of their tether. As a society, we should be looking at that.

In New South Wales a domestic violence task force has been set up. It is a co-ordinated program across a whole range of departments, including the Department of Youth and Community Services and the Police Department. A lot of professional advice and help is provided to assist families in those sorts of difficulties. I cite the example of women who feel that the situation could deteriorate to the extent that they may very well be hospitalised. They have somewhere to go to ask for assistance. At the moment in Queensland no such place exists; there are no preventive measures and nowhere for those sort of women to go.

The Minister is still not listening; she is still reading the ads in the *Telegraph*. She is not interested in domestic violence or in the abuses that are occurring within her own department. She is not interested in delivering any kind of welfare service in some kind of spirit of generosity from the Government because she thinks that people should just look after themselves as if Queensland was some sort of nineteenth century colony where it is a case of the survival of the fittest. That is the Minister's philosophy; she says it time and time again. There is no way, even with all her rhetoric about programs for the family and for parents, that she can cover up the problems. It is the parents who are abusing the children; they are the people who need help. The children also need help. They all need help. Yet the Minister just sits there; she is not interested. She would rather just go along with her ideological claptrap about the family being the heart of the nation.

Mr STEPHAN (Gympie) (3.11 p.m.): It gives me much pleasure to support the Minister in her efforts to help the citizens of Queensland.

Mr Milliner: You would not have a clue about welfare. You could not care less.

Mr STEPHAN: I do care. It is quite obvious how much the Minister, in the short time she has held her portfolio, cares and how real her concern is for the real problems in this world.

Opposition Members interjected.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr Booth): Order! I suggest that, if the two honourable members who are interjecting wish to continue, they return to their correct seats.

Mr STEPHAN: Opposition members are a little concerned. They are frightened of hearing the truth about what is happening in the State at the moment. After hearing the diatribe—the nonsense that was dished out by the member for Kurilpa on behalf of the Labor Party in the name of the policies that it espouses—I am not surprised that the Minister was not listening.

Mr Lee: That was definitely her valedictory speech.

Mr STEPHAN: I think that might have been her valedictory, yes. If the honourable member for South Brisbane (Mr Fouras) were standing as a candidate for South Brisbane, it certainly would be her valedictory and she knows that very well.

Mr Lee: Akers is out in Pine Rivers.

Mr STEPHAN: I am not too sure where Akers is.

I am surprised that the Labor Party has made statements about commitment to eliminate the need for welfare in this State, when its colleagues in Canberra have done an enormous amount to cut such welfare funding as child endowment. If the Labor Party is interested in the family, why has it done that? Why has it cut that sort of funding if it is genuinely interested in helping the family?

Mr D'Arcy: The child welfare officers in your electorate, Gympie, reckon they have the worst office of any in Queensland.

Mr STEPHAN: I will respond to that interjection about the office in Gympie. I know that there is need for improvement in the office space at Gympie. I know that steps have been taken to improve that office space. In the next couple of months, that will be implemented. A problem that has been pointed out to me—and to the staff itself—relates to confidentiality. However, the problem to be overcome is the cut-back in welfare funding for Queensland by the Labor Party in Canberra. It has been pointed out that the Labor Party was established because of the poor. I would go so far as to say that the poor are growing in number because of the Labor Party's policy. If that policy is an indication of what is to be expected and what is going to be dished out on behalf of the Labor Party, Heaven help us in the future!

In the short time that the Minister has held the portfolio, she has covered a very large area of the State in an endeavour to speak to all officers of her department. In that way she has gained first-hand knowledge of the problems of her staff. That is tremendously important. She has been able to speak with them individually. She has been willing to do so, and has been very effective in that way. By working very closely with those of her officers who are out in the field, she has learned what the problems are.

I will now deal with the operations of her departments that relate to the family, which interests me a great deal and upon which I will spend most of my allotted time this afternoon. The goals of the Children's Services Department are: to provide services to promote and support positive family life and the well-being of children, youth and the community; to provide services that assist in keeping families united, where appropriate; to provide services that promote effective parenting; to provide services that assist and support persons at times of family crisis and personal distress; to provide services that offer emotional support and practical help in developing skills in home management and child care to individuals and families; and to promote the development and delivery of effective family and community services by the non-government and local government sectors. I will dwell a little more on that later in my contribution to the debate.

The Government can take great pride that the allocation for the Department of Children's Services has been increased from approximately \$44m to almost \$54.5m, an increase 23 per cent.

Mr Davis interjected.

Mr STEPHAN: I believe that the honourable member for Brisbane Central is not willing to acknowledge that at all. He spends too much time thinking that all that is needed is the expenditure of more money. He and his colleagues seem to believe that spending more money equates with the provision of better services and facilities. That is not so, is it? The Welfare Services Department deals with people—people with problems; people who need care and attention. The honourable member for Brisbane Central would not be prepared to give any assistance of that sort.

Mr Davis: I want to ask a question.

Mr STEPHAN: The honourable member is prepared to interrupt, but he is not prepared to provide assistance. If he has a sensible question, I might try to answer it.

Mr Davis: Do you know why the Minister has not been taking any interest in this debate?

Mr STEPHAN: I know why the Minister took no notice of the honourable member who preceded me. She spoke nothing but nonsense.

In a time when economic circumstances are not good, an increase of 23 per cent in the amount of funds that have been made available is considerable. When one adds to that the increase of 18.5 per cent—that is from \$2.58m to \$3.06m—in the allocation for general welfare and youth services, one cannot say that the Government has anything to hide in this portfolio. I have not heard the honourable member for Brisbane Central comment on that.

As the Premier pointed out in his Budget Speech, of the total additional allocation in the Budget to the department, \$700,000 will be provided for increases in allowances to foster parents, payments to licensed institutions, assistance to families and additional subsidies for social workers. I will also deal with each one of those later in my speech.

As I said earlier, I am particularly interested in the family. Regardless of the introduction of new legislation, I draw the attention of honourable members to the preamble to the existing Children's Services Act, which reads—

“An Act to promote, safeguard and protect the wellbeing of children and youth of the State through a comprehensive and co-ordinated program of child and family welfare.”

The National Party Government is committed to supporting the family as the primary source of support for children and the stabilising factor in our society. The Government has increased by 23 per cent its financial support to the department, which is responsible for family welfare.

A recent article that has been drawn to my attention is about specific programs directed towards youth in America. As the honourable members opposite have been talking about the amount of money being spent and the need for extra money, I ask them to listen to this. The article makes the point that the United States of America increased its expenditure from almost \$40 billion in 1960 to \$244 billion in 1980. The 1960 figure has been converted to 1980 dollar values, so the comparison is correct. Even though there has been such a vast increase in expenditure on youth, a number of indicators, including educational performance, moral character and physical health, show there has been no corresponding improvement in the behaviour of youth. In fact, things have got worse. I repeat that these are American figures. For example, between 1960 and 1980, reported juvenile delinquency rates have increased by 130 per cent. The American National Institute on Drug Abuse reveals an increase in the use of marijuana, non-prescribed stimulants and cocaine. The birth-rate of white, unmarried women from ages 15 to 29 years has increased by 140 per cent. The number of adolescents contracting sexually transmitted diseases has grown rapidly.

The authors of that article asked, “How are we to interpret these disquieting statistics?” After an increase in expenditure of almost 600 per cent, all those dreadful things are not only still happening but also on the increase. The authors of the article conclude that greater emphasis should be placed on the family and, in particular, on family supports so that families can be prepared and assisted to properly carry out their role. In my opinion, the Labor Party does not appreciate the role of the family or the needs of the family. If it did, it would give families support.

Mr Comben: Rubbish!

Mr STEPHAN: It is not rubbish.

Members of the Opposition and the public are always critical of the Government for not directing more funds towards implementing family programs. That criticism has

been made this afternoon in this Chamber. Those American statistics should be considered. One wonders how effective many of the welfare programs in other States have been—programs that have been implemented with a splurge of money by big-spending, big tax-gathering Governments. What has been the end result of the expenditure of that money? That is what the Queensland Government is interested in. Is the Australian experience the same as the American experience? I do not believe that Opposition members can answer that question.

It is interesting to note that the traditional family, once dismissed by academics and socialists, is now being seen as more important. Recent research has shown that the total family, including the father, is in fact very important. Children growing up in families where the father is absent show a lower ability to adjust to other people than do children who are brought up in two-parent families.

It has always been the National Party's philosophy on welfare to support the family. I note with great pleasure the announcement at page 180 of the Budget document entitled *Departmental Services and Programs: A Budget Perspective 1986-87* of an expansion of the Family Welfare Community Development Worker program.

Mr Davis: You are getting a reputation here as an easy mark.

Mr STEPHAN: No. The member for Brisbane Central is trying to paint somebody else into a corner. The honourable member has a reputation for interjecting constantly and not making very many speeches in this Chamber, and in that way getting his name into *Hansard*. The contributions of the member for Brisbane Central have not been very significant.

Funds have been provided under that program to allow 11 extra workers to be employed from January 1987. That will cost \$20,000. At present, 21 family community development workers are employed; so, if one does the mathematics, one finds that the number will rise to 32. That is a considerable increase for the benefit of communities and families throughout the State.

There is also an expansion of the Subsidy for Social Workers Scheme to allow an additional eight social workers to be employed by the non-Government sector as from 1 January 1987. It may not be well known, but the Department of Children's Services has always paid the salaries of approximately 31 social workers working with a variety of community organisations which help either children or their families. That number will be increased to approximately 39. That will result in an additional cost of \$64,000 for the rest of 1986-87 and \$123,000 for the full year.

Assistance is being offered in the form of subsidies over and above the contributions through grants. That is a far more effective method of providing assistance to utilise the community organisations that are in existence. With a little extra help, those organisations work so much better.

The honourable member for Archerfield (Mr Palaszcuk) is shaking his head in disbelief. I suppose that he finds it hard to believe that people do want to work in the community on a voluntary basis. With the extra assistance that is offered in the form of subsidies, those community organisations will be able to do their job far more effectively. I can cite a number of instances where that is so.

Mr Palaszcuk: Administration costs are far too high that way.

Mr STEPHAN: That way is more efficient and the effect is far better. I will use the example of the Church of England family group home, which is operating in my own electorate. It has no problems at all. The same cannot be said about many of the organisations that are fully funded. Voluntary organisations are achieving their aims in a far better way and a far more efficient way than the honourable member for Archerfield may care to admit. I know that the honourable member is trying to make a point.

Mr Palaszcuk: I disagree.

Mr STEPHAN: The honourable member for Archerfield might disagree, and I am not surprised.

I was happy to note in the *Departmental Services and Programs*, as well as the initiatives for the prevention of child abuse, that Queensland has agreed in principle to share the cost with the Commonwealth Government of the new Family Support Program on the basis that the State receives approximately a per capita share of the total Commonwealth funds for family support. There have been occasions when funds have not been provided to Queensland on a per capita basis. In fact Queensland has been cheated, and the Government's insistence on having funds allocated according to the number of citizens is quite proper and correct. The Minister and the Government are to be congratulated on these initiatives. They are a step in the right direction. Even though the Minister will continue to receive criticism from the Opposition benches, the criticism will remain in the Opposition benches, where it deserves to be.

I suggest to the Minister that she look at the traditional assisting bodies in our society, such as the churches and neighbourhood groups. Many people believe that the churches no longer receive the respect and support they received in the past or have the influence that they used to have. I do not know if the honourable member for Archerfield would agree with that aspect.

Mr Palaszczuk: I agree.

Mr STEPHAN: The honourable member for Archerfield agrees, and this is possibly correct. The churches have felt the financial squeeze and are not able to achieve as much as they would like to do under the present circumstances.

Mr Palaszczuk: Exactly right.

Mr STEPHAN: That is right, they are feeling the squeeze. I wonder how much support the honourable member for Archerfield gives any of the churches or community groups in his electorate. Does he make any contributions, either financially or by assistance? Does he help them along the way and give them that encouragement? I dare say he would turn a blind eye and pass on the other side.

Mr Comben: No.

Mr STEPHAN: That is a fair comment and the honourable member for Windsor can disagree if he likes.

The churches and other groups have needed to rethink the way they communicate their relevance to members of society. In recent years they have been very successful. The churches are the traditional supporters of persons in society who are under stress. In the not-too-distant past that was always so. Neighbourhood groups should also be encouraged by the provision of Government financial support for their programs.

The Minister has formed a Family Advisory Committee, under the chairmanship of Mr Plummer. I congratulate Mr Plummer for the very able manner in which he has looked after that aspect of the Minister's portfolio. Mr Plummer is the adviser for welfare policy and legislation. The membership of his committee is not made up of representatives of organisations, but of persons with considerable experience in successful family life. They provide the Minister with their experience from the grassroots level of the rearing of families and the problems faced by families in today's society. They are also able to direct the Minister's attention to the needs of families for services. Many members of the committee, although not representing individual denominations, have strong ties with their denominations. In this way the Minister is able to draw on the insights of parents who have church affiliations and, on the basis of that input, the Minister is able to steer her department and its provision of services in the right direction.

I am sure the Minister's fine record in welfare has much to do with her relationship with that committee and a number of other advisory committees. Some of the other areas she has under her control come under the Homemaker service that is included in

the children's services program. The Homemaker service provides families and individuals with emotional support and practical help in developing skills in home management and child care. The service includes the provision of care, support and interest, and practical help focuses largely on improving the client's general home management skills. The home-makers work with individuals and families in conjunction with child-care officers, who co-ordinate the overall plan for the client.

It is a poor reflection on our society that the family needs help in that way. The need does exist. It is very real. So many people unfortunately are unable to cope with the stress and financial problems involved in caring for their family, or in keeping them reasonably free of disease and in a healthy and fit state of mind. I commend the home-makers for their effort. They must be very special people with very special concerns, working with the disadvantaged, who require a great deal of assistance. In many instances it is appreciated. It is appreciated also by the younger children who are being looked after and taken to child-care centres and kindergartens. In some instances, they are being taken to schools in a far better frame of mind than they would otherwise. The department is working towards the aim that families will ultimately be able to look after themselves. Previously, the children would have become wards of the State. Now, they are being kept in the community, and that is being done very effectively.

Assistance is being provided to foster parents. It has been recognised that the allowances paid to foster parents have been increased.

Mr Palaszczuk: You are falling down badly there.

Mr STEPHAN: I am not. The contributions are \$60 a week for the first four weeks under five years.

Mr Palaszczuk: You don't know what you are talking about.

Mr STEPHAN: I do. The honourable member is blabbering away. He is losing his way completely. He is not too sure what he is interjecting about at the moment.

It is interesting to note that the assistance being offered to the parents of foster children varies from \$60 to \$70 per week.

I commend the Minister on her presentation of the Estimates. The Government has made a handsome allocation to support families.

Time expired.

Mr COMBEN (Windsor) (3.31 p.m.): I make passing reference to two previous Government speakers. The member for Gympie (Mr Len Stephan) has just made various comments about statements made by Opposition members in relation to support for local church and charitable organisations. That was typical of the judgmental attitude of Government members and people of his ilk. It is fairly un-Christian to judge Opposition members on how they behave in their electorates and on their donations to various organisations. The honourable member cast a low slur under parliamentary privilege. He defamed all Opposition members. I would be interested to see what giving he has done. I have not seen too much genuine giving on his side of the Chamber.

Mr Littleproud: What a wide-ranging statement!

Mr COMBEN: I know of one recent example. On page 3 of my local newspaper a Minister is reported as making a donation to a local organisation. One of those people came up to me and said, "Do you know that he gave half of what you personally gave?" It was a donation made to a safety house program. If honourable members want me to name the person, I will.

An Opposition Member: Name the Minister.

Mr COMBEN: At least Opposition members are not friends of tax-avoiders, as are Liberals in Western Australia and Queensland Government members. It was Len Stephan's contribution. He is the deputy chairman of the Christian Breakfast—the most

hypocritical, self-righteous, "you scratch my back and I'll scratch yours" group of people whom I have ever seen.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: I rise to a point of order. I take exception to the comments about the people who go to the Christian Breakfast. I attend that function. I find the honourable member's remarks completely uncalled for. I call for an apology.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr Fouras): Order! There is no point of order.

Mr COMBEN: In deference to the honourable member who has just risen to a point of order, I point out that my remarks do not reflect on him. I apologise to him personally. I repeat that my remarks were not intended to reflect on him whatsoever. However, I remind Mr Stephan that he was one of two people who greeted me on the first occasion that I attended a Christian Breakfast function. He questioned what I was doing there because I was a member of the Labor Party. The persons to whom I refer are the honourable member for Gympie and his mate on his left, the member for Coorooora (Mr Simpson).

Mr STEPHAN: I rise to a point of order. I take exception to the statement that I questioned what the member for Windsor was doing at the function. I welcomed him there. I do note that, for his own reasons, he has not returned to that function.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! There is no point of order.

Mr COMBEN: I did go back. I went back on the following occasion and took a good Labor preacher with me. He made them all squirm.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! The honourable member will return to the debate.

Mr COMBEN: Honourable members heard a really good contribution from the member for Fassifern (Mr Lingard). His speech was all about bucketing the Labor Party. Have honourable members ever seen in this Chamber a more scurrilous and lowly act than the one they witnessed last week when the honourable member sent the Special Branch into the Kingston State High School to investigate the breakfast club? The breakfast club at the Kingston State High School is the same as a number of breakfast clubs that are currently operating in various State schools within Queensland, in particular Woodridge, West End and South Brisbane, where up to 120 students are given toast and cereals on Tuesday and Thursday mornings.

Because Mr Lingard was not happy with the activities of the breakfast club, he did not ask the police to go to the school and investigate a criminal matter. Instead, he asked the secret police—the Special Branch—to investigate what was happening. No-one knows why they were sent there. There was no political involvement. In fact, the organiser of the breakfast club, Mr Norman Haub, is a genuine gentleman who is devoted to the welfare of students at the Kingston State High School. Mr Haub does not know why the Special Branch was involved.

I suggest that what has really happened is that the honourable member for Fassifern is concerned that the results of the welfare policies of this State, which result in virtual starvation amongst some of the young people, should not be seen.

If the Government is serious about alleviating poverty within Queensland, it must acknowledge that poverty exists. The best way of acknowledging poverty and a poor diet is to provide additional food through programs such as breakfast clubs. However, the honourable member has stated that that cannot be done. He stated that he was the principal at that particular high school for approximately three years before he was elected to this Assembly, and during that time he never saw a student who was not receiving food at home. He regarded the breakfast club as a trumped-up scheme, because he believes that it is only natural that children who go to school and smell food cooking will claim that they are hungry and want some breakfast.

However, that is in stark contrast to the testimony of one of the organisers of the breakfast club, a Mrs Hall, who stated that single mothers had approached her on a regular basis and had told her that on the Tuesday before pension day they had no food in their houses and that they were very glad a breakfast club existed, because the food that is provided is the only food that their children receive on those days.

There is obviously a great need for a breakfast club at the Kingston State High School. However, the honourable member for Fassifern sought to cover that up so that people in the area would be able to claim that no poverty or hunger exists in the Kingston area.

Mr Lingard believes that because the Kingston State High School is in a developing area, with new development occurring on the other side of the main highway, the people of the area do not want to think that their children are attending a high school that needs the services of a breakfast club. I believe that the performance of Mr Lingard on the subject of breakfast clubs was shameful and disgusting.

In relation to the Estimates, I wish to mention one aspect of the Queensland Recreation Council's annual report for 1985-86. Under "Major Projects" on page 11 of that report it is stated—

"National Trail a High Priority

Several major initiatives with Statewide implications were undertaken by the Queensland Recreation Council during the year under review.

Development of The National Trail, a recreation trail system spanning the Australian eastern seaboard between Cooktown and Melbourne, has been given priority in Queensland."

That is a long-standing proposal, which has been considered by both State and Federal Governments of every political persuasion. I am glad that it is now coming to fruition.

I believe that the Premier and Treasurer stated 10 or 12 years ago that he wanted to see a trail stretching all the way down the dividing range. Something is finally being done about that.

In relation to the financing of the trail, it is interesting to note that further on in the annual report of the Queensland Recreation Council it is stated that—

"The Council has already provided substantial administrative and organisational assistance to The National Trail Committee. This included preparation of a submission to the Australian Bicentennial Authority for \$100,000 which was successful, and a further submission for \$100,000, currently under consideration."

That is all that is mentioned in relation to finance.

When one examines that statement, what it really says is that the staff of the Queensland Recreation Council have given time to the proposal but that not one dollar of State Government money has been provided towards the trail. It is a major project that is being funded with Australian Bicentennial Authority money. The sum of \$100,000 has already been allocated. However, a further \$100,000 is required. It is typical of the usual manoeuvres of the State Government; there is a nice image there; it is a nice project; it is good PR; and there appears to be some sort of structure there.

From the State Government's point of view, there is no substance to it. The National Party Government is not putting one penny towards it. It is giving office time that would otherwise be used on other projects. It is not putting any substantial funds towards the trail. It is Federal money, and honourable members could compare the Australian Bicentennial Authority grant with CEP money—honourable members hear many allegations of misuse of CEP money, or strange uses of it—yet the Government is prepared to take Federal Government money in that form.

I hope that the trail is a success. I look forward to one day walking over part of it. I do not think that I will ever be good enough to walk 5 100 km. If the State

Government is not removed at the next election, as I expect it to be, it will probably be many years before it is completed, anyway. By that time, the honourable Minister will be in her grave and I will be too old to walk. The trail should be added to part of a conservation strategy in this State. The idea is to be commended.

When the Minister presented her Estimates this morning, she said—

“Another milestone for the council in the foreseeable future will be the bringing into reality of the Queensland portion of the national trail from Cooktown to Melbourne—arguably the world’s longest recreation trail.

Apart from its pure recreational benefits, this project will improve the accessibility of many of the State’s scenic and heritage features for Queenslanders and visitors.”

To her credit, the Minister does not say that it is State Government funded, but to a casual reader it would certainly appear that the State Government was doing something substantial when in actual fact it is only the enabling authority for the use of Federal Government money. I hope that the planned network of committees to set up the trail will soon be established. They will certainly be established very soon under the Labor Government after the election in October or November this year.

At the beginning of the Minister’s speech, she said—

“The welfare state mentality has got us by the throat and things have got to change. It will be too late after the final squeeze. The answer lies in two words, ‘responsibility’ and ‘accountability’.”

One wonders about those two words from the National Party Minister when one thinks of the Department of The Arts, National Parks and Sport and its accountability.

The Minister continued—

“People must be made more responsible and accountable for their actions. Then we will get back to a sane and sensible welfare scene where self-help is important and where those genuinely in need and those struck by misfortune can be helped to overcome their problems.”

That is a very simplistic view and one that I would expect from a National Party Minister in this Chamber. It is in stark contrast to the real position of welfare now in every other State of Australia in which the professional welfare workers and the academic welfare workers are saying that Queensland should be. The true picture of welfare in the State was well stated by Professor Edna Chamberlain in chapter 6 of the book *The Bjelke-Petersen Premiership 1968-1983 Issues in Public Policy* in which she states—

“The State of Queensland, at least, has lagged in absorption of new ideas which purport both to explain disadvantage in our society and predicate related strategies for its eradication or diminution. The Queensland Government’s reticence is, at least in part, ideologically based and extends beyond the field of welfare.”

The Minister says that people have to take more responsibility and have to be accountable, whereas the professional welfare workers say that there has to be an attempt to explain why some people are poverty-stricken, why other people are in need and what can be done.

Covering historical aspects, Professor Chamberlain goes on to say—

“Despite legislative changes, however, financial support to families continued to be administered in a stigmatising, punitive and morally controlling manner.”

Nothing shows that better than the Minister’s own statements about supporting mothers on welfare benefits. She said that the Government is subsidising supporting mothers’ love lives. I do not believe that any of the statements that she made at that time were truly supported by any thinking—

Mr Palaszczuk: The previous Minister called them deviates.

Mr COMBEN: Yes, that is about right.

Mrs Chapman: You should see the amount of letters we received.

Mr COMBEN: I am sure that the Government received many letters. The Opposition received many over Lindeman Island as well.

I believe that the average Queenslanders realise that the supporting parent's benefit is used in the majority of cases by mature aged women, often widows, and people in need. Only a very small percentage of young women are of the type that the Minister tried to stigmatise all supporting parents as being, that is, young women with young families who are in some way trying to remain on some sort of pension.

Mr Hamill: Baby-farming.

Mr COMBEN: The Minister for Welfare Services, Youth and Ethnic Affairs (Mrs Chapman) certainly suggested that a good deal of baby-farming has been going on. I can think of a couple of examples in my own electorate who have been described by the Minister as engaging in baby-farming and as those who are having their love-life subsidised. The true position is that those people are working very hard to bring up young children for whom they are responsible through no fault on their part. Their means are limited solely to the pension, and they have been made to feel as though they are third-rate citizens in society because of comments made by the Minister.

Professor Chamberlain makes the following observation—

"The pace of change in the welfare field had been slow prior to 1968. Bjelke-Petersen's years of office have been ones which have witnessed a revolution in welfare philosophy and practice theories in other places. The Bjelke-Petersen government has been assiduous in efforts to keep revolution in this, as in other areas, at bay but the ingestion of ideas has been sufficient to accelerate change.

. . .

Introduction of the concept of 'family welfare' in place of 'children's services' demonstrates recognition of the integration of individuals within wider systems. It falls short, however, of recognition that children and families are embedded in even broader systems. These broader systems are those represented by the somewhat nebulous term 'community'."

In terms of the provision of welfare services, Queensland has always lagged behind every other State in Australia. The Government should look to broad-scale community welfare. Professor Chamberlain concludes the article by commenting in part—

"Central to a concept of social development pertinent for the eighties is a broad vision of social justice and commitment to confront disadvantage at the political and senior administrative levels, and active development of mechanisms for action at the locality level. The first of these features is absent in Queensland as the Bjelke-Petersen government remains committed to economic resource development. Although recent Ministers of Welfare have had much to say about the role of local government and non-government agencies in carrying and supplementing the government's programmes, the accent is not locality development. It is hard to see that anything new is being suggested."

Professor Chamberlain's comments depict the present situation. Her final comment reads—

"In failing to fund adequately an organisation like QCOSS, the government not only muzzles informed debate on social issues, but also the potential to generate more constructive social welfare policies. Fortunately there have been some recent examples of capacity and will to be heard on the part of the churches in Queensland. If this represents a resurgence of community concern, it may lead to redefinition of the ministerial notion of partnership between the government and the non-government sector and serve to shorten the shadow of disadvantage across the sunshine State."

The article reflects badly on the Government because a professional social worker has concluded her academic career by observing that Queensland is always behind the other States in the provision of welfare services and that a need exists in Queensland

for community development at every level. My time is short, so I will conclude by referring to the need for community welfare. On 3 September, an article was published that stated Queenslanders wanted more help from social workers, and it was based on a survey undertaken by the Queensland Institute of Technology. The article asserted that all of the local community needs could be co-ordinated by social workers.

What is needed in the wider community is similar to what has been established in the Windsor electorate. A community development program has been established, and it is hoped that it will attract Home and Community Care funding. That responsibility is administered by the Minister for Health (Mr Austin). Because home and community care is a welfare problem, I hope I will be granted the indulgence of including it in my speech.

People who live in the electorate of Windsor are of the view that welfare can no longer be considered in the context of a local church looking after its own parish or a local service club looking after a particular section of the community: rather, it must be considered in terms of the needs of the whole community. The north-western suburbs of Brisbane are attempting to establish an umbrella organisation to co-ordinate welfare services provided by the various welfare agencies. It is also hoped that the activities of the group will attract funding so that professional welfare workers, such as social workers, will be able to examine a locality and prioritise needs in the area. A co-ordinated service will enable a social worker to say to the individual groups, "Look, you are providing a particular service, but Mrs X who lives down the road will have to be cared for in a nursing home unless someone can care for her and clean her home, as well as do the shopping for her." That form of local assistance is presently provided by community health care groups.

Mrs Chapman interjected.

Mr COMBEN: That is one of the things that is also being set up. A volunteer agency is being set up to co-ordinate the unemployed. At the moment a young unemployed chap is at the Windsor Meals on Wheels every day of the week. Last week, on two days when that chap was told, "We have got enough people for tomorrow, you do not need to come in.", he still came in. So the young, unemployed should not be knocked.

Mrs Chapman: I am not knocking them, I am saying that they want to do that sort of thing. It is a pity that you couldn't get that message through to Mr Hawke.

Mr COMBEN: The Federal Labor Government has set up youth volunteer employment schemes already. One is operating through the volunteer centre in the city. Across Queensland there are five schemes co-ordinating the young unemployed. I believe that the young unemployed can contribute a lot and can obtain a lot of satisfaction out of doing that sort of work. The other group in society in the volunteer sector, about which enough is not being made, is the early retired male. The middle-aged female who used to do a lot of volunteer work is no longer around, or is not around as much as she was previously. She is generally going back into the work-force. Men are now retiring at 55 to 58 years of age. They are available for a lot of duties. They can be tied in as well. The Labor Party looks forward to a good regional development in the north-western suburbs of Brisbane. The scheme is in place. It is hoped that the Minister will later be supportive in the application for HACC funding. That sort of scheme has to be undertaken right across Queensland and right across Australia. With that sort of involvement, and with proper funding from the State Government, there is a hope of tackling the problems where they should be tackled, and that is at the local community level, with local people having some sort of say in the determination of their future.

Mr LITTLEPROUD (Condamine) (3.51 p.m.): At the outset, I acknowledge the fact that the honourable member for Pine Rivers (Mrs Chapman) has been elevated to the Ministry during the last 12 months. I put on record that I enjoy working with her and her department's officers, and I also acknowledge the fine work that was done by her predecessor, the honourable member for Whitsunday (Mr Muntz).

Mr White interjected.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: I did not work with the Minister before that, but I have heard that the honourable member for Redcliffe was very whole-hearted in his application to those affairs.

It is interesting to note that in the recent State Budget an increase of 19 per cent was provided for in the allocation for Welfare Services. That was well above the allocations for most of the State departments. More importantly, the comparison should be made between what has happened in Queensland with its State Budget and what is happening in Canberra. The Final edition of today's *Telegraph* contains the headlines "Canberra protest over Government policies. And most are Labor supporters." I will read two salient points. The first is—

"The protestors are complaining about cuts to welfare spending"—
of course, that is by the Federal Government. The second point is—

"Most of the protestors are ALP supporters representing at least 15 trade unions and a widespread number of community groups."

I find it rather strange that Opposition members should be very critical of what the Queensland Government is doing, when Queensland's spending has been increased by 19 per cent, whereas in Canberra thousands of people are marching on Parliament House complaining about cuts to welfare spending.

Mr McElligott interjected.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: It is not an ad; it is a news article.

I turn now to the comments of the honourable member for Kurilpa (Ms Warner).

Mr Hamill: How does Queensland compare with the other States?

Mr LITTLEPROUD: I will get to that.

The honourable member for Kurilpa made many claims, one of which was that the officers in the Welfare Services Department are afraid to speak out and reveal facts because they may lose their jobs. Her claim was completely unsubstantiated. At some time I would like the honourable member to come forward and reveal some facts to back up her claim.

The honourable member for Kurilpa was highly critical of the Sir Leslie Wilson Youth Centre. She said it was a wastage of young lives. She spoke in most derogatory terms, and then finished up by admitting that she had never been there. I find it difficult to understand how a person can be so ill-informed and so critical, yet can make an admission such as that.

In speaking about the funding to which the honourable member for Ipswich (Mr Hamill) referred a short time ago, I shall quote from page 30 of the prepared speech of the Minister. She said—

"... I am sure that members of the Opposition will parade their same worn-out assertions that Queenslanders fare poorly in welfare expenditure in comparison with other States. It is appropriate for me to point out at this stage that all published interstate comparisons contain difficulties. These are caused by the varying components of the respective welfare systems in each State. Even the comparisons produced by the Grants Commission were limited in certain categories and did not recognise aspects of welfare spending in Queensland and in some of the other States.

This problem of comparisons is further highlighted by the fact that the most recent publication of the Australian Bureau of Statistics, *State and Local Government Finance, Australia 1984-85*, indicates clearly that Queensland spends twice as much per capita as either New South Wales or Victoria."

Mr Hamill: Mr Littleproud—

Mr LITTLEPROUD: The honourable member can make his speech later on.

The member for Windsor (Mr Comben) commented on the payments made to unmarried mothers and implied that the Minister's view was completely against public opinion. I refer honourable members to the most recent issue of *Review of the Institute of Public Affairs*, in which a short article pointed out that over the last decade the number of unmarried mothers has grown at a tremendous rate.

The first point I make is that the Minister highlighted the change in our society and a change in its attitude to marriage and motherhood. The second point is that, by way of interjection, the Minister said she received a number of letters that were overwhelmingly in favour of her stand. The member for Windsor was a long way off the mark.

Obviously changes are taking place in society. I have just spoken about the change in attitude towards unmarried mothers. There have been many changes in attitude with regard to society as a whole. Because of the decline in Australia's economy, the number of people suffering from poverty has increased enormously. That has been caused by high interest rates, increased costs of living and high unemployment. The problem is compounded by the fact that the nation now has a much smaller gross national product, which has to cater for a much larger welfare sector. Obviously that cannot go on. So the Minister is quite correct in saying that there must be a reappraisal. The nation cannot afford to continue supporting the same level of welfare payments with a smaller and smaller gross national product. The obvious thing to do is bring about more productivity and more profitability in the private sector. If that is achieved, the nation will have the capability of supporting those people in need of service.

In the debates on other Estimates and in the Budget debate as a whole, those sorts of policies were expounded by members on this side of the Chamber. We on the Government side are trying to give initiative and a framework to the private sector so that the nation can produce more and will then be able to provide better welfare services. Without doubt, there is a need for those services.

This new approach hinges on two words—I like the words chosen by the Minister—responsibility and accountability. The responsibility is in three parts. Firstly, the Government has a responsibility to provide the services that cannot be provided by the individual or the community, or to supplement those that are being provided by those people; secondly, the community has a responsibility; and, thirdly, individuals have a responsibility.

I am aware of criticism from some members opposite and also from some professional people that the present system of offering subsidies to non-Government groups, which do some excellent work out there in the community, is providing welfare on the cheap. I am also aware that a lecturer of a lass from Chinchilla who is doing a course in welfare believes that welfare has no place for the do-gooders who throw down the apron at 9 o'clock in the morning and go along to do some service work of a welfare nature. I have news for that lecturer. At the present time in Chinchilla, a family support centre is doing tremendous work. Just like anywhere else, Chinchilla has many people who are in trouble. On top of that, the town has a number of people who might be termed hobby farmers. They live on blocks of land of a size that makes it very hard to earn a living. Many of them exist wholly and solely on social welfare. They get into all sorts of problems.

The family support centre started on its own. Because of the good work it has done, and through my representations—although I am a very modest man, I have to say that—I have been able to get some financial help from the Queensland Government. Now a welfare worker has been employed two days a week to help the people in all sorts of ways. I will address that matter later when I deal with some of the subsidy payments that have been made. However, I want to put down the criticism that people who give their time voluntarily under the advice of professionals do not play an important role. They should not be criticised as they are.

I was interested to note the Minister's comment that a review is being undertaken in her department. That is in line with the Government's general policy to consolidate

Government services, make them more accountable and streamline them. I congratulate her on that.

I now refer to an article in *The Australian* on Monday, 15 September, on page 4, headed, "ALP package centres on families, jobs". The article states—

"The Labor Party in Queensland plans to raise the living standards of families if it wins office at the next State election."

The article states further—

"Labor's plan to ease the financial burden on families included establishing State government machinery to monitor prices of key goods and services, he said."

It is interesting that a bit of a furphy, a bit of an ideal, is being bandied around as a State ALP policy, when the reality of ALP policy is that thousands of people are marching in protest today in Canberra. It is pretty hard to reconcile one with the other.

The reality is, of course, that people are extremely hard pressed by the policies of the Federal Government, yet the ALP's counterparts in Queensland claim that they will raise the standard of living of the people of Queensland. I have news for members of the Opposition. I have found that the public is very, very well informed, and will not be duped by such a statement.

The general thrust of the Minister's approach to welfare services is something akin to preventive medicine. I suppose that, in welfare, that means positive, preventive programs. Cognisance must be taken of attitudes. People must be educated and given counselling in various things. Support must be given to those people who fall by the wayside. Over the last three years at least, the Government has a good record in that regard. 1984 was Year of the Family, last year was International Youth Year and this year is the Year for Parents. Obviously, it is an ongoing thing, because the value of those special years is recognised.

It is true to say that society today is much more complex than it used to be. Much more complex work skills are needed to gain employment. People have to be better educated than in the past to follow instructions, use automatic tellers and fill in forms for social welfare, and so on. A certain amount of intelligence is needed to know how to access the various social services that are available. Most definitely, these days people need specialist advice on how to manage their finances.

I assert that the social skills needed these days just to interact with people are more complex than they used to be. That being the case, more and more people tend to fail to cope. They are not failures altogether, but they are failing to cope with some aspects of life. There is a tendency for people to expect that, if the family fails, the Government will automatically pick up the cudgels. That is well and good; that is what welfare is all about. However, there is a danger that the stage is being reached at which parents are abdicating their responsibilities and saying, "Someone else will do it." That someone else may be a good non-Government organisation or a welfare service established by the Government. One only has to attend a sporting function on a week-end to realise how many orphans there are on a Saturday morning. Hundreds of boys and girls are running round with only about 10 or 15 parents present. The member for Townsville (Mr McElligott) would know all about that.

Mr McElligott: They are not all mine.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: No. I recognise that the honourable member is an administrator of sport and would understand the situation, which is akin to the abdication of parental responsibility.

What is needed is not picking up the pieces, but a positive initiative to lead people along the right path. Without doubt, there is in the community a great pro-family feeling. So, these special years are chosen. Some people ask, "What is the real value of these years?" There are two measurable values. In the short term, the promotion is highly visible. There are catchcries, mottos, jingles, advertising and special days. People become enthused and want to be part of the action. That is human nature. However, there is

also a long-term aim. Probably the best example of that is the International Year of Disabled Persons. Honourable members should consider how many organisations are taking cognisance of the fact that disabled people need access to buildings. Special toilets are now fitted out for disabled people. Ramps are being erected leading into buildings and special access is being provided on public transport.

Mr Hamill: How do you reconcile that with the closing-down of the Jefferis-Turner Maternal and Child Health Home in Ipswich?

Mr LITTLEPROUD: I am running out of time. The member for Ipswich can talk about that. I am not aware of the circumstances surrounding that. That home is in the electorate of the member for Ipswich. I am concerned about my electorate.

It is now my great pleasure to spend a few moments on the Year for Parents. That is a very positive undertaking, following upon the Year of the Family and International Youth Year. The aim, of course, is to promote and strengthen the art of parenting.

The concept does not discriminate at all between kinds of parents. No matter what type of parent a person is, it is important that he or she look after and nurture his or her offspring. The kinds of families that have come forward and the ones this program hopes to reach are the normal two-parent families, the single-parent families and unmarried mothers. All those families have been embraced by this positive program, and the Government is implementing it in order to help those families.

Not long ago, I was listening to a lady speaking on the subject of motherhood and I thought that what she said was very relevant to the subject of parenting. She said that a teacher, after 12 years of education, receives three years of professional training. The teacher takes a child for one year and by the end of that year is supposed to have taught the child. On the other hand, the parent has no professional training whatsoever but after 18 years is supposed to have reared the child. That comparison draws attention to the fact that something should be done to provide formal training for parents.

Most of the training that parents receive comes from their mother or grandmother, but perhaps in this Anglo-Saxon society not as much support is given to families as is given in the southern European communities through their extended families. Parenting is a skill that is passed on. The Department of Welfare Services can see that there is room for the Government to play a supporting role in the provision of the right kinds of attitudes and counselling in order to avoid the failures with parenting that occur today and with which the Government is concerned.

The Year for Parents was put together at the end of last year by a State planning committee under the chairmanship of Senator Lady Bjelke-Petersen. The deputy chairman was Mr Alan Sherlock, OBE, of the Scout Association of Australia; the co-ordinator was Mr Alan Pettigrew, Under Secretary of the Department of Welfare Services; and the members were Mrs Mylene Carrick, of the Department of Children's Services; Rev. Paul McLachlan, MBE, the director of the media office of the Catholic Archdiocese of Brisbane; Mrs Elaine O'Brien, of Toowoomba; Mr Bob McKeon, of Reed Stenhouse Limited of Creek Street, Brisbane; Mrs Janette Lockhart Gibson, of the Girl Guides Association of Queensland; Mr Bruce Hawkins, of the City Heart Traders in the Queen Street Mall; Mrs Anna Bauers, representing the Cairns area; Mrs Margot Delaney, representing Mackay; the Rev. Ray Hunt, who is moderator of the Uniting Church; and myself, as vice-president. That committee has met monthly throughout the year and represents all kinds of regional communities within the State of Queensland.

It is this committee's role to organise the promotions and distribute funds that are made available. A sum in the region of \$98,000 is to be distributed to various organisations throughout the State. These organisations must be able to prove to the committee that they are able to responsibly use the funds to achieve what is required by the committee in the Year for Parents. The funds must be used for seminars, counselling, community centres and things of that nature.

The different kinds of bodies that are participating in this program consist of the church groups throughout the State, parents of the disabled and nursing mothers. The Noah's Ark Centre in Cairns is being provided with a parent-counselling scheme that includes a video machine and cameras to film the interaction between the parents and their children in order that comments can be made on this interaction to improve parenting. Various family support programs are being run by the churches. On the Darling Downs there is an education group that wanted to include the parents in order to provide them with a skill so that they could become more involved as members of p. and c. associations. It is a pretty wide range.

A great deal of co-operation has been received from a large number of organisations throughout Queensland that have offered their time, expertise and money to ensure the success of this program, which was firstly tested by public opinion and received unanimous support. Since then, *Footprints*, a television program screened by Channel 0, will be going to air explaining the program, and Radio 4BK and *The Courier-Mail* will be combining at the end of this year to organise a great festival to be held at the QE II Stadium, much the same as was held for the Year for the Family in 1983-84. All the time, Greater Union Theatres runs advertisements in all its theatres throughout Queensland regarding the program, and the City Heart Traders Association is putting together a gala day to be held in the near future. In addition there are special events such as Kids Week at Work and Senior Citizens Week, and at the RNA grounds there was a display with Pinocchio. This display was interesting because there were two stories. One was the fable of Pinocchio; the other was aimed at parents, whereby parents were given an insight into some of the problems that are expected in life, just like those that young Pinocchio caused for his father. The parents were given some kind of advice as to how they could overcome the kinds of problems that they will face.

A float has been travelling round the State and stopping at various shows. It will appear at Warana. Earlier, I spoke about the long-term effects of leaving decisions for the future. At the last meeting with the State planning committee, which was held on Thursday, it was decided that a suggestion would be made to the State Education Department that parent-counselling be introduced in secondary schools. I am not talking about sex education; perhaps it is an extension of human relations. It can be discussed with the Minister for Education.

Mr Hamill: During daylight hours?

Mr LITTLEPROUD: I would imagine that it would be during school hours. That would have to be negotiated.

I have referred to the Year for Parents. I would now like to make some comments about the department's community grants and subsidy program. The welfare policy of the National Party Government is not to establish an enormous welfare bureaucracy with layer upon layer of public servants checking on each other; rather, it is to encourage and support the voluntary sector by a series of grants and subsidies. This philosophy has a simple basis, which is that people nearest the grassroots know much better the needs of their area and that non-Government organisations are able to be much more flexible in meeting targets than is a large bureaucracy, which, of necessity, must be guided by rules and regulations. That leads to inevitable rigidities that are not experienced by voluntary organisations. In its simplest form, the philosophy of child welfare as practised by the Department of Welfare Services is changing from being a department of last resort, which sweeps children into State care when all else fails, to one in which, through the grants and subsidies program, the emphasis is now being placed on trying to assist community organisations. The Government is trying to stop all else from failing.

A number of programs were mentioned earlier, including the Support Accommodation Assistance Program.

Time expired.

Mr McELLIGOTT (Townsville) (4.12 p.m.): It is interesting to follow the honourable member for Condamine. The Opposition would agree with some of his calls for Government assistance towards providing resources to assist families in Queensland, given the horrible job that the present Government has done with the economy of Queensland. I will refer to that again later in my speech.

I commence my contribution to the debate on the Welfare Services Estimates by reminding the Committee that yet another year has gone by with still no sign of the replacement of the Children's Services Act. Of course, the former Minister for Welfare Services produced a draft family and community development Bill, which was accompanied by considerable publicity. The draft Bill took some seven years in its development, and it looks as though it has returned to the obscurity from whence it came.

When the draft Bill was published, I was the Opposition's welfare spokesman and I wrote a very detailed submission containing 46 recommendations, including substantial amendments. As this parliamentary session draws to a close, I wish to have recorded some of the comments contained in that submission. I am sure that they will be of assistance to the incoming Labor Minister for Welfare Services.

The Children's Services Act was enacted more than 20 years ago, and is now seen to be out of date. Its replacement is well and truly overdue. I believe that the Minister of the day erred in attempting to cover too much ground in the overly complex family and community development Bill.

The existing Act sets out the statutory responsibilities of the Government, and the Department of Children's Services carries out those responsibilities. In most cases the department is seen as being all powerful, with right always on the side of the department.

The draft family and community development Bill, by its very title, sought to give an impression of flexibility and social awareness. However, it fell well short of achieving that objective.

The title of the draft family and community development Bill was misleading. Although most of the clauses relating to child protection were welcomed, the Bill contained nothing new as far as support for the family was concerned. This is where I find myself in agreement with the member for Condamine. He made the point that Governments need to look at providing those support services and the legislative back-up to go with those services.

The Minister of the day, Mr Muntz, in his second-reading speech on the draft family and community development Bill, said—

“Increasingly it has been recognised that the provision of services to support the family unit is not the sole proviso of Government. It is a responsibility that is shared with individuals, the non-Government organisations and the community generally.”

I notice that that theme is repeated by the Director of Children's Services in his annual report. It is extremely doubtful that non-Government organisations and the community can do more.

It has been estimated that volunteers in Queensland work the equivalent of 30 000 full-time jobs. The proposal to include the voluntary sector in a partnership approach to the delivery of welfare services is welcome, but it must be a genuine two-way commitment. The draft Bill spelt out what the voluntary sector could do for the Government. However, there was no reciprocal commitment.

It must therefore be of some shame to the present Government—and indeed the former coalition Governments—that they have been unable to introduce child-protection legislation applicable to today's environment.

Mr Lee: Why?

Mr McELLIGOTT: Because the Government does not have the intestinal fortitude or the fear for the community that requires the introduction of appropriate legislation.

Child abuse is the cause of increasing concern. No honourable member would doubt that child abuse is the social problem of this day and age and that it requires the attention of Government. However, it has been largely ignored by the inability of the Government to introduce appropriate legislation and resources to combat that scourge in our society.

An urgent need exists to provide permanency-planning for the victims of child abuse. Under the present laws a child is more likely than not to be returned to its natural parents, although the risk of further abuse remains.

I am aware of a case in which a child was so severely battered that it was left with a shunt in the brain, and yet an application to have that child returned to its natural parents was successful. I am extremely concerned that that child will come to further harm.

The Department of Children's Services is powerless to act, because the present legislation permits that department to recommend temporary foster care only. In the particular case of child abuse to which I referred, the department intended to hand the child back to the natural mother for a trial period in anticipation that the court would find in favour of the natural mother. There is nothing wrong with that. However, the mother in that case needed only to behave herself for a few weeks and she would have had the child returned to her. That is the type of case to which I refer when I say that there is a need for family-type legislation. Resources and services should be available to assist that mother to overcome whatever problems motivated her to become a child-abuser before exercising that right to have the child returned to her.

That particular case was not a minor case of child abuse, because the child involved suffered a broken leg, cracked ribs and severe head injuries. The Director of Children's Services is well aware of that case, and I will be interested to hear the outcome.

The courts must be enabled to make permanent arrangements for the protection of abused children. Apart from the risk of further injury, children suffer major emotional disturbances by being taken from a stable and caring foster home and returned to the source of abuse.

I strongly support calls for the community to take a more active interest in reporting suspected cases of child abuse. However, there is a huge responsibility on the Government to ensure that the necessary legislative powers and resources exist to provide permanent protection for abused children.

I also query what has happened to the plans that were announced by Mr Muntz during 1984 under which the Government was going to take tougher action—as Mr Muntz described it—against criminal children.

In December 1984 Mr Muntz stated that the Government was proposing new sentencing options that were to be implemented by a new juvenile court. The fact is that the family and community development Bill, which was to provide for those initiatives, has never eventuated. The 20-year-old Children's Services Act—as insensitive as it is—still applies.

Under the present legislation delinquent children can only be charged with criminal offences or exposure to moral danger. Given the lack of alternatives, the courts are releasing offenders or alternatively feeding them into a system that will almost certainly turn them into hard-nosed criminals.

Successive Ministers—both Liberal and National Party Ministers—have made grand statements about what they intended to do, yet they were incapable of providing the resources or legislation to enable those proposals to be implemented.

Juvenile crime has reached epidemic proportions in some suburbs of Brisbane. However, after seven years on the drafting board, the new Bill is as far away as ever. The recent State Budget provides no additional resources to deal with the problem.

Mr Muntz was wrong in his assumption that clearing rubbish and cutting grass would teach a child citizenship. The new Bill, as originally drafted, envisages programs

and services to assist not only the child but also, where necessary, his or her family. I believe that programs and services such as that are critical if the Government is to come to grips with the increasing crime rate amongst children. Those programs and services cannot be provided by an already overworked Department of Children's Services.

I point out that the present National Party Government and the previous coalition Governments have all failed to introduce any family legislation at all. The word "family" is well and truly over-used in propaganda distributed by the National Party.

While recognising the importance of the family, the Labor Party also recognises the pressures and problems that lead to the break-down of that unit. In order to highlight those problems and pressures, the Labor Party sponsored a forum on 10 November 1984 entitled *The Family in Crisis*. The director of the Australian Institute of Family Studies, Dr Don Edgar, had this to say in his keynote address—

"The debate about family policy in this country needs turning on its head. A lot of rot is talked about in the name of family policy and it is time to call a halt." My main point is that the personal desire for a satisfactorily family life is still strong, but the social supports are lacking.

He continued—

"We have in Australia at present too many families on the brink of disaster. We must devise better ways of providing them with positive support."

Something like 84 per cent of all Australians still live in families, but only 6 per cent live in families that contain both parents and offspring. Close to 15 per cent of families are couples only, 10 per cent have one parent only and 15 per cent of Australians are not living in families at all. The break-up of that 15 per cent is: 6 per cent live alone, 5 per cent live with unrelated others, and 4 per cent live in non-private dwellings. There is still a strong affirmation of marriage. A study of those aged between 18 and 34 undertaken by the institute indicated that 85 per cent agreed that marriage provides love, warmth and happiness, whereas 75 per cent agreed that marriage is for life. But there is uncertainty—a crisis of confidence and direction. Young Australians want stability and satisfaction through family life but are uncertain whether they can achieve it or, once it has been achieved, sustain it for very long.

In that same survey, conducted by the Australian Institute of Family Studies, 41 per cent said that there are very few happy marriages today. Good reasons exist for expressions of fear and doubt. Since the 1960s, a rapid rise has taken place in the divorce rate. It has been estimated that 40 per cent of current marriages will end in divorce. Over 60 per cent of those involve dependent children. Between 1976 and 1984, 465 765 children were affected by their parents' divorce.

Since 1976, there has been a 29.4 per cent increase in one-parent families. Of those, 86 per cent are headed by women, only 39 per cent of whom are in the paid labour force. Most of those women live on the supporting parent's benefit, which is well below the Henderson poverty line. I stress that I am talking about children. Poverty seems to have taken on a new face—that of female-headed families with dependent children.

The story does not end there. The face of poverty affects many intact marriages with children. Since the 1978-79 income survey, a 54.4 per cent increase has occurred in the number of couples with children living below the poverty line. Add to that the concentration of unemployment in certain families and there is a scenario for increasing family break-down. A woman married to an unemployed man is five times more likely to be unemployed herself. How do they survive?

To cite Don Edgar again—

"The central 'family policy' question to be asked is: Why, if the community is prepared to provide economic support after a family has broken up, are we not prepared to help prevent dissolution in the first place by making available sufficient financial and service support when they are most vulnerable?"

We know those points of vulnerability coincide with early marriage and early birth, the middle years when the costs of children are greatest, and the stage where youth searching for independence via employment are likely to cause family stress and where the 'empty nest' syndrome begins to have its impact on women. So we need in place programs to stimulate employment, to guarantee viable family income where employment is unavailable, better training and retraining for youth and women, provision of low cost accommodation (especially to facilitate access to children following divorce) and better provision for flexible child care and joint parenting through leave provisions which recognise both parents' dual responsibilities for earning income and rearing children."

The central political question to be asked is, "Where are the family programs after three years of National Party Government in Queensland?" That was a period which included, incidentally, a Year of the Family and a Year for Parents. The legacy of three years of National Party Government has increased financial pressure on Queensland families through massive electricity charges, motor vehicle registration fees, third-party insurance and State Government charges generally. In spite of the fact that the Government has boasted about increased efficiency in the electricity industry and the railways, no reduction in charges for electricity or in rail fares has taken place. Instead loss of jobs has resulted.

Where is the incentive for families that is provided by this Government, which consistently returns figures indicating the highest level of unemployment in the nation and has failed the test of a whole range of economic indicators? Honourable members should compare its record with the positive family policies announced recently by the Leader of the Opposition (Nev Warburton) on behalf of the Australian Labor Party.

I make the point to honourable members that pressures bearing down on families are financial. The rhetoric of the National Party counts for nothing when families face poverty because of unemployment. Where is the incentive for people who live in rented Housing Commission accommodation and are met with increased rentals when they embark on initiatives to increase family income?

I have been informed of circumstances that I find difficult to believe. I hope that they are not true. I understand that a policy implemented by the Housing Commission nominates the tenant as the highest income-earner in the family. A series of events led to the daughter of a family earning more income than the supporting mother. Tenancy in the accommodation was transferred to the daughter. The point was made to me that, although it had not occurred, if the daughter and the mother were to have a dispute, the daughter would have been able to order the mother from the home. Fortunately, that did not come to pass. I reiterate that I hope the story is not true. I put forward that example to highlight the ridiculous outcomes of such a policy being applied to tenancy of Housing Commission accommodation.

How can the families of Queensland people have faith in a Government that embraces policies espoused by the New Right, advocating abolition of recreation leave loadings and penalty rates and envisaging a return to the industrial jungle? The Queensland Government is the very same Government that disputes attempts made by the Hawke Labor Government to provide a fair and equitable taxation system. It is interesting to note, in the context of welfare, that family allowances have fallen significantly since 1976 after inflation has been taken into account. According to a forecast made by the Brotherhood of St Laurence, by 1987 the value of family allowances will have fallen by 37 per cent, whereas the total tax revenue that is owing to the Federal Treasury exceeds \$3 billion and represents nearly 24 per cent of total collectable tax. That amount represents tax payments outstanding—those that have been assessed as due and payable but have not been paid. I reiterate that it presently exceeds \$3 billion and represents nearly 24 per cent of collectable tax revenue. I assure the Committee that very little of that amount would be owed by ordinary Queensland families.

At the State conference of the Queensland Local Government Association held in Toowoomba recently, the president (Sir Alby Abbott) stated that he was concerned about

local authorities becoming increasingly involved in the provision of welfare services to their respective communities. If that statement is correct, it represents a step backwards for local government in Queensland. I represent an electorate that comprises substantial areas of the city of Townsville and all of the city of Thuringowa. It would be difficult to imagine two local authorities more opposite in their views, particularly about welfare services.

Over a period, the Townsville City Council has developed a very efficient and well-resourced system of providing welfare services, which has been something of a shining light in local government circles. In contrast to that, the city of Thuringowa is what I regard as an old-fashioned council that rejects the role of local government in the provision of welfare services. Because it is my responsibility to represent both areas, I am easily able to make the distinction between the level of welfare services. As I move round, I observe the level of desperation in people who need welfare assistance and live in Thuringowa compared with those who live in Townsville. The people of Thuringowa do not know where to obtain assistance, because the resources and personnel have not been provided, whereas the people who live in Townsville not only know of the existence of the services but also know where the centres are located.

Mr Hamill: Thuringowa does not descend to those sorts of basic family needs.

Mr McELLIGOTT: Thuringowa is administered by an elderly gentleman who has nineteenth-century ideas. He is also a very keen supporter of the National Party. I suggest that that style of local government representation is on the way out. I also have to say that the President of the Queensland Local Government Association, Sir Alby Abbott, does not impress me with his views on the needs of a modern local authority area.

Mr Hamill: Which way did the Thuringowa representatives vote in relation to the 17½ per cent holiday loading?

Mr McELLIGOTT: The council tried to take that away from its workers. I would think that the chairman, in particular, would be one of those who would support most of the policies of the New Right and would seek to reduce the real income of Queensland workers.

Leaving that to one side, I would like the Minister in her response to indicate what initiatives, if any, the State Government is prepared to take in encouraging local authorities such as Thuringowa, which have no welfare network whatever in place at this time, to do something about it. In that area there is a crying need. As the Leader of the House (Mr Wharton), who is here at the moment, would know, there is quite a large Housing Commission involvement in Thuringowa these days. It has also very many supporting mothers with young children who desperately need all sorts of welfare and other social assistance. For example, the provision of recreation service through the Queensland Recreation Council is non-existent in Thuringowa. I would hope that officers of the Minister's department and officers of the Queensland Recreation Council could go out into such areas and encourage the local authority to accept sponsorship of activities of the community type. In local government there is a feeling that welfare services can be very expensive and provide no visible sign of return to the tax-payers. That concept is erroneous.

My impression is that, because of its efficient administration, the Townsville City Council has been able in fact to obtain substantial grants from both Governments, but particularly the Federal Government, for programs that have benefited the people of Townsville. I suggest that, per head of population, Townsville has been one of the most successful applicants for CEP funding, for example. That is because of its long-term involvement in the field of welfare generally and the way in which council officers have brought their expertise to bear in making submissions. Again, I suggest most strongly to the Minister that she look at some of those expanding local authority areas to which people are being forced by suburban expansion, facing the predicaments of poor public transport and few community facilities generally.

Mr WHITE (Redcliffe) (4.32 p.m.): I take this opportunity to speak in the debate on the Welfare Services Estimates and, at the same time, thank those people who are working in that portfolio which, when one thinks about it, is one that deals with the children and other people in the community who really need care and attention. Any society—any Government—is judged by the way in which it deals with its young people and with those people who are in need and are not able to assist themselves. Fundamentally, what should be debated today is where welfare is going, not only in terms of service delivery but also the whole philosophy. My view is that over the last 50 years, the proponents of reform, well-intentioned they may have been, have looked to Government and large institutions to take over the role of family welfare. Welfare, as it has been practised in this country, has actually increased and it has, in my view, perpetuated poverty, often isolated people, created an under class and in many cases has even weakened and destroyed the self-respect and dignity of families and individuals.

Tax-payers now seem to look to Government to ensure that moneys are spent wisely and without waste. The community is tired of transferring earned income when the results are often seen to be counter-productive. Over the years that has been seen in many facets of welfare.

When one speaks to people working in the welfare area, one realises that there is a great need to have a greater area of consumer control, to increase choices available to families and so return to families greater control and influence over wider community services which relate to them. By that I simply mean that big government and big welfare should be departed from and the Government should move into the area of having services based at a community level that will work to support and help families.

In that way agencies will be encouraged to respond directly to consumer needs, to build upon the strength of families and to work with them, rather than in competition. Over the years the innate thinking in Government departments seems to have been that the departments know best and the Government knows best. There has always seemed to be some scepticism or doubt in the minds of many well-intentioned people in Government that community agencies do not have the wherewithall or the ability to deliver the service.

I believe that an effort should be made to ensure that all Government funding of services is more flexible and more responsive to the changing and often urgent needs of families instead of reflecting some passing social theory or philosophy. That is what the community has had to put up with over the years. Fundamentally, the family has to be supported. The family is the basis of the society. We in the Liberal Party believe in the importance of the family institution and that the civic standards that a free society assumes should have their origin in traditional family ideals. Unless society has strong families who subscribe to traditional values, it will not be stable. Some may say that that is rather old fashioned, but I think more and more people today are returning to, or looking for, what might perhaps be called some of those conservative values—I do not mean that in a political sense—by which families look after their own and stay together.

The family role is separate, of course, from the autonomous functioning of the individual. Therefore, it is desirable that policies for families should be separated from policies for individuals—for example, policies for women and so forth. Family roles for both men and women are best considered in terms of a family policy in which the issues are focused upon the family as a whole rather than the individual.

I wish to take a little time to speak about the importance of the family, because I really believe that that is where society has gone off the rails. What society today is struggling to come to grips with is how to keep the family together, how to support that family and how families accept the traditional responsibilities that they have had over the years.

Mr D'Arcy: You realise that as a former Minister you have quite a bit to add to the debate. The Minister is so frightened of your contribution that she has run from the Chamber.

Mr WHITE: I thank the member for Woodridge. I am disappointed that the Minister is not here. Perhaps we should give her the benefit of the doubt; perhaps she has to attend to some more pressing matters.

Nevertheless, the family remains the most basic and enduring unit of social organisation in this country. The nation's character has been built on it. The nation's ethos, loyalty and aspirations have been built in that way. Yet today, wherever one turns, families are under attack. I will consider the taxation changes that have been made over the years. I was grateful to receive publications from the Australian Catholic Social Welfare Commission, one of which pointed out quite clearly the deteriorating economic position of families over the years. All one has to do is look at the graph supplied by that commission to see what has happened. I quote from the publication—

“Most Australian taxpayers with dependants, especially single income families, will suffer a decline in real income by 1988, despite the proposed new tax scales devised after the 1985 Tax Summit. This decline will continue the deterioration in the relative economic position of Australian taxpayers with dependants that has occurred since World War II.”

Whilst all this time the deductible allowances and taxation benefits of families have been declining, the social welfare bureaucracies have had an enormous escalation in growth.

I well remember the great debate in Queensland about women's refuges. At that time many people—particularly the media—seemed to think that Queensland should have as many women's refuges as are provided in the southern States. At that time New South Wales had approximately 170 or 180 women's refuges, yet in many cases they were run by feminist-type social workers who seemed to be more interested in getting a job for themselves and building their own empire than looking after the women in real need.

I come back to my point about dealing with family problems. If Government-funded programs of that nature are escalated, very often contact is lost with the communities. Where community organisations in Queensland are involved—be it the St Vincent de Paul Society, the Salvation Army, the Save the Children Fund or whatever—one finds a greater deal of commitment, and the program is far more efficient.

Is it all very well for the Opposition to be critical of the Government—

Mr Davis: Welfare on the cheap.

Mr WHITE: The member for Brisbane Central can call it welfare on the cheap. I call it welfare for the needy.

That is what the Government should be thinking about. One has only to look at the abuse of the social security system to see what is going on in the general abuse of the welfare system.

I come back to my point about taxation. It is perhaps the most critical thing that families have to contend with today. Families are under great strain. Much of that strain is brought about by economic considerations. In many families, both parents have to work. I have no objection to both parents working if they have to do that to keep their family together. However, if the taxation system provided enough incentive so that the mother could stay at home and do the traditional job of looking after the children, particularly when they are of tender age, many of those families would prefer to have only one parent working.

In recent times Federal Government policy has exacerbated the situation and brought about a decline in the economic position of tax-payers and pensioners with dependants when compared with single tax-payers without dependants. That decline has reached such a critical point that many families are finding the task of raising children a severe financial burden. As I said, mothers are being forced to take paid work to make ends meet.

In a nation like Australia, which is a young country with enormous resources, everything possible should be done to encourage the development of families, particularly through the development of taxation systems that discriminate actively in favour of the family. I have always been a great supporter—indeed it has been the Liberal/National policy federally—of a split income-tax policy, which gives another incentive in that regard.

I come back to the portfolio that is administered by Mrs Chapman. It covers a wide range of activities. Probably one of the better things that happened in recent times was the hiving off of the corrective services aspect, namely probation and parole, from the portfolio. When dealing with a portfolio that involves people, it is impossible to be able to cope with that additional work-load. That separation has been an excellent measure.

I welcome the increase in funding that the Minister received in the last Budget. Many of those who have taken an active interest are concerned about the ability of the Department of Children's Services to cope with its work-load.

I welcome the funding that has been provided for dealing with child abuse. This is a very difficult subject with which to come to grips. I do not believe that child abuse or the sexual exploitation of children is any worse today than it was in the past. Today it is just that more incidents of abuse and molestation of children are being reported. That is putting a tremendous strain on the department. On many occasions I have said that in that portfolio it felt as though one were standing at the bottom of a cliff tearing around the place putting little band-aids on everybody. I welcome the ongoing attitude of the department in its move towards these preventive measures in welfare.

Australia will never ever have the resources or the ability to deal with the social problems in its communities if it continues to head in the direction in which it is headed at the moment. The impetus for family break-down is to some degree related to economic considerations, and also to a lowering of standards or morals—if you want to use those words. People have not accepted the responsibility of parenthood as they did in years gone by. I believe that that attitude is changing. The last two decades have seen a great deal of social destruction in the community, when, because of the attitude of some people, opting out of one's responsibilities became not only fashionable, but also mandatory.

This Government has to get into the business of public awareness. The public are aware of what has occurred over the last couple of decades, and this has shown up in child abuse. Moves have to be made towards family life education, call it what you like. Queensland's youngsters, male and female, have to be educated in school and must understand that marriage is not a temporary contract and that the procreation of children is not a fun thing.

There has been much discussion in regard to single parents. Many people have complained rather bitterly to me and said, "We have accepted our responsibility. We have worked hard and raised our children. We get no incentive or thanks from the Government." I am not decrying single parent families. Many of them are in that situation through no fault of their own, but nevertheless, substantial welfare assistance exists for them which is not available for two parent families who are bringing their children up in a traditional manner.

The way in which many European families, particularly in the Italian and Greek communities, raise their families should be looked at. They have always had a strong belief in the extended family. Instead of Australians putting their elderly folk away in homes, they could take a leaf out of the book of those people who have come to Australia from Europe and who encourage their parents, grandparents, uncles and aunts to be a part of the family itself.

The Minister has a difficult job and it is nice to see that there are some changes for the good occurring in the portfolio. I welcome the recent changes in regard to

adoption. Because of the great demand this is not an easy area, but it is pleasing to see that changes are gradually occurring.

The Queensland Recreation Council goes from strength to strength. It conducts a very healthy and positive program and is encouraging people of all ages to be involved in it.

I was particularly privileged to be associated with the development of new recreational programs for the disabled. The activity that was commenced in 1981 has been continued. It has been very helpful and supportive to the disabled.

I convey my appreciation to the Minister and her staff, particularly the senior officers, who have been very helpful to the people in my electorate. The Department of Children's Services recently received some additional assistance in my electorate. Each child care officer is currently carrying a case-load of about 30. Each day, about 20 new cases knock on the door of the Department of Children's Services. It is the old story of every officer being under pressure. Unfortunately, social problems exists in that area.

Mrs HARVEY (Greenslopes) (4.50 p.m.): I rise to support the Minister in her presentation of the Estimates of the Department of Welfare Services, the Department of Youth and the Department of Ethnic Affairs. Much general criticism is levelled at the Queensland Government's apparent lack of concern for the provision of welfare services. In a recently published book edited by Allan Patience and titled *The Bjelke-Petersen Premiership 1968-1983*, Professor Edna Chamberlain, retiring professor of social work at the University of Queensland, made the following point—

“Consistent with the Bjelke-Petersen Government's ethos is a formulation of welfare based on the premise that there are two natural channels through which an individual's needs are met: the private markets and the family. Only when these break down should social welfare institutions come into play and then only temporarily.”

Professor Chamberlain goes on to say—

“An alternative model sees social welfare as a positive force for social development operating outside the market system. . . This model gives priority to programs aimed at re-distribution in command over resources and the development of community processes for identifying need and the generation of action for change.”

Professor Chamberlain concludes this section—

“Sometimes there have been glimpses in new programs of the model mentioned above, however, these glimpses often prove to be mirages.”

While it is not my purpose to be too critical of Professor Chamberlain, who is coming to the end of a long and distinguished career in social work in this State, I make the point that, like the work of so many academics, her comments are just a little off key and away from reality. The welfare philosophy of the Queensland Government seeks to encourage individuals to be responsible for themselves, to provide them with information and to encourage the development of community self-help. Government is not concerned with promoting big welfare, which encourages dependence and all the apparatus of inspection and regulation of the socialist state.

I note with some interest that Professor Chamberlain, in her article, refers to the paper published by the honourable member for South Brisbane, *Welfare Services: Queensland's Forgotten Problem*. The honourable member has slipped back into the Chamber.

Mr Fouras: Yes.

Mrs HARVEY: I am glad that he has returned. He can listen to what I have to say.

Mr Fouras's paper was disappointing in that it provided no new analysis; no new suggestion of an approach to welfare needs. As Professor Chamberlain said—

“His theme. . . seems to be more of the same.”

Professor Chamberlain also commented—

“His theme . . . elicits scepticism from those interests in welfare who believe that a fundamental analysis of the causes of disadvantage is a prerequisite for the determination of welfare objectives.”

The paper embodies the cargo-cult mentality referred to by my colleague the honourable member for Balonne (Mr Neal) in his speech on Supply on 2 September 1986.

At a time when the economy is in trouble, when the Commonwealth Treasurer in his guide to the 1986-87 Commonwealth Budget is saying, “The economic facts of life demand that this reduction in Australia’s income must be matched by a cut in Australia’s spending,” the Labor Party is urging an increase in spending.

The Australian Financial Review on 5 September makes the same point and refers to the need for the Federal Government to cut costs in the welfare area and speaks of the need to “pare down the deficit in the Federal Budget, particularly the burgeoning costs of Social Security”.

The Queensland National Party Government, for good economic and philosophical reasons, is pursuing a welfare policy of encouraging individuals to be responsible for themselves, providing them with information and encouraging the development of community self-help.

Time and time again, I have spoken about the whole idea of bringing in hero figures to save individuals on a one-to-one basis. I have continually maintained that it would not matter how many social workers were provided at whatever expense to provide a one-to-one social-work basis, people cannot be forced to be saved. They must at least meet the social workers half way. Those people must be in a position in which they want to improve their lot. Somehow and in some way that co-operation must be achieved. The Government cannot insist on helping those people who do not want to be helped. Therefore, the Government must come up with a program that goes far beyond providing welfare workers for every person in trouble. Community-oriented programs, which entice people to seek help, to meet organisations half way, to start admitting their problems and seeking avenues of help that go beyond a one-to-one hero basis and into a support situation, must be introduced in order that people can be part of a wider community in which they can start building their own self-worth and can start developing as part of a group of citizens that has a direction.

The argument that has been put forward constantly by the Opposition in relation to providing more and more social workers does not stand up, nor does the research. Numerous articles have been published on the fact that people must be organised in order to provide long-lasting and enduring help.

A person who is isolated—as are most people who have social problems—and who has low self-worth and associated problems does not need someone to come in and tell him that he is making a real hash of his life and that that person will save him. People in that position need someone who will guide them generally through the bad times and help them to help themselves, so that they feel in control of their lives and not that they have handed their lives over to an expert. Ultimately the whole program must be handed back to the individual or the family. Where does that leave the people involved? It leaves them feeling inadequate in the first place, because someone had to take over their lives, and they still feel inadequate at the end of it, because they could not manage for themselves. I have always maintained that that is not the answer, and I continue to maintain that belief.

I turn now to child abuse. In my speech during the Supply debate of 2 September 1986, I referred to the Child Abuse Research and Education Committee, which I chair. The thrust of the first initiative of that committee—the publication of a booklet designed for teachers—was prevention. The booklet was aimed at providing a handy guide to teachers so that they could be made aware of child abuse and could take quick steps in order that a child could be supported and further abuse prevented.

Mr Palaszcuk: You were taken for a ride. It was edited severely.

Mrs HARVEY: If the honourable member for Archerfield believes that he could have done a better job, I suggest that he write the next publication. I invite his contribution.

Child abuse in both Queensland and the other States is on the increase. The reported cases of child abuse in Queensland increased by 122 per cent during 1984-85. According to the report of the Director of Children's Services for the financial year 1985-86, the incidence of child abuse during that period was 62 per cent higher than that for the previous year. The number of substantiated cases of child abuse was 2 400, compared with 1 480 during the previous year.

It is my understanding that the number of child-abuse cases has increased at the same rate in other States. In New South Wales the figure is approximately 65 per cent over that for the previous year.

The community needs to undertake new initiatives in order to prevent, rather than react to, the problem. There has already been a considerable amount of emotional reaction. The Government must now settle down and start dealing with the problem on the basis that it requires a logical approach rather than the sheer emotionalism that has been shown so far.

The purpose of the Queensland Centre for Prevention of Child Abuse, which was recently established, is to encourage the development of programs and initiatives that are aimed at the prevention of child abuse.

Prevention means the implementing of strategies that attack the root cause of child abuse rather than its effects. In its way, the booklet prepared by my CARE Committee was consistent with that aim and was targeted towards prevention.

I was very pleased to read in the report of the director that the department was using anatomically correct dolls to assist children who were being interviewed when sexual abuse was suspected. Honourable members will surely be aware of the trauma that would be evoked in children if they had to give explicit descriptions of sexual molestation committed on them. The use of the dolls will enable children to point to certain areas of the doll and help them to express themselves clearly without a great deal of embarrassment when they are telling the story. It is to be hoped that eventually the courts will see fit to accept a child's explanation with the anatomically correct dolls as part of the child's evidence, rather than requiring the child to go into explicit and painful detail.

Child abuse is a problem for society, but I repeat that the community needs to undertake new initiatives to prevent it rather than to react to the problem. Many children who are neglected or abused are placed with foster parents. As at 30 June 1986, approximately 1 700 children were placed in 1 050 foster homes.

Foster parents are to be both admired for and congratulated on their dedication to children. The department's reliance on foster parents is a clear example of sharing with the community. In the community, able and dedicated people exist who can provide for the physical and emotional needs of children. The Government plays its part by paying maintenance for those children. The community resource provides the expertise and the care.

I have the honour of being the patron of the Queensland Foster Parents Association and I take this opportunity to express my personal gratitude, the gratitude of the Minister and that of the Government to those people who have hearts bigger than most and who take on and perform a very difficult task in the most excellent manner. Those people are people without whom the community could not manage, because children, regardless of their problems, will always need love and affection. Those special people have hearts big enough to take in extra children, children with problems, and provide them with that warmth that they so desperately need.

I now wish to congratulate the Honourable the Minister on her responsibility for Senior Citizens Week. The first Senior Citizens Week in Queensland is to be held between 6 and 10 October and the theme of the week is "Age Is No Barrier", an appropriate and commendable theme that has two aspects, like the two sides of a coin.

The first is that honourable members sometimes overlook the fact that the aged can provide a repository of wisdom for young people and the community at large. Life experience should not be ignored, stored away somewhere and regarded as irrelevant. Age should not be a barrier to our drawing upon the wisdom of our senior citizens to help us cope with the problems of the day.

The other side of the coin is that the community owes something to its senior citizens, and every effort should be made to provide suitable facilities and experiences for them and include them in all community activities. Quite simply, age should be no barrier, because the elderly have something to offer us and we owe the elderly respect and care.

I hope that Senior Citizens Week will be celebrated every year and that its emphasis on the mutual interdependence of today's generation and our senior citizens will continue to be developed.

In my own electorate of Greenslopes there are very many elderly people, and I never cease to be impressed by the contribution that they make to the community and to be somewhat saddened because, in some cases, their potential to contribute goes untapped.

In the community centre recently opened in Queen Alexandra Home, which is unique in Australia, there will be a free, open venue, a drop-in centre for all age groups from various sections of the community to mix, mingle and integrate and share experiences, talents and interests. Senior citizens will be more than welcome at the community centre, and I hope that through the community centre they will be able to play their proper part in the community at large.

I thank the Premier for his personal interest in the setting-up of the community centre and providing a building that is historically significant to the area. I thank him also for assisting in organising the restoration of the building and then coming out and opening the building and mixing with the thousands of people who attended the opening of that wonderful project.

I have great pleasure in congratulating the Minister for Welfare Services, Youth and Ethnic Affairs on her presentation of her Estimates, and I congratulate the officers of her department on the efforts that have been made to achieve a high standard of well-being throughout the community. These efforts are consistent with the policy adopted by the Government to promote independence and to encourage the community to play its part in the provision of welfare needs.

Time and time again, honourable members listen to the knockers. I point out that a portfolio concerned with welfare could engage in any amount of work yet never provide enough assistance. It does not matter how much is spent or how much is done; it will never be enough, because a modern society will always require more assistance and the provision of more services as time goes by. That is the way in which our society functions; it requires care to be offered and it requires assistance to be given. I am sure that all honourable members recognise that fact and recognise also that limits determine the amount of money and time that can be spent and the efforts that can be made. I am equally sure that all honourable members would agree that the Department of Welfare Services contributes the maximum amount of effort that can be provided by this Government for the people of Queensland.

On Sunday, 14 September 1986, an article in *The Sunday Mail* by Susan Hocking posed the question: Is the new child abuse centre a case of too little, too late? I ask the Committee what sort of an attitude that might be, because it would not matter when the funds were provided or how much is provided, or what the Government did or when the Government did it, someone would always ask whether it is case of too little,

too late. I think that a better attitude would be to give ideas a good trial by encouraging people to participate. People should support the Government's ideas and make them work.

I believe that members of the Opposition should adopt such an attitude. After all, it is the constituents of each honourable member who will benefit. All honourable members should get together to make Queensland a better place in which to live because of the programs that have been implemented by the Government on behalf of the people. Let us all acknowledge that, in spite of the fact that there will never be enough resources, all honourable members could work together to make Queensland a better place for people who need special assistance. Members of the Opposition should not go round accusing and criticising the Government; they should look to ways of making every program successful. The Opposition should be constructive in its criticism rather than destructive.

Each honourable member should look to the effect that the Government programs will have on constituents, and refer useful suggestions to the Minister and officers of her department. Instead, members of the Opposition indulge in knocking the Government and are quite vague about suggestions for improvement. The Opposition should bring to the attention of the Minister specific instances in which improvement can be effected for individuals in each member's electorate. Because problems do not go away, the Opposition should adopt an attitude of offering specific suggestions to the Minister. Indeed, it is doubtful whether problems can even be reduced, as society becomes more complex, people become more alienated, tensions increase because of economic factors, high levels of unemployment are experienced, and difficulties are encountered in interpreting legislative provisions. As parliamentary representatives, we should find ways to support people and try to make their lives a little easier, if possible.

I believe that the new child abuse centre is a case in point. Everyone should participate and provide useful suggestions for its operations. If people who are so fond of knocking the Government were to adopt a different attitude and were to join with others in a community effort, perhaps more could be achieved in the long term.

I congratulate the Minister on the initiatives that she has implemented during her short term as Minister for Welfare Services. I have been impressed by the booklets that have been provided to me and other members of her committee. The booklets address the problem of child abuse in a very sensitive way. The booklet is directed specifically at providing information for children, and has been presented in a very colourful and interesting way. It makes for very interesting reading. It makes an impression on the child's mind that is very supportive and very realistic. I would not mind betting that no Opposition member has even bothered to read the booklet, which is widely available at this stage through the new department that has been set up by the Minister to deal with child abuse.

I also congratulate the Minister on her sensitivity in relation to the aged. In my electorate there are many aged people. A quarter of the people in my electorate are aged over 60 years. On behalf of those people, I am very grateful that the Minister has included them in her programs.

Time expired.

Mr FOURAS (South Brisbane) (5.10 p.m.): I have pleasure in joining this debate on the Welfare Estimates. Following the honourable member for Greenslopes (Mrs Harvey), I comment briefly on the Queen Alexandra House restoration, which quite clearly is one of the worst instances of political pork-barrelling that I have seen in the nine years that I have been a member of Parliament. The Government talks about needs and about finding scarce resources to cater for the interests of people who are in real need; so it is a bit much for it to spend something like \$500,000 so that the honourable member for Greenslopes can have somewhere nice for the aged people in her electorate to have a cup of tea.

Having been in this Chamber and listened to National Party members make speeches, the one thing that I can say in favour of the honourable member for Greenslopes is that she is one member who took an interest in welfare. When the Premier (Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen) chose the honourable member for Pine Rivers (Mrs Chapman) as the Minister for Welfare Services, Youth and Ethnic Affairs, who, before she was appointed to the Ministry, did not even know how to spell the word, I was amazed. At least the honourable member for Greenslopes took an interest in welfare services. The honourable member for Greenslopes is very lucky that she is a National Party member in a marginal seat and that she needs to be re-elected. That is the only reason why \$500,000 was granted to restore Queen Alexandra House.

The two major topics that I shall speak about are funding—and what this Government is skiting about in relation to an increased level of funding—and child abuse.

In his Budget Speech the Premier and Treasurer made a big fuss about funding for Welfare being increased by 23 per cent. Last year when the Welfare Estimates were listed for debate at the 12th hour, because of what the Director of Children's Services said, and for other reasons, suddenly, for no reason at all, the debate did not go ahead. The heat became too much for the then Minister, Mr Muntz, who decided to get out of the kitchen. Therefore last year no debate on the Welfare Estimates occurred. This year—all of a sudden, and surprisingly—the Government had the luxury of deciding what would be the third Estimate to be debated. It felt that, as there was a large superficial increase in welfare funding—23 per cent—it would skite about what it had done.

Let me analyse that increase. The figure of 23 per cent is based on the amount appropriated for 1985-86, which was \$44.1m. In fact, if it were based on the amount spent in 1985-86, which was \$45.945m, in reality the increase is not \$10.1m but \$8.3m, or 18 per cent. Furthermore, if one deducts the \$4.24m increase in funds from the Commonwealth Government under SAAP—the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program—an increase of just \$4m-plus remains. Consequently, allowing for those two items, the real increase in Queensland Government spending is only 10 per cent. So the increase has fallen from 23 per cent to 18 per cent to 10 per cent. After those two amounts have been deducted, an increase of \$4.79m remains. Salary increases for departmental institutions and for the Children's Services office account for \$1.4m. The increase in payments for children in care—that is, the increase for foster care allowances—accounts for another million dollars. Travelling and incidentals account for an increase of another million dollars. In other words, \$3.5m of that \$4.79m is eaten up by those increases that are a necessity and that the Government could not really have avoided in any way at all. So the real meaningful increase is about 3 per cent. That is typical of this Government's fraud and deceit and of how, philosophically and ideologically, it is opposed to doing anything to fund welfare services. That is an absolute fact!

The Budget contains only a couple of positive measures. One is the increase of \$631,000 in grants to community organisations. However, people tend to get carried away. In the annual report of the Department of Children's Services, which I will speak about at length later on, the Director, Mr Zerk, speaks about an increase of 40 per cent over the previous year in the distribution of grants and subsidies to non-Government organisations. That sounds marvellous but, again, that 40 per cent increase does not bear analysis. One would think that the Government would go out of its way to do what it says it is doing—that is, to give more money out in the community to provide resources so that people can help themselves and so that people out in the community can do things in a better way.

I support community development. If one analyses those figures one finds that, of the \$13m funding to community organisations, the total Commonwealth contribution is \$8.94m. That leaves only \$4m. So the increase that the Minister speaks about is an increase of \$653,000 under the Government's SAAP commitment and an increase to community organisations of \$631,000. The Minister is talking about a real increase of \$1.28m. The Government should be fair dinkum. That it tries to hoodwink the public

and do nothing more for welfare is appalling. All the Government is doing is skiting about Commonwealth funds. That point should be made.

I turn now to my major theme, which is funding for the Department of Children's Services and to combat child abuse. In his 1984 annual report, the Director of the Department of Children's Services, Mr Zerk, warned the Government that departmental services were being strained to the limit. In his 1985 report, Mr Zerk took a much harsher line. In that report he frankly admitted that, because his warning had not been heeded and because of a chronic shortage of resources and staff, his department simply could not cope and was unable to carry out the full range of services. In 1985 the director also said—

“... it is no longer possible to provide the full range of statutory services for which the Department is responsible, and even child protection work is now being prioritised.”

He further stated in his report that, because of the number of court appearances of children and the number of child-protection notifications received, it was clear that “the needs for staff now exceed the establishment of the Department by a considerable margin.”

In his report he made the telling point that 3 420 children were registered for protection last year, an increase of 61 per cent on the previous year and more than double the 1981-82 figure. Such an extraordinarily frank admission by the Director of the Department of Children's Services was, I believe, a last-gasp response to create political pressures to force an uncaring National Party Government to increase staff numbers and resources. For the past six years I have been stating both inside and outside the Chamber that the Queensland Government could not meet its statutory obligations to protect children. The Professional Officers Association, the union that represents child care officers, has been saying the same thing for the last couple of years. At the time the 1985 annual report was tabled, a submission for 136 additional staff for the Department of Children's Services was before the Public Service Board.

The State Government's political response to departmental, Opposition, community group and union pressure to improve the chronic lack of resources was interesting. On 10 December the former Minister (Mr Muntz) said in this Chamber—

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

Apart from blaming parents, the former Minister also ordered an internal audit, which was a classic case of ministerial bluster and bluff that certainly did nothing to solve the problem. If all parents fulfilled their responsibilities, there would be no need for a Department of Children's Services and, for that matter, no need for a Minister. When the former Minister approved only 40 more additional staff instead of the 136 requested, the community was outraged. The Minister's action fell well short of any meaningful response.

I will deal now with internal audits. The Minister ordered one then, and now the Director of Children's Services has ordered another one. That is just amazing. The document that dropped off a truck and was handed to me last year stated that no efficiency gains were to be made by moving staff from one office to the other, because all the offices were hard pressed. The exact words from the audit are—

“The firm advice was that there would be little gain from this as all offices were under strain.”

That internal audit found that between 1979 and 1984 the Queensland population grew by 13.1 per cent, but the department's staff grew by only 3.9 per cent. Furthermore, between 1979 and 1984 confirmed child abuse and neglect reports increased by more than 200 per cent, and the number of children appearing before the courts increased by

more than 20 per cent. It is interesting to note that the number of confirmed cases of child abuse was 1 142 in 1983-84, but in 1985-86 that had more than doubled to 2 400. That is a 400 per cent increase since 1979. Similarly, there has been an increase of approximately 30 per cent in the number of children appearing before the courts.

When presenting the Estimates of her department, Mrs Chapman said that field staff are to be increased as a result of yet another review. Staff of the department, who lack morale, feel lost and are wondering what to do, are calling it the Claytons review—the review that you have when you do not need a review. Nobody in the department is aware of it. Nobody knows what the hell is being done about it. In fact, it is just a sop. It is an exercise to stem the tide until after the election. The crisis about which Mr Zerk spoke in his 1984 report has not subsided. In fact, today it is even worse. Staff morale and staff professionalism are worse than ever. Mr Zerk has learnt his lesson. Last time he had his knuckles rapped, so now he is playing politics.

In his letter to the Minister contained in the 1986 annual report, Mr Zerk congratulates Mrs Chapman on becoming the first woman Minister in Queensland. What a sexist statement! I would have hoped that the Minister was selected because of her ability to do the job, not because she is a woman. If the Minister was appointed because she is a woman, that is not good enough. It would be putting down every woman in this State.

I will come back to my point. In his report, Mr Zerk says—

“As a positive response to this continuing increase in child protection notification the department will establish the Queensland Centre for Prevention of Child Abuse.”

Surely it must be abhorrent to his professionalism to take part in such an appalling charade. If, as Mr Zerk stated in his last report, there was a crisis in 1985, how could that crisis have abated when the statistics contained in the 1986 report reveal a 60 per cent increase in the number of proven child abuse cases? How could the situation have improved? Matters have worsened, as demonstrated by the spending of \$200,000 on a centre and the employment of 40 additional staff. It is a shame that Mr Zerk has gone to water. It is a shame that he has not stood up for all the neglected and abused children in the community.

Whether one deals with child abuse referrals and investigations, post-abuse treatment such as therapy and counselling, community education or developmental and preventive programs, the Queensland Government has a well-documented history of chronic resource shortage. Any Government that does not seek to minimise and mitigate social disadvantage cannot be said to be truly democratic. On that basis, Queensland has the most undemocratic Government of any western democracy. Any Government that can find \$70m for race-tracks but cannot find adequate resources to protect abused and neglected children must have sick and twisted priorities.

Any Government that can find \$500,000 to set up a community centre as a pork-barrelling exercise for the member for Greenslopes (Mrs Harvey) must have rocks in its head. As I said, it must have twisted priorities. It is about survival; it is not about looking after the interests of children.

I seek leave to have a table incorporated in *Hansard*. It is a small table, which I have shown to a previous Temporary Chairman.

Leave granted.

	1981/82	1986/87	
Total Public Servants	58,823	66,291	+ 12.7%
Teachers (a)	22,841	28,151	+ 23.2%
Police (b)	4,586	5,665	+ 23.5%
Children's Services Department (c)	917	991	+ 8.0%

(a) Pre-school, Primary, Secondary and TAFE.

(b) Superintendents, Inspectors, Senior Sergeants, Sergeants, Constables, Technical and Scientific Officers, Probationaries, Cadets and Native Trackers.

(c) Total staff numbers.

Mr FOURAS: The table shows that, between 1981-82 and 1986-87, the Queensland Public Service increased by 12.7 per cent, that the number of teachers increased by 23.2 per cent and the number of police increased by 23.5 per cent. However, the staff of the Department of Children's Services increased by a mere eight per cent. The number of staff increased from 917 to 991—a total of 74—41 of whom, or more than half, were employed only a couple of months ago. There is no doubt that, with an increasing population, the State requires more police and teachers, and the Government must find them. I do not believe that this Government or the National Party cares. I believe that the neglect is ideologically based.

There has been a lot of rhetoric in this Chamber and discussion about the establishment of the Queensland Centre for Prevention of Child Abuse. In 1978 a co-ordinating committee was set up on child abuse. Its role was to advise on all aspects of child abuse, to co-ordinate resources, to periodically review services and to develop programs to educate the public. That committee has rarely met. I have been told that it has met only three times in three years and has done nothing to develop programs for public education. It should have developed protective and preventative programs for schools and programs for the training of professionals and families, and done something about public awareness. It did very little about that.

The Chamber has been told that the much-heralded Queensland Centre for Prevention of Child Abuse will achieve all of that with a miserly budget of \$200,000; that it will spearhead public awareness programs, promote the development of educational programs and help children. It is a bag-all approach. The Government has wrapped up all of its problems and all of its child-abuse uses into one gimmicky little section. Why have the aims of the 1978 co-ordinating committee not materialised? It is because this Government does not care. It would rather give \$70m away to racing clubs so that they can have plush carpets and facilities. The Government has spent \$30m-odd stabilising the Southport bar, has ripped up the train line to the Gold Coast and is building another one. It can do all of those things. It can pork-barrel and do things for its rich friends and cronies, but it does not give a damn about meeting its statutory obligations for the protection of children. It is a shame and it is reprehensible.

The Liberal Party was involved in 1980 in the setting up of SCAN teams. The then Minister for Health (Sir William Knox) stated that one of the objectives of SCAN was to provide a comprehensive and continuing management plan for each family. Additionally he stated at that time that a public education campaign would be conducted. No such campaign was conducted. Under the Liberal Party leadership, the SCAN teams objective was to provide a proper management plan for each child of a family.

Brisbane has an additional three SCAN teams, which is admirable. The teams were much needed, but they are still operating under very stressful conditions. The teams meet two afternoons a week and deal with between 20 and 25 cases in three hours. How can a management plan be realistically established in the five minutes or so that is available for each case? The end result is rubber-stamping by saying that a management review has taken place. The child protection unit that was set up amid much fanfare by this Government is a similar gimmick and is the centre-piece of the Government's fight against child abuse. Unfortunately all that that unit does is liaison between the Mater Misericordiae Hospital and the Royal Children's Hospital SCAN teams.

It is a sick joke that in an election year this Government is not celebrating the Year of Peace but is spending \$200,000 on the Year for Parents. That wasted \$200,000 could have been added to the Sexual Abuse Treatment Program to double its staff from four to eight. That program was established in February 1985 and offers assistance to families in which children have been sexually abused. The sexual abuse treatment unit saw 50 victims in 1985-86. It can only barely scratch the surface. It has been booked out since its inception, but no attempt has been made to increase its staff numbers. In the sensitive area of sexual abuse, referrals to the Mater SCAN team have increased from 91 in 1983-84 to 200 in 1985-86, which is an increase of 120 per cent. That unit has only four people, who are trying to pick up the pieces.

All facets of child protection are short of resources. The resources that are available are stretched to the utmost in offering support to abused children and families of abused children. In 1984-85, out of 549 children who were referred to the Mater SCAN unit, 114 were re-referrals. In 1985-86, out of 500 notifications 99 were re-referrals. In other words, one in five abused children is being reabused. That is a reprehensible and unacceptable level.

A substantial number of girls in the Sir Leslie Wilson Youth Centre are there because they have left home as a result of sexual abuse. Those girls end up on the streets behaving in a promiscuous manner, which results in their being placed in an institution. It is sad that they represent a classic example of victims being treated as culprits. Statistics that are available show that a large proportion of the girls are at the Sir Leslie Wilson Youth Centre because they have been sexually abused. Although they are mixed up with rapists and the criminal element, the Minister is doing nothing about it. Surely the Government should be building special facilities to house and treat those girls to help them overcome the horrors of sexual abuse rather than destroying them by putting them in the Sir Leslie Wilson Youth Centre, which is nothing more than a gaol masquerading as a hostel.

In the minute remaining to me, I refer briefly to the Proctor Program. It is nothing more than a pilot program. Only six proctors are operating. It has been a pilot program for years. Similarly, the Homemaker Service is a pilot program. For a long time I have been saying that a remand foster-care program is needed. The program in the south has been successful. The program in this State is known as the Community-based Adolescent Support Scheme, which I support. Only eight families are involved in that scheme. It will remain a pilot program, as all the other programs implemented by the Government have done, because it is not willing to provide the funds or find the resources that are needed.

Finally, I turn to child care.

Time expired.

Mr BOOTH (Warwick) (5.31 p.m.): In rising to speak to the Estimates, I think that I would be correct in saying that most honourable members, including the Minister, would wish that a welfare services portfolio was not needed. If everyone was to look after his children and do everything correctly, a Minister for Welfare Services would not be needed. Unfortunately, one is needed. Let us not get too emotional about it. We are living in a time when some problems are caused by the break-down in the family unit. That is not something that the Government would like to admit. There might be some things that make it easier for a break-down to occur in the family unit. Because there is a supporting mother's benefit, some people might not think about what they are going to do; they walk out very quickly. Judgments handed down by the Family Court sometimes make it economically beneficial to one party to break up the family unit. That is not particularly helpful. I think that the Minister has performed well in a very sensitive area, as did the former Minister for Welfare Services. They were dealing with a sensitive area. They tried to do the best they could in the circumstances.

Having listened to some of the members who have spoken during the debate, one would think that all that one had to do to improve things was to plonk more money and more people into the provision of welfare services. When one is dealing with sensitive issues, properly trained people are needed. One does not need too many people; only the right number is required. For that reason I do not think that honourable members should be basing their comments or their ideas solely on money.

The first thing that is needed in the provision of children's services and in many other areas is common sense. The Queensland Government has tried to implement that policy. Some members have criticised the Director of Children's Services (Mr Zerk). He is a particularly efficient officer who knows how to go about his work. He has satisfied most people who have tried to use his services. I congratulate him on his performance and on the way in which he has carried out his duties. It is a different thing to say to

him, 'We want you to employ so many officers immediately.' It has been said that the provision of 40 officers is insufficient. The employment of 40 additional officers is significant. They cannot be employed until they have been trained adequately. The worst thing that one could do would be to put staff into a position for which they had not been adequately trained.

Child abuse has been mentioned throughout the debate. I would like to refer to two aspects of child abuse. It is a tragedy when a child is abused physically or sexually and nothing is done about it. It is also an awful tragedy to accuse a man or a woman of child abuse without adequate knowledge of the facts. If a person wants to ruin someone's reputation, he has only to place a couple of policeman and a couple of welfare officers on his doorstep and let the neighbours know that there was a suggestion that he might have been sexually abusing his child. That man's reputation will be ruined for all time. He would indeed be fortunate if he ever regained it.

I believe there are two very important aspects of that problem; firstly, the Government must ensure that children are not abused, and, secondly, that it does not get carried away with every minor complaint of child abuse.

Mr Davis: You had better make sure that the safeguards are there. I know of a couple of cases where they have made mistakes.

Mr BOOTH: The honourable member should be fair. The Minister pointed out that the Government must be careful.

That is exactly what I wanted to hear. If I were an Opposition member listening to a Minister, I would still like to hear the Minister say that. I believe that the Government must be sincere and must watch what it is doing. It also has to be careful, because even if it does all those things mistakes can still occur. Nevertheless, I believe that the Government has been attempting not to make mistakes.

I listened carefully to what the honourable member for Woodridge (Mr D'Arcy) had to say. However, I was surprised at some of the things he said. I was also surprised at what the honourable member for Kurilpa (Ms Warner) had to say. I am not saying that those honourable members lacked sincerity, but I was surprised at the remarks that the honourable member for Woodridge made about smoking.

I believe that it must be a frightening experience for a young boy or girl to be placed in the Sir Leslie Wilson Youth Centre. Once a person's liberty is curtailed, that person becomes very upset. I do not believe that children should be repeatedly given cigarettes. However, if a child was very upset and could be calmed down with a few cigarettes, I do not see anything wrong with that.

Mr Davis: Mr D'Arcy was making a comparison between this Government and the way it goes on with certain things and at the same time it continues dealing with children.

Mr BOOTH: I am speaking about welfare this afternoon. I feel that all that has ever been done in regard to providing cigarettes has been to attempt to settle down those boys or girls. I honestly do not believe that it is a major issue.

Mr Davis: I bet if there was a Labor Party in Government you would be getting up screaming.

Mr BOOTH: I do not believe that I would say that.

Honourable members should think about what happens and why young people are afraid when they enter such institutions. For instance, if a disease suddenly became rampant in Brisbane today and all honourable members were told that they had to stay here for the next month or so, and their liberty was curtailed, they would be nice and cranky after a few days.

Mr Milliner: We might even start smoking.

Mr BOOTH: Honourable members might even start smoking. Even those who have given up smoking might start again.

The point I am trying to make is that in the initial stages of their confinement those boys and girls are afraid. Honourable members should not be in any doubt about that, because I have spoken to youngsters who have been institutionalised at that centre. Of course, some of them start to make headway after a month or so. However, there is no doubt that in the initial stages they are afraid, because their liberty has been curtailed.

It has been correctly stated that some of those children are in institutions because they are in moral danger. I do not believe that much else can be done with such children.

I am concerned about the present attitude towards girls under the age of 16. The law is there to protect them. However, that protection is often discarded. I believe that the law, which protects girls under the age of 16 years, is necessary and that it should be enforced. I am inclined to believe that some of the problems exist because the great majority of the community know that the law will not be enforced and, therefore, they can get away with many things that they would not have been able to get away with some time ago.

Mr Prest: Are you a goody-goody?

Mr BOOTH: No, I would not say that. I am probably as much a goody-goody as the honourable member for Port Curtis.

I am pleased that during this debate no-one has stated that he is a goody-goody. Most honourable members have stated that they are trying to solve the problem, and I do not believe that many of them have tried to paint themselves as goody-goodies.

Mr Prest interjected.

Mr BOOTH: The honourable member for Port Curtis should confess, and that will make a lot of difference.

It seems to be conceded that child abuse has increased. I know that an increase has occurred in the reporting of it. Whether it was always about the same, I do not know, but some increase has occurred.

I believe that unemployment has played some part in the increase in child abuse. Boredom and unemployment seem to bring out the worst in people. No doubt, that has been worrying people and causing some of the problems.

Earlier speakers mentioned the Sturgess report. They said that it highlighted undesirable happenings, and so it did. If honourable members were to get too emotional about the Sturgess report, they might find themselves in a situation in which the cure would be nearly worse than the disease. Things have to be looked at in a liberal light. The Sturgess report was probably written with the idea of bringing about certain corrections, but I am not prepared to think that that should be allowed to colour the thinking on the subject.

As well as highlighting certain happenings, the Sturgess report appears to be highly emotional, which concerns me. Emotionalism can create problems.

I do not intend to speak much longer, but I would like to say to the Minister that I appreciate the fact that in most of these issues she has hastened slowly. That is the way to go.

Shortly, a Department of Children's Services office will be opening in my area. A need exists for it. It is a pity that it is needed. It is expected to open within the next few weeks. It will be appreciated not only by me but also by the people in the area. Some people continue to say that the Government does not care and that it is not trying to do this and that.

I would like to make some remarks about the Queensland Centre for Prevention of Child Abuse. It was stated earlier that, because only so much money has been spent

on it, it will be a failure. The energy and the ability of the people running that centre will make up for any lack of money spent. It is an area in which people will have to be trained, sensitive and really dedicated. The amount of money spent will not be the end of the issue.

I say to the honourable member for South Brisbane (Mr Fouras) that one of the problems that the Federal ALP Government has is that it believes everything can be solved with money.

Mr McPhie: You have got to have money, though.

Mr BOOTH: That is right. The money is starting to run out now. The Federal Government thought that it could solve everything with money.

The previous speaker said something about the money spent on race-tracks. I am not saying that I want huge amounts of money ploughed into race-tracks in my area, but honourable members must remember that the amount of money spent on race-tracks has been collected from the racing community. Racing is as much an industry as it is a sport. In my area, some people grow lucerne and oats and other products. They would not be able to sell them if it was not for the racing community, which uses the crops to feed the horses.

Mr D'Arcy: What has that got to do with welfare?

Mr BOOTH: It has not a lot to do with welfare. I was answering the member for South Brisbane, who tried to draw an analogy. I do not think it was right.

Mr D'Arcy: I think you should sit down and go to tea.

Mr BOOTH: I was going to sit down, but now that the honourable member for Woodridge has interjected to that extent, I will say, as I said earlier before he entered the Chamber, that I thought that he adopted a very unreasonable approach when he spoke about the smoking episode.

Mr D'Arcy: Are you in favour of smoking?

Mr BOOTH: I used to smoke.

Mr D'Arcy: You were sensible and gave it up?

Mr BOOTH: Possibly. Of course, there are a lot of young people who have not seen the light yet.

Mr Hamill: Did you go cool turkey or cold turkey?

Mr BOOTH: I was one of the fortunate ones who could give it up without a great deal of trouble. Not everyone can do that, particularly young people who believe that it is the social elite who smoke. Who told them that? The honourable member said nothing about it. The advertising created the impression that everyone who was supposed to be anyone boarding a large jet was smoking Peter Stuyvesant, or if someone was any good at all, he was in Marlboro country. Who told the youngsters that it was socially acceptable? If it was not the members of Parliament, it was the members of Parliament who allowed them to be told that, and I do not think that honourable members should get too carried away.

Mr D'Arcy: Why did you say I was unreasonable because I wanted the law applied?

Mr BOOTH: The honourable member wanted the law applied across the board. I made the suggestion earlier that if a person is accommodated at the Sir Leslie Wilson Youth Centre and became upset, and if a cigarette could help to calm him, I see nothing wrong with that. I stand by what I have said.

I concede that I have spoken for longer than I expected. I congratulate the Minister on the sensible and sensitive approach that she has adopted in her administration of the Welfare Services portfolio. I thank the Minister sincerely for the office of the

Department of Children's Services that will soon be opened in my electorate. I hope that the Minister will see her way clear to perform the official ceremony in due course.

Mr HAMILL (Ipswich) (5.45 p.m.): The Minister for Welfare Services, Youth and Ethnic Affairs has boasted long and loud about the increased funding allocated to the Department of Youth, which forms part of her portfolio. At the outset, the Minister mentioned that \$3.2m will be expended under the auspices of the Department of Youth during the 1986-87 financial year.

I submit to the Minister that, in spite of the increase and though every honourable member who cared anything for the youth of Queensland would welcome the increase, the allocation is completely ludicrous when one considers that 17 per cent of Queensland's population could be termed as youth—that is, in the 15 to 24 year age group—and is made up of more than 400 000 young Queenslanders. The allocation of \$3.2m will not provide youth with much benefit. If the Minister were to engage in some fundamental arithmetic, she would discover that the allocation means that \$8 per head per year, or 13c a week, will be provided for each young person who will benefit—and I use the term "benefit" advisedly—from the allocation made to the Department of Youth for 1986-87.

I turn now to examine the allocation from another perspective. I have already mentioned that 17 per cent of Queensland's population could be termed "youth". Upon examination of the allocation made for the Department of Youth, it can be seen that it commands 0.06 per cent of consolidated revenue. In the past, I have heard Government members complain about Queensland's not receiving 16 per cent of revenue disbursement made by the Federal Government, in line with its proportion of population over a whole range of different activities. The figures should be put on the board. I reiterate that 17 per cent of Queensland's population has benefited to the extent of 0.06 per cent of consolidated revenue allocations, which must be an indication of the National Party's concept of fiscal fairness to those in need in the community.

A few more facts that relate to young people in Queensland are worth mentioning. I have already mentioned that there are 400 000 young people in Queensland, and the Minister would know that they are leaving the State to seek jobs elsewhere. In July this year, 23 100 unemployed teenagers still remained in Queensland.

Mr Lee: That is because of Bob Hawke.

Mr HAMILL: The failed honourable member for Yeronga asserts that it is because of Bob Hawke. Let me put the facts before the Chamber. It is rather because of initiatives taken by State and Federal Labor Governments in New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia that young people are leaving Queensland. It is because the young people know full well that their prospects of obtaining meaningful employment are enhanced as soon as they travel south of the Tweed River. That is a fact that the honourable member for Yeronga cannot deny.

On behalf of the unemployed in Queensland, the question must be asked: What is contained in the Estimates of the Department of Youth that will benefit the unemployed? The answer, unfortunately, is that very, very little has been provided for them. Earlier this year, on behalf of the unemployed Queenslanders—and for the benefit of the honourable member for Yeronga, I emphasise "Queenslanders"—I calculated that the assistance being provided by the Queensland Government for unemployed teenagers in Queensland was less than the cost of a local telephone call per day per person. Nothing has changed.

The Budget does not alter my analysis one iota; indeed, it merely confirms the total neglect and ignorance of the policies implemented by the Queensland Government in addressing the plight of the young unemployed in this State. Nothing better exemplifies its neglect than the so-called Youth Employment Support Scheme that was trumpeted by the Minister in the presentation of her Estimates today.

The YESS scheme was established in 1978 and, at that time, two centres were opened. Eight years later, seven centres are operating, although four additional centres are in the pipeline and three more have been projected as future development. The Minister mentioned that in 1985-86, 969 people were placed in full-time jobs and 336 were placed in part-time or casual employment. No-one would take away that contribution, but can I suggest that that contribution to the overall and serious plight of the young unemployed in Queensland is virtually negligible?

Why does the Minister not prevail upon her Cabinet colleague the Minister for Transport (Mr Lane) to provide some worthwhile assistance to the unemployed in this State, particularly the young unemployed? Country members are heard to speak about the tyranny of distance and the problems of isolation in country areas. Honourable members who represent electorates in the urban sprawl—the Minister herself represents one such electorate—would well realise that young people isolated in the suburbs without access to cheap public transport are no less isolated than young people or, indeed, anyone in the country towns of which so much is heard.

Why is not real assistance given to the young unemployed by way of fare concessions on public transport in this State? Other States can do it. Other States can administer a reasonable and equitable system. Why will the Queensland Government not put its money where its mouth is and assist in a real and fair manner the young unemployed? The Estimates also refer at length to a range of assistance being provided to community organisations. No-one on this side of the Chamber would in any way criticise those sorts of organisations that do provide a very worthwhile service. They are in fact stepping into the gap that is left by the State Government in not providing adequate support to welfare services in this State.

Let us look at the funding allocations, and look at them not in my terms but in terms used by the Premier and Treasurer. Let us look at the Youth and Community Grants Program. In the last financial year \$150,000 was allocated under the program. If the \$5,400 that was allocated to an organisation named the Human Resources Group at Toowong was dropped—I do not have anything against that group; this is just an example—the sum of money that would then be provided under the Youth and Community Grants Program would be less than the so-called “lousy” \$145,000 that was provided by this Government to one Michael Behan under a program of rural reconstruction.

Let us look at the Youth Assistance Scheme. Last year, under that scheme \$162,000 was provided. That is not much more than the “lousy” \$145,000 that was provided, against the advice of the Rural Reconstruction Board, to Michael Behan, an employee of the National Party.

Let us look at the Youth Leadership Training Grants of \$200,000. That amount is not all that much more than the “lousy” sum that was supplied to Michael Behan against the advice of the Rural Reconstruction Board.

Let us look at the Sports and Youth Fund, for which \$382,000 was provided. That is only two and a half times the “lousy” sum to which I have already made mention. That is not my term; it is the Premier’s term. That is a clear illustration of the inadequacy of the funding. The sum of \$145,000 is not being talked about for one person, as in the case of the said gentleman; sums that have been spread out among the 400 000 young people in Queensland, to whom the Minister owes a duty through her responsibilities, are being talked about.

As to these Estimates, it is quite clear from the report that the Minister presented that there is no clear direction in her portfolio in relation to Youth Affairs. In case she wishes to question my statement, let me quote from a report of the Minister. It is the *Annual Report 1985-86 Department of Welfare Services*. The passage is as follows—

“During the year the efforts of the Committee”—

that is, the Ministerial Advisory Committee on Youth Affairs—

“focused on the development of a Youth Policy for the Department of Youth. A draft document has been completed and made available to the Minister.”

That is an extraordinary statement. I always understood that this place provided for political leadership and that the responsibility of a Minister was to provide political direction and policy formulation for the public service department to go ahead and implement. What can be clearer evidence of the total intellectual desert of the Minister, the National Party parliamentary committee and the National Party itself on youth policy than that extraordinary statement in the report which shows quite clearly that, in the development of youth policy, the Government has no idea but rather it is urging the department to formulate a policy for the Department of Youth, which already exists. Presumably that policy that is to be formulated within the department will be adopted as the Government's policy. Talk about putting the cart before the horse! In this case, of course, there is no harness between them.

From that sort of policy formulation, quite clearly major problems have been recognised by the young people and the youth groups with whom I have had the great privilege to work. There is a real feeling, a real awareness, on the part of those groups that the delivery of youth policy by the Queensland Government is totally fragmented and totally unco-ordinated and that really it needs drawing together under the auspices of a department that has real responsibility for youth, not a department that seeks to augment or duplicate certain services that may be made available under the Department of Employment and Industrial Affairs, a department that offers a range of subsidies and hand-outs to organisations and is greatly lacking in a full appreciation of the range of problems that confront young people in Queensland today. Consequently, by having a fragmented, disjointed, unco-ordinated approach, there is conflict between departments, waste and a clear lack of direction, a lack that can only be laid at the feet of the responsible Ministers, because, after all, they are the persons who are supposed to give directions to their departments.

It is high time that this State had a cohesive, integrated youth policy, such as that advocated by the Labor Party. In this regard I was appalled by the remark of the honourable member for Fassifern who sought to try to gain a little mileage for himself by criticising the Labor Party's Youth Employment Scheme. I find that quite extraordinary from a former school principal who, by his words and deeds, evinced no concern whatsoever for the welfare of young people. I particularly was appalled when I heard from his own mouth that he would deny the disadvantaged schoolchildren of his own school the opportunity to get a decent breakfast, thus denying the real nutrition needs of those young people. He is the very person who was appointed by the Government to the International Youth Year committee. What sort of credentials are they for a person who supposedly is in a position of responsibility for the development of a worthwhile policy on youth? That is an indication of the intellectual desert, as I have said, which is quite clearly evident in the Government party.

To this Government, welfare is nothing more than social Darwinism—survival of the fittest and too bad for the rest. Where is the Department of Youth when it comes to the real and pressing issues which go to the basic day-to-day survival of young people in this State? Where is the Department of Youth on matters of health, housing and recreation and in providing the framework for a proper education and training program that would link, of course, to employment opportunities for young people in this State?

Quite clearly Queensland has been left behind by the initiatives of other States. Take, for example, the South Australian Government's initiative in funding what it calls the Second Storey, the one stop shop, if I can term it that, to provide a range of services to young people under one roof. It has been networked through the suburbs and through the major provincial and regional centres of South Australia. No such project can be seen on the horizon in Queensland. Certainly, the Labor Party would endorse a similar concept for Queensland that would work in close harmony with established community groups in the towns and provincial centres of the State. The Labor Party would seek to fund such centres as a matter of priority. However, the great need—the overwhelming need—is for youth accommodation. It is in this area that I wish to make a number of remarks in the time allowed to me.

Sitting suspended from 6 to 7.15 p.m.

Mr HAMILL: Before the dinner recess, I was identifying a particular need of youth in this State, that is, accommodation. There is a great need to address what is an area of particular neglect, that is the medium and long-term accommodation needs of Queensland youth.

Unfortunately—and it is consistent with a Government that is without a policy—the Queensland Government has done very little about accommodation for youth. Why cannot the Queensland Housing Commission provide rental accommodation for young people under the age of 18? At present, a young person has to be over the age of 18 and, in reality, must have a family before becoming eligible for placement by the Queensland Housing Commission.

Why could not the State Government, for example, implement a scheme whereby, say, local authorities or community groups act as some sort of nominal tenant so that they could then provide accommodation for those young people who, by virtue of their age, are not legally capable of entering into tenancy agreements? It would not take much imagination or innovative planning by the Government to implement such a policy.

Furthermore, why cannot the State Government implement a scheme in co-operation with local authorities or community groups to provide for detached street workers and other community youth workers whose operations could be funded jointly perhaps by the local authorities and the State Government? That would seem to me to be a very practical program whereby the delivery of youth services could be carried out at the proper face-to-face level in the towns and cities throughout the State.

In relation to the severe problem that many young people face in regard to accommodation, I mention also the SAAP program—the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program. Everyone knows that that program is a jointly funded Commonwealth/State initiative.

In 1982-83 the funding for supported accommodation by the then coalition Liberal/National Party Federal Government was a paltry \$5.3m right across Australia. However, in 1986-87, under the Hawke Federal Labor Government, \$49.1m has been provided for supported accommodation.

By 1989 the States are obliged to match the Commonwealth contribution. I am very sad to have to relate that in 1985-86 the Queensland Government's record in relation to meeting SAAP funding was by far and away the worst of any State Government in Australia. In fact, on the 1985-86 figures, Queensland would have needed to increase its contribution above its commitment by some 58 per cent to meet its matching requirements for the current year of funding. That is far in excess of the next State that is lagging behind, which is Tasmania. Tasmania would have needed to increase its contribution to SAAP funding by 38 per cent to meet its matching requirements in the current year. For the benefit of Government members, who are always very keen to compare the performance of this State with other States, I point out that New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia have fully matched the Commonwealth funding under SAAP.

I always give credit where credit is due. The Queensland Government has dug deep into its pockets and brought out a few more dollars. Nevertheless, it would still have to increase its contribution by 37 per cent above the increase that it has deigned to grant to SAAP funding this year. It is a long way short of meeting its obligations, and it is a long way short when one considers that its obligations have to be met by matching Commonwealth funding by 1989.

Who is suffering because of that lack of funding? It is not the Queensland Government; it is the homeless youth of Queensland. It is those people of whatever age group who are suffering because they do not have adequate accommodation. That is exactly what the SAAP program is designed to overcome—the lack of accommodation that so many Queenslanders are currently facing.

Unfortunately, that is the sort of record that members of the Opposition must contend with when the Queensland Government waxes lyrical about its support for families. Honourable members have heard about the imposts upon family budgets that taxes and charges have made. Honourable members hear about the lack of resources for education, which means that families are forced to fork out of the family budget additional funds to subsidise what ought to be the responsibility of the State Education Department. Of course, all those measures fall disproportionately upon the family budget, particularly the family budget of the poor in the community.

The State Government has also let down many people, particularly in the Ipswich area, in this Year of the Family by its closure of the Jefferis-Turner Maternal and Child Health Home in Ipswich. That is a consistent policy of the Health Department. It has taken similar action in Toowoomba, Rockhampton and Sandgate. The Health Department says that the Department of Welfare Services should be providing that kind of respite facility for parents, mothers and babies, but unfortunately the Department of Welfare Services has not picked up the gauntlet and has not met the need that the Health Department is running away from.

That is indicative of a lousy Government and a lousy Budget allocation for the needy in this community. As far as youth in the community are concerned, there are not too many Mike Behans amongst them. This Government ought to spare a thought for the homeless youth and the unemployed youth in this State who cannot get fare concessions. It also ought to spare a thought for those families in need of assistance. I believe that those young Queenslanders deserve a future from this Government.

Mr CAHILL (Aspley) (7.20 p.m.): The year just completed by this department, despite the criticism, has been one of achievement and advancement. As the permanent head of the department, Mr Alan Pettigrew, says in his report, it has seen significant developments in its major areas of operation. Mr Pettigrew has carried on splendidly with the work set in train by his gifted predecessor, Mr Peter Jones. The department is well staffed and no-one in this Chamber would argue with that. That talent is reflected in the efficiency displayed. I have to say also that there is no more co-operative group of advisers to a Minister's parliamentary committee than the ladies and gentlemen of this portfolio.

Tonight I wish to address myself to the ethnic affairs area of the Minister's responsibility. One of the best things that ever happened to the ethnic affairs section—perhaps the best thing—is that it became a department in its own right. That upgrading is proof of the importance that this Government attaches to the welfare of the people from other nations who come to share Queensland with us and to make their homes here permanently. I hope that all Queenslanders value the types of cultures that are brought here from elsewhere. Queensland is the better for it, provided that the Government goes the right way about settling migrants in the State; and this Government has done, and is continuing to do, just that. Perhaps there are areas which need to be refined, expanded or even upgraded. If there are, the Government, through the officers of the department, is alive to them and will continue to give them close attention.

The report mentions working towards building a cohesive society; and surely that is the aim of all honourable members. The last thing this Chamber wants is the fragmentation and ghetto problems which occur in other States, with all the attendant troubles and horrors of such situations.

It is gratifying to note that there are nine separate areas in which services to migrants operate. Because most of Queensland, and for that matter many honourable members in this place, will not have read the report, let me put on the record some details of those services. Newly arrived migrants are able to be settled in at first at the lovely setting of Yungaba at Kangaroo Point. I put it to the Chamber that such a place with its stately home effect is the best in Australia. This is not a depressing barracks.

I suppose that there are only two or three honourable members in this place who have experienced the awful wrench it must be to have to leave one's homeland, as our

forefathers had to do and today's migrants have to do. No matter that conditions in many of their countries were such that people were moved to seek a better life, one's birthplace almost always has a special place in one's emotions and one's psyche. It is bad enough for people from countries where English is the native tongue, but how extraordinarily difficult it must be for those who have no English. If anyone in this place does not think so, I suggest he or she tries going even as a visitor to a country where English is not the native language, where there is not much interest in it and where he or she cannot speak the local tongue.

The Translation and Interpreting Services Unit does a splendid job for these people. There are many services supplied by the department as I have said; but perhaps the two which are most appreciated on an emotional level at least, are the interpreting service and the Queensland Migrant Welcome Association with its 250 volunteers. This is self-help and the department is happy to co-ordinate it. When considering how many migrant arrivals there were in the year 1984-85, it can be seen easily how important it is that the arrivals be settled in. In that financial year, 12 per cent of the national total of 78 078 came to Queensland. That figure of 9 454 would make up a good-sized provincial town. The last figure available covers the first six months of 1985-86, when 5 282 new Queenslanders arrived. That clearly means the numbers are going up.

The department is to be congratulated, therefore, on continuing to fund a reference library, a welfare consultancy service, a research and information function and support facilities for the Ethnic Communities Council and for cultural groups.

While on the subject of the Ethnic Affairs Advisory Council and its counterpart in the north—this Assembly needs to congratulate the members of those bodies on the splendid, selfless work they do. Congratulations are due to the Government, too, for supplying executive and clerical assistance to aid those councils in their work. Money for this was provided in the Budget last year and is provided again in this year's Budget.

It is clear that the Government encourages self-help in the migrant communities and is prepared to back it up with money. These long-time citizens realise the problems that they or their parents faced as newcomers; but they do not just stand by asking for hand-outs or for the "Government to do it". They need to know, however, that the Government will back them in their efforts, as it does and as it will continue to do.

I am of the opinion that *Hansard* should show the names of those people on the advisory councils so that their place in the history of the State will be preserved in its archives. Mr Keith Hamburger chairs both councils with Mr Alan Marshman the recently appointed head of the Department of Ethnic Affairs as his deputy. On the Queensland Ethnic Affairs Advisory Council they are joined by Mrs M. Buldrini (Spanish); Mr Nick Xynias (Greek); Mrs M. Zlobicki (Polish); Dr Max Brandle (Swiss); Mr Guiseppe Rinaudo (Italian) and Father Gregory Sakellariou (Greek). The Northern Ethnic Affairs Advisory Council has as its members Mr A. Gabrielli (Italian); Mrs B. Chiu Chong (Chinese); Mr E. Buehler (German); and Mr E. Cavallo (Italian).

Although members are of different ethnic origins, they do not represent their communities specifically but serve the migrant community as a whole, and are to be congratulated on the work they do.

I think that all honourable members would agree that a giant problem for any persons coming to a new country is their difficulty, for a variety of reasons, in fitting into their adopted communities. The Accommodation and Settlement Service does a splendid job in Queensland. Regular information sessions help tremendously in the integration of our new friends.

It is interesting to note that the department uses the word "integration", not "assimilation". Those two words may give the impression that they mean virtually the same thing, but that is not so. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, their meanings are reasonably far apart, but the connotations and implications are far removed from each other. To "assimilate" means to acquire new ideas by interpreting new ideas; to be absorbed or incorporated. On the surface, that might seem acceptable; but it is not

to the department and it should not be to us as fellow-Queenslanders. We do not want our newcomers to be swallowed up—to lose their identities. We cannot afford to have them stifle and lose their ancient cultures. We need the best they have to offer us, so we aim for integration.

To “integrate” means to amalgamate and mix; to bring racially and culturally differentiated peoples into equal membership in a society where component elements combine harmoniously. That is what the department is determined to have happen; that is what is being done; and Queensland reaps the benefits.

Earlier in my speech I referred to the splendid job that is done by the Translation and Interpreting Service that is provided. In Queensland, it works on the basis of a gentlemen’s agreement between the Commonwealth and State Governments. Under that agreement, the Commonwealth Telephone Interpreting Service looks after those needs in Queensland in the first instance. In the second instance, the Department of Ethnic Affairs picks up the demand with which the TIS is unable to cope. However, as time has passed, that demand has continued to grow and has placed great stress on the State unit’s concentrating in the first instance on translating needs.

It ought to be noted by this Committee, too, that the department’s interpreters are not simply to help write a letter home, as it were, but are called upon increasingly to discharge highly specialised needs, not only in personal areas, but also in trade and security matters. The department has also carried out interpreting needs surveys in the areas of public health and the courts.

That brings me to the case of one Ms Judy Carrey. Ms Carrey is the co-ordinator of the Migrant Resource Centre at West End and a member of the Ethnic Communities Council. Ms Carrey has been either the instigator or the purveyor, or both, of much uninformed criticism concerning the Government’s alleged failure to address the needs of migrants in regard to interpreting services in the health area.

One of the things in politics that make me most angry is that too many people in this profession bring petty party politics into areas that concern the lives, welfare and happiness of people, and it must be said that no party has exclusive claim to that fault. Honourable members may recall that in this Chamber during the second-reading debate on the Adoption Act Amendment Bill I said that I was pleased that, with one exception, honourable members opposite did not let that discussion develop into an inter-party brawl, and I congratulate honourable members who have adopted the same high standards during this debate.

Mr R. J. Gibbs: Thank you.

Mr CAHILL: In advance!

However, to return to Ms Carrey, I am happy to inform honourable members that an interdepartmental committee comprising officers of the Department of Ethnic Affairs and the Department of Health has been investigating—

- (i) the need for translated health materials; and
- (ii) the need for translated material in the area of public health.

Honourable members will be pleased to know that those investigations are progressing satisfactorily.

With Welfare Services as part of the Minister’s responsibility, the welfare of newly arrived Queenslanders is very much in the minds of her departmental officers with a cross-matching and fostering of the links with Government and non-Government organisations. Much assistance is given to establishing ethnic associations in the State, and to their growth and development. Clearly, the better the ethnic organisation, and the more strongly based it is, the better the liaison it will have with the department and the community generally. It has been noted that the allocation is down by \$4 000, but this can be seen as a tribute to the efficiency of the department in its liaison with the ethnic communities and the efficiency of the communities themselves in the conduct of their affairs, as well as the success of the integration policy of the Government.

Naturally, I am disappointed that more money was not allocated to the Department of Ethnic Affairs. Any money spent there is an investment in the future of Queensland, to make it a better and more productive place. Nonetheless, close to \$100m is a splendid investment for Queensland's continuing good; and the cake can be cut only so many times.

Not only am I happy to have served on the parliamentary committee of the Department of Welfare Services, Youth and Ethnic Affairs, but I am also proud to have done so. I thank the previous incumbent in the portfolio, the Honourable Geoff Muntz, for having placed me on the committee, and the Honourable Yvonne Chapman for continuing to have me there. I have tried to contribute to its deliberations and its aims.

I have said elsewhere—and I want to say here—that the Minister's portfolio has among its officers some of the most talented and dedicated of the public servants of Australia. I want to mention particularly—and this is only a minimal list—the efficiency, co-operation and unfailing courtesy of Mr Peter Jones, Mr Alan Pettigrew, Mr Robert Plummer, Mr Graham Zerk, Mrs Myolene Carrick, Mrs Kay Pulsford, Mr Bob Downey and Mr Arthur Marshman in all of my dealings with them. Honourable members and Queensland ought to be grateful that they and their colleagues make their talents available to us.

The Departments of Welfare Services, Youth and Ethnic Affairs are among the most difficult to administer because they deal with the problems of people. It is said that there are no votes in welfare, delinquent and abused children, foreigners and prisons—now transferred to Corrective Services. I do not know whether that is true or not; but in any case those departments are about people—our fellow-Queenslanders. It is to the great credit of the Government that it continues to care for their welfare.

As to my own special area of interest—the Department of Ethnic Affairs chooses to go about its work quietly, but its record of service to the migrant community and therefore Queensland is a proud one, second to none in Australia. It is not *pare inter pares* but indeed first among its peers.

Ethnic Affairs in this State is in good hands. I am happy to support the Estimates.

Mr R. J. GIBBS (Wolston) (7.33 p.m.): The debate on the Estimates of the Welfare Services Department provides honourable members with an opportunity to make observations and comments not only on the performance of the Minister to date but also on some of the statements that unfortunately she has seen fit to make concerning certain people within the community. I shall touch upon those in a moment.

At the outset, I wish to place on record the very excellent job that has been done by an organisation within my own electorate, namely, the Goodna Neighbourhood Centre. That is a very bipartisan organisation. A moment ago the honourable member for Aspley made the point that the Goodna Neighbourhood Centre does not involve itself politically. It plays a very progressive role within my own electorate. The former Liberal Party candidate who stood against me in 1980 and 1983, namely, Bob Harper, happens to be the chairman of that organisation. Mr Harper, who is also the brother of the Attorney-General, is an excellent fellow and he works very hard within the community and contributes greatly to the needs of the community. I can assure honourable members that his desire to keep politics out of that centre is always very much appreciated.

In drawing attention to the very excellent job that the Goodna Neighbourhood Centre performs, I point out that it never ceases to amaze me—in fact, it distresses me greatly—when I see the paltry amounts of money that are given to that organisation by the State Government or by the appropriate department. Each year, the centre has to go virtually cap in hand to the Minister or to the department applying for grants to pay, for example, for a qualified social worker to carry on a much needed role in the area that I represent. I shall expand on that shortly.

I cannot see why the paltry grants should be given in that manner. I do not see why the Government cannot reassess the way in which it deals with many of the voluntary organisations, which have very excellent people who contribute time and effort to the community free of charge. I do not see why a straight-out grant on a needs basis

cannot be made to the organisations each financial year without making them go through the grovelling act that they have to go through. It strikes me as no mere accident. I have said that many times in the Parliament. In areas of most need such as education, health and welfare services, which usually happen to be in Labor-held seats, it never ceases to amaze me that the amount of money allocated always seems to be less than that given to conservative electorates, particularly those electorates held by the National Party.

I want to make some observations on that sort of Government attitude and on statements made recently by the Minister. In the area that I represent, in the lower boundaries round some areas of Oxley, Wacol and Darra, the socio-economic situation of many people differs greatly from one outstanding area in my electorate, the Riverview area. The Riverview area, as most honourable members would probably know—certainly as the Minister, hopefully, may know—is one of the disaster areas for which, through lack of foresight and proper planning, the Government is responsible. It is a 100 per cent Housing Commission area. The commission built homes, but provided no recreational facilities for the families who moved in, no counselling services, no back-up facilities of any kind and no sporting outlets for the children who were to be raised in that area. Unfortunately, it went one step further. By and large, a concentration of single-parent families has occurred in the Riverview area. In the majority of cases they would be deserted wives and many unmarried mothers. I cannot think of a more distasteful and disgraceful statement than the one made by the Minister some months ago when she said to the media that there are women in the community—unmarried mothers—who either go out and get pregnant for the fun of it or who do it deliberately.

In my years of adult life, I have met many married women in the community who by choice and design start a family when they want to do so. But, of course, many women in the community are not married and they do have children. I have never found an unmarried mother in the community who has deliberately set out to get herself pregnant.

The Minister can shake her head, but, after making such an inane statement, which was offensive to thousands of women throughout the State of Queensland and hundreds of women in my electorate who are in that situation, it is high time that she put some evidence before the Parliament that a woman or a group of women have deliberately got themselves pregnant merely, on her down-the-road synopsis, because they want to collect the supporting mother's benefit. I ask the Minister for Welfare Services, Youth and Ethnic Affairs (Mrs Chapman) whether she really believes that women in the community have a child simply because they can draw a pension of \$101 a week? I suggest that the Minister is completely out of touch.

Mrs Chapman: But you are misrepresenting the truth.

Mr R. J. GIBBS: I am not misrepresenting what the Minister has said. What the Minister did was typical of the ploys devised by the National Party. She deliberately set about fostering division in the community and hatred against people who find themselves in an unfortunate situation.

Many unmarried mothers live in my electorate, and I can vouch for the role that they play in the community. They rear their children and send them to school; they do their very best to bring them up properly; in spite of the fact that they are alone, they feed them, and they clothe them. The role they play is a valuable one, and they can do without stupid and imbecilic statements made by a Minister who is completely out of touch with what is happening in the community.

Mr Miller: Do you believe that the husband, or the would-be husband involved with these people, has a responsibility to the community and to the child?

Mr R. J. GIBBS: Yes, I do. I will refer to that at a later stage.

Mr Miller: Why is it that the community is supporting the Minister, yet you overlook that?

Mr R. J. GIBBS: I will come to that matter shortly.

It is my belief, and the belief of my Federal colleagues who have taken steps to introduce a scheme, that a legal obligation should be imposed upon people, in the circumstances I have described, to make maintenance payments in respect of the child.

Mr Miller: It is a responsibility.

Mr R. J. GIBBS: In the circumstances, they have a responsibility to make maintenance payments. I do not deny that those people have a responsibility, but when I hear inane statements being made by people on the Government side of the Chamber, I can only refer to the history of Government in Australia.

If the National Party survives the election this year, it will have held office in this State for 30 years. In the Federal sphere, the non-Labor parties have held office for approximately 52 of the 70 years that have elapsed since Federation. Despite that, Government members seem to think that all of the ills experienced by the nation and the ills that exist in this State should be blamed constantly on elected Labor Governments. The non-Labor governments have never had the intestinal fortitude to face up to some of the massive social problems that exist, and to tackle them head on.

The Australian Labor Party has faced up to those problems, and will continue to do so. Members of the National Party Government like to trade in emotive statements. At the risk of repeating myself, I must point out that the National Party sets out to deliberately foster hatred and division in the community.

Mrs Chapman: That is absolute garbage, and you know it.

Mr R. J. GIBBS: It is not garbage. People such as the Minister cast aspersions and attempt to slur the people of my electorate, in areas such as Riverview, Wacol and Goodna.

Mrs Chapman: You should tell the true facts. The Government will pay for the first child, but none after that.

Mr R. J. GIBBS: If the Minister cannot cop the laser beam on her belly-button, she has no right to be a member of this Parliament. Although she has entered the Parliament, the Minister has very little ability, and is not up to the standards that have been set by this Parliament. The Minister should sit still, shut up, and cop it, because I am heaping criticism on her this evening.

The facts are that the Minister is one of the people who is responsible for making sinister allusions about people who happen to be unemployed and are in receipt of social security benefits. The Minister makes the kind of statements that fan the flames of hatred in the community. She says that the unemployed are all dole bludgers and that they are all cheating on social welfare entitlements. Although I acknowledge that there are people in the community who should be sorted out—that is, people who are employed but are collecting unemployment benefits—it should be remembered that that issue is being tackled by the Federal Government in a responsible manner.

The point I make is that the Minister's stupid and inane comments do nothing to help the honest people in the community. Because the Government has failed to provide essential services in areas such as Riverview, I believe it is important for the Government to examine ways and means of rectifying the tangled web of welfare services for which the Minister is responsible. Because no sporting facilities or back-up services are provided in Riverview, I believe it is essential that full community use should be made of the State school facilities in the area. It is high time that the Minister's departments and the Department of Education agreed on a co-ordinated policy to utilise existing facilities.

As I said, because of the very large number of single-parent families in Riverview, obviously many parents have to go out to work. Consequently, it is a typical example of what has commonly become known as the latchkey suburb. Many children leave school in the afternoon for a home in which there is no parent. Of course, without

parental supervision, social problems develop. I ask the Minister why, through officers of her department, she cannot seriously consider a program to co-ordinate officers from her department and the Education Department to provide an ongoing service in schools such as at Riverview under which the kids can use the playground facilities after school hours and be supervised in other programs.

Mr Miller: Is this for working mothers?

Mr R. J. GIBBS: Yes, and people who want to participate in the community.

Mr Miller: Not only the mothers?

Mr R. J. GIBBS: No, not the mothers. I want them all to be able to participate. I cannot help it if the honourable member's mind is so narrow and uneducated because of the fairly wealthy sort of person whom he has tended to represent over the years. The honourable member for Ithaca is notorious for not taking too much care of hard-working people—the battlers—in his electorate. A program such as the one I have just mentioned needs to be implemented.

I now refer to another matter that exists not just in the Riverview area but also in Goodna, Wacol and Darra. Child abuse is on the increase in the community. I reiterate what I said before: because all of these social problems are happening in this wonderful State of Queensland, in which the present Government has been in office for 29 years, a Labor Government cannot be blamed. The Government has to accept that child abuse, sexual offences against children, the type of prostitution that exists, the establishments that can be seen in the Valley and those constantly operating in the suburbs, to which the police turn a blind eye—and to which the Government turns a blind eye—have occurred under 29 years of National Party Government, with the full and total support of the Liberal Party for 27 of those 29 years. That is beginning to cause enormous problems in the community. Child abuse, both sexual and physical, and violent crime against women have obviously increased. I do not wish to cast a slur on many fine people in my electorate; but regrettably in my area, because of its social problems, there is a noted increase in these crimes. Many cases are being reported to me, or brought to my attention. The record of the Government and the Minister's department in providing funds, for emergency accommodation and for women's shelters, for example, is appalling, abysmal and disgraceful. Such facilities are virtually non-existent in the Ipswich area.

When I drive past what is now the deserted Aboriginal hostel and the deserted army homes at Wacol, I am appalled that the Government has not had the foresight—or the Minister has not had the ability—to step in and say, "Here is a way to immediately solve the problem." For example, the former Aboriginal hostel at Wacol is currently up for sale by the Federal Government, I understand, for the sum of \$860,000. I have inspected it. It comprises eight excellent residences, which with the spending of approximately half a million dollars or a little more could be brought up to a marvellous standard and provide the sort of emergency accommodation I am talking about. People from Ipswich and areas to its west could be safely housed and looked after in that hostel in a proper, loving way. Of course, as I said, the Government is not interested in that sort of program.

Three minutes' drive down the road from the former Aboriginal hostel are 175 deserted army houses. The personnel who formerly resided there have been transferred to the electorate of Everton. I understand that those deserted houses can be removed in batches of five or six. Therefore, that consists of a ready-made market of suitable houses which, with some paintwork and a few dollars spent by the Minister's department, would provide all of the necessary services and facilities for the needy. However, once again the Queensland Government has failed dismally in its responsibility.

I refer again to the Goodna Neighbourhood Centre, which I mentioned at the outset of my contribution this evening. That centre and the Queensland Recreation Council recently conducted a very comprehensive survey in the areas that I have already mentioned. Three primary issues emerged from that survey. Because of the sorts of

attacks made on them by people who should know better—people such as the Minister—people in those areas feel neglected and are very, very lonely. One major issue is unemployment, which is always high on everybody's list—and that is as it should be. However, equally important issues are the lack of suitable recreation facilities and welfare services.

An apt example of the lack of welfare services in my electorate exists at a place that is called "Happy Valley". Honourable members can use their own imaginations about that. In one street of approximately 25 homes on occasions, unfortunately, gunshots have been exchanged at night, windows have been broken and dogs and cats have been poisoned. It is not the most savoury area. In all seriousness I say to the Minister that the contribution by the local police and the Goodna Neighbourhood Centre in trying to look after those people and solve some of their problems is commendable; but I do not believe that it is the job of the Queensland police, unless shootings are involved, to be involved in welfare matters. Although the work of the many people who assist with the Goodna Neighbourhood Centre is commendable, at times they do not have the expertise to handle the counselling and so on that is so obviously needed. The area has only one welfare worker. The Minister's department should earnestly consider the provision of full-time facilities and extra assistance to the Goodna Neighbourhood Centre.

I make one final comment, in which I will be critical of my Federal colleagues. It is high time that the people in the Federal Government got some of their welfare service program priorities right. I go on record tonight as one person who is heartily sick and tired of driving round the State and seeing CEP money used for additional facilities at golf clubs and bowls clubs, or to turf a new green at the local RSL or something like that. It is time that, through proper liaison with responsible people in State Governments, the money that is available under that program went into the priority areas where it is needed. That money should go into proper welfare community programs. I can see no sense in, and I will not support any applications in my electorate for, some of the nonsensical programs for which people want money. I wish to be on record as saying that.

Mr CLAUSON (Redlands) (7.53 p.m.): I rise to pay tribute to one innovative and important initiative that the Department of Welfare Services has taken and expanded since its inception. I refer, of course, to the Disabled Persons Service.

Following the conclusion of the 1981 Year of the Disabled, in close liaison with various community groups representing disabled persons, those of their families who care for disabled persons and others associated with the disabled, the Government set up the Disabled Persons Service. Contrary to what some may consider, disabled people are extremely independent and determined to succeed against what are sometimes seemingly insurmountable odds.

I am always amazed at the grit shown by the disabled people in my own electorate who are constantly working to achieve greater things for themselves and, at the same time, assist one another to attain those goals that have been placed within their reach. It is most appropriate that in the debate on the Estimates of the Departments of Welfare Services, Youth and Ethnic Affairs, tribute be paid to groups in my electorate of Redlands that provide such an outstanding service for and on behalf of the disabled, for without that dedicated group of selfless individuals no progress could realistically be made.

A group with which I have had steady contact and for which I have unbounded admiration for its tireless work for disabled persons is the Handicapped Association of the Redlands District. That association, led by Miss Val Martin and others, has established a most productive workshop facility for the young and not-so-young to be trained in many facets of work, ranging from carpentry to soft-toy manufacture.

Recently, HARD, as the organisation is known, rented a modern, large home on a long-term basis and appointed house parents to supervise and teach trainees living skills without which they would have to rely on others. That is a most important aspect of disabled care, for, sadly, it is a fact that the young disabled today become the parentless

aged and disabled of tomorrow. Without the necessary living skills they would be placed in institutions that would provide less than ideal scope for their capabilities as individuals.

Other organisations that assist in the specific areas of disability are the Redland Shire Council, which assists through its welfare officer; Bayside Rheumatoid and Arthritis Group; Cross Roads—a disabled persons holiday program; the Endeavour Foundation; HARD; Redlands Asthma Awareness Group; Redlands Special School; and the Department of Social Security. These groups were all represented at the Disability Week display, which I had the signal honour to open in the Cleveland shopping centre. The interest shown by the general public was tremendous. The week ran from 25 August to 31 August and was instigated to publicise the availability of services for the disabled, the activities conducted by the various groups that exist to assist the disabled and to create within the general public an awareness of the needs that disabled persons have in day-to-day life.

The person who is blessed with all of his or her faculties quite often takes them for granted. Everybody should sit down occasionally and reflect upon his or her ability to cope if he or she was crippled by arthritis, blinded, robbed of full intellectual capacity, lost hearing or limbs of manipulation or perambulation and was then confronted by the rigours of day-to-day life. Stairs would become hidden traps, car-driving would be out of the question and the simplest calculation would be almost an insurmountable challenge.

The Disabled Persons Service was created to assist in the dissemination of information and to assist disabled persons and those charged with their care.

Quite often the persons themselves or their relatives and friends are unable to find information about their particular disability, the services available and community support groups such as those I have previously mentioned.

The Disabled Persons Service addresses these problems and, for the cost of a local telephone call, can place callers throughout the State in contact with the necessary services, which are retained on computer and provide the inquirer where possible with a series of options that may assist. As the service is computerised, it is easily operated and retrieved.

It is no secret that some of the supportive organisations that assist the disabled face financial hardship through the escalation of costs associated with telephone and postage charges, photocopying services and other support services.

The Disabled Persons Service has recognised that and has established a free service to help reduce running costs of financially limited organisations. That is particularly significant as telephone and postal charges could be alleviated through a significant change in attitude on the part of the ALP Federal Government. Both fall squarely within the ambit of Federal control, and it is an absolute disgrace that the State Government has to step into an area where the remedy lies with another Government.

Recently the Disabled Persons Service has undergone a review, and in response to the feedback from various public groups and families associated with disabled persons, a Respite Care Program has been implemented. The Government has reacted with sensitivity to the plight of the care-givers, who have the unenviable strain at times of caring for a disabled son or daughter.

The program allows for a disabled person to be cared for temporarily either outside the home or by a person from outside the family within the home. The family has a break and the disabled person receives contact from other persons and expands his social horizons. *Respite Care Resources in Queensland* is a publication setting out respite services that are available to care-givers who need to have a rest from the constancy of caring for a disabled friend or relative.

This Government recognises the fact that the community generally has been regrettably unaware of the needs and circumstances of disabled persons and their families. This is particularly so with regard to building design and access. It is important to ensure that publicity is given to the needs of the disabled in this matter in order that architects,

town-planners and others concerned with the construction and design of public buildings and facilities are made aware of the needs of disabled persons. It is pleasing to see that this Government recognises these matters and is creating new buildings, such as railway stations, with consideration for the disabled in mind.

The service publicises those places that are made accessible for the disabled and is attempting to implement increased accessibility throughout the community. One of the most disturbing aspects that face the disabled is the economic disadvantage faced by handicapped persons and imposed by Federal legislation regarding taxation, sickness benefits and invalid pensions. This legislation discourages the disabled from part-time work.

The Human Rights Commission—that famous ALP creature—in its newsletter *Human Rights*, No. 18 dated July 1986 sets out the real problem. I shall read the full article into *Hansard*, as I consider the matter to be of great importance.

The article states as follows—

“Anomalies in taxation, sickness benefits, allowances and invalid pensions which deter many handicapped persons from working part-time, are spelled out in a publication just released by the Human Rights Commission.

The Commission's Occasional Paper No. 11 is an In-depth study prepared by the Australian Council of Social Services on the ‘Treatment of Disabled Persons in Social Security and Taxation Law’.

Its release follows in the wake of legislation allowing for permanent part-time positions in the Public Service and the Commission hopes that particular note will be made of many proposals contained in the Paper.

For instance, the Paper indicates that people on sickness benefits are significantly worse off working part time than those on invalid pensions, and invalid pensioners earning a part time income lose some of their supplementary assistance or rent allowances.

As a result, it suggests the need for a change in legislation to prevent what presently amounts to double taxation for many pensioners and sickness beneficiaries.

The 85 per cent ‘incapacity’ regulation also comes in for severe criticism with a suggestion that it be abolished along with proposals for a more accurate and realistic approach to what constitutes ‘incapacity to work’.

The abolition of the distinction between handicapped and severely handicapped children is also proposed in conjunction with a suggestion that an allowance be paid to all parents suffering economic disadvantage as the consequence of caring for a disabled child.

The continuing poverty of disabled people is highlighted in the paper, and reference is made to gaps and anomalies in the maintenance of incomes and the fragmentation and confusion in Federal/State funding.

The paper mentions that in the past ‘solutions’ have invariably been piecemeal, ad hoc and inadequate, based as they are on outmoded assumptions that disabled people are not capable of managing their own lives.

Although welcoming innovations such as the introduction of the Mobility Allowance, the paper suggests those reforms do not confront the fundamental disregard of the rights of disabled people, and states that in some instances, they actually add to the bewilderingly complex maze already confronting the disabled.

The paper stresses that the plethora of recommendations in recent reports aimed at alleviating discrepancies and shortfalls in current legislation provide ample guidance for immediate government action.”

That action has not been taken.

Following that message of gloom from Canberra for the disabled, I proceed to draw the Committee's attention to another success story for the Queensland Government. I

refer, of course, to the Queensland Blind Industrial Centre (QBIC), which produces an excellent and professionally made array of products that have enjoyed excellent market acceptance. It is pleasing to note that a 10.6 per cent increase in sales has been achieved in the past year, with total sales of \$748,607—a most creditable effort indeed.

The recent implementation of Stage 1 of the agreement between the Department of Education and the Department of Welfare Services whereby the QBIC premises are shared with the Yeronga TAFE college has seen a highly successful wood-working course involving partially sighted pupils. Provided that his work is satisfactory, such training naturally enhances a student's chance of obtaining a permanent position at the QBIC.

Whilst on the subject of the QBIC employment, it is pleasing to note that as part of the extensive review undertaken at QBIC last year an assessment was made of organisational structure, wages for blind employees, participation in management by employees and staff and productivity and support teams. As a result, a new wages and employment scheme emerged. It has now been established that prior to those reforms the QBIC was ahead of similar institutions interstate. What an indictment of those Labor States that allowed and still allow such a situation to exist!

Mr Davis: Who gave you the brief?

Mr CLAUSON: The member for Brisbane Central is carrying on like a hollow drum. He is thin-skinned and full of air and noise. He does not want to hear what I have to say.

He is surprised to see Queensland leading Australia once more in the provision of handicapped services. Of course, since implementation of the review's new structure, Queensland's system surpasses those in all the other States. What an indictment that is on those Labor States that have not followed suit. Perhaps they are on daylight saving and it is still dark in the south.

I compliment the Minister on the presentation of her first Estimates, which I consider are exemplary. I compliment her officers, particularly Mr Plummer, on his contribution to the Queensland Blind Industrial Centre, and Mr Alan Pettigrew. I consider the Estimates to be a worthy effort and well supported.

Mr PALASZCZUK (Archerfield) (8.7 p.m.): In speaking to the Estimates of the Department of Welfare Services, I would first like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the organisations that do such marvellous work among the aged, youth and the disadvantaged in our community. While the larger organisations do spring readily to mind, such as the Salvation Army, St Vincent de Paul, Brisbane City Mission and Wesley Central Mission, it is great to see that an increasing number of smaller self-help groups are springing up and trying to help themselves.

I have taken the trouble to speak to most of the organisations in my electorate during the last couple of years, and particularly during the last couple of weeks, since I found out that the debate on the Welfare Services Estimates would take place during this session. The community feels that there is a genuine need to provide welfare services. I accept that a few people are abusing the system. However, the majority—I stress the word “majority”—are in need of assistance. It is high time that the labelling of all welfare recipients as welfare cheats was stopped.

One saga that springs readily to mind is the infamous labelling by the previous Minister for Welfare Services (Mr Muntz) of all single parents as deviants. That statement, of course, was in poor taste. As a matter of fact, within my electorate a deputation was made to me by a number of single parents. For the Minister's benefit, I point out that that deputation was not from a group of female single parents; they were male single parents who, through no fault of their own, had been left with a number of children to look after. They were so incensed that they said that, if the Minister attended at the Civic Centre at Inala, he would not see an effigy of himself hanging from the flagpole but would find himself hanging from it by a very tender portion of his anatomy.

What has come through from the welfare organisations is that in a number of cases, although extra funding is provided, it is nowhere near enough to cover increased expenditure. The people within the welfare organisations feel that there is a subtle move afoot by the Government to shift more and more responsibility onto voluntary organisations. That feeling was expressed on numerous occasions, so there is an obvious concern. Government members alluded to that point in a rather non-apologetic manner. From the statements of Government members, it is clear that the suspicions of welfare organisations are correct.

I am heartily sick of the knockers of my electorate of Archerfield. I remind all honourable members that, whereas it is true that a large number of welfare cases exist in my electorate, the electorate also has a very large percentage of home-ownership. As a matter of fact, Acacia Ridge is 75 per cent home owned and the percentage in Inala is almost 50 per cent. That is very high by anybody's standards, especially in a Housing Commission area. The suburbs of Durack, Richlands and Doolandella are private developments within my electorate. They also enhance the electorate.

Those people who deliver literature within my area tell me that they are amazed at the number of inground swimming-pools within my electorate. Taxi-drivers within my electorate also comment on how quiet and peaceful the electorate is on week-ends.

The policy of the Queensland Housing Commission to place all welfare cases in Housing Commission areas such as Inala is one of the reasons for a high percentage of welfare cases within my electorate.

I am pleased to see that the Housing Commission has seen the error of its ways and that people are now spread throughout the community with a social-mix policy. The Minister is aware that that policy will take off some of the pressure from the welfare system, especially in my own electorate.

The Minister is also aware that 1984 was the International Youth Year. With the usual fanfare, 1986 is the Year for Parents. I suggest that both declarations are very hollow. In particular, I point to the disgraceful performance in Kingston. Most honourable members would be aware that the Kingston p. and c. association was concerned enough about the welfare of children to provide them with breakfast. However, instead of being congratulated, the p. and c. association was subjected to abuse.

The honourable member for Fassifern (Mr Lingard) should be ashamed of himself for supporting a small band of National Party snobs who are trying to stop the p. and c. association.

Mr Davis: All he is interested in is *The Sunday Mail* social pages.

Mr PALASZCZUK: I do not have *The Sunday Mail* social pages here at the present time. However, I do have a copy of *The Catholic Leader* of 24 August 1986.

I wish to read from that publication a few excerpts from principals of schools in which similar problems to those at Kingston High School are suffered in relation to hungry children.

Mr Braddy: It is not a communist publication. What was it again?

Mr PALASZCZUK: I am referring to *The Catholic Leader*. I believe it is also a rather right-wing publication.

Mr Hamill: That is the same journal that published Mrs Chapman's dreadful recipe for the poor, wasn't it?

Mr PALASZCZUK: Yes, but that recipe has since been explained to me.

The Catholic Leader is also the publication in which Mr Henderson advertises for the forthcoming election. Mr Paul McCann, the principal of St Francis Xavier School at Goodna, on Brisbane's western outskirts, said in the publication—

"I had a student sent to my office for misbehaviour and that child was as high as a kite—not on drugs but on hunger. He hadn't eaten for two days. I sent him to the tuckshop for a good feed."

Mr Tony Connor, the principal of the Holy Spirit School at New Farm, stated—

"Children from genuinely hard-up families are fed through the tuckshop. Our feeling—the teachers' feeling—is that this is our family and these are our children."

Mr Terry Sullivan, the principal of the Sacred Heart School at Rosalie, said—

"Some of our families are quite desperate—I am looking at ways to provide breakfasts here for children coming to school hungry."

Principals of State primary schools in outer Brisbane developing suburbs, including Woodridge, Kingston, Browns Plains and Loganholme, generally state that they also have cases of hungry pupils.

In my own electorate there is an excellent principal at the local Catholic school, St Mark's School, Mr Bill Barker, who said that hunger was also a problem there, but that the students of Inala have been able to overcome that problem by their method of sharing their lunches when they come to school. In other words, children help each other by sharing their lunches. I urge the Minister now to give some practical support to the p. and c. association. As I said previously, the problem at Kingston supports my contention that both the International Youth Year and the Year for Parents are a sham.

While I am on the subject of snobbery, I have to inform the Chamber that, unfortunately, snobbery is alive and well. Honourable members will recall the recent Colts Ball in the city. Some colts made snide remarks about Inala being a welfare suburb and therefore with no social style. On the night, extra bouncers were hired in case hordes of youths from western suburbs invaded their ball. What rubbish! As a matter of fact, before the fringe benefits tax, the whole thing would have been written off as a tax dodge. The colts tried to take it out on my constituents. And what a nice old turn-out that was! A young doctor had his wallet stolen and a lass was refused a taxi because of the vomit on her dress. Quite honestly, as a result of the ball, the colts have finally been gelded.

Mr Bill Turner of Inala has been making noises in my area recently on the need to assist the youth of the area. On the surface, it is a very commendable aim. However, when one digs into some of these schemes, one finds that they do not come up smelling of roses. In my opinion, the scheme qualifies for the bad smell award of 1986. I make it quite plain to the Minister that under no circumstances will I tolerate a pinball and pool parlour in my electorate.

Some years ago, one was set up in Skylark Street near the electorate office of my late predecessor. That caused enormous problems, but it got very short shrift from both Kev Hooper and the local police, and it closed its doors. Ample facilities are available for the youth of my electorate. Inala has an excellent police youth club. Acacia Ridge has an excellent YMCA. The area has marvellous church organisations that cater for its youth. Every sport and every recreational facility is catered for in my area. So a pinball parlour and a pool parlour is just not on. Honourable members know the consequence of having such establishments in one's electorate.

I understand also that the Premier, when he was at Oxley last Friday opening Mr Philbrick's campaign office, accepted a petition from a Mr Turner. The ALP candidate, Peter Rowe, will pick the seat up, anyway. Mr Turner was evidently complaining to the Premier at my lack of support for his ventures. Mr Turner has evidently been making noises recently that he would like to be the National Party candidate in the forthcoming election. I wish him the best of British luck. If the National Party is silly enough to take him on, I will pay his deposit. I would also remind him of the fate of Doug Jackson

after the by-election. He lost on the Saturday. He went to work on the Monday to the Fish Board and got the sack.

Mr Kruger: What Turner is that?

Mr PALASZCZUK: He is certainly not the Turner up north who is calling himself an MLA—a bogus MLA. I would advise the Minister and her officers to tread very warily with that gentleman and his group.

It may be news to the Minister that Mr Turner and his group were recently thrown out of the Wandarah Neighbourhood Centre. The centre was subsequently forced to seek a Federal Government grant to effect repairs because of the damage. I say to the Minister: forewarned is forearmed.

I am pleased to note that the annual report of the Department of Welfare Services records an increasing number of pensioners who are taking advantage of concessional rail travel. The report states that an increase of 30 per cent has occurred over the past two years. The total number of rail concessions applied for in 1985-86 was 57 804, which is very commendable. I take this opportunity to encourage pensioner organisations that are active in my electorate to take advantage of the scheme. Judging by the applications that have been made in my electorate office, I have been pleased to note that Cairns is the most popular destination.

Mr Kruger: I guess that is because Cairns has a good State member.

Mr PALASZCZUK: I concur whole-heartedly with the honourable member for Murrumba's sentiments. The honourable member for Cairns (Mr De Lacy) provides excellent representation for his constituents.

Cairns is so popular as a tourist destination that it comes as a surprise when an applicant wants to go somewhere else. I must admit that, at times, my electorate office is more like a central railways booking office. The fact that my constituents are able to make application at the electorate office has saved people the expense and inconvenience of an extra trip to the city. I appreciate what the Government has been able to do for pensioners who seek to travel throughout the State.

At this point, I inform the Minister and honourable members that a number of initiatives have been taken by the Federal Government to improve opportunities for people who receive low incomes or welfare payments. The initiatives I refer to have been designed specifically to help people educate their children to a higher than usual standard by enabling the children to remain at school for longer periods.

The Federal Government has also encouraged young people to embark on further tertiary studies and has encouraged mature-age students to study and gain meaningful employment. The schemes to which I refer are the Secondary Allowance Scheme (SAS), the Tertiary Education Assistance Scheme (TEAS) and the Adult Secondary Education Assistance Scheme (ASEAS). I am pleased that many of my constituents are availing themselves of the opportunities afforded by these schemes. In particular, the ASEAS scheme has involved high schools at Richlands, Acacia Ridge and Inala in a very successful program of integrating mature-age students in campus activities. Presently, 14 single parents in my electorate are studying so that they may be qualified to teach. They have made the effort to take themselves off the welfare assistance queue. What assistance has been provided by this Government for the people to whom I refer?

Mrs Chapman: How many children have each of those single parents?

Mr PALASZCZUK: The number of children ranges from four down to one. They are sole parents to those children through no fault of their own.

Mrs Chapman: No fault of their own! Who did it, then?

Mr PALASZCZUK: Here we go again. I am not going to bother with the Minister. What a ridiculous statement, coming as it does from a Minister for Welfare!

Mrs Chapman: It is not ridiculous.

Mr PALASZCZUK: It is ridiculous.

As I was saying: What assistance has been forthcoming from this Government for students, especially those who live in rental accommodation provided by the Queensland Housing Commission? Absolutely none!

The Queensland Housing Commission, through the implementation of its income-g geared rental policy, is using the three schemes I have referred to as a milking cow to increase Government revenue. I urge the Minister for Welfare Services to approach the Minister for Works and Housing in an endeavour to put an end to that practice, and to give the people concerned a fair go in obtaining an education so that they can be gainfully employed in the community.

Mr Davis: Then the Housing Commission takes an extra \$10 off them.

Mr PALASZCZUK: That is exactly the point I am making.

I urge the Minister to hold discussions with the Minister for Works and Housing to put an end to the iniquitous scheme that operates presently.

The Department of Ethnic Affairs also is administered by the Minister for Welfare Services, Youth and Ethnic Affairs. Recently, it was my pleasure to attend a function held at the Spanish Club, Acacia Ridge, which is situated in my electorate. I am pleased to inform the Committee that I was one of the judges who selected a young lass who subsequently became Miss Warana. Also in attendance at the function was the Australian Ambassador to Spain and former Speaker of the House of Representatives, Dr Harry Jenkins, who is a very charming man.

The annual report of the Department of Ethnic Affairs states its continued commitment to meeting the needs of migrant families. The department and the Government have done precious little in my electorate. It has all been left to the Federal Government through the CEP, which has assisted numerous ethnic groups in my electorate. Those groups include the Croatia community of Rocklea, the Dutch community in Richlands, the Inala Soccer Club, the Lions Soccer Club and the Vietnamese community. All of those groups have benefited or are about to benefit from the program. It has also provided short-term employment for long-term unemployed. The Federal Government has put its money where its mouth is. What about this Government? It is long on talk but it is short on cash. This Government takes delight in bashing the CEP. I can assure the Minister that the ethnic groups that I have mentioned are very grateful for the CEP. The main reason that the State Government is sour on the CEP is that it has been caught out while misusing the program. The Federal Government has put a spoke in the State Government's wheel.

Finally, I would like to congratulate the Minister on her political tolerance. I note that listed as being members of the Ministerial Advisory Committee on Youth Affairs are Mr Santo Santoro, the Liberal aspirant against the Minister for Transport (Mr Lane), for the seat of Merthyr, and Mr Alan Sherlock, the Liberal aspirant against my good friend the honourable member for Ashgrove (Mr Veivers). I am sure the Chamber would be very interested to know if they are still on that committee.

Mr PREST (Port Curtis) (8.26 p.m.): I have pleasure in speaking in this debate on the Welfare Estimates. First of all, I congratulate the foster parents who have been looking after children over the past 12 months, especially those in my own area. Of course, I also would like to thank the Salvation Army in Gladstone for the work done in foster homes. I am quite certain that the Minister would know of and appreciate the work that the people from that institution do.

I am concerned about families whose children have been taken from them because of the unsuitable accommodation in which they have been living. That family must then find a suitable home. So they apply to the Housing Commission for accommodation because the children would be able to be returned to them when suitable accommodation

is obtained. But the one department fights against the other. The Housing Commission says that they cannot be considered for a home until the children are in the family's care. When the family speaks with the Department of Children's Services in order to have the children returned so that the Housing Commission can fulfil its part of the bargain by allocating a house, the Department of Children's Services says that the family cannot get the children back until they have adequate accommodation. That is an instance of two Government departments, the Housing Commission and the Department of Children's Services, pulling against one another. I believe that, if it is at all possible, the Minister for Welfare Services (Mrs Chapman) should confer with the Minister for Works and Housing (Mr Wharton) about the allocation of homes in such instances. I leave it at that.

It is pleasing to note that throughout the year a record 57 804 pensioners received free rail requisitions. In my electorate office, I receive many inquiries about rail requisitions each day. The Railway Department requires a person making a booking to be able to pick up his tickets within 24 hours. It is found that because of the shortage of accommodation on the trains at various times that a passenger is notified of change of booking and must then ask for an immediate issuing of his rail requisition. The pensioners go to the police station, from where they are sent to my office. Approval is obtained and they return to the police station to pick up their requisitions. From there they return to the railway station. That is quite inconvenient for them.

On 9 May I wrote to the Minister's department in the following terms—

"I am writing in relation to the issue of emergency rail requisitions to Pensioners.

At the present time, pensioners who, due to unforeseen circumstances are required to travel at short notice, contact the Police who refer these Pensioners back to my office to obtain approval from your Relief Officer. My office then advises the Police that approval has been given, the Pensioner returns to the Police Station and the necessary requisitions are issued.

This is a lengthy and involved procedure causing considerable inconvenience to the Pensioner, many of whom are frail, infirm, etc. It also creates a duplication of duties for the Police Department and, in order to simplify the service, I am willing to act as agent for the issue of emergency requisitions, after first obtaining approval from your department as I do at present.

I would appreciate if you could investigate the possibility of allowing these requisitions to be issued through my office, thereby benefitting not only the pensioner, but also relieving an already understaffed Police Station of extraneous duties."

On 19 June the Minister replied—

"Thank you for your correspondence in which you requested to act as an agent for the issue of rail warrants to pensioners in emergency circumstances.

Careful consideration has been given to your request but it is not proposed to alter the present arrangements at this stage.

However, it is appreciated that the present system does cause some inconvenience in certain cases and my officers are examining the possibility of introducing a new system which will streamline the present procedures involved in issuing the warrants.

I am hopeful that a satisfactory system can be implemented which will be acceptable to all concerned."

I thank the Minister for that letter. I sincerely hope that, when the investigations are completed, satisfactory arrangements will be implemented for the issuing of those requisitions. The May 1986 issue of *The Voice of Pensioners* deals with long-distance rail travel. In many States free pensioner travel vouchers are issued with pensioner health cards. For example, each pensioner in New South Wales receives two first-class travel vouchers with the health card. In Queensland, pensioners get two second-class travel vouchers only on application. In Queensland, the Government refuses to upgrade the second-class vouchers to first class and refuses even to make two second-class

vouchers changeable to one first-class voucher. It refuses to issue the vouchers with health cards. In Queensland pensioners must line up like beggars at the welfare office or police station for their vouchers. That was what I was talking about when I wrote that letter to the Minister in May, to which she responded in June. Since second-class sleeping cabins are segregated according to sex, couples must either sleep apart or pay to upgrade.

In many States far more generous local travel concessions are provided. In South Australia travel is free. In Sydney, one 60c concession ticket entitles a pensioner to day-long travel by bus, train or ferry within a 50 km radius of the city. In Queensland, a pensioner concession return fare from Mount Gravatt to the city costs \$1. I do not know the present cost, but that is the information that appeared in that May publication to which I referred. Obviously the inconvenience to pensioners and their treatment in Queensland are not inflicted on their counterparts in New South Wales and the other States of Australia. I am quite certain that, as a very responsible person, the Minister will take on board——

Mrs Chapman: Thank you.

Mr PREST: I always treat a lady as a lady.

Mrs Chapman: That is very nice of you. It is a pity you didn't talk to your mates over there.

Mr PREST: I will have a chat to them later.

I am certain that the Minister will take on board the thoughts of the pensioners of Queensland and see if alterations can be made to meet their demands.

I place on record my appreciation of the work at Louise Lodge, which is run by Mrs Anderson for deserted wives and their children. It has been a wonderful refuge for ladies and families in need. It is very pleasing that throughout the year the Government has made a contribution that enables that hostel to continue to operate.

It is also pleasing to note in the annual report of the Department of Welfare Services that many youth assistance schemes in Gladstone have received subsidies. I place on record my thanks for the work done by the Girl Guides Association and the Boy Scouts Association in my area. It is pleasing that during the past 12 months new huts have been built at Calliope for the Calliope Girl Guides Association and for the Calliope Boy Scouts Association, at Boyne Island for the Iluka Girl Guides Association and in Gladstone for the Chanel Boy Scouts.

Those groups have received assistance from the department. The Calliope Girl Guides Association received \$2,948.88, the Iluka Girl Guides Association received \$3,157.61, the Calliope Boy Scouts Association received \$1,293.24, and Chanel Boy Scouts received \$3,000. That money made it much easier for the various committees to pay off the debts incurred in building the new scout or guide huts. Those four groups now have dens equal to those of any group in the State of Queensland.

The Queensland Police-Citizens Youth Welfare Association received \$15,260 from the department. That shows that the Gladstone Police-Citizens Youth Welfare Association is doing a marvellous job and receiving the consideration that it deserves from the department to allow it to look after the youth of Gladstone.

I note that the Gladstone Police Youth Club also receives \$6,900, which is a considerable amount of money, for the Vacation Care Program. Of course, the work that is carried out under that program is of great benefit to the parents of the children of Gladstone.

Gladstone has also received a substantial grant for its Family Day Care Scheme. That grant is \$14,705. The money that is being distributed is being used in a very worthwhile way. Under the Emergency Relief Program, the Salvation Army in Gladstone received \$1,500.

During the year, the Gladstone Youth Crisis Centre was opened in Rosebery Street, Gladstone. Unfortunately, that youth crisis centre was somewhat delayed because about a year earlier the Queensland Housing Commission had bought a home in Worthington Street from Mrs Kahane for such a youth centre, but without consulting the Gladstone City Council. When the mayor discovered that he was to have a youth crisis centre alongside his residence, he said that it would devalue his property; so the Queensland Housing Commission had to make other arrangements to purchase accommodation to set up the Gladstone Youth Crisis Centre. I am pleased that the centre is up and going, doing the job that it was designed for.

One of the disappointments during the year, as has already been stated today, was the Minister's statement in April of this year that the payment of supporting parent benefit to single mothers should be stopped. Many groups were outraged. Various comments were made by single mothers.

Mrs Chapman: That was for more than one child.

Mr PREST: Yes, I quite agree.

Mrs Chapman: I am glad you do.

Mr PREST: As a mother, a female and a very responsible person, the Minister should have been more sympathetic. Even if the Minister had no sympathy for the unmarried mother, anyone who has children of her own, as the Minister has, should have been more sympathetic to the welfare of the child itself.

Mrs Chapman: I couldn't care less if they had 20. It's who pays for them that bothers me.

Mr PREST: That is where the Minister and I differ. Last year was the International Youth Year, the year before was the Year of the Family and this year is the Year for Parents.

Mr Simpson: You also have the year of the big Hawke debt.

Mr PREST: There he is, the honourable member for Cooroora. He only comes into the Chamber on very rare occasions and, when he does, he makes inane comments. The honourable member should return to the watering-hole that he has just come from.

The Minister made statements about taking payments away from a mother. That would not have curbed the mothers' sexual desires, but it would have had a very adverse effect on the children whom she brought into the world. I do not believe that any child at all should have to put up with——

Mrs Chapman: Let's get it straight. I wasn't going to stop the payments to all the children who are here now. I said that Mr Hawke should say that in 12 months' time there will be no payments for any child after the first child. Surely you would agree with me on that.

Mr PREST: The Federal Labor Government is doing the right thing. A newspaper article dated 2 September 1986 continued the statement that the Federal Government plans to revise child maintenance to make custodial parents give the name and whereabouts of their children's other parent, who will be able to be traced. If that parent is receiving benefits, an amount will be deducted for the upkeep of that child.

Mrs Chapman: That is a step in the right direction.

Mr PREST: Yes, that is a step.

No-one should shirk his or her responsibilities. I believe that, if it is good enough to gratify one's sexual desire, it is good enough to bear one's responsibilities. I agree with that. Until a solution is found, I do not believe that the child should be the one to suffer.

One of the matters that have concerned me for a long period of time is child abuse within Queensland. It is not only happening in this State, but also seems to be a growing concern for all. Over a period of time a committee has been set up by the Minister, but it appears that very little has been done to attempt to diminish the incidence of serious child abuse. Every week or so one can see in a newspaper the emotional face of a child who has suffered child abuse. One headline states "Abuse reports increase sparks renewed calls". The number of child abuse notifications increased from 1 442 in 1981-82 to 5 642 in 1985-86. That shows that over a period of four years the number of notifications of child abuse has increased by approximately 400 per cent. That is very serious.

Mr R. J. Gibbs: All while the National Party has been in office.

Mr PREST: That is so.

I remember reporting one case of child abuse. Unfortunately, it was not a person of my political persuasion. Because she was of another political colour, that woman was not charged. When reports of child abuse increase by 400 per cent over a period of four years, it is essential that more people should be taken to court and have penalties imposed for the abuse that they inflict on children.

The amount of funds allocated in the State Budget has met a mixed reaction. \$150,000 has been provided for the Queensland Centre for Prevention of Child Abuse. That money will be used only to distribute glossy pamphlets. It will do nothing to solve the massive problem that presently exists.

Mr DAVIS (Brisbane Central) (8.46 p.m.): The very important debate on the Estimates of the Department of Children's Services and the Department of Welfare Services is one in which I have always been interested.

Mr Elliott: You knew more about it when you were younger.

Mr DAVIS: The member for Cunningham did not tell the Minister for Education about the appointment the other day. However, he has butted in straight away.

Mr R. J. Gibbs: The intriguing thing about that appointment is that I cannot figure out which father-in-law it was.

Mr DAVIS: As the honourable member knows, I do not like to get personal. I think that it was No. 2.

The Minister's portfolio is a very important one. I congratulate the Minister. A number of my colleagues and I were able to tell the Minister that she would get her present appointment. I think that the member for Everton also made that forecast. I am glad that the Minister has shown honourable members that, since she was promoted to this portfolio, she has not gained much of a clue about it. However, I am glad to see that she received the appointment. She is certainly better than the member for Greenslopes (Mrs Harvey).

Mrs Chapman: Speak honestly.

Mr DAVIS: I have to be fair. However, I am glad that she received the appointment rather than the member for Greenslopes. Everyone could see that she was green with envy because she missed out on that portfolio.

Earlier, somebody mentioned, and I think it is true——

Mr Lingard interjected.

Mr DAVIS: The honourable member missed out. He has no chance. Judging by his performance since he became a member of this Assembly, it will be a long time before he gets in.

I think that the member for South Brisbane brought a certain matter to the attention of the Committee. He has been right on the ball with his statements about the member for Greenslopes. I do not think that during the time she has been a member of this

Assembly there could have been more money allocated to her electorate to prop her up so that she can retain her seat of Greenslopes.

Mr FitzGerald: You are being vicious.

Mr DAVIS: I think that one has to be fair. I am not being vicious. I know that the member for Pine Rivers would be the first person to agree with me, and I know that you, Mr Row, would also agree.

Mrs Chapman: Oh, there you go again. I would never agree with you.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Firstly, I ask the member for Brisbane Central to refer to the Minister by her correct title.

Mr DAVIS: Holy mackerel, aren't we getting a bit touchy towards the end of the session! I said "the member for Greenslopes" and I said "the member for Pine Rivers". Even though she is a Minister, she is still the member for Pine Rivers. I referred to her as the member for Pine Rivers.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the honourable member to refer to the Minister by her correct title when she is in the Chamber presenting a Bill or listening to a debate on her Estimates.

Mr DAVIS: As I do not want to be personal, I will call her the Minister for Welfare Services. I hope that the protocol will extend both ways. I will make sure that it is extended both ways. Some of the chairmanship that honourable members have seen in this Chamber over the last three years leaves a lot to be desired—not including the present occupant of the chair.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Did I hear the honourable member reflecting on the Chair?

Mr DAVIS: No. I said, "over the last three years". I did not refer to you, Mr Row.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I warn the honourable member under Standing Order No. 123A.

Mr DAVIS: I did not refer to you, Mr Row, because I know that you are fair and above board.

Before I was rudely interrupted by the Minister for Welfare Services, Youth and Ethnic Affairs, I was referring to the huge amount of money that has been injected into the Greenslopes electorate. The honourable member for South Brisbane (Mr Fouras) pointed out that approximately half a million dollars was expended on that building at Coorparoo. I am not sure whether honourable members are aware that the honourable member for Greenslopes was upset because she wanted the building, which was named the Queen Alexandra Home, to be known as the Leisha Harvey Hostel. However, that proposal was knocked back. I believe that was the proper decision to make, because it is a heritage building. Even though the Government contributed half a million dollars towards the reconstruction of that building. I do not believe that it is proper to name buildings after politicians.

Mrs Chapman: We heard you wanted it called the Brian Davis Den.

Mr DAVIS: I do not believe that is very good. I will leave that matter go. The comment by the Minister refers more to some of the buildings that are constructed within my electorate, the opening ceremonies of which I am rarely invited to attend.

I do not think I will dwell on the honourable member for Greenslopes, because I do not believe that she will be here after the next two days.

The SCAN scheme has been discussed at length. In relation to child abuse—and I am looking at some of the Government members when I say this—I am glad that the Minister referred to child abuse, because although there is a great deal of media coverage

of child abuse, which the Government should be trying to eradicate, I would not like to see the stage reached at which every person will be judged guilty.

In my own electorate there was a case involving an upstanding family whose child fell over and broke its arm. Because the child had a broken arm and bruises, the SCAN unit at the General Hospital was alerted. Honourable members would be amazed at what that family had to go through. I had never realised how bad the procedure was.

At that time I contacted Mr Zerk and he gave me the full details of the case. However, although the stage may be reached at which child abuse can be prevented, it must be remembered that the system still exists whereby a person is presumed to be innocent until proved otherwise. From the actions of that SCAN unit, it appeared that the person involved was presumed to be guilty right at the outset.

The Government must ensure that all suspected child-abuse cases are investigated, that both sides are protected, and that everything is done above board.

I have no criticism of the Welfare Services Department. I have always had a good relationship with Mr Plummer, Mr Zerk and their officers. That relationship dates back to the days when I was spokesman on welfare. I appreciate the assistance and attention that is afforded whenever I find it necessary to contact that department. It has always been one of those non-political departments.

I do not like to criticise the Minister, but she has fallen into the same trap as so many others. I believe that you, Mr Row, would agree with me that the Minister has fallen into the trap of wasting tax-payers' money on unnecessary advertisements.

With all due respect to the Minister, what benefit is it to her, the child or the State for her to appear in those advertisements? They obviously do not impress anyone, and I believe they are a tremendous waste of money.

The Minister for Health, whose portfolio is similar to that of the Minister's, recently appeared in advertisements that have been resurrected from four years ago. I wonder why the Government does those things. Surely it could not be from a political point of view!

Mr Milliner: As a matter of fact, it is detrimental, because it scares the kids when they see the Minister.

Mr DAVIS: I do not believe in being personal. The Minister for Welfare Services, Youth and Ethnic Affairs (Mrs Chapman) is a very attractive person, and I would not criticise her in that respect.

The honourable member for Archerfield (Mr Palaszczuk) referred to the investigation or report of the Special Branch into the breakfasts at Kingston State High School. If ever a situation deserved to be brought forward, it is that one, because no-one wants to claim responsibility for it. I have not heard anything from the Minister for Welfare Services. The Minister for Education and well-known employer of family members said that it has nothing to do with him and that he did not authorise the Special Branch to raid the Kingston State High School in regard to the provision of breakfasts. The Minister for Police knows nothing about it. I would like to know whether the Minister for Welfare Services knows something about it. Obviously, somebody has authorised the Special Branch to make the investigation. The Special Branch of the police force went down to investigate that school, which out of the goodness of its heart was giving breakfast to the poor and starving children. The heaviest branch of the police force had to investigate.

Mr Yewdale: Gestapo tactics.

Mr DAVIS: The honourable member for Rockhampton North said it; it is identical to Nazi Germany. I certainly hope that the National Party, to which very similar names to that of the regime between 1939 and 1945—

Mr D'Arcy: I have it on the best information that it was the member for Fassifern.

Mr DAVIS: My colleague the honourable member for Woodridge has stated that the honourable member for Fassifern (Mr Lingard) was the person involved. From my information, I would probably have to agree with him.

I now refer to the single supporting mothers who were mentioned by the honourable member for Port Curtis (Mr Prest). The Minister's outburst was probably one of the worst outbursts by a Minister that I have heard. It did not go over too well, because she was attacking a minority group, that is, the single supporting mothers. The Minister should have seen the poor service that the Children's Services Department provided when I was Opposition spokesman on welfare services in 1972 and when the Children's Services Department administered the supporting mothers scheme. It was not called the supporting mothers scheme then; it was called assistance to the children. The scheme was taken over by the Commonwealth. I do not know what benefit was obtained by knocking people who are on the single supporting mother's pension. It is not only single mothers; a lot of freeloaders also grab the supporting mother's pension.

I read with interest an article on the Callaghan affair in which Mrs Callaghan, a well-known National Party supporter and well-known tea-leaf, obviously plundered the purse of the Queensland Government. At that time I noticed that the first wife of Mr Callaghan was living on \$110 a week, which coincides with the supporting mother's pension. That would be a classic example of why the supporting mother's pension should be tightened up.

However, the Minister should go ahead. I do not know what to call her; I am tongue-tied. I do not know whether to call her "Mrs Minister" or "Madam Minister".

Mrs Chapman: Just don't call me "Ms".

Mr DAVIS: I am not sure whether I should address the Minister as "Ms Minister", "Mrs Minister", "Dear Minister"—simply to observe protocol—or "Yes Minister".

The Minister for Welfare Services, Youth and Ethnic Affairs (Mrs Chapman) no matter how much she might try to avoid the accusation, has nevertheless attacked single mothers.

Mrs Chapman: I am not trying to avoid it. The honourable member for Brisbane Central is twisting it.

Mr DAVIS: No, I am not.

Mrs Chapman: Yes, you are. I am talking about single mothers who have never been married, and all of the children after the firstborn.

Mr DAVIS: I am glad the Minister has interjected. I waited for her to demonstrate the very attitude that she has adopted.

How many times in this Chamber have former Ministers for Welfare Services, such as the honourable member for Redcliffe (Mr White), taken a strong stand on legislation relating to adoption? The people who are against the payment of supporting mothers' benefits say exactly what the Minister is saying now. I ask the Minister what should be done with a person who has had one or more children and has never been married? Will the Minister introduce legislation prescribing that they be put into hospital to have their tubes tied?

The point must be made that the Minister is one who has taken a strong stand against abortion. During the course of my parliamentary career I have met many people who could be described as conservatives. Every honourable member who has taken a strong stand against abortion legislation and has spoken strongly in the debate on abortion is one of a type.

Mr Borbidge: You would be about the biggest idiot in this Parliament.

Mr DAVIS: The honourable member for "Sufferers" Paradise is the type of member who will take a strong stand against abortion and tell people that there is no way in the

world that abortion should be allowed. In the case of a second child born to a single parent, he is one of those who do not wish to pay an increased benefit to supporting mothers. The attitude of the conservatives on the Government side, who have had some involvement in the provision of benefits through the Department of Welfare Services, is basically that when a person has a second child, that child should be made available for adoption.

I make the point that when the Labor Government introduced a scheme to pay benefits to supporting mothers, it did so because of humanitarian reasons. I will conclude my speech on this note: the Labor Government introduced that scheme as a humanitarian gesture. As far as I am concerned, if a supporting mother deserves help, a humane Labor Government will provide assistance.

Hon. Y. A. CHAPMAN (Pine Rivers—Minister for Welfare Services, Youth and Ethnic Affairs) (9.2 p.m.): I indicated at the outset that I was proud to open the debate on the Estimates of my department, which are realistic in the light of the current economic climate. Certainly, nothing I heard from Opposition members who have participated in the debate would change my view. Nevertheless, I thank all honourable members for participating in the debate. A number of contributions, particularly those made by Government members, were constructive and thoughtful.

The officers of my department and I never presume that we know all the answers, and therefore constructive criticism is welcome. However, destructive comments that have been levelled on a personal basis against me and my senior officers by Opposition members—some of whom wasted their entire time completely—served absolutely no purpose.

It is impossible for me to deal with all of the points that have been raised, but, if I am unable to respond this evening and if a written reply is appropriate, I undertake to write to honourable members in reply to specific questions that have been asked. In the case of the honourable member for Woodridge (Mr D'Arcy) that will be difficult to do, as he hardly finished a sentence. I advise the honourable member to get a new speech-writer because the notes he tried to read out were almost a replica of speeches made by Opposition spokesmen on welfare when the previous debate on this department's Estimates took place. Protected by privilege, the honourable member made a cowardly attack on senior officers of the department, which should be deplored.

I was pleased to hear the honourable member agree with my decision to undertake a review of the department, but, typically, the honourable member got his wires crossed. His stooge in the department is giving him incorrect information. From the start, the staff of the department has been fully informed and are constantly advised of developments that take place along the way. Numerous members of the staff are participating in project teams. I will deal with the tripe about secrecy on the review when I reply to comments made by one of the honourable member's misinformed colleagues.

The legislation, which I foreshadowed, to set up my restructured department will incorporate several sections of the preliminary draft Bill. I have decided to split the proposed legislation into parts to facilitate its passage through the Chamber and its implementation. I noted that the honourable member for Townsville (Mr McElligott) appeared to support that approach.

I make no apology for the delay in the introduction of this comprehensive legislation because of the numerous sensitive issues involved and the necessity to properly negotiate matters affecting other Governments. Although the honourable member did not finish his argument, I gained the impression that he advocated that more children should be cared for outside institutions. For some years that has been the policy of the department

and the Government. In that respect, the department has a very good record, with only 13.3 per cent of children under court orders in institutions compared with 28.4 per cent in New South Wales.

I now turn to the honourable member's pathetic attempt to grab a headline and ignore the important sensitive nature of this debate. I refer to his ridiculous assertion that legal action should be taken about smoking—are the honourable members for Brisbane Central and his mate listening to this—in the Sir Leslie Wilson Youth Centre. It was quite obvious that the honourable member was making the allegation for cheap—very cheap—political purposes, because while he was making it he was looking to the press gallery the entire time. He is getting very good at that. As the honourable member knows full well, I never mentioned at any stage in my reply to the question that children under 16 were being encouraged to smoke at that centre. I challenge the honourable member to show me anywhere in that reply where I said anything like that. As honourable members who were present will recall, I said quite the opposite. The policy of the staff is positively to discourage smoking and they actually offer incentives to achieve this. In a supervised situation and with parental consent, some children are permitted to smoke. The honourable member's running to the press did not help him in any way. I repeat what I said on that earlier occasion, that placing a ban on all smoking, when some of the offenders are addicted to smoking when they enter the centre, will only lead to some of the young people trying to smoke by underhanded means, thus creating a fire hazard. The honourable member's ploy to distract attention from the laudible Budget allocations to my portfolio and the progressive programs undertaken by my department is a old as the statute which he quoted, and about as good as the legal advice that he claims he received.

I greatly appreciated the reasonable contribution by the honourable member for Fassifern (Mr Lingard), who obviously has taken the time during his term in Parliament to learn of the services provided by the department, unlike so many honourable members opposite. His understanding of the problems of youth and also the difficult job confronting my officers in handling complex family problems is obvious, and no doubt can be attributed to his training and experience before entering this place.

I noted the honourable member's submission for greater financial assistance to be given to Boys Town. I too applaud the wonderful job being done for young people at that outstanding facility. I have given serious consideration to the honourable member's previous pleas on behalf of Boys Town as well as those made to me personally by Brother Paul. I am happy to say that Boys Town will receive an increase of at least 15 per cent in its basic funding this financial year, which is an indication not only of what the Government thinks of that institution but also of its partnership with the non-Government sector generally.

The honourable member for Kurilpa (Ms Warner) seemed to have some problems interpreting the figures presented in the Budget documents, the report of the Director, Department of Children's Services, and the figures referred to in my presentation of the Estimates. The figures are all consistent and I suggest that the honourable member either spend more time going over the documents carefully or take a short lesson in arithmetic.

I specifically deny that the Government investigated or intimidated the persons who were providing breakfast at a particular school. I was amazed at the honourable member's continuing theme of intimidation.

She also alleged that social workers who were subsidised under the Subsidy for Social Workers Scheme were intimidated and that funds were cut off by changes in the guide-lines for the scheme if they spoke against the Government. That, of course, is a pack of lies. A case that contradicts that assertion relates to the video *Open Tantrum*. Persons associated with a subsidised organisation were connected with the making of that video, but no attempt was made to amend or alter the subsidy given to that organisation.

The honourable member also raised the issue of domestic violence. I have received a submission from the Combined Women's Refuge Committee seeking a review in this area. That is currently receiving consideration.

The honourable member attempted to misrepresent the current situation at the Sir Leslie Wilson Youth Centre. She ignored the forthcoming opening of the John Oxley Youth Centre and denigrated recent efforts to provide teaching services. For the information of the honourable member, I state that not one child who is in care and protection has been admitted to the centre this year. I point out to the honourable member that child abuse, and therefore the protection of children, is too important an issue for political point-scoring. This problem is something Queensland has in common with other States. For instance, New South Wales had a 65 per cent increase in notifications. My Department of Children's Services takes seriously its responsibility to provide protective services for children and the Queensland Centre for Prevention of Child Abuse stands testimony to that approach. As I mentioned earlier, it is the first centre of its kind in Australia.

I thank the honourable member for Gympie for his remarks. It is indeed timely that he should draw to the attention of the Chamber that my department already has responsibility for family welfare. His remarks on programs for youth have been noted and his important theme, that the family is vital in today's society, is one in which I certainly believe. I look forward to the expansion of the Family Welfare Community Development Workers Scheme, which shows that the Government is putting its emphasis in the right direction. The honourable member can be assured that Queensland will fight hard to gain its fair share of the funds to be made available by the Commonwealth for the proposed family support program. I was most interested in the honourable member's remarks about support for the churches and the concept of neighbourhood groups. My department works in close co-operation with churches of all denominations and will continue to do so. The department hopes to encourage the neighbourhood group idea.

I find it rather difficult to respond to the honourable member for Windsor (Mr Comben) because he spent a great deal of his time quoting from reports and articles. I was amazed to hear him criticise the success in gaining bicentennial funds for development of the National Trail and typically urge the State Government to dip into its own pocket. I do not believe in double-funding. The money which he would have my department outlay on that project will be well spent in helping the needy. He then reiterated passages from my speech about the welfare mentality in Australia today. For that, I thank him. I also thank the honourable member for Windsor for his contribution on community involvement in the provision of welfare services. Almost everything he said about that agreed 100 per cent with what I am doing as Minister, and for which the ALP has criticised me so openly. His actions in his own electorate are diabolically opposed to his party's philosophy and disagree violently with almost everything the ALP spokesman said earlier.

The honourable member for Condamine (Mr Littleproud) drew attention to the work that the Year for Parents committee is doing. Essentially Queensland's Year for Parents seeks to draw attention to the importance of parenthood and to the role of parents in shaping the next generation in our society. Many of the activities undertaken will pay dividends for the Government but, more importantly, for society as a whole. The honourable member pointed out a number of subsidy programs conducted by my department. The emphasis is, and will continue to be, on the Government's encouraging and providing financial assistance to the voluntary section to conduct a wide range of welfare programs. This is not the first time it has been said, but it is worth while repeating that the Government is committed to small and effective government. We realise that we cannot provide all the programs ourselves and we want to share with the community.

I wish to acknowledge the effort of the honourable member for Townsville (Mr McElligott) in providing input into the drafting of the proposed family welfare legislation. Although I can appreciate his enthusiasm to see the early introduction of new legislation,

I was pleased to receive his support for the previous legislation, to be broken into parts with each covering less ground. I will write to him outlining the outcome of his submission. He referred to a number of pressures that are placed on today's family and the need to support the family. However, when one considers the Labor Party policy on the family recently released by the Leader of the Opposition, one finds a series of non-specific promises with, as one would expect, no costings or advice as to where the funds would come from.

The honourable member for Redcliffe (Mr White) posed the general question, "Where are we going with welfare?" I could not agree more. He commented that taxpayers in the community at large are tired of transferring moneys to promote big government and big welfare.

I agree entirely with the remarks of the member for Redcliffe. I support in particular his remark that the taxation system should be geared in such a way as to support the family unit. Indeed, the Federal Government, which is responsible for taxation, should develop a policy that discriminates in favour of the family, not against it, as the policy of the Hawke Government does. As the honourable member for Redcliffe is a former Minister responsible for welfare, it was pleasing to note his strong support of the family unit.

The honourable member for Greenslopes (Mrs Harvey) has referred to the book entitled *The Bjelke-Petersen Premiership*. She is correct in saying that many of the chapters are written by persons looking in from the outside. Many of the authors have only some of the facts and have drawn sweeping conclusions from them. I support the reference to the cargo cult mentality of honourable members opposite. Instead of screaming for more welfare programs, Labor members opposite should be doing two things. First, they should be helping Queensland get its just share of funds on a per capita basis from their socialist colleagues in Canberra and, second, in times of economic restraint—an idea that was recently adopted by the socialists in Canberra—instead of preaching more of the same, they should be examining new ways to provide welfare services.

The remarks of the honourable member for Greenslopes on child abuse are much appreciated, and the work of her Child Abuse Research and Education Committee has been very worth while. I take this opportunity to thank all the members of that committee for their past and continuing input.

I turn to Senior Citizens Week, with its theme of "Age is no barrier". I have noted the honourable member's remarks on the implications of the scheme. This is the first Senior Citizens Week in Queensland. It will be held annually, and it will become bigger and more spectacular.

The honourable member for Ipswich (Mr Hamill) must be the Simple Simon of the Opposition benches. To say that 17 per cent of the population—meaning youth—are receiving only 0.06 per cent of the total allocation from consolidated revenue is nonsense, and typical of what the honourable member tries to say when he huffs and puffs. That piece of simple arithmetic ignores the funds expended on youth by the Department of Education, the Department of Employment and Industrial Affairs, the Department of Children's Services, the Department of Health and several other departments.

The honourable member for Ipswich criticised the youth policy recently completed for my department. Obviously, he did not understand that it was compiled by my advisory committee on youth, not by my department. It is based on extensive consultation with young people conducted during International Youth Year.

The honourable member for Ipswich referred to certain suggestions relating to the Department of Health and the Queensland Housing Commission. I suggest that if he wants any more information, the honourable member should take them up with the Ministers responsible for those departments.

In respect of SAAP, our Government has an excellent record of increased expenditure. It is no good drawing comparisons with the Commonwealth, which all too often withdraws from its commitments and expects the State to pick up the tab.

I thank the honourable member for Warwick (Mr Booth) for his words of support and for the common sense that he brought to the debate in respect to extravagant calls from the Opposition for apparent unlimited increased expenditure.

The honourable member for Warwick reminded honourable members that many of the ills facing today's society cannot be solved by increased Government expenditure alone. In his presentation, the honourable member indicated his understanding of the problems that are faced by children who are placed in secure custody and the need to respond to their needs sensitively rather than attempt to use them for cheap political gain.

The honourable member for South Brisbane (Mr Fouras) has found not only that it is too hot in the kitchen, but also apparently that he has to get out of the House as well. By misinterpreting figures, he put honourable members through a fruitless exercise. No matter how much he twists figures around, the plain, simple fact remains that the total allocation to my portfolio increased by 19.4 per cent, and the allocation to the Department of Children's Services, with Commonwealth funds extracted, by 15.6 per cent.

No doubt what has stunned the Opposition members is the fact that our National Party Government has been able to increase its allocation for welfare and balance its Budget, as it always does, while the Opposition's colleagues in Canberra have been forced to desert the needy and slash their welfare programs drastically, and still finish in the red. The Queensland Government has never ever brought in a mini-Budget, but I bet Australia will be getting one from Canberra. The honourable member spoke for most of his time in calling for more resources; but, once again, like his Federal colleagues, he did not offer one suggestion as to where the funds will come from except from higher taxes.

Like the comments of the honourable member for Woodridge, those of the honourable member for South Brisbane regarding the review of the department were absolute rubbish. His claim that the staff do not know what is going on is completely untrue, as every member of the staff throughout Queensland received a newsletter detailing the review on the same day as it was announced to senior officers. The honourable member should tell all those fellows who are getting the leaks from everywhere to get their facts straight. Since that time there have been several other meetings with staff, and only yesterday I spoke again with 40 of the top executives in the department about the progress to date. The honourable member also criticised the Government's priorities on spending. Perhaps I should remind him that the Hawke Federal Government provides more funds for the publishing of homosexual magazines than it provides for emergency relief to Queensland.

I appreciated the contribution of the honourable member for Aspley (Mr Cahill) in setting the record straight as to the role played by the Department of Ethnic Affairs in providing assistance to immigrants in their integration into Queensland society. I appreciate his positive contribution to the debate. He obviously has studied the problems that are facing our migrants and has a very sound understanding of the programs that have been introduced by the department and the program's objectives.

The honourable member for Redlands (Mr Clauson) adequately covered many aspects of the Disabled Persons Service and highlighted many of the ways in which Queensland is ahead of the other States in this service—something that is not generally recognised.

The honourable member for Archerfield (Mr Palaszczuk) raised the old cry about stigmatising unmarried mothers. On 7 August, in winding up the debate on the adoption of children legislation, I made this point in response to the honourable member for Woodridge—

“I am an advocate of social responsibility, . . . The concern expressed by me in my public comments is based on economic reasons and the realisation that the community just cannot afford ever-increasing payments for unsupported children.”

The honourable member for Greenslopes (Mrs Harvey) drew attention to an article in *The Australian Financial Review* referring to the need for the Commonwealth Government to pare down the deficit for the Federal Budget, particularly the burgeoning costs of social security. In the guide to the 1986-87 Commonwealth Budget, the Treasurer states that there is to be a major crack-down on social security fraud, and he includes in the main measures the fact that "child maintenance arrangements will be reformed so that non-custodial parents will shoulder more financial responsibility for their children, rather than throwing the burden on the tax-payer". For once I find myself and the Commonwealth Treasurer in agreement. My main concern is that, like so many undertakings of the Federal Labor Government, the Treasurer does not know how he will accomplish what he has set out to achieve.

I will raise the issue of parents and citizens' associations with my colleague the Minister for Education (Mr Powell). The honourable member for Wolston (Mr R. J. Gibbs) was obviously listening when I stated that the answer to the welfare state was responsibility and accountability. My department has developed a comprehensive range of responsible and accountable programs to be provided through the partnership of Government and the voluntary sector, as well as through local neighbourhood support networks.

The honourable member for Port Curtis (Mr Prest) has very correctly praised the work of foster parents and other residential care facilities. If he refers his particular problem with the Housing Commission to me in writing, I will sort the matter out and respond to him. As well, I will examine the other problems that he has raised. My views on payments to unmarried mothers have already been made clear, and I will not repeat them.

The honourable member for Brisbane referred to the importance of the portfolio. I agree with him.

Mr Davis: Brisbane Central.

Mrs CHAPMAN: The honourable member is so self-centred that I forgot to include it.

The Queensland Government regards welfare as being of the highest priority. I have noted his remarks about the investigation of child abuse cases. Children are vulnerable and must be protected, but the investigations should be carried out in an open-minded fashion.

Very little of a positive nature has been put forward tonight by Opposition members. This is a very sad indication of their views on the whole subject of welfare and welfare recipients. The worst feature has been their outright attack on the traditional family. If anyone was ever in doubt as to the ALPs philosophies on the family, they were dispelled today.

The honourable member for Wolston (Mr R. J. Gibbs) summed it up when he advocated that the Government should virtually assume the role of parents and take on all the responsibilities of parenthood. The honourable member for Kurilpa called the family "claptrap". If those philosophies were implemented, they would wreck the nation. The Queensland Government is dedicated——

Ms WARNER: I rise to a point of order. The Minister is misrepresenting what I said. I said that what she said about the family was claptrap.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! There is no point of order.

Mrs CHAPMAN: If those philosophies were ever implemented, they would wreck this nation. Thankfully, there is no chance of that happening in Queensland. The Queensland Government is dedicated to providing welfare services in areas of need and will continue to do so. The negative, destructive ramblings of some Opposition members will be treated with the contempt that they deserve.

I again thank the honourable members on both sides of the Chamber—not that I can thank too many Opposition members—for their contributions. I thank the members of my parliamentary committee, who have supported me, for their contributions and for the assistance that they have given to me during the past few months. I am sure that the Government and the community will be much richer for that.

Once again, I pay a special tribute to my departmental staff, who have been absolutely denigrated by members of the Opposition during the debate. There will not be too many votes going to the Labor Party at the next election. One would not find a more dedicated group of employees than those in my department. As I said earlier, they perform a complex task and meet very difficult, emotional problems every day of the week. They deserve support, not cowardly abuse in this Chamber by members of the Labor Party, especially when they do not have the chance to defend themselves. I congratulate them on their work and the manner in which they deliver the department's programs so positively.

At 9.28 p.m.,

Votes passed under Standing Order No. 307 and Sessional Order

By agreement, under the provisions of Standing Order No. 307 and the Sessional Order agreed to by the House on 4 September, the questions for the following Votes were put by the Chairman and agreed to—

Welfare Services, Youth and Ethnic Affairs—

	\$
Chief Office, Department of Welfare Services	5,875,200
Balance of Vote, Consolidated Revenue and Trust and Special Funds	61,826,550
Executive and Legislative, Balance of Votes	14,691,800
The Premier	37,416,400
The Treasurer	565,088,400
The Deputy Premier, Minister Assisting the Treasurer and Minister for Police	249,788,600
Corrective Services, Administrative Services and Valuation	93,815,600
Education	1,295,017,600
Employment and Industrial Affairs	25,499,100
Health and Environment	1,093,193,700
Industry, Small Business and Technology	32,525,350
Justice and Attorney-General	83,157,600
Lands, Forestry, Mapping and Surveying	62,485,960
Local Government, Main Roads and Racing	12,907,558
Mines and Energy	24,260,400
Northern Development and Community Services	34,028,030
Primary Industries	118,198,900
Tourism, National Parks, Sport and The Arts	79,765,100
Works and Housing	161,355,200
Trust and Special Funds Estimates, Balance of Estimates	8,208,123,382
Loan Fund Estimates, Balance of Estimates	299,710,995
Statement of Unforeseen Expenditure to be Appropriated (Consolidated Revenue) 1985-86	318,575,820
Statement of Unforeseen Expenditure to be Appropriated (Trust and Special Funds) 1985-86	222,190,731

\$

Statement of Unforeseen Expenditure to be Appropriated (Loan Fund)

1985-86	8,962,343
Vote on Account, 1987-88	2,560,000,000

Resolutions reported, and ordered to be received on 18 September.

COMMUNITY SERVICES (ABORIGINES) ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Hon. R. C. KATTER (Flinders—Minister for Northern Development and Community Services), by leave, without notice: I move—

“That leave be granted to bring in a Bill to amend the Community Services (Aborigines) Act 1984-1985 in certain particulars.”

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

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

Second Reading

Hon. R. C. KATTER (Flinders—Minister for Northern Development and Community Services) (9.41 p.m.): I move—

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

The Bill is designed to introduce a number of changes requested by various Aboriginal councils as well as the Aboriginal Co-ordinating Council. Other measures will improve good government and more efficient administration throughout Queensland's more isolated settlements.

In the early 1960s, soon after this Government came to power, it instituted widespread changes that swept away the injustices of the past Labor era. Good administration, extensive education and State-funded infrastructure enabled this Government in 1984 to make a second and final qualitative leap forward when the National Party parliamentary committee comprising 12 members of this House, and the National Party policy committee under the chairmanship of Lady Logan, determined that the people on Queensland reserves were as ready as they would ever be for total equality in terms of local government and land-ownership.

Although the 1984 Bill is regarded as the penultimate legislative act in the delivery of equality in line with the rest of the Queensland community, at the time the legislation was introduced, the Government expressed the view that it would need revision and modification, particularly as administrative change followed in the wake of this dramatic landmark initiative. The Bill before the House is yet another of these steps and facilitates further the wishes of community residents to achieve effective administrative control, economic growth and maximum possible self-sufficiency within their townships.

Private enterprise and private ownership are key elements in reaching these targets. I hope to make available, under commercial arrangements and contracts, property held in the Aborigines Welfare Fund to assist people of Aboriginal descent into local ownership rather than ownership by the Department of Community Services.

Provision is made in the Bill to vest this fund in the Corporation of the Under Secretary rather than in the Under Secretary as a person, thus facilitating commercial arrangements on proper business lines.

Deeds of grant in trust have issued to the Hope Vale and Cherbourg Aboriginal Councils and more are following. However, at some subsequent time it may be necessary to amalgamate other reserve areas into those initially granted by deed. Such moves are needed now in the islands to enable uninhabited Torres Strait Islander reserves to be included into deeds of grant. A number of similar situations could arise on the mainland areas and this modification facilitates such action if and when required. The Bill will

enable the inclusion of these lands without the need to issue separate deeds in each case to the same trustees.

The original legislation is also being amended to enable further Aboriginal councils to be created should it be evident that this is necessary in relation to land or parts of land reserved for Aboriginal people but not already governed by an Aboriginal council. Mapoon is one obvious case in point.

The Aboriginal councils are responsible for local government within the trust areas which they administer. Local authorities normally draw their powers not only from the Local Government Act but also from numerous other Acts.

The Bill enables Aboriginal councils to respond to the obligations and responsibilities under those Acts in the same way that local authorities under the Local Government Act would respond.

The Bill also emphasises the delineation between trust areas and local authority areas by removing from the latter any authority to exercise local government functions in the former. Although the Government believes that this does not need emphasising, and whilst its belief was of course vindicated and our critics silenced by *Smallwood v. Mulgrave Shire Council*, this clause ensures that such cases, which placed the Yarrabah council's rights and powers in jeopardy, cannot occur in the future.

The Bill brings some modification to the type and number of financial returns and statements required by Aboriginal councils, without any loss in accepted standards of financial management accountability.

The processes of justice administered through Aboriginal courts are being refined based on needs shown to exist. These include provision that no person will be able to sit as a member of a court to hear a matter in which he or she is a party; the terminology is redrafted to make it clear that in addition to breaches of the by-laws, the courts can hear and determine fully and finally disputes between residents which are based on the cultural and traditional practices recognised between the residents of a trust area. It must be noted that the Aboriginal courts have had such powers for a long time and seem to work reasonably well.

The Government has responded to constant representations by the Aboriginal Co-ordinating Council for an increase in the membership of that council, which currently comprises the chairman of each individual Aboriginal council.

The Bill enables an additional member of the Aboriginal Co-ordinating Council to be nominated by each of these councils and for members of the co-ordinating council to delegate their responsibilities should they themselves be unable to temporarily discharge them.

The co-ordinating council is also to be equipped with the power to handle and run its own administration. It will operate within an annual budget and its books and accounts will be audited by the Auditor-General as is the case with individual councils and other quangos, as they are called, throughout Queensland.

Aboriginal community residents have rights under the Act to fish and hunt by traditional means. This food can be consumed within the community but cannot be sold.

The Bill introduces similar rights with respect to forest products and quarry materials, enabling their use within the trust area, thus bringing the situation in line with rights which exist for the residents of Mornington Island—or Gununa as it is now called—and Aurukun and is a compromise with the various types of quarry and timber rights attaching to other land-holding tenures in Queensland.

The Bill also enables regulations—which will reflect the wishes of the co-ordinating council—to relate to meetings of Aboriginal councils and to cover certain operational functions of the co-ordinating council itself.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Scott, adjourned.

COMMUNITY SERVICES (TORRES STRAIT) ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Hon. R. C. KATTER (Flinders—Minister for Northern Development and Community Services), by leave, without notice: I move—

“That leave be granted to bring in a Bill to amend the Community Services (Torres Strait) Act 1984-1985 in certain particulars.”

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

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

Second Reading

Hon. R. C. KATTER (Flinders—Minister for Northern Development and Community Services) (9.49 p.m.): I move—

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

This Bill resembles the Community Services (Aborigines) Bill introduced a short while ago, and again illustrates representations by the Island Co-ordinating Council for amendments to the Act. The changes outlined here are those not in the provisions of the Community Services (Aborigines) Bill.

The island communities have, during the comparatively short life of the services legislation, shown their potential for economic growth through increases in the production and marketing of marine produce and in the development of privately owned fishing activities.

The Island Co-ordinating Council, like the Aboriginal Co-ordinating Council, is also co-ordinating certain aspects of community development in the trust areas.

I want to stress, however, that the Bill does not reduce in any way the local government rights and authorities of an island council. The co-ordinating council will only undertake a function or a responsibility relating to a particular trust area with the consent and authority of the island council concerned.

The Island Co-ordinating Council membership is presently constituted by the persons who are chairmen of the 16 individual island councils. The Bill admits an additional representative for the people of Tamwoy on Thursday Island and thus brings into this forum a voice for the hundreds of Torres Strait Islanders resident on Thursday Island.

The Bill also gives better recognition to the regional similarities of custom and language in Torres Strait by increasing the number of divisions of communities in Torres Strait from four to five.

Mr Scott: What about Abednego.

Mr KATTER: No. Tamwoy Town has been included because that is the only request before the department at the moment from the Island Co-ordinating Council. If a request is made to that council by those people, I am sure it will be viewed favourably.

The Torres Strait Islander membership of the Island Industries Board will also increase from four to five.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Scott, adjourned.

LAND ACT AMENDMENT BILL (No. 2)

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

“That leave be granted to bring in a Bill to amend the Land Act 1962-1986 in certain particulars.”

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

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

Second Reading

Hon. W. H. GLASSON (Gregory—Minister for Lands, Forestry, Mapping and Surveying) (9.51 p.m.): I move—

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

The amendments contained in this Bill are designed to complement amendments in two Bills introduced by my colleague the Minister for Northern Development and Community Services to sections 6 of the Community Services (Aborigines) Act and the Community Services (Torres Strait) Act.

This Government has issued deeds of grant in trust to 14 Torres Strait island councils, the Hope Vale Aboriginal Council and the Cherbourg Aboriginal Council and, as the relevant maps are completed, the deeds to the remaining councils will be granted.

As the Department of Community Services winds down its operations of management of individual trust areas, further areas, at present set apart as reserves, will be available for inclusion in the deed areas.

As claims by island councils for additional islands in the Torres Strait are assessed and approved, the need will arise for those islands to be included in existing deeds. This Bill provides the mechanism within the Land Act for those actions to proceed.

There has been much talk over the past decade of Aboriginal and Islander land rights. This Government has received a lot of criticism for its perceived lack of action. However, while other Governments have criticised and talked, the National Party Government of this State has acted with compassion and understanding.

It has issued grants in 16 cases and has nearly completed work on the remainder of the initial grants of freehold title in trust to the established Aboriginal and island councils of Queensland over their present reserved lands.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Prest, adjourned.

REGULATION OF SUGAR CANE PRICES ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Allocation of Time-limit Order

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

- “(a) That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as would otherwise prevent the Regulation of Sugar Cane Prices Act Amendment Bill from passing through all its remaining stages at this day’s sitting, all of its remaining stages to be passed by 12.15 a.m.,
- (b) That, at the time so specified all remaining questions, if any, shall be put forthwith by the Chairman or the Speaker, as the case may be, without any further amendment or debate and if applicable, remaining questions on the clauses of the Bill shall be put en bloc.”

Mr BURNS (Lytton) (9.55 p.m.): I want to debate that motion.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The question is that the motion be——

Mr BURNS: No. The Leader of the House did not move that the question be put. He sat down without moving that the question be put. He moved that so much of Standing Orders be suspended as would prevent the Bill from being concluded by a certain hour. I want to debate that motion.

This is another use of the gag by this Government to try to stop the Opposition from having its say on important issues that affect a large section of the community. All of the provincial cities of Queensland are affected by the Regulation of Sugar Cane Prices Act Amendment Bill. All of the sugar-mills and cane-farmers are interested in this Bill.

The Bill is most important. It is a serious Bill, which is of great concern to the people in sugar-growing areas, and it should not be gagged in the last stages of the Parliament.

It is all right for the Premier to say that he will announce on Monday when an election will be held. This Parliament should sit until its business is completed. Each and every Bill that is introduced should be debated fully. All honourable members should be given the opportunity to debate this legislation.

It is crazy that Opposition members are forced to sit long into the night and are then gagged because the Government does not want Bills to be debated fully. What has the Minister got to hide? Why will he not debate the Bill? All he is doing is using the gag to guillotine the Bill through the Parliament.

The Government is saying that the sugar industry does not count. It is saying that matters concerning the sugar industry should only be debated very briefly, because it is not game to debate the issue properly. The Government is saying clearly to the people in the north that it has got something to hide as far as this issue is concerned—that it is prepared to run away from the issue. The Government does not want the Opposition to have a say. The Opposition has members representing every provincial city who want to speak on this Bill.

At 10 o'clock at night the Government is saying that the whole debate on the sugar industry is to be finished by 12.15 a.m. It is allowing two hours and 15 minutes for debate on the problems of the sugar industry in this State. The Government believes that that is the way in which the Parliament should operate; the Opposition does not believe that. The Opposition will oppose the motion.

Mr INNES (Sherwood) (9.57 p.m.): The Liberal Party also opposes the motion. For two years the sugar industry has been in its most serious trouble for decades. On a number of occasions the Liberal Party has attempted to have this issue debated. It is a matter of great importance to the State and even to the nation. It has been resolutely avoided by the Government, which has not allowed any general debate on the sugar industry whatsoever.

In what are believed to be the dying hours and dying days of this Parliament, the first general debate on the sugar industry in two years arises and it is to be gagged to a period of two hours.

The Liberal Party understands that the legislation is likely to be supported in part or in total by many honourable members. However, certainly all honourable members are entitled to have a say on something that is so important. Is it that the Government does not wish representatives——

Mr Yewdale interjected.

Mr INNES: One of the first sugar-mills in Queensland was in my electorate. However, I do not pretend that I am a grower.

A matter of principle is involved. Any honourable member who represents a sugar-growing area or any honourable member who believes that he or she has something significant to contribute to the debate is entitled to have a say at least once in the three-year term of this Parliament.

The sugar industry is one of the most important industries in this State. Is it that the Government wishes to avoid its own members representing sugar-growing areas from participating in the debate because there might be some local or regional differences?

One suspects that that is the reason why there was not a debate until somebody else found an answer to get the Government off the hook.

The Liberal Party has been totally consistent. It has attempted to debate this issue twice in the life of this Parliament. Tonight the two-hour limit on the debate of major structural changes and legislative changes in the sugar industry is a disgrace. It is contrary to the principles of democracy; it is a scandal in terms of the organisation of Government business, and the Liberal Party will oppose it.

Mr CASEY (Mackay) (9.59 p.m.): I also want to speak to the motion because it looks as if I will be gagged later.

Sugar is the most important industry in my area. It is the most important industry in the whole of coastal Queensland.

It is not two years, as the member for Sherwood said, but four years since the sugar industry was last debated in this Parliament. In 1982 the then Minister for Primary Industries (Mr Ahern) promised honourable members when the Sugar Acquisition Act was being debated that an inquiry would be conducted into the sugar industry—that a wide-ranging inquiry would be undertaken to try to sort out problems with legislation.

That fell in a great heap because of the inability of this Government to show any leadership whatsoever to the sugar industry in Queensland. When the Hawke Government came to office, a massive national debate ensued about financial aid for the sugar industry. Before that time the industry did not cry to its own friends in Canberra, but the industry cried to the Hawke Government as soon as it took office. The Hawke Government responded by ensuring that a proper inquiry was held into the sugar industry throughout Australia. The Savage committee—the Sugar Industry Working Party—conducted that inquiry. The result of the Savage committee of inquiry is the legislation that is before the House. Because of the effect the sugar industry has on the overall economy of Queensland, employment in Queensland and the economy of Australia, the Bill is the most important legislation to come before the whole of this Parliament.

Mr Yewdale: The blokes opposite who represent the sugar industry are sitting back.

Mr CASEY: It is not just the blokes from the sugar areas who are sitting back. Cabinet Ministers come from sugar areas and have made an examination. Members of the National Party generally throughout Queensland are trying to push this legislation through.

I forecast that, if that is the Government's attitude towards the sugar industry, it is the rock on which it will perish at the next election. It will bring this Government down—and deservedly so, if that is the way it treats the greatest industry in this State.

This is not just a shame; it is a damnable shame. The leader of the House, who himself represents a sugar electorate, this evening endeavours to gag this legislation. Everyone knows the incompetence of the Premier in sugar matters and the strife he has got the Queensland Government into through the way in which he has tried to manipulate it over the last two years, since the Savage committee began its investigation. Unless the House is given an adequate opportunity to debate sugar legislation, this indeed will be the greatest fiasco of government that Queensland has ever seen. It will affect the State's sugar industry from top to bottom and will show the National Party up to be a bunch of mugs.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! We will have a little more quiet in the House whilst an honourable member is on his feet.

Mr EATON (Mourilyan) (10.2 p.m.): Mr Speaker——

Mr Wharton: Are you against it, too?

Mr EATON: The ALP is not against the sugar industry. What it is against is the gag that is being applied to this legislation.

I will tell this House why the Government wants to apply the gag. Everyone knows the problems associated with the sugar industry over the years and the request for support that have continuously been made by sugar industry representatives to the Government. When the Government amended the Sugar Acquisition Act four years ago, it promised a full inquiry into the sugar industry. A preliminary inquiry was conducted, which ascertained what the problems were. Most of the problems were already known, but the inquiry also provided the solutions, which the National Party Government did not want to implement. The solutions were that mills would have to be closed, workers would be paid off and farmers would lose their farms. This Government did not want to be a part of that solution.

There was a need for money to be put into the right areas. This Government again failed the people, which is why it does not want to allow a debate tonight that would enable the Opposition to raise the issues. No Government wants to tell communities that the mills have to close in order to bring stabilisation to the industry. Several mills will have to be closed in Queensland to stabilise the industry, but this Government has not wanted to face up to the facts and implement the correct policies, particularly during an election year. That is why the Government wants to gag this Bill tonight: to prevent the issues being raised.

Mr Turner: What's the Bill about?

Mr EATON: It is about the Government trying to do it its way instead of the way that the industry wants. That is the point the ALP wants to raise.

Mr Casey: The Minister wouldn't know what the Bill is about.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Mackay has already been on his feet. Now he must give somebody else a chance to speak.

Mr EATON: That is why the Opposition wants full and open discussion. The Opposition would have liked to see the legislation brought in earlier and laid on the table so that the man in the paddock could have greater input through his local member's contribution to this Bill.

Hon. Sir WILLIAM KNOX (Nundah) (10.4 p.m.): There has already been an expression from the Liberal Party about the application of the gag on this debate. The Liberal Party has been waiting for some time for this matter to come before the House. It could have come before the House 12 months ago, but only last week was it put before the Parliament.

There is no indication from the Government that the Parliament is to be wound up this week. There is ample time for this debate. Eleven members on the Government side of the House have seats in sugar areas. Five members of the Opposition hold sugar seats.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Rockhampton will return to his usual seat if he cannot keep quiet where he is.

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: Every member of the Assembly is interested in this State's economy, in which sugar plays a vital role. Some time ago in this Chamber I moved a motion that the problems in the sugar industry be debated. That motion was opposed by the Government. There is now an opportunity to debate it, but the Government wants to gag the debate. That is stupid, because the sugar industry and the people of Queensland want these matters to be debated. It is the responsibility of members of Parliament and it is this Parliament's responsibility——

Government Members interjected.

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: By the arrogant use of numbers, Government members are trying to stifle democracy and the voices of the members of this Assembly, who are entitled to be heard in this Chamber. The list on the Business Paper is light. There is

loads of time to debate the matter. Tomorrow, Friday, and Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday of next week—any of those days could be made available to debate this important matter. The sugar industry is the most important industry in the State. It is the industry that has the greatest effect on its economy. The legislation is being rushed through the House unnecessarily. The industry and the people of this State are entitled to have it debated fully in the Chamber.

Mr CAMPBELL (Bundaberg) (10.6 p.m.): As the representative of a——

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! This is turning into a farce.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr Casey: It is a farce, Mr Speaker.

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

Mr CAMPBELL: As a representative of one of the most important sugar-growing cities in Queensland, I join with fellow members of the Opposition in protest at the gag that is being applied. This is the first time for over two years that honourable members have been able to debate the sugar industry. The debate is being gagged because of the Government's incompetence and its mismanagement of the sugar industry over more than a decade. I join with members of the Opposition and voice the protest that the Queensland Government does not have the guts to debate the sugar industry, which is a most important industry in Queensland.

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

AYES, 39		NOES, 35	
Ahern	Littleproud	Braddy	Price
Alison	McKechnie	Burns	Scott
Austin	McPhie	Campbell	Shaw
Booth	Menzel	Casey	Smith
Borbidge	Miller	Comben	Underwood
Cahill	Muntz	D'Arcy	Vaughan
Chapman	Newton	De Lacy	Veivers
Clauson	Powell	Eaton	Warburton
Cooper	Randell	Fouras	Warner, A. M.
Elliott	Row	Gibbs, R. J.	White
FitzGerald	Simpson	Goss	Wilson
Gibbs, I. J.	Stephan	Gygar	Yewdale
Glasson	Stoneman	Hamill	
Harper	Tenni	Innes	
Harvey	Turner	Knox	
Henderson	Wharton	Lee	
Jennings		Lickiss	
Katter		McElligott	
Lane	<i>Tellers:</i>	McLean	<i>Tellers:</i>
Lester	Kaus	Milliner	Davis
Lingard	Neal	Palaszczuk	Prest

Resolved in the affirmative.

Second Reading—Resumption of Debate

Debate resumed from 9 September (see p. 1124) on Mr Turner's motion—

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

Mr De LACY (Cairns) (10.15 p.m.): I protest the gagging of the legislation. I can only reiterate what my colleagues have said. Four or five Opposition members represent sugar-growing electorates. I am sure that everyone in the Opposition realises that the

sugar industry is vital to the economy of the State and the nation. Often honourable members hear Government members talking about the importance of primary industries to Queensland and to Australia; yet, when they are put to the test, the first time that a piece of important legislation is brought forward on primary industries and the sugar industry, which is one of Queensland's biggest and certainly most troubled industries, the Government is not prepared to have a free, open and exhaustive debate on the subject.

For at least six months, the Government has known and the Opposition has expected that legislation to amend the Regulation of Sugar Cane Prices Act would be forthcoming in this session of Parliament. The Government has been preparing and foreshadowing legislation ever since the Savage report into the sugar industry suggested a great degree of deregulation, since the Commonwealth and State Governments adjustment package was put into place, and certainly since the Cabinet meeting in Babinda when the Premier made his famous statement to the Babinda cane-growers, "Trust me." He said then that the Government would be making changes that would allow the Babinda sugar-mill to continue to be viable.

Since that particular Cabinet submission, which proposed changes to the Regulation of Sugar Cane Prices Act in order to provide a rescue package for Babinda, fell off the back of a cane truck, the Government has been going to introduce this legislation. Now honourable members have the spectre of this legislation being rammed through in the last dying week of the Parliament.

As the honourable member for Townsville (Mr McElligott) said, it is not only the dying days of this Parliament, but I expect that it is the dying days of the National Party Government. If ever the ALP wanted an issue on which to fight the next election up and down the coast of Queensland, it has been given it tonight. As the election campaign gets into full swing, the ALP will be going up and down the coast and saying to the cane-farmers, the business people and the workers of coastal Queensland that the Government does not have enough respect for them or their industry to have a full debate on the subject and that it has to run for cover. The record of the Government on the sugar industry is absolutely abysmal. That has been confirmed here tonight.

The sugar industry is in crisis. It has been in crisis for some years now. The National Party Government has provided no leadership and no direction to the industry. It has delayed the price support scheme until the bitter end. It placed as many impediments in the way of a negotiated sugar package as it possibly could. For political reasons, it grossly misrepresented its contribution to financial assistance schemes. It has turned policy somersaults on a variety of issues, particularly those relating to deregulation. On the vital issue of sugar-mill rationalisation, the Government mischievously misrepresented the Commonwealth's position by saying that the Commonwealth adjustment assistance and price support assistance was contingent upon changes being made to the Regulation of Sugar Cane Prices Act. I know that that left it with a lot of egg on its face when the Commonwealth Government made that money available with no strings attached. But it provides a great case study in the deceitful and dissimulating way in which the National Party Government carries on in respect of issues such as this. It has left the sugar industry and the cane-growers of Queensland confused, irritated and, I might say, angry.

As honourable members know, Innisfail is the centre of a cane-growing area. The area depends on the production of sugar. In June 1986, a headline in Innisfail's *Weekend Advocate* stated, "Growers up in arms over planned cane Act changes" The headline also used the term, "a moral outrage".

The July edition carries the headline, "Cane men to hold talks on rationalisation". The August edition carried the headline, "Government lied to cane-farmers—McAvoy—'Credibility in tatters'." The article reads in part—

"The Queensland Government had attempted to deceive cane grower representatives over Commonwealth assistance to the industry, it was claimed yesterday."

Mr Tenni: He is one of your socialist cronies.

Mr De LACY: The honourable member for Barron River says that Mr McAvoy is a socialist crony. I think that Mr McAvoy would be interested in that description because Sir Joseph McAvoy was the long-time chairman of the Queensland Cane Growers Council. I think also that the cane-farmers of Queensland would be interested in the description that the honourable member for Barron River has ascribed to him.

The Central Sugar Cane Prices Board was set up by the Australian Labor Party 70 years ago. The reason why the board was set up was that politics had to be taken out of the decision-making process within in the sugar industry. The establishment of the board was certainly welcomed by the people involved in the sugar industry. The board has continued to operate ever since, and it has provided an umbrella and controlling mechanisms under which the sugar industry has prospered over a long period.

The first time that the Queensland Government has been put to the test of governing under adversity, what does it do? It proposes the removal of powers, particularly those prescribed under section 33 of the Regulation of Sugar Cane Prices Act that refer to rezoning of assigned cane land. The Government proposed to remove certain powers and revert control to the political arena, thereby taking the industry back 70 years. Not only did the Government propose to do that but it also proposed to push the legislation through the House by deceitfully claiming that the Federal Government has demanded the kinds of changes reflected in the legislation.

The proposal to bring about sugar-mill rationalisation by bypassing the central board would have had explosive consequences for the industry. The consequences of the industry's reaction caused the Government to back-pedal and renege on its determination to bring about the changes. I state categorically that the Australian Labor Party believes in the central board.

I reiterate that the central board was established by the Australian Labor Party, and it is the Opposition's belief that it is the only organisation that has the appropriate composition to deal with the problems that beset the industry. It is a semi-judicial, non-political body and it is the only organisation that enjoys the respect of the industry to a sufficient extent to enable it to oversee problems associated with rationalisation that are bound to arise during the next few years.

The Government has appointed the Sugar Milling Adjustment Committee, known as SMAC, which is a five-member committee constituted by the chairman of the Queensland Industry Development Corporation, Commonwealth and State Government representatives, and representatives from the milling and growing sectors of the industry. The representative from the milling section is Mr Deicke and the representative of the growers sector is Mr Soper. The great irony of the crude attempt by the Government to change the provisions of section 33, thereby saving the political skin of the honourable member for Mulgrave (Mr Menzel), is that last year in the House the honourable member for Mulgrave launched a series of bitter attacks——

Government Members interjected.

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

Mr De LACY: Last year in the House, the honourable member for Mulgrave launched a bitter attack on executives of the Queensland Cane Growers Council. He said——

“ . . . there are strong rumours in the sugar industry that Soper, Belcher and Ferguson have been offered well-paid unelected jobs for life on the new sugar industry authority if they agreed to co-operate with the milling companies' demand to deregulate, and, from the double-dealing that they have carried out in recent times, it is obvious that they have been compromised by the millers. Some people would say that this is similar to the offering of a bribe to Soper and Belcher by the milling companies.”

The great irony is that, in its desire to do away with the central board, the Government created the Sugar Milling Adjustment Committee. And who has been appointed to that board? None other than the much maligned Mr Soper—the compromiser, the conspirator, the Watergate conspirator, the double-dealer, the recipient of bribes. It is a great irony that last year the honourable member for Mulgrave (Mr Menzel) predicted that Mr Soper would be offered a job, and in this package that was put together to do away with the powers of the central board, Mr Soper got the offer of the job. I consider that to be a great irony. There is no doubt that this great crisis and the loss of confidence in the Government's capacity to oversee the rationalisation of the industry arose from a desire to assist the Babinda mill. I hope that was the case, anyway. That is the best construction that can be put on it. Probably a more crude but more accurate construction is that it was a crude attempt to save the honourable member's political skin.

Mr Smith: Do you think it will be successful.

Mr De LACY: I do not think it will be, because I believe that after the next election there will be a different member for Mulgrave.

I would like to point out to the Minister, who has said in this House on a number of occasions that the trade unions in Babinda wrote to the Premier saying that they opposed the point of view put by Casey, De Lacy and Warburton, that on 15 August the honourable member for Mackay (Mr Casey) and I visited Babinda. We spoke with directors of the mill, members of the suppliers' committee and also the unions. I am pleased to say that we overcame the misconceptions which had been bandied around by the Minister and by others, people who were interpreting what we had said previously. When we told the people with whom we had spoken exactly what we said, they all accepted our point of view.

I would like to say a few words about Babinda because, as I have just said, the whole drama commenced from the time the Premier was in Babinda after cyclone Winifred and made the promise to the people of Babinda to "go on milling, and trust me". I would like to put the record straight insofar as Babinda is concerned, because I know that people of Babinda are concerned about their future. As those people are fond of saying, Babinda is the mill. If the mill is closed down, Babinda is closed down. Babinda is the archetypal sugar town. It has relied on sugar since its inception and it has known no other existence. It is the wettest town in the super-wet belt. The people of Babinda believe that Innisfail fiddles its rainfall statistics. Babinda is noted for its remarkable lush tropical landscape. During the days of the cane-cutters Babinda was a bustling, busy town—hard living and hard drinking. The bar of the Babinda Hotel was reputed to be the biggest in Australia.

However, Babinda has fallen on hard times. From being one of the most productive and richest sugar-cane areas it is now one of the poorest. It is land-locked. Recent expansions have gone into marginal country. Northern poor root syndrome has played havoc with ccs and production returns, and possibly even modern cane varieties have been less suited to the super-wet area.

The mill has fallen on hard times and has, for a couple of years, been on the point of bankruptcy. However, it was the Labor Party that put Babinda on its feet, and the Labor Party is not about to see it destroyed. It is passing strange that the present member for Mulgrave, Mr Max Menzel, is endeavouring to set himself up as the saviour of the mill. I want to put a few facts before the House that will dispel any illusion that he may have about going down in history as the saviour of the Babinda mill because the opposite is the case. The people of Babinda need to be reminded of that.

The honourable member for Mulgrave was chairman of the Babinda Co-operative Mill from 1974 till 1983.

Mr Muntz: A good one at that.

Mr De LACY: From a report produced by an economist for the Co-operative Sugar Millers Association, the honourable member can make the judgment for himself. I will make the judgment on the basis of the statistics that I am about to refer to.

According to the statistics issued in April 1984, when the member for Mulgrave took over in 1973 the funds on deposit totalled \$1,165,000 and the amount owing was nil. When he departed as chairman in 1983, the funds on deposit were nil and the amount owing was \$7.6m.

The same report said—

“Without changes Babinda Mill will be forced into liquidation.”

During his 10-year tenure as chairman of the mill, the honourable member for Mulgrave steered Babinda mill to the brink of bankruptcy. In 1980 the mill recorded a record profit of \$7.6m. In 1982 it was broke. The whole of that 10-year period was characterised by bad management decisions, lengthy stand-downs, bad industrial relations and so on.

A new No. 1 mill was purchased at a cost to share-holders of \$2m. It was never used. According to a policy campaign document issued by the current chairman of the mill, it was never used even as a tax deduction, even though it was purchased in a year when the mill borrowed \$3m to pay its taxes. In fact, the whole tax scene at the Babinda mill in those days justifiably gives rise to suspicion. It seems that the chairman had a hare-brained scheme to divert waters from the Russell River and he wanted to pay tax to show the Federal Government what it would lose if the Eubenangee Swamp was not drained.

I am pleased to advise that after the unceremonious departure of the member for Mulgrave as the chairman of the mill in 1983—I might add that he virtually lost his seat on the board at the 1984 election, coming in equal last and retaining his position by virtue of being the incumbent and after having four votes disallowed on his say-so—things have been put right at the mill. There is great co-operation between the workers and management. The unions have made a large number of concessions on manning levels, work practices and so forth and the whole mill—management and work-force—is united in the objective of retaining the mill as a viable enterprise. However, it has been confronted with the massive task of recovering from a decade of mismanagement in the middle of the worst sugar recession in the State's history.

Unfortunately for the people of Babinda, the talents of the member for Mulgrave have not been directed only towards the sugar-mill. He has been an avid supporter and promoter of the much-maligned western bypass route for the Bruce Highway.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER Order! The honourable member for Cairns is digressing entirely from the provisions of the Bill. He should return to the legislation under debate.

Mr De LACY: I wish to make one other point, and it relates to the Bill under debate. It is being said by National Party supporters in Babinda—I might say that they are pretty thin on the ground and are getting thinner on the ground—that if the member for Mulgrave loses at the next election, the State Government rescue plan, which I understand is now being put into place, will be withdrawn. It seems that the Premier is back to his old blackmail tricks.

Let me say two things. Firstly, the people of Babinda are strong and resilient. Over the years they have been through many trials and tribulations and they are not about to be blackmailed by such cheap and shoddy tactics. Secondly, the rescue package will not be a State Government one. The whole sugar assistance scheme is a Commonwealth/State one, funded on the basis of Commonwealth to State of 2 to 1. It is designed to achieve certain objectives. Although the State Government is responsible for putting the right legislative processes in place to ensure that these objectives are achieved, there is no way the Commonwealth will agree and continue to be involved if the State Government starts allocating and withdrawing money on narrow political grounds. That would put the whole package into jeopardy. It is nonsense to say that the State Government could

go ahead in relation to Babinda with or without Commonwealth assistance. The Commonwealth simply would not wear it, and nor should it.

I have spoken to John Kerin on a number of occasions and, like the ALP in Queensland, he is very sympathetic to the needs of the Babinda mill. Provided the adjustment assistance is allocated on the basis of due process, that assistance will be forthcoming even if the member for Mulgrave loses at the State election. I am certain that once the people of Babinda place everything into perspective, as I have outlined it here, that outcome will be a foregone conclusion.

I will return to the Bill before the House. What it actually does is start the process of deregulation. The Opposition believes it to be a loose and badly put together Bill. Its intention could be much more simply put into operation. However, the Opposition is prepared to give it qualified support.

If the member for Mourilyan (Mr Eaton) gets a chance to speak before the gag is applied, he will enumerate his very serious reservations, particularly about the roaming provisions.

The legislation is very complex. It will have many consequences that have not yet been foreseen. I believe that it will lead to a field-day for barristers during appeals to the central board.

I sometimes wonder what all the fuss is about. It was rumoured at one stage that the session of the Parliament was being extended because of the introduction of the Regulation of Sugar Cane Prices Act Amendment Bill. However, now that it has been introduced, without the much-vaunted amendments to section 33, it is a damp squib.

Most of the changes were permissible under the old regulations. The reasons for the urgency and the reasons for pushing the legislation through this session of Parliament were supposed to be because of an amendment to section 33 to save Babinda and because the Commonwealth Government was demanding changes.

Mr Menzel: Don't you want to save Babinda?

Mr De LACY: I invite the honourable member for Mulgrave to tell me how these amendments will save Babinda. It was said also that the Commonwealth Government was demanding the changes. Of course, that has not proved to be the case.

The Bill outlines restructuring in three main areas—the roaming provisions, the transferring of significant powers from the central board to local boards and the disposing of assignments and peaks plus, of course, the severe restrictions on the power of the central board to recommend increases in aggregate mill peaks. That is something that has been requested by the Queensland Cane Growers Council. It is supported by the Opposition. Certainly, the Opposition believes that it is necessary because any move towards increasing production in this day and age, with the world stock and price situation as it is, would be plain lunacy.

The section dealing with roaming is a controversial one. Roaming is defined as a seasonal permit to use unassigned land, and at this stage has been confined to a 15 per cent increase. I understand that the Queensland Cane Growers Council has approved the Bill. However, I also know that many of the cane-growing areas of Queensland do not support it.

I am in two minds about the roaming provision. Certainly, the super-wet and far-northern areas that I come from do not support it because there is no way in which we can benefit from it. What that provision is supposed to do is to free-up a range of management options. I think that it can possibly improve the management practices on those farms that do have extra land. That land can be more effectively managed, particularly in relation to rotations and so on.

I think it is fair to say that one of the reasons why the production levels and ccs levels have been decreasing in recent years in the land-locked areas of the far north and the super-wet belt in particular has been because of the nature of the farming practice

of growing cane on most of the land each year. That is finally catching up with those growers.

Before the expansion in the 1960s, all farms produced on up to 85 per cent of their assigned land, and they all had 15 per cent for roaming. So, really, the legislation is only reverting to that time.

However, there are areas that will be significantly disadvantaged by this piece of legislation. It has been said that it will lead to an overall increase in productive capacity of 8 per cent. I might point out that that is an increase in production of the same magnitude as the 1980 and 1981 increases combined.

What will happen is that those people with spare land will cultivate probably 100 per cent or in excess of 100 per cent of their assigned land, and that will lead to a situation in which the No. 1 pool price will be permanently reduced, except in those years when every mill in Queensland reaches its peak. That would be very rare. It would probably only happen one year in every 20. It will certainly guarantee that each mill area will go closer to reaching its peak every year. However, as soon as one mill in Queensland does not reach its peak, the No. 1 pool price will be reduced for every grower, even those growers who do not reach peak. That means that 70 per cent of the growers in Queensland who do not have spare land to expand onto will be disadvantaged. I wonder at a Government that, so close to an election, is introducing legislation that will disadvantage 70 per cent of the growers in this State.

The people who benefit will be the mill-owners and those growers who have room to expand. This may lead to an increase in efficiency of production, but the point remains that there is no way a grower without spare land can benefit. He can only lose from this legislation.

Because of the ALP's concern on this issue, I foreshadow an amendment, which will be moved later, to ensure and expand the right of appeal to the central board. I will explain that amendment more carefully in a moment.

The second major question to which this legislation addresses itself is the transfer of powers from the central board to local boards. This is the first move towards deregulation that everybody seems to be talking about but which no-one seems to be in favour of. In recent years the central board has been accused of all kinds of things, such as stultifying and over-regulating the industry, putting a brake on the market signals, and making it impossible for rationalisation and adjustment to take place. The questions need to be asked: Have we fixed up this problem? Have we overcome those perceived difficulties with the central board?

One matter that should be looked at is the cost-effectiveness of the changes that are being proposed in order to streamline the administration. What is actually being done is that the central board is being replaced by 29 fully operative local boards. The central board is supposed to be too big and unwieldy, yet it is being multiplied by 29. To what extent the industry will be deregulated has yet to be seen. This amendment has made the regulations board more unwieldy and more expensive, and not much has been achieved in allowing the industry to adjust.

I wonder whether the Government and the industry realise that they have created a monster. Instead of having to meet once a year, the local boards will meet probably once a month. They will have to retain some sort of executive or bureaucracy to answer queries from people. All honourable members who come from country towns will know that the Magistrates Courts have a backlog of cases and cannot cope with the work before them. How are the magistrates going to be able to pay the amount of attention to this matter that is required of them by this new legislation?

Secondly, the ALP is concerned about the devolution of powers from the central board to the local boards in regard to the appeal provisions. Clause 9 of the Bill refers to the fact that the local board's construction and interpretation of plans of assignment will be final and binding. The ALP does not agree and is moving to have that provision deleted. It is also proposing to expand the general appeal provisions by inserting a new

section 37E. The ALP believes that the existing appeal provisions are too restrictive, both in terms of who can appeal and in which area persons can appeal.

The third important principle that this legislation addresses itself to is the right to sell or transfer assignments. The ALP supports that principle. The provision is really regularising and simplifying something that has existed for a lengthy period. The other complementary provision concerns the ability to sell peak independent of assignment. This breaks a traditional link and is a significant change to the structures insofar as they relate to the sugar industry. It is part of the syndrome of allowing people to leave the industry with dignity, and nobody could oppose that. I wonder how it will work in practice in land-locked areas such as Babinda, where people do not have any money to buy peaks or land to grow extra cane on.

To a certain extent, it may also be rationalisation in reverse. A value has now been put on peaks so that people can sell their peaks separate from their land. It makes them a tradable commodity, but they can be traded only within the mill areas. Previously they were surrendered to be redistributed for nothing to other assignment-holders who had excess capacity.

I foreshadow two amendments at the Committee stage, one to clause 9 and one to clause 11. Because the Government has moved to terminate the debate prematurely, I will resume my seat now. Other Opposition members who represent sugar-growing electorates wish to make some very important points, so I will leave it to them to put the rest of the Opposition's case.

Mr MENZEL (Mulgrave) (10.46 p.m.): First of all, I would like to give a brief history of the sugar debate in north Queensland. The Opposition spokesman made a few comments with which I agree. A great deal of publicity has been given in the press to certain people in Innisfail and the Labor Party's talk about saving the seat of Mulgrave and other things. However, they do not seem to be very interested in saving the Babinda mill. They seem to denigrate any move that is made to save it.

Originally, Babinda and South Johnstone mills believed that it made good sense for each to buy out half of Goondi mill with the aim of having only co-operative mills in far-north Queensland, namely, Mossman, Mulgrave, which would eventually take over the CSR mill at Hambledon, and Babinda. The Savage report said that Babinda mill should remain a sugar-mill. South Johnstone and Tully would be the other two co-operative mills, with South Johnstone taking over Mourilyan and the bottom half of South Johnstone being rezoned to Tully.

The Babinda, South Johnstone and Tully mills agreed that an overall approach should be agreed upon, until it dawned on the chairman of directors of South Johnstone mill that, because his cane farm was in the Silkwood area, he would lose his position on the board of directors of South Johnstone mill. The same would apply to the chairman of the South Johnstone Mill Suppliers Committee.

Mr Tenni: Isn't he a socialist?

Mr MENZEL: No, it is the other bloke from Goondi. These two are not socialists.

The chairman of the South Johnstone Mill Suppliers Committee has a cane farm at Silkwood that would eventually be rezoned to Tully. Therefore, two political positions at South Johnstone would be lost—not the member for Mulgrave's political position. However, the biggest political change was for Joe McAvoy, chairman of the Goondi Mill Suppliers Committee.

Mr Tenni: He's a socialist. He's a financial member of the Labor Party.

Mr MENZEL: I do not know, but he certainly acts like one.

He is also chairman of the Innisfail cane-growers executive and a member of the Queensland Cane Growers Council. Mr McAvoy makes no secret of the fact that he wishes to follow in his father's footsteps and one day become chairman of the Queensland Cane Growers Council.

Mr Tenni: I don't know any farmers who would have him in a fit.

Mr MENZEL: Last time, he stood against Mr Soper and received six votes out of 30, so he still has a long way to go. I am told that if he stood again now, he would receive only five votes because one of the six votes came from Babinda.

Mr Tenni: There are very few socialists in the sugar industry.

Mr MENZEL: The Minister is right.

The main reason why Goondi did not want to come to Babinda was that Joe McAvoy lives in the area that would be rezoned to Babinda. As Babinda is in the Cairns district cane-growers executive area, Joe McAvoy would lose his position as chairman of the Goondi Mill Suppliers Committee and as chairman of the executive, because Keith Day is chairman of the Cairns cane-growers executive. Joe McAvoy is aware that he could not beat Keith Day for that position and that, in addition, he would lose his position on the cane-growers council and thus never have the chance of becoming chairman of the cane-growers council. So the political future of Joe McAvoy had to be saved.

Des Ripple saw that his position on the Goondi Mill Suppliers Committee was in jeopardy, so he decided to fight for his position. That was fair enough. The added bonus for Mr Ripple was that he is and always has been a strong supporter of the ALP and he saw the opportunity of belting the National Party.

The ALP-controlled Johnstone Shire Council and one of the ALP councillors who support Councillor George Pervan—who was responsible for the ALP council's misappropriation of State Government funds—namely Councillor Lacaze, who is a cane-farmer in Goondi, decided that it would make good political mileage to fight the proposal. Councillor Lacaze also sought assistance from his brother. They were the three ring-leaders.

The ALP journalist, Don Brooks, was employed by McAvoy at the expense of the cane-growers to churn out lies and ALP propaganda.

I might add that since I uncovered the ALP corruption within the Johnstone shire Don Brooks has been at a loss for words.

From the beginning the Babinda mill attempted to negotiate with the Goondi growers. However, McAvoy, Lacaze and Ripple rang up the cane-growers and threatened them in a manner similar to the stand-over tactics and intimidation of the trade unions. Those three persons also lied and worked up a hysteria about the whole matter, which resulted in the growers of the Goondi area having nightmares about going to Babinda. Joe McAvoy even stated that the Babinda mill would pay a lower price. That is rubbish, because every mill pays a relative percentage on ccs. Of course, Joe McAvoy would be aware of that, but he still made that statement to the central board hearings.

Mr Tenni: I have a list here for Johnstone Shire Council quarrying material—\$7 for rock and \$11 for restoration.

Mr MENZEL: The Johnstone Shire Council is robbing the river improvement trust and the cane-farmers.

Much has been said in recent times about the opposition of the cane-farmers to the State Government's proposal to amend section 33A of the Regulation of Sugar Cane Prices Act.

The general secretary of the Queensland Cane Growers Council, Ron Belcher, and its chairman, Mr Fred Soper, initially agreed to the proposed amendment of section 33. Mr Belcher said that at a meeting of approximately 50 representatives of the industry. I was present at that meeting. However, when it was discovered that that would help the Babinda mill to obtain half of the Goondi cane—or that it could lead to that—they decided to oppose it. It is no secret that Ron Belcher has embarked upon a campaign

to get even with me because I named him as the one who was selling out the interests of the cane-growers to the proprietary sugar-millers.

I am pleased to note that Ron Belcher has now resigned from the Cane Growers Council. He will certainly not be a loss.

The present legislation can only be described as Belcher legislation. In many respects, I am also not happy with it. It represents the greatest loss of power by the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board in the history of the sugar industry. In effect, it means that the central board will be impotent and will be only a figure-head board. Under the legislation the local board will make all the necessary decisions. That will lead to uncontrolled production and a great deal of cheating by certain mill areas.

The new section 32 is the greatest sell-out by the Queensland Cane Growers Council.

Mr Casey: There is still the right of appeal back to the central board.

Mr MENZEL: I am not blaming the Government. The Queensland Cane Growers Council wants this legislation.

As I was saying, the new section 32 is the greatest sell-out by the Queensland Cane Growers Council of cane-growers in the history of the sugar industry. Ron Belcher is obviously its architect. Mr Belcher, in conjunction with certain milling groups, conned the Queensland Cane Growers Council into accepting that section by a narrow vote of 15 to 14. I feel that that is a major split within the Cane Growers Council in relation to section 32. I might add that the members present at the cane-growers council meeting who voted against it had their votes recorded.

However, the cane-growers of Innisfail—including McAvoy and company—seem to be more interested in not going to Babinda and working for the ALP through the ALP journalists than fighting section 32. The statement that was written by Don Brooks on behalf of Don Spina in relation to the fact that Babinda should die was an absolute disgrace. It was a most despicable act for anyone to publish that statement. It was a most terrible thing. The proposed new sections 61A and 61B will allow the cane-growers to sell farm peak and still retain the same assignments. In my opinion, this is a ridiculous piece of legislation that is proposed by the cane-growers.

Under the legislation, the assignment system, as it has been known for many years, will no longer exist. No longer will the security that went with it exist. Assignments were always a gilt-edged security. The proposed clauses demanded by the Queensland Cane Growers Council will cause the end of a form of security under which the sugar industry has survived and prospered through thick and thin.

One sensible provision of the Bill is that which allows the sale of cane farms without the permission of the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board, as it was a source of corruption when the Federal Labor Government was in power prior to 1974. The honourable member for Mackay (Mr Casey) knows that.

Mr Casey: Rubbish!

Mr MENZEL: The honourable member knows that. Everyone knows that a certain Labor politician would have to be paid on all farm sales and grants of assignment. The man is now dead, so I will not name him.

I wish to cite an example of a Babinda grower who previously owned a cane farm in another mill area. When he decided to move to Babinda, a 6 500 tonne **peak** cane farm was for sale. In one section was a piece of about 4 500 tonnes and in another section about 10 miles away, 2 000 tonnes. The grower could comfortably afford to buy the 4 500 tonne area and the seller was able to sell the remainder. However, the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board would not allow the farm to be split. It was amalgamated, so the buyer borrowed heavily and bought the complete unit of 6 500 tonnes. The price of sugar fell and interest rates rose. The grower got into serious financial trouble. Two years ago the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board allowed him to sell the 2 000 tonne section for a song; but he is still in trouble because of it.

That is what the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board does. If I were the Minister, I would sack the whole board and appoint new personnel—people with no axe to grind with the Premier; people who are not under the wing of Belcher or the proprietary sugar millers; people who will not lose their jobs if they do not make the right decision on matters before the board.

As to Fred Soper being worried about the role of the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board—I wish to refer to a letter that he sent to the Honourable Neil Turner on 23 September 1985. In that letter, he referred to the fact that the central board could be replaced by a central core committee, composed of a miller, a grower and a judge, who would sit on all local boards; and that any appeal would be by civil action in the Magistrates Court. On the one hand, the Queensland Cane Growers Council fights like hell against section 33A and says that it takes away the powers of the central board, yet, in writing, says that it is prepared to allow the central board to have no power whatsoever. That is rather hypocritical.

I wish to reply to a few comments made by the previous speaker. One thing that has been said is that the original Bill was to save Babinda. I do not believe that; but, by the same token, I am proud to think that the State Government is there to see that Babinda survives. Even the combined unions of the Babinda mill supported the Government. Babinda has been known to be a Labor town throughout political history. I will read a resolution that the AWU passed in the first week of July this year—

“Resolved that the membership is fully aware that:—

1. Employments opportunities in the Babinda Innisfail areas will be maximised if Babinda Mill remains in operation.

2. Contrary to views expressed in the media and elsewhere Babinda Mill can be viable under the Government proposal.

3. The ALP leaderships media releases are biased and misinformed and are harmful to Babinda workers and the ALP's image.

The membership invite Messrs Warburton, Casey and De Lacey to come and examine the Rationalisation Study in Babinda and to be briefed as to what has been achieved here in recent years.”

Mr De Lacy: We went there.

Mr MENZEL: The honourable member went because he was forced to go along.

Mr Casey: Would you care to read out the resolution that was passed after we had been there?

Mr MENZEL: A few resolutions were passed before that, and I suspect that the honourable member for Mackay (Mr Casey) went up there and buttered them up. By the same token, there will be a swing against the Labor Party at Babinda at the next election—that is for sure.

Mr Borbidge: Mr Casey would have misled them.

Mr MENZEL: That would be debatable. I am amazed that the parliamentary leader of the Liberal Party, the honourable member for Nundah (Sir William Knox) talks about helping the sugar industry. I do not know what the honourable member would know about it.

Mr Borbidge: He was well dressed.

Mr MENZEL: He entered the Chamber in his dinner suit. I do not know where the honourable member has been, but five minutes ago he was not in the Chamber. In any case, it is good to know that the sugar industry has a few supporters.

Members of the Australian Labor Party have said that they believe in the central board, but I point out that the Federal Minister for Primary Industry (Mr Kerin) certainly does not. The Federal Minister has been pressing the Queensland Government and the

Queensland Cane Growers Council for deregulation of the industry. I understand that the State branch of the Labor Party has not been very happy about that. It is my contention that Mr Kerin is behind the main thrust for deregulation and dismantling of the central board. I think that that is where much of the trouble began.

The Queensland Government will regret having fallen into the blackmail trap set by the Federal Government when it declared that it would not contribute any financial assistance until a commitment was given for deregulation of the sugar industry. Such a suggestion is ridiculous because the regulations have stood by the sugar industry for a long period, through thick and thin. I believe that deregulation will only make things worse, especially during difficult economic periods.

The honourable member for Cairns (Mr De Lacy) referred to a co-operative mills report and said that when I became the chairman of directors in 1974, the mill had a deposit of \$1,165,000 approximately. Although that is true, I draw to the attention of honourable members that the mill had ordered a boiler that was valued at \$5m. During the year in question, the crop amounted to 431 000 tonnes only. Finance had to be borrowed to pay for the boiler. The honourable member also suggested that a new 7 ft 6 inch mill had not been used. I point out to the honourable member that when the price per tonne of sugar dropped, a great many pieces of equipment were not used in the sugar-mills. Obviously the honourable member has been misinformed, because he does not appear to know that a taxation deduction cannot be claimed for equipment or premises until they are ready for use.

For the information of the honourable member I point out that the mill will eventually reap the benefit when the boiler is installed ready for use, but until that stage is reached, the mill could be accused of cheating the Commissioner for Taxation if it were to claim a tax deduction prematurely. As far as I know, there are no taxation defrauders in Babinda, and I do not want anyone to influence people to defraud the Commissioner for Taxation.

Mr De Lacy: In a word, would you call that poor management?

Mr MENZEL: No-one can control the world price of sugar and the over-production by the European Community.

Why has the Federal Government provided a financial assistance package to the whole of the sugar industry? It has done so because of the depressed circumstances of the industry. All honourable members have been arguing about the level of assistance provided by the State Government to the Rural Reconstruction Board. I point out that Babinda is not the only area that needed assistance. As the representative in State Parliament of the area I have been continually trying to help growers not only in that area but in Innisfail, Mulgrave and other areas of the State. People come to me to make representations to the Government to have finance made available to the Rural Reconstruction Board and for carry-on loans to be provided by the Agricultural Bank. Honourable members should not single out Babinda.

Mr De Lacy: They should not go to you.

Mr MENZEL: They come to me because I am successful. They know that I get results from the representations I make. Many times, people have been knocked back on their applications for loans from the Rural Reconstruction Board. They have come to me and, after I have spoken to the board, the loan has been agreed to.

Mr Prest: Many, many times, you mean.

Mr MENZEL: Many, many times—and the word gets around.

I still say that the Russell River diversion would be of benefit if it were to be implemented. It is ludicrous to suggest that the mill concerned had to pay a great deal in taxation. It is too silly for words to suggest that that scheme had to be justified in any extraordinary way.

The Queensland Cane Growers Council is obviously running with the Labor Party in its fight against Babinda, and if the council is ever successful in stopping Babinda from expanding its throughput, it will destroy Babinda. I challenge the Labor Party to come clean on that point. Certainly the Labor Party in Innisfail—I am not referring to the honourable member opposite but to other prominent people in the Labor Party—has been working hand in glove with the Goondi Mill Suppliers Committee to try to destroy Babinda. That is all it amounts to. The Goondi Mill Suppliers Committee was hit with a levy of 10.2c just for fighting not for Max Menzel's future but for Joe McAvoy's future and the future of a few other people around the Innisfail area. My future is certainly not in doubt. The only futures that are in doubt are those of members of the Opposition. In the coming election, if there is anything like the avalanche that occurred against the Labor Party in the two New South Wales by-elections, Cairns will be one of the first seats to roll and the National Party will win it.

Mr CASEY (Mackay) (11.6 p.m.): If there is one thing that has happened in the last 12 months within the sugar industry and within this State, it is that the National Party has learnt why the old Country Party—the stock from which the National Party originally came—never interfered with the sugar industry. It was an industry that was based on Labor legislation and it was set up as a model for other primary industries, not only in Queensland but also throughout Australia. It is an industry that has been controlled by Government legislation but under industry control, not Government control, and that is the big difference. The sugar industry will never accept Government control. That is why this Government has floundered today, and why it has floundered in the last two years in trying to bring about the necessary corrective action to put the industry back into a properly structured situation again and to help it get up off the grass.

In 1982 the Government promised a revision of the whole of the industry. That was before the Hawke Government came to power. The State Government cannot criticise the Hawke Labor Government. In 1982 the then Minister for Primary Industries (Mr Ahern), during the dying stages of the debate on amendments to the Sugar Acquisition Act, made a commitment that he would constitute an inquiry into the industry, which would be structured across the board, and which would help to sort out its existing and future problems. What happened? It got lost absolutely in a maze—a maze of committee structures, a maze of committee meetings, and a maze of endeavours to try to get something moving. Why did it get lost? Because this National Party Government failed absolutely to provide any leadership to the industry in this State, and failed absolutely to step forward and make any effort whatsoever to do what could be done. Again I am speaking about 1982. In those days, when a Liberal-National Party Government was in power in Canberra, there was no pressure on Canberra from this State Government. The only pressure that was placed on Canberra by the State Government was when the Hawke Government came to power.

Meanwhile, what was happening? The industry was going down the drain. As the honourable member for Cairns (Mr De Lacy) mentioned earlier, in the very early 1980s a couple of expansions took place without proper consideration of what was happening in the world markets. To a lot of people it was quite evident then that there would be problems ahead for the sugar industry. Thank goodness that there was a change of Government in Canberra in 1983, because if there had not been, by now the sugar industry would have collapsed. It has only been through the effective work of the Opposition's Federal colleagues in Canberra that the position has improved.

Everyone knows the history of what happened from there on—the formation of the Savage committee, its inquiry and then, of course, the lengthy negotiations that occurred to try to get something moving, to really get some action out of this State Government on what it was prepared to do insofar as restructuring of the industry was concerned. The Savage committee report created enormous debate throughout the industry. What it really did as well—and this was needed—was grab the industry by the ears and make it realise that it had to restructure and modernise. That has been one of the great successes of the Savage report.

At the time when that report was first released, I claimed—I still stand by those claims—that three principles had to remain sacrosanct. They were the assignment system, which is necessary and is the basis of control of the industry; a peak system, which is required because it is the basis of farm value and the basis of income in the industry; and that the central board be left untouched as the industry's own judicial controlling body. I claimed that it had to remain in that role. What did the industry see from the Government? The Government wanted to erode those principles in whatever way possible. The worst aspect was the proposal to take away the power of the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board and give it to the National Party Cabinet; in other words, to politicise the State's sugar industry.

The Government cannot deny that that was its intention. I have seen the Cabinet documents. I have seen the submission made by the Minister for Primary Industries (Mr Turner) and the Premier to Cabinet to give effect to that intention, taking away from the central board its control of the industry and politicising that power in the hands of the National Party. That is when the industry started to buck; that is when the industry really began to show it was prepared to dig its toes in and make sure that it was saved in a manner that, hopefully, will be achieved in part by the Bill.

I believe that, taking some of the recommendations of the Savage committee report, everybody accepted that there could never be complete deregulation of the industry, which was the term being used. Complete deregulation of the sugar industry would only result in marketing chaos.

Of all that has happened since the Savage committee report was handed down, two things stand out. One has been the Premier's paranoia about Canberra and his endeavour, with political intent at all times, to use every stage of negotiations to try to cause trouble within the industry. All he achieved by that was to expose to the industry, to the people of this State and to the negotiators throughout Australia his own ignorance of the sugar industry. He does not know or understand the industry. He really showed that he was not interested in the industry, that he was interested only in playing politics. The second thing to stand out has been the determination of brave people in the industry to retain independent control of their industry. What did they receive for that? Character assassination of the type heard in the Chamber this evening from the honourable member for Mulgrave (Mr Menzel)! The brave people were prepared to stand up to the Premier, to the Government and to their own cane-grower organisations. They commenced as very small voices until finally the crescendo grew so loud that everybody had to listen. As a result, the Government backed away from steps that it had intended to take, which would have been to the detriment of a great industry that provides so much employment for people along the coast of Queensland.

There was no more cynical example of the efforts of this Government, of what it was doing and the manipulative way in which it was trying to organise matters than its action in relation to Babinda. That has been clearly outlined by the honourable member for Cairns. All honourable members know Cabinet's decision on section 33; it wanted to gut the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board. I am not ashamed of the role that I played in that matter. What I am ashamed of and disgusted at is the Premier's attitude and the way in which he tried to manipulate the sugar industry.

With this legislation, the industry is sitting on the tip of a volcano. Babinda was the tip of that volcano. If things had gone in the way in which the Government wanted them to—that is, to play politics with the industry—the industry would have finished up in an awful mess. Babinda would have been only the start. Many honourable members would be well aware that major talks are now proceeding between four or possibly five co-operative mills in the Mackay area on the future of Pleystowe mill. When one speaks of Pleystowe mill, one is not speaking of a debt-ridden mill. It is one of the best and most efficient sugar-mills in Australia. It is a very profitable mill for CSR. I will come to CSR's attitude to this in a moment. The co-operative sugar-mills that surround it are intent on forming themselves into a group and buying that mill to rationalise services in the area. They recognise that there has to be rationalisation in the industry and that,

if the industry is to survive as an efficient producer of sugar for the declining world markets, on which prices have dropped, there has to be restructuring. That drop in price will be permanent. There will not be a return to the halcyon days of the 1970s or to the prices that were received in the very early 1980s, or back in the 1960s. That will not happen again. All honourable members recognise that.

The Bundaberg Sugar Company has already taken steps to rationalise the sugar industry in Bundaberg, particularly the milling side, and to effect a more efficient organisation.

More changes will occur in the northern mills. Even the honourable member for Mulgrave (Mr Menzel) admitted that earlier this evening. I will not forecast what those changes will be. However, I do know that the industry ought to be allowed to shuffle them out. That is the important part of the legislation. The industry, not the Government of the day, must be able to decide on those changes. The Government has to put the legislative mechanism in place so that the industry can control its own destiny. That is why the legislation before the House is so important.

I do not know what the future of the small southern mills will be. I do not have a crystal ball, and I am not prepared to forecast what will happen. However, the industry knows that something must happen because the small mills cannot continue as they are. That is one of Babinda's problems. I agree with the points that have been made about Babinda. Any mill with sufficient throughput can be profitable. However, as increased throughput would have to be at the expense of other mills, some will have to go.

The big prize is still coming. The big prize, of course, is the Burdekin. When one talks about the Burdekin, one really must consider who is controlling and manipulating the Government. I believe—and I am prepared to say so—that it is CSR. Last year's annual report of CSR quite clearly mentions divestments. It mentions the new areas in which it is considering taking advantage of other opportunities. It mentions new business opportunities. It refers to CSR's investment increase in Pioneer Sugar Mills, which has highly competitive sugar-mills in the Burdekin River area. That is the prize that CSR is after; that is what will determine the future of the sugar industry; and that is the reason why the Queensland Government wanted Government control of the industry instead of industry control.

The industry is wary of CSR, even though it has been its marketing agent for such a long period. The industry is aware that CSR, as a company, is intent on taking over and controlling additional areas. I repeat that the aim of CSR is contained in its annual report. All honourable members know that the Burdekin Dam is almost at a stage at which water will be available for use. All honourable members know also that no use for that water is yet specified, other than to guarantee the existing areas of the North and South Burdekin Water Boards.

All honourable members know that people in the Burdekin area are already talking about where the increased assignment areas will be and what other sugar farms will be established in the area. Last week, during the debate on the Estimates of the Water Resources and Maritime Services portfolio, it was revealed that jockeying is going on in the National Party to set people up and to set farms up within the Burdekin area. CSR is already in there jockeying on the milling side, which is the most efficient facet. Certainly, because of the cost of water, the Burdekin will be a high-cost growing area. The big cane that can be grown, however, will produce a large volume per hectare. Because of the consequent economy of scale that could be achieved in the Burdekin, the cost of milling will be low. That is the area in which CSR is determined to consolidate its sugar interest in this State.

One certainty in the future of the sugar industry—one does not need a crystal ball to foresee it—is that what is known as district equity cannot continue to be retained. If there is an expansion, or additional expansion, the same percentage cannot be retained for the far-northern, central and southern areas, as has always happened. Even within various areas there are individually land-locked mills. I could name them. You, Mr Deputy Speaker, and other honourable members are fully aware of the mills that have

problems because they are land-locked, unable to expand, and unable, from their own assigned lands, to produce additional peak that can be used to achieve the required economy of scale. Yet in those same districts are mills with a great deal of land available for development. Surely with the trouble in the industry and with the financial input that has been established for the industry from the public purse, the Australian public is entitled to say to the industry, "You must restructure and rationalise your industry." That is really what has to happen, and this legislation has to be the legislation that will allow that to happen.

Australia cannot afford to do anything other than grow and produce sugar in the most efficient manner in order to retain its world position. Through organisations such as the Sugar Research Institute and the Sugar Experiment Stations Board, Australia has reached the stage at which it is at the peak world-wide in regard to its ability to produce sugar at a low cost. The rest of the world has caught up with Australia and Australia has lost that competitive edge. Australia is situated further away from the world's markets and there is the problem of the competition from the EEC and the sell-out by the Americans of Australia.

All of these matters added together mean that Australia cannot afford to be inefficient in its operation of the industry. One of the problems that have occurred in the industry over a lengthy period is that many of those in the industry have become complacent. The industry has always guaranteed them a living; even the inefficient were guaranteed a living. That situation cannot continue. In the 1970s in the beef industry there was a big shake-up because this was happening. Back in the 1950s the same thing happened in the wool industry, and now it is happening in the grain-growing industry. There are many other primary industries in this nation in which this situation has occurred before. Inefficient people, organisations, growers or millers cannot be retained within the industry. The industry has to be restructured. If it is not, Australia will be unable to compete on the world markets.

This restructuring has to include a hard look at what Australia is really doing with its cane and the raw brown-sugar crystal that it is producing. I have made this statement on many occasions in different areas of the countryside. It is all very well to blame the EEC for capturing Australia's markets with its subsidised sugar, but the major world market captured by the EEC was the white-sugar market, not the brown-sugar market. In capturing that white-sugar market, the EEC went into a field where Australia was not even competitive, because Australia was not trying to sell white sugar. Australia is continuing with the system of having big bulk sheds and ships transporting the raw brown-sugar crystal round the world.

Australia has to go further and look not only at white sugar for certain customers, but also at liquid sugar. Australia has to look at the possibility of manufacturing further products from sugar, such as value-added products and chemicals, which are being manufactured by other countries in the world. Queensland will reach the position where it will not have 30, 29, 28 or whatever number of raw-sugar mills producing raw brown-sugar crystal and putting it into bulk terminals ready for export. Queensland will have different mills being used for different purposes and providing different products through the sugar industry.

As far as exporting is concerned, Queensland is already in an excellent position because of the port infrastructure. If Queensland expands into the activities that I have mentioned, some of Queensland's problems in the sugar areas will be solved. The provincial populations are available for employment in manufacturing, as Queensland's provincial cities have the highest rate of unemployment in Australia, almost twice the national average. Certainly the rate is higher than in Brisbane and contributes to the fact that Queensland has the worst unemployment rate in Australia.

Markets do exist for manufactured products and they have been established in regard to value-added products that can be produced in the sugar industry. Australia has to start going after these markets in the world because that is what Australia's

competitors are doing. Australia will miss out even further on what it is now selling, unless it starts establishing itself in this way.

I have established the Labor Party's regional policy, which the party will put to the people of Queensland in this forthcoming election. This policy clearly shows the way in which the National Party has regarded the sugar industry and its total disregard for the future of that great industry. If restructuring does not occur, the industry will go down.

The honourable member for Cairns has already made the point that the Opposition believes that the Bill is not the complete answer. In fact, it may create more problems than it will solve. The Bill contains five major principles.

I support roaming because I can see its being far more beneficial in my area than in some of the land-locked areas in Queensland.

The sale of assignment and peak will cause some difficulties. The difficulties already exist because the smart operators have already moved in. I believe that, in the last couple of months, applications for sale before the central board have reached an average of about 50 a month. At the moment, because of the depressed state of the sugar industry, nobody wants to buy a cane farm. The smart people who have money available are buying up farms because they know that they will be in a better position to sell them after this legislation is passed and will be able to sell peak without assignment, or vice versa. That is already happening in the industry. People are getting in early.

More power will go to the local boards. One aspect of the Bill will create further problems. With more power and more work going to the boards, as was pointed out earlier, staff changes will be needed. Experienced staff who are presently employed by the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board will be replaced by inexperienced staff from the local boards. There will be a difficulty with the meeting-times, and local boards will have to determine many matters. When the Minister begins to provide staff to local boards, he will finish up incurring extra costs. That will mean that additional levies will need to be imposed on the industry. That is an aspect on which caution needs to be exercised. I would like to hear the Minister's reply about the imposition of additional and higher levies on the industry.

The fifth principle contained in the Bill is rather strange. It relates to proposed sections 21 to 29. Reference is made to the corporation sole of the Treasurer of Queensland. It re-establishes something that was included in a Bill that was passed in 1893. Those provisions have absolutely nothing to do with the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board. However, I understand that the principle has been included in the Bill to overcome what supposedly was a mistake made by the Government in 1968 when the old sugar legislation was repealed. I refer to the Sugar Works Guarantee Acts of 1893 to 1908. In the 1908 legislation, an amendment was put forward to save sugar-mills in Queensland that had got into debt and were trying to work their way out of it. Legislation was introduced under Premier Kidston's Government by Mr Airey, who was the Treasurer at the time. Premier Kidston is the great grandfather of one of the key staff members of the Department of Primary Industries who are involved with this Bill. At that time, there was a distinct purpose behind that Bill.

Another clause in this Bill validates certain things that may have happened since 1968 when the Act was repealed. I am always suspicious of validating legislation, especially when I see some of the things that have happened. Opposition members are even more suspicious if the Minister makes no mention of the matter in his second-reading speech. That is what has happened on this occasion. I hope that the Minister comments on that matter in his reply. I assure honourable members that he said nothing about it when the legislation was introduced. I know that the legislation in some way controls certain lands that were surrendered as tramways in 1908. Land was surrendered to the Crown rather than to the sugar-mill, because under the legislation the corporation sole of the Treasurer of Queensland at the time was in control of the mills. I recognise that some of them still exist on deeds today. If the tramlines and tramways were the only reason for the changes to the legislation, it can be said that the Law Reform

Commission, which proposes and puts forward matters in relation to the repeal of old Acts, has made a monstrous blunder on this occasion.

The Treasurer could be given back those powers in other ways, instead of including them within the Regulation of Sugar Cane Prices Act. However, I note that, in giving the Treasurer back that power and giving him corporation sole in that manner, the Government puts the Treasurer in a position in which he has enormous powers in other ways. It puts him in a very important position because he is the supplier of the restructuring moneys for mills, of which two-thirds comes from the Commonwealth and one-third from the State.

Because of Queensland's Constitution and the legal way in which it is structured, the Treasurer virtually acts as a mortgagor insofar as the mills are concerned. I refer in particular to those mills to which money is lent for restructuring, whether they be Racecourse, Farleigh, Marian, Cattle Creek or possibly North Eton buying out Pleystowe. No matter where the mill is, the Treasurer is entering the situation. Should further problems arise in relation to any of those mills, the Treasurer is then in a position to take over the financial control of those mills.

I draw the attention of honourable members to the powers that were given to the Treasurer under the old legislation. The powers that were given to him under the 1908 amendment, which are specifically referred to in the latter clauses of this Bill, clearly state that one of the powers of the Treasurer is—

“To enter into all contracts or agreements and to execute all instruments which in his opinion are necessary or proper for carrying out the objects of the Principal Acts or this Act, or the powers of the Treasurer thereunder.”

That refers back to the principal Act. However, when one refers to the principal Act, which still covers what the Treasurer is able and capable of doing, one finds that the Treasurer is able to execute a mortgage to a company. The mortgage to the Treasurer is then to have priority over existing mortgages. Not only can he issue a mortgage, but it is the first and only mortgage. It does not matter who has already obtained funding or loan moneys.

The repayment to the Treasurer is also to be a first priority on the profits of the mills. Because the first charge to be imposed upon the co-operative mills is that priority payment, the return on the equity of the growers who form the co-operative will be reduced.

If default should occur, the Treasurer may then fix the price of cane. Therefore, he can also regulate the price of cane that is going from the farms into the mills. That is done in an endeavour to ensure that the Treasurer gets his money back. When one examines the powers that are given to the Treasurer under the provisions of the Bill, it is obvious that there are many hidden aspects. As I said earlier, if there should be a default, the Treasurer may take possession.

Mr Menzel: He can do that now.

Mr CASEY: The honourable member for Mulgrave says that he can do that now under certain circumstances. That is true in cases in which the Treasurer has provided the finance, but not on a normal borrowing basis. Under the Act he can now do that on an abnormal borrowing basis and take over mills as he wishes.

The honourable member for Cairns (Mr De Lacy) stated that the Opposition was very keen to move an amendment to the Bill. Perhaps time will still be available to consider that aspect.

Earlier I said that I am not happy about certain aspects of the provisions relating to the selling of assignment, selling without peak or selling peak without assignment. The big safeguard that still exists in the Act is that it provides for a possible appeal to the central board. Therefore, the matter keeps returning to the central board, which is the industry's own judicial and controlling body on matters of appeal and matters of dispute. It has had that responsibility for a lengthy period and its responsibilities have

been accepted by everyone within the industry. Very few appeals are ever undertaken in either the Supreme Court or the Full Court. It is imperative that that right of appeal back to the central board remain in existence. However, in some cases that right has been removed, and that is the principle that the Opposition wants to see amended.

I have one other query about the Bill. If a proper commercial decision is to be taken, it is obviously not practical in cane-farm operations to have only a one-year permit. Commercial decisions taken in the sugar industry ought to be over a four-year period, because that allows for not only the cost of planting but also the ratooning of the cane, which helps to return to the farmer the costs of the original planting over four years. That has to happen, yet the permit system on the roaming provisions will be for only one year.

Mr Turner: The industry only wanted 12 months.

Mr CASEY: No. The industry settled on 12 months. That may be so, but it was only a compromise because so many sections of the industry did not want roaming at all.

Problems will occur with that provision because, so far as the growing side is concerned, a commercial decision cannot be taken in the industry for only one year.

I ask the Minister whether there is any provision to overcome the problem of the Victoria Plains situation so far as the Pleystowe Mill area is concerned, in which CSR is trying to claim that it owns the peak and assignment that was given to the growers on their leased land in the 1960s. A major dispute has arisen over this matter. It finished up going to the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board. It was not resolved. Both parties laid off and it is still sitting in limbo. I hope that the Bill fixes that matter up, because it has to be fixed up.

Time expired.

Mr RANDELL (Mirani) (11.37 p.m.): It gives me great pleasure to speak on the Bill. If it was not such a serious matter, the comments from the members of the Opposition, particularly from the Opposition spokesman, would be almost laughable. How he was given that information, I will never know.

For three years, the Government has tried to get justice for the sugar industry and it has been stymied on every occasion by the Federal Government. Not one word of support has come from the Opposition. It has used every opportunity to make political capital on every occasion it could. It is doing exactly the same tonight. The Opposition cannot deny that it is doing exactly the same tonight. It has shown in every way that it could not care two hoots for the man on the land or the workers. It makes political capital out of the legislation. There is no doubt about that. How many members on the Opposition side of the House have stood up to Canberra to try to achieve justice for this great industry? Not one of them! The Opposition has allied with Canberra to fight the Queensland Government and the cane-growers. The Queensland interests have formed an alliance and will keep fighting to get justice. I have no doubt that if the Opposition had shown some co-operation, the Queensland Government could have applied enough pressure to Canberra to obtain economic aid long before this. The Opposition tonight tried to stop the debate on the Bill.

The Liberal Party wanted to take part in the debate. Where is it? Where is the great Liberal Party? Its members have left the Chamber. There is time remaining and they could debate the legislation, but they have left the Chamber.

The honourable member for Cairns (Mr De Lacy) said that the Government proposed to abolish the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board. The legislation is before the House. Can the honourable member show me that provision? The central board is still there.

Mr De Lacy: You were forced.

Mr RANDELL: The Government was not forced at all. I do not deny that it was looked at very closely. Any legislation for the sugar industry should be looked at very

closely. The Government looked at every aspect of it. The Opposition was just guessing. The Opposition was hoping that the Government would take steps to abolish the central board, but it fell into the trap. The Opposition felt that it could have used that to its advantage, but it fell into the trap.

The legislation had the support of the Queensland Cane Growers Council. I remind honourable members opposite that the Queensland Cane Growers Council is the body that represents the cane-growers of Queensland, and it supports the legislation. What is the Opposition saying about the cane-growers? I have spoken to cane-growers and they are quite happy with the contents of the Bill, although there is a thought that some clauses could be looked at. I have no doubt that the Government, if it sees a need for change, will co-operate with the Queensland Cane Growers Council and the cane-growers and work in co-operation with the industry to make those changes.

Mr Campbell: Was it unanimous support?

Mr RANDELL: The honourable member for Bundaberg would not know about sugar-cane. He could not grow a bit of lettuce. He should not talk to me. He will be heard later.

I would like to look at the record of the Federal Government, which the Opposition holds up as a paragon of virtue. On 28 February 1983, the Prime Minister (Mr Hawke) and the Federal Minister for Primary Industry (Mr Kerin) travelled to north Queensland and made promises all over the north. The Federal Labor Government leaders have no comprehension of what the sugar industry is all about. They simply made promises, on the basis that the most important consideration was retaining Labor Party representation in Leichhardt, in an attempt to save the Federal representative for Leichhardt (Mr Gayler). Their rationale was that as soon as they had won Government, they could do as they pleased. Ever since, the Federal Labor Government has gone from pillar to post.

Mr Eaton: They did put the money in, though.

Mr RANDELL: I will deal with that matter at a later stage, but meanwhile I point out to the honourable member for Mourilyan that the Federal Labor Government took 3½ years to contribute financial assistance. The growers received 38c a tonne by way of assistance.

A cane-farmer who lives on a neighbouring property has a 1 700-2 000 tonne peak but grew only 1 700 tonnes of cane during the last season. The other day he informed me that he had received a cheque for \$646 from the Federal Government. He told me that on the same day he received that cheque he had purchased two tonnes of fertiliser that cost him \$700. Members of the Opposition should not try to tell me that the Federal Government has tried to help. That cheque for \$600-odd symbolises the price that will be paid by the industry for Federal Government assistance that is based upon a commitment to deregulation of the industry. It should be remembered that although the Federal Government will provide assistance this year, not a cent will be given next year because the price of sugar has risen. The Federal Government must have known that it would rise. In 1987, the crisis that has beset the sugar industry will receive the same kind of attention at the hands of the Federal Labor Government.

I wish to quote from an article that appeared in *The Cairns Post* on 28 February 1983. It states—

“The worsening crisis in Australia’s sugar industry demanded urgent Federal Government attention, Labor’s spokesman on primary industry, Mr John Kerin, said in a statement yesterday.

During his latest visit to the Cairns district with Labor candidate for Leichhardt, Mr John Gayler, Mr Kerin held discussions with local canegrowers about the deepening industry crisis.

Mr Kerin gave the sugar industry an assurance the Labor Party stood ready to extend the assistance measures already outlined in the party’s sugar policy.

. . . .
‘Labor will sympathetically consider any request for an industry loan and/or an underwriting scheme, to include the 1982 crop.’”

That statement was made by Mr Kerin about the 1982 crop, yet in September 1986 the growers have received only 38c a tonne. Not a single thought has been given to the years that the cane-farmers have put into sugar production. Not one thought has been spared for those who have been left to despair over the future of the sugar industry. Not a single thought has been given to the families of the farmers or the workers. I notice that members of the Opposition have suddenly become silent.

How members of the Opposition can continue to support a heartless Government that breaks its promises and has no intention of providing assistance to rural industry is incomprehensible to me. The Federal Labor Government has crushed the primary producers of this nation, and it has been assisted by members of the Opposition. Members of the Opposition have been audacious enough to interject throughout the debate despite the evidence I have presented of the Federal Government's neglect. I point out to honourable members that the date of Mr Kerin's statement was 28 February 1983, and that the urgent attention he referred to was given 3½ years later on 24 August 1986. I will provide details at a later stage of the level of assistance that has been given.

Mr Eaton: How much support has the State Government provided for farmers?

Mr RANDELL: The State Government did not demand that deregulation of the sugar industry, and that is the essential difference. The Federal Government demanded deregulation of the industry in return for financial assistance, and that is the factor of paramount importance that must be remembered. I can provide the honourable member with a list of assistance given by the State Government in the period between 1982 to 1986.

The next series of promises made by the Federal Labor Government came in November 1984 when 1 000 cane-growers travelled from as far north as Mossman and as far south as New South Wales to talk to the Prime Minister in Brisbane. They were totally frustrated by the unwillingness of the Federal Labor Government to forestall the collapse of such a vital industry. The big-hearted Prime Minister agreed to meet a delegation of cane-growers who had travelled to Brisbane. The acting chairman of the Queensland Cane Growers Council, Mr Keith Day, met Mr Hawke and said to him,

“The sugar industry is an efficient, vital industry not only to Queensland, but to Australia. It earns around \$600 million a year in export income. It also provides, though this export income and through employment generated in support industries, the livelihood for around 200,000 Australians.”

The sugar industry has been supported by the Queensland Government, but what have members of the Opposition been able to do? They have done nothing. I will provide the information I have collected to members of the Opposition if they wish to check my sources. They will be able to note the anguish of the farmers whose photographs appeared in the newspapers at the relevant times. On 23 November 1984, an article in the *Daily Sun* stated—

“Prime Minister Mr Hawke last night promised a four-point plan to rebuild the ailing sugar industry after 1200 furious cane-growers demonstrated in Brisbane.”

The Prime Minister's response was to offer a four-point plan, but the people involved in the sugar industry are still waiting. The Prime Minister also gave an undertaking that the Federal Government would co-operate with the State Government to consider an overall package that would result in a strong and viable industry. The Prime Minister then went on to refer to an international sugar agreement. What has he done about that?

One of the four points outlined by the Prime Minister, to which I have previously referred, was reported in the *Daily Sun* article as follows—

“‘Because of the importance I attach to your concerns and to this industry, after the election I will involve myself personally in the discussions with Primary

Industry Minister Mr Kerin. I will involve myself in the discussions with him and with the State Government.' ”

What has the Prime Minister done since he made that statement? He has done absolutely nothing. All he has been able to do is introduce a Budget that has ground farmers further into the dust by imposing more indirect taxes. The Federal Government takes more from primary producers in taxation than they could ever receive for their product. Opposition members have not joined the Government in confronting the Federal Government over the issue. Why don't Opposition members have a bit of guts and help the Government do something about the problem?

The next scenario was in Canberra in 1985 when the Premier (Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen), the Minister for Primary Industries (Mr Turner) and the representative of the Queensland sugar industry met the Federal Government to try to get some agreement. The upshot of that meeting was that the Prime Minister (Mr Hawke) and Mr Kerin asked for an investigation—another side-step—into the needs of the industry and the degree of deregulation required. That was agreed to by the Queensland industry representatives because I understand that a note was passed by them to the Queensland Premier asking that he agree to that suggestion. So a working body was set up to inquire into the industry and to come back with a report within 100 days. That is another 100 days that was wasted.

Mr Menzel: Did you read in the *Daily Sun* what Mr De Lacy said about the people that——

Mr RANDELL: No, I do not read what he says.

So Mr Hawke and Mr Kerin, over two years down the track from the 1983 promises, bought more time while the sugar industry was sinking further into the mire. The farmers, their families and the workers were feeling the full weight of the sugar depression. Throughout all of that time the Federal Government was side-stepping, squirming and squirrelling around the place and the sugar industry was going further into debt. That is when the Federal Government first showed its hand in wanting total deregulation of the industry. It was being advised by academics and intellectuals in Canberra and it thought that it could adjust the numbers in a book. The Federal Government forgets about the social implications, it forgets about the families suffering. That is what it is all about. Opposition members should not just talk about figures or numbers, they should talk about people. That is what has to be talked about, and that is what this Government stands for—the people and their families who are trying to survive and not to be ground into the dust by people like Opposition members.

The inquiry went on and the Savage report, as it came to be known, was duly presented. The Federal Minister, Mr John Kerin, demanded that it not be made available to the the sugar industry. Of course, he wanted an agreement to be hammered out between the State and the Federal Governments irrespective of the wishes of the sugar industry. He wanted to ride right over the sugar industry and reach an agreement that the industry knew nothing about. Once again, Mr Kerin showed his complete disregard for the wishes and thoughts of the farmers, workers and business people right up and down the coast of Queensland. He showed total contempt for them.

Of course, it is known that that report was made available to the sugar industry and, after considerable and lengthy debate, was rejected as a disaster.

Mr Menzel: How do you think Mr Wilson will go in Flinders? Do you think he will——

Mr RANDELL: I do not know what is going on up there, but the results will be seen.

The industry thought that the report was too far-reaching. It believed it would spell the end of this great industry that has made such a great contribution to this nation. It felt it should be able to expect some loyalty in return.

As I stated before, after lengthy consideration the Queensland Cane Growers Council came up with its own recommendations. Then in September the chairman of the Queensland Cane Growers Council went to Canberra to try to ascertain from Mr Kerin whether he would accept the Queensland Cane Growers Council's response to the Savage report. I will now quote from a letter that Mr Soper wrote to the Queensland Minister for Primary Industries (Mr Turner) on 23 September 1985. It shows that the Federal Government was determined to get a greater degree of deregulation. Contrary to what Opposition members are saying, they went for it. As my time is running out, I will only quote parts of that letter. The letter states—

“Dear Mr Turner,

In response to a request by you on Tuesday 17th September, I met with Minister Kerin in Canberra to ascertain whether the response by the QCGC to the Working Party report was acceptable.”

The punch line was—

“In brief, the Minister's response was ‘that if we expected him to achieve more than \$220,’ ”—

a tonne—they were talking about \$240 a tonne but he said “\$220” just as quickly as that—

“ ‘then we would have to be prepared to “move” further than we had indicated.’ ”

Mr Soper is saying in black and white that “we had to move further.”

Mr Menzel: Who is that? Kerin?

Mr RANDELL: Yes. He said that. The letter continues—

“I have since spent some time in ascertaining a position that would be acceptable to the Commonwealth and have undertaken to have put to our representatives a ‘bottom line’ position, assuming assistance to be forthcoming at or above \$230 for three years”—

this is what Mr Soper said to Mr Turner—

“we are still pressing for \$240.”

I want the Opposition spokesman to listen to this, as he has spoken about a central board. Mr Soper then says—

“This position is:—

- (1) A Central Committee (perhaps the present Chairman, millers and growers representatives of the Central Board) of 3 to be the ‘core’ of all Local Boards together with 2 representatives appointed by each of the millowners and Mill Suppliers’ Committees in the respective areas.”

So he is saying that he wants to abolish the central board. I will pick a bit more out. He also said that appeals would be only by way of civil action. So if a grower wanted to appeal, according to Mr Kerin he would have to go to court. So much for the Opposition's words about saving barristers' fees. How would a grower get on if he had to appeal to a court, encounter lengthy delays and pay for a barrister? The letter contains a great deal and I have not the time to read it all. In summary, he said—

“The above position would be the growers absolute ‘bottom line’ conditional on the level of assistance being sufficient.”

Mr Menzel: The Labor Party is full of “brilliant” lawyers.

Mr RANDELL: There is no doubt about that.

I should say that in response to that letter, at their special meeting on 9 October the cane-growers were quite opposed to even the tentative compromise position that Mr Soper had suggested and reaffirmed their resistance to substantial change. That shows that the Queensland Cane Growers Council, together with the Queensland Government,

was fighting attempts by the Federal Government to impose deregulation, which could destroy the industry as it is now known.

Mr Eaton: That is the 100-day committee.

Mr RANDELL: He went down to find out what the Federal Government wanted. It told him what it wanted. In response I wish to quote what the Minister for Primary Industries (Mr Turner) said to all cane-growers—

“I wish to clear up any misunderstanding you may have regarding my attitude and the attitude of the Queensland Government to de-regulation of the sugar industry.

There will be NO de-regulation of the sugar industry without the complete acceptance of the proposal by all the sugar industry organisations including the Queensland Cane Growers' Council.

The position paper presented to Mr Kerin in Sydney was developed following several meetings with sugar industry leaders including Mr Soper. I was firmly of the opinion that it was in line with industry views as expressed to me at those meetings.

In view of recent reports regarding that position paper I have called another meeting of all industry organisations including the Queensland Cane Growers' Council to seek their further guidance as to the position they wish the Queensland Government to adopt in its negotiations on your behalf with the Commonwealth Government.

I repeat, there will be NO de-regulation without the full acceptance of the proposal by ALL the sugar industry organisations.”

I wish to table and have incorporated in *Hansard* a list of the financial contributions the Queensland Government has made by way of assistance to the sugar industry. I have shown it to Mr Speaker and he has said that the material can be incorporated.

Leave granted.

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

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO THE SUGAR INDUSTRY

In recognition of the problems within the industry the Queensland Government has provided substantial funds in special assistance directly to the industry.

	\$ million	
1982/83	10.0	loan assistance to Co-operative Sugar Mills;
1983/84	10.0	carry-on loan assistance for growers;
1984/85	5.0	carry-on loan assistance for growers;
	0.175	towards the cost of a review of the sugar industry;
	0.716	towards the interest payable on finance required to increase the per tonne delivery advance for sugar during the 1985 season;
1985/86	8.9	carry-on loan assistance for growers. These funds were part of the \$20 million made available to the Rural Reconstruction Board in September 1985 in anticipation of agreement being reached on the Commonwealth/State sugar industry assistance package;
	6.9	for interest subsidies to increase first advance payments to growers and interest subsidies on Sugar Board stockholdings; and
1982/83 to 1985/86	2.775	towards the operating costs of the Bureau of Sugar Experiment Stations.

In addition to this direct industry aid, other assistance has also been provided in the form of rail freight subsidies, government guarantees, research into ethanol production and industry rationalisation studies.

Over this same period, from 1982/83 until the end of 1985/86, the Commonwealth had contributed \$15 million to the sugar industry.

Mr RANDELL: That document shows that the Queensland Government gave, in 1982-83, \$10m loan assistance to the co-operative mills; in 1983-84, \$10m in carry-on loan assistance for growers; in 1984-85, \$5m carry-on loan assistance for growers—

Mr Davis: You have already incorporated that.

Mr RANDELL: Yes. I am just letting the honourable member feel the sting of it.

In 1984-85, the Queensland Government contributed \$175,000 towards the cost of a review of the sugar industry and \$716,000 towards the interest payable on finance. In 1985-86, it contributed \$8.9m by way of carry-on loan assistance for growers and \$6.9m for interest subsidies to increase first advance payments to growers. In the same period the Commonwealth contributed \$15m to the sugar industry.

I have a newspaper cutting headed "Sugar men get \$100m federal aid". I do not know whether that is through yet. There is still some doubt about whether the whole lot is coming. Because I do not want to prejudice any meetings that may take place, I will not speak about it now.

Mr De Lacy: This is a shocking speech. This is the worst speech I have ever heard. You would do yourself justice if you sat down. It is a disgrace to the sugar industry.

Mr RANDELL: The honourable member is getting a little hurt. It is getting under his skin. A few home truths are getting to him. The honourable member is being exposed for what he and his party stand for. The Labor Party has not given one bit of support to Queensland cane-growers. All it has done is knock, knock, knock. It has not given cane-growers a thing. If there had been a bit of support from the Labor Party in Queensland, the industry might have got the money quicker. I wish to quote the following newspaper article—

"In Mackay, the Queensland Cane Growers Council chairman, Mr Fred Soper, said last night the final delivery of the package was welcome, but had been a long time coming.

He said the Government had announced the package on April 15 and it had been accepted by the State Government and the industry by the end of May.

'We've been waiting for them to finalise the paper work since then,' he said.

He said the Government was to have finalised the package by the first week in July to allow price support money for the 1985-86 crop to be available.

'The State put their money in on time but the Federal Government is about six weeks behind.' "

Mr Davis: What is the date?

Mr RANDELL: The date is 25 August. That is when the money went in. Of course, on the same day as he made that announcement, Mr Hawke urged the Queensland Government to proceed as quickly as possible with deregulation measures in the sugar industry.

As I have said, after a long, long time, the Commonwealth has made a contribution of \$13m towards a guaranteed price of \$230.85. As I mentioned, only 38c a tonne will be given to the growers. In 1986 it is supposed to be increased to \$225. All honourable members know that the world price will be above that, so nothing will be put in in 1986.

Mr Wilson interjected.

Mr RANDELL: Cannot the honourable member for Townsville South listen? It is the Federal Government that is demanding deregulation in return. If the honourable member reads my speech he will learn what the Queensland Government has given and what the Federal Government has given. The Federal Government has contributed nothing.

I just hope that agreement can be reached so that the debt reconstruction farm build-up moneys that are so essential flow through as soon as possible. That is essential. That is in most demand. I do hope that it flows through as quickly as possible.

The Queensland Government will always listen to the industry, as it has in the past, and it will not force change on it. It has never done so and will not do so. The

Queensland Government will listen to the ideas of the industry and will co-operate with it.

Before I conclude, I pay tribute to a couple of people. The Minister for Primary Industries (Mr Neil Turner) has done a very good job in difficult circumstances. Honourable members opposite have not made his task any easier.

Mr Wilson interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row): Order! The member for Townsville South!

Mr RANDELL: This morning was the second occasion on which the Opposition has made a shameful attack on the Minister. The Minister will walk out of this Chamber with his head held high. He will look any man in the eye. He owes members of the Opposition nothing. He has done his job to the best of his ability.

Mr Prest: He has no ability; that is the trouble.

Mr RANDELL: It is shameful for the honourable member for Port Curtis to say that. A man of the intellect and capacity of the honourable member for Port Curtis is so far below the Minister that his comments do not matter. The honourable member could not even walk in the Minister's shadow.

Although I have not always seen eye to eye with the Minister, at least he and I have reached an amicable agreement. How many Opposition members can say the same?

I pay tribute also to Mr Fred Soper, the Chairman of the Queensland Cane Growers Council. On occasions he has received a lot of flack. Sometimes I think that there is more politics in the Queensland sugar industry than in this Parliament. For anyone to last as long as Fred Soper has in that job certainly merits full commendation.

I support the Bill. It should be considered carefully in the light of future changes in the industry. If changes are required, the Government should be moving as quickly as possible to implement those changes in co-operation with the industry.

Mr EATON (Mourilyan) (11.58 p.m.): I emphasise the opposition of the Labor Party to the Bill and the hypocritical stance taken by the previous speaker and other Government members who tonight have claimed that the ALP Federal Government forced deregulation of the sugar industry. The deregulation provisions contained in the Bill are all taken from the 100-day committee report. The arguments that Government members have used in their accusations against the Federal Government are as weak as water. The Federal Government is putting in twice as much price support as the State Government. It has already put in its share.

The previous speaker was only too ready to point out what the State Government has contributed, but he would not state that the Federal Government's commitment—signed, sealed and delivered—is twice the amount of price support contributed by the State Government.

The amendments proposed to the Act are unnecessary. Honourable members would remember that in the last few years the cane-growers kicked up a stink—and rightly so—about the Rocky Point Mill getting an increase. There was no deregulation and no amendment to the Regulation of Sugar Cane Prices Act; yet an increase was granted to the Rocky Point Mill that went against the grain of all other sugar-producers in Queensland.

Wednesday, 17 September 1986

The Bill refers to assignments and the sale of part of an assignment. It will be an offence to withhold an assignment. Problems will be created by this Bill for financial institutions, such as banks and many others, that are involved in the sugar industry. Because the assignment of peak is worth money, financial institutions hold mortgages

against that assignment of peak. Many a farmer in Queensland has a large mortgage—it is the interest rate on those large mortgages that is killing him—and I am sure that the banks will be reluctant to let part of their mortgage security go.

Mr Randell: Who sets the interest rates?

Mr EATON: It is the Queensland Government. The 100-day committee produced a report that the Federal Government supported. The committee was established by the National Party, and the majority of representatives on the 100-day committee were appointed by the State Government. They would have outvoted the Federal Government on any point raised during that 100-day inquiry.

The other matter I wish to raise relates to the powers of the central board. The worrying part is that the Government, the Minister and Government back-benchers have used the excuse that the four sugar organisations have agreed to this Bill. They told the House exactly the same thing when the Sugar Acquisition Amendment Bill was introduced. In answer to a question, the Minister said that he had received a letter signed and sealed by the executives of the four organisations agreeing to it; yet the cane-farmers went berserk when they were informed of the decision taken by their executive.

I quote the Minister's speech. He did not go into detail, but he stated—

“The first extends the power of the Minister to make a reference to the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board on any matter that he considers relevant and ensures that the board has the jurisdiction to act on such a reference.”

That is the only reference that is made to it, apart from the clause in which it is stated that four words will be deleted from the Act.

Many of the farmers and I are afraid that the Government will use the Bill to bring the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board under the control of the Minister by having the board take cognisance of what he says. There are all kinds of rumours, but the cane-farmers are concerned that, even though this Minister may not effect that control, a future Minister could exert his authority to influence the board. Up to the present time the board, because it is headed by a Supreme Court judge, who is the only person on that board who is an unfinancial member of a political party, has been kept out of the hands of political influence.

I now quote an article from *Queensland Country Life* which is headed “Bundaberg Sugar warns of instability” and states—

“Bundaberg Sugar Company directors have warned against politics—inside and outside the sugar industry—hindering producers' ability to respond quickly to world market trends.”

Today all the sugar organisations want to keep politics out of it. The ALP wants to see the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board remain as it was prior to this amendment, and outside politics and influence. I know that all the cane-farmers in Queensland wish to see the board remain that way, because it has carried them through wars, depressions and hard times. Although at times the farmers may not have agreed fully with the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board's decisions, they have always admitted that in the long run the board is the one and only protection that they have.

The ALP supported a division earlier tonight opposing the Bill's not being fully debated. The ALP opposes all the amendments to the Act. The ALP believes that the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board should have been left as it was, untouched, and that the amendments will only bring problems to the industry in the future. The Queensland Government has not considered the long-term interests of sugar-mills.

In his speech the Minister states—

“The second provision extends the cut-off date, by which applications are required to be made to the central board for exemption to be made to operate a mill in a season, from 30 September to 31 December.”

Mr Casey: What about the character assassination by the honourable member for Mulgrave of those good people up in Innisfail?

Mr EATON: Yes, that is correct. I do not have to tell them. The people in Innisfail know all about all the politicians in north Queensland.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I suggest that the honourable member speak about the Bill.

Mr EATON: Returning to the Bill, particularly that part altering the date from 30 September to 31 December—the extension of that period could place many farmers in a predicament. If a mill applies after 30 September, but particularly if it does so just prior to 31 December, they would have outlaid finance, or even borrowed money, to plant the following year's crop. Under the proposed alterations to the Regulation of Sugar Cane Prices Act, those mills could be granted exemption from crushing that season. The farmers, who have outlaid large sums of money, would be left in the lurch, holding the baby.

The Minister, in his second-reading speech, further stated—

“Although it is not referred to in the Bill, I mention the Sugar Milling Adjustment Committee. This committee will have an important part to play in the restructuring of the industry over the next three years.”

The Opposition wonders how much the committee will be influenced to help certain areas at the expense of other areas. It is trying to find ways of solving the problems in the sugar industry. The Opposition is prepared to work with the Government to find a solution to those problems that is in the best interests of the farmers and the industry as a whole. The Sugar Acquisition Act and the Regulation of Sugar Cane Prices Act have carried the industry through for many years. The Central Sugar Cane Prices Board was untouched because it was so successful. I doubt whether any other Acts have been as operative as those two Acts to which I referred. They were satisfactory to the farmers and they were left untouched. They were one protection that the farmers had. Despite what was happening, the farmers knew that they could present their case before the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board, which was headed by a Supreme Court judge.

The Minister further stated in his second-reading speech—

“In association with the Queensland Industry Development Corporation, the Sugar Milling Adjustment Committee will have the responsibility for recommending to the Commonwealth and State Governments the manner in which rationalisation finance should be allocated in the long-term economic, social and commercial interests of the industry.”

The Federal Government will insist on having a representative on that committee so that it knows where the money allocated to it is spent and can ensure that the money is used in the best interests of the sugar industry as a whole.

Both Opposition and Government members are aware of the plight of the sugar industry and the efforts made in some areas to help the industry. The decisions made tonight will have a long-term effect on sugar-mills, farmers and employees in the sugar industry in Queensland. The legislation is trying to save mills, farms and jobs. Nobody wants to see a town or an area destroyed because of the closure of a sugar-mill. If the industry is to survive, that closure and restructuring should take place in the best interests of all concerned, including millers, farmers and workers.

Recently, the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board did not come up with the decision that the Government had requested. Certain negotiations had been taking place behind the scenes. Evidence was presented in an open court. People had to face up to the fact that the decision that was made was contrary to the Government's wishes. The decision was based on the evidence and facts presented in open court. Everybody heard the evidence that was presented. I sat in the court-room for a day and I was impressed with the way in which the inquiry was conducted. When such a court that is free from taint and outside interference makes a decision, it should be accepted. If the Government

was to charge the court with the responsibility of conducting mill restructuring and the restructuring of the industry, half of the problems that will be experienced in the near future would not occur.

Government members criticised members of the Opposition for not supporting them. Every Labor member of the primary industry committee met with the Federal Minister for Primary Industry (the Honourable John Kerin). I wrote letters opposing the dismantling of the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board. We met Mr Kerin on several occasions and raised the matter continually with him and his personal advisers when they travelled north. We also met them in Brisbane and backed the Government. The Labor Opposition, which supported the retention of the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board, finds that the Government is amending the Act to destroy that board. It is the thin end of the wedge. The amendments are taken from the report of the 100-day committee, the majority of members of which were nominated by the Queensland Government. The Opposition is concerned about that. The Government will gag the debate on this Bill.

Mr Casey: That Government also nominated the independent chairman.

Mr EATON: The honourable member is correct.

Mr Casey: What they are trying to do is rat out under him as well.

Mr EATON: That is right.

If the Queensland Government is going to criticise the Federal Government, it should criticise itself, because the amending legislation has been introduced as a result of the 100-day committee inquiry. The Queensland Government has to align itself with the Federal Government, because it took the advice of the 100-day committee. The advice of the 100-day committee was opposed by the State Government.

The State Government did not want to deregulate the industry at the behest of the Federal Government. However, the State Government said, "We will deregulate it in line with the 100-day committee request in order that we can operate it to suit ourselves." That is why the Labor Party has always opposed any interference with the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board, and the Labor Party will continue to oppose any interference.

Hon. N. J. TURNER (Warrego—Minister for Primary Industries) (12.10 a.m.), in reply: I am amazed at the inaccuracies, untruths and lack of knowledge that have been shown by many honourable members during this debate. Many honourable members protested at the setting of a time-limit for the debate, although the majority did not protest the need for the legislation, which will allow rationalisation within the industry.

I thank the sugar industry organisations for their co-operation in relation to the formulation of the Bill. I believe that those organisations are well aware of the contents of the Bill. In fact, the majority of those industry organisations requested the necessary changes to the legislation.

All honourable members are aware of the history of the matter from the report of the Industries Assistance Commission, the internal review, the Savage committee report through to the present legislation.

The honourable member for Cairns (Mr De Lacy) made many broad and brash statements, none of which contained any substance. However, I will mention two of the statements that he made in order to demonstrate that he obviously does not know what he is talking about.

The honourable member dealt firstly with financial assistance to the sugar industry. The facts are that, since the slump started in 1982, up to the present time the Queensland Government has contributed \$44.5m to the sugar industry. The Commonwealth Government has contributed the sum of \$29m over that same period. In addition, the Queensland Government has provided further assistance by way of rail-freight subsidies, Government guarantees on borrowings, research into ethanol production and industry rationalisation studies.

Negotiations have been finalised on three out of four of the elements of the Commonwealth/State sugar industry adjustment assistance package, namely price support, mill adjustment and research measures. Negotiations are continuing on grower-assistance measures.

With regard to price support, contributions are made on the basis of \$2m from the Commonwealth and \$1m from the State. However, as the Commonwealth Government has refused to support prices in excess of \$225 and \$220 per tonne of sugar for the 1986 and 1987 seasons, I believe that it is unlikely that growers will receive any further assistance in that respect.

For the 1985 season, at a support price of \$230 per tonne, the Queensland Government contributed \$7m to growers. The Commonwealth Government contributed a further \$14m for that season.

Finance for mill adjustment assistance by way of grants over the next three years will amount to \$40m, with \$12m coming from the State Government and \$28m from the Commonwealth Government. The State Government will contribute a further special allocation of \$4m for research during the same period.

In the case of grower adjustment assistance, agreement has been reached as to the level of finance that will be made available by way of grants at \$25m, with \$18m coming from the Commonwealth Government and \$7m from the State Government. Details as to how the specific financial agreements are to be applied are still being negotiated.

The second issue upon which the honourable member for Cairns spoke related to Commonwealth insistence on legislative change. Many uninformed and possibly mischievous comments have been made in relation to the extent to which the Queensland Government has been under pressure to legislate for deregulation within the sugar industry.

The fact is that the Queensland Government was prepared to legislate for the deregulation of certain industries in consultation with the growing and milling sectors. The Government is prepared to work with the industry to achieve change in an evolutionary manner. That has been made difficult to a certain extent because of the inability of the industry to agree on certain deregulation measures. Nevertheless, the Government has persevered, and the Bill presently before the House represents a reasonable consensus. On the other hand, the Commonwealth Government, in its earlier pronouncement, called for quite dramatic—even revolutionary—deregulation of the industry.

Honourable members will recall that the Commonwealth Government earlier called for the abolition of the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board. That was a measure that the Queensland Government would not tolerate.

Without going into the details of the correspondence between the State and the Commonwealth Governments, I feel that I must at least quote some of the pertinent comments that clearly identify the position of the Commonwealth Government in relation to deregulatory legislation as a precondition of financial assistance. An important element of those negotiations has been a Commonwealth requirement that the State would “use its best endeavours to secure a progressive deregulation of the industry.” The Commonwealth also required that Queensland would amend the Regulation of the Sugar Cane Prices Act to remove impediments to the transfer of farm peak and assignments.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row): Order! In conformity with the resolution agreed to by the House earlier in this sitting today, I must now put the question for the second reading of the Bill.

Motion (Mr Turner) agreed to.

Committee

Clauses 1 to 26, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

Third Reading

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

ADJOURNMENT

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

“That the House do now adjourn.”

Water Contamination at Gladstone Hospital

Mr PREST (Port Curtis) (12.17 a.m.): I wish to speak tonight about water contamination at the Gladstone hospital. On 20 August 1986, in *The Gladstone Observer* an article stated—

“Government laboratory tests show that parts of the public water supply at Gladstone District Hospital are contaminated.

. . .

This follows advice from the laboratory of microbiology and pathology that water samples taken from the hospital grounds had unacceptable levels of bacteria.

Two separate samples from the hospital have been marked as contaminated by the government environmental chemist division.

. . .

Hospital manager Mr Greg Lynn said pathology screening of council-supplied water had clogged hospital filters more than usual during the past six weeks.

All pathology water has to be 100 per cent pure and because of this exhaustive filtering is necessary.

‘The filters are clogging up quickly—maybe it could be related to what is going on,’ Mr Lynn said.

. . .

‘Our pathologist complained to the council about the quality of the supply some time back.’

. . .

A spokesman for Queensland Health Minister, Mr Brian Austin, said there was a problem with a chlorination deficiency in the Gladstone water supply.”

I spoke to the Minister for Health and Environment about the supply. He said that the Gladstone City Council was taking care of it and that all would be well.

Some three days later, on 23 August 1986, an article headed “Bacteria level is high” stated—

“The plate count, or bacteria level, of Gladstone District Hospital’s water supply is 285 times more than the accepted level.

Government laboratory tests have revealed that the hospital plate count was 57,000. The accepted level is 200.

But Mayor Ald Col Brown said yesterday there was no cause for alarm.”

I do not know why he would say that. The article continued—

“‘It means there are more bugs in the supply there and every effort is being made to get the plate count down to the accepted level,’ he said.”

That is, from 57 000 to 200. The article continued—

“A coliform count of—80 was also registered by the Health Department laboratory. Ideally coliform counts should be zero.

The coliform count details the specific number of organisms contained in the water soil.

Further laboratory tests of the supply are being carried out and these findings are expected to be known early next week."

Some two weeks later, on 3 September, after I had spoken with the Minister for Health, an article stated—

"Improvement in hospital water

Drinking water at the Gladstone District Hospital is now fit for human consumption, according to a Government laboratory report."

The article goes on to state—

" 'There are no real problems there now,' Ald Brown said yesterday.

'We still have to find out why the plate count in certain areas is high but at least the count has been reduced significantly.'

The highest plate count stands at 14,000 which compares to the 57,000 registered at the hospital about two weeks ago.

Intensive scouring of the system has reduced this level. The ideal plate count is 200. Even at 14,000 it is still 200 too high."

Today, I again spoke to the Minister for Health (Mr Austin) and asked him to take positive steps to ensure that the high level of bacteria that is still present in the water supply will be eradicated.

In a further media report on 11 September 1986, there is reference to the Gladstone District Hospital's water supply in the following terms—

"Further testing of Gladstone District Hospital's water supply has still revealed high bacteria levels.

Gladstone City Council chief health surveyor Mr Gordon Anderson said yesterday more tests would be carried out on water samples from the hospital.

Similar to the previous tests, the water did not contain any ecoli or coliform, Ecoli is recognised as the most severe form of contamination while the coliform count details the specific number of organisms contained in the water's soil.

Mr Anderson said the Fisher Street reservoir, which serviced the hospital area, had been cleaned out, internally chlorinated and sterilised.

The hospital water supply has been under investigation since it was revealed three separate areas had abnormally high bacteria levels, Government laboratory tests had previously revealed that the plate count was 57,000. The accepted level is 200.

Testing of the last lot of 10 samples revealed four high plate counts. The high plate count ranged from 10,000 to 46,000."

I am still very concerned about what action has been taken to eradicate high levels of bacteria in the water supply. I am gravely concerned about its effect on the health of patients at the Gladstone District Hospital and on anyone who is forced to consume the water.

On the one hand it has been said that there is no problem, and on the other hand it has been said that when the bacterial level drops to 14 000, the water is acceptable and fit for human consumption. I draw the attention of honourable members to the fact that when the bacterial level rises to 57 000 in terms of plate counts, a serious problem must exist. I call on the Government to take action that will resolve this problem.

Young Farmer Establishment Scheme; Auditor-General's Report

Hon. Sir WILLIAM KNOX (Nundah) (12.22 a.m.): I wish to draw the attention of the House to certain circumstances that surround the accounts of the Young Farmer Establishment Scheme, which are listed in the Auditor-General's report. In 1984-85, expenditure amounted to \$2.5m. In 1985-86, an appropriation of \$3.2m was made and expenditure was recorded at \$1.6m.

The Auditor-General's report indicates, in the notes to the accounts, that failure of prospective borrowers to satisfy loan requirements resulted in advances required by the Agricultural Bank being less than had been anticipated. The scheme I have referred to is fairly important. A few years ago, it was introduced by the Government and supported by everybody because it was designed to establish young people on the land. It is interesting that the amount that has been appropriated has not been spent.

I understand that one of the reasons is that applicants have been met with stringent conditions that apply to the loans and have found it difficult to qualify. In the report of the Auditor-General to which I have referred, an extraordinary position has been revealed because only a modicum of money has been made available under the Young Farmer Establishment Scheme.

It would be interesting to know just how many applicants have been successful and how many have been rejected. It would also be interesting to know whether rejected applicants have appealed to the Minister for Lands, Forestry, Mapping and Surveying (Mr Glasson), and whether any appeals that were made to the Minister were considered, with the result that changes were made to the qualifications that had been specified. The facts are that the comment I referred to appears in the notes to the accounts and a large proportion of the allocated funds has not been spent. Because many applicants have been rejected under the scheme, I am inclined to contrast that situation with the position that exists in the Agricultural Bank and the Rural Reconstruction Board. Apparently, it is possible to appeal to the Minister for Primary Industries (Mr Turner) for consideration to be given to an application for a loan that had previously been rejected.

I do not decry the availability of reconsideration of an application for loan: indeed, I believe it is very desirable that people should have recourse to making an appeal. I merely point out that the allegedly small amount of money that was made available by the Agricultural Bank to a private individual, following an appeal made to the Minister for Primary Industries, leads me to believe that similar consideration should be given to applicants for loans under the Young Farmer Establishment Scheme. It would be interesting to know just how many applications have been rejected and on what grounds.

Other people who are facing difficulties will not get out of them, because, according to those who have examined their circumstances, they are lent money at low interest rates and are then not able to meet their commitments because of other situations, such as drought, or circumstances over which they have no control. It is worrying — and this has already been commented on by the Auditor-General — that the amounts put aside, obviously in anticipation of their being used, have not been used for the purpose for which they were set aside.

In previous years, in debates on these matters, it was made known that amounts set aside for the Young Farmer Establishment Scheme are set aside on the clear understanding that they will be used. Last year the amount was \$3.2m. It was not a capricious figure; it was not something that was plucked out of the air. Yet only half of it was in fact used.

What is happening to those people who are applying to and are being rejected by the Young Farmer Establishment Scheme committee? More would like to be known about this, and, no doubt, in the course of time the number of applicants who have been rejected and the circumstances under which they were rejected will be discovered. It does seem that some people are more privileged than others in regard to getting those sorts of loans. It is about time that those people in the Young Farmer Establishment Scheme who perhaps have more to offer in the long term to this country than those who are on the way out were looked at.

Queensland Railways Use of Non-Australian Products

Mr De LACY (Cairns) (12.27 a.m.): Honourable members may recall, if they heard it, that a fortnight ago the honourable member for Flinders (Mr Katter) raised the issue of TAA—now Australian Airlines—and Qantas—Federal Government instrumentalities, as he termed them—not using Australian coffee and Australian tea on their flights.

What I would like to do is demonstrate that the Queensland Government, in respect of its railway services, does a much worse job. I have with me a kit that is supplied to passengers on the present flagship of Queensland Railways, the *Queenslander*. I am very pleased to see that the *Queenslander* has gone up-market. Certainly, the menu looks very appetising, and those honourable members who have had an opportunity to travel on that train would appreciate that.

All first-class passengers do receive this kit, and that is very good. The only trouble is that the bag containing the kit is made in Taiwan. On looking inside the bag, one sees the first thing that is offered is a shower cap—that is made in Hong Kong. The next thing is a toothbrush kit that is made in Japan.

Mr FitzGerald: Do they make them in Queensland?

Mr De LACY: Why would a company make them in Queensland if the Government will not deal with it?

The next thing that is in the bag is a very attractive comb and mirror set that is made in Hong Kong.

Sir William Knox: Is this all the stuff you souvenired on the plane trip?

Mr De LACY: Not the plane; the train.

A little bit further in the bag are the serviettes, and they are at least made in New South Wales. As well, there are some fingernail files that are also made in New South Wales. At least the Labor Party does recognise New South Wales as part of Australia.

Mr Scott: Wasn't Mr Katter raising that matter about Qantas?

Mr De LACY: Exactly. I am pleased to see that the Minister has entered the Chamber. A couple of weeks ago he attacked the Federal Government because it did not use Australian products on Australian Airlines.

Mr Scott: Would you say the man is a bit of an idiot?

Mr De LACY: I would say that the Minister led with his chin in respect of the matter.

I have three other items here. One is a Bic shaver, but it does not have a country of origin stamped on it. I know that Bic is a French company. In the absence of any emblem denoting that it comes from Australia, I think I can safely say that it probably comes from France. The next is a comb, and the other is a sewing kit. They have no indication on them of where they come from. I think that honourable members can probably assume that they do not come from Queensland.

Honourable members may also remember that last year in this House I raised the point that the coffee, tea and milk given to members at Parliament House does not come from Queensland. In fact, we are not provided with milk; we are supplied with non-dairy whitener.

Sir William Knox: Where is the suit you have on made?

Mr De LACY: I inform the honourable member that these days whenever I buy anything the first thing I ask is, "Where is it made?" If it is not made in Australia, I simply do not buy it. I wonder where the honourable member's suit was made.

I shall conclude by saying that all members should be aware that Australia is in some difficulties with its balance of payments, so that it is beholden on all Australians to support Australian-made products. However, let us face it—if the Government of Australia and the Government of Queensland cannot lead the way, the people of Australia cannot be expected to follow. I think it is absolutely disgraceful that on the flagship of Queensland Railways, the *Queenslander*, passengers are handed a box of tricks such as this. Virtually all its contents are made overseas. Certainly they are all made outside of Queensland. Perhaps I should have these items incorporated in *Hansard*!

Brisbane River Committee

Mrs HARVEY (Greenslopes) (12.32 a.m.): I rise to speak about the Brisbane River and the committee set up by the State Government to work on the beautification of the Brisbane River, the Brisbane River Committee.

Mr Henderson: I hear that Sallyanne Atkinson has one, too.

Mrs HARVEY: Yes, I believe that a number of committees are floating around. However, there is only one Brisbane River Committee, and that is the one set up by the State Government.

I particularly wish to speak about it because only a short time ago the member for Archerfield (Mr Palaszczuk) launched quite a vehement attack on the State Government's Brisbane River Committee. Yet again he showed his total lack of information and understanding of what really goes on in the State. I do not know what he does out there at Archerfield, but he certainly does not take too much notice of what is happening in this State and what the State Government is achieving. It is either that or he does not want to know.

Following an initiative of the Premier, a \$25,000 report was commissioned, presented and made available to all interested parties. That report is the basis for a floral waterway scheme, which, in effect means that the Brisbane River Committee is charged with the responsibility of planting numerous plants, both exotic and native, along the 20 km stretch of the river from the Apollo ferry at Hamilton to the Six Mile Rocks at Yeronga. Because in much of that area exotic plants are already in existence, a good deal of the area will be planted with more exotic species. So the committee is working in with what already exists on the river-bank.

Because the operations of the committee are community based, it depends on the support of private land-owners, business people, the council and all interested parties. I am happy to say that a great deal of support has been forthcoming and the committee is very pleased with the response. The floral waterway scheme will provide not only for the beautification of the banks of the river but also for an opportunity to boost tourism in the Brisbane city area.

I firmly believe that when people come to a city, they want to know about its history. Much of that history is already available for people to see. A heritage path already runs from Parliament House past The Mansions to Harris Terrace. That will be extended to the Old Government Printery. The Brisbane River is adjacent to all of those buildings, so people need to be lured down to the river to complete the package tour. When people visit the city's historical sights, they need to be able to understand the history of the river and how it relates to the city, how Brisbane was dependent on river transport in the early days and how it has been transformed from a working river to one that provides entertainment and tourist potential.

Perhaps in October one could travel along the river and see the jacaranda blooming. There would be a continuous theme of purple along the 20 km stretch. In winter-time, one would see the dominant colour of the acacias—the golden wattle colour—right along that stretch of the river.

In the four seasons of the year, one would get four totally different pictures of the Brisbane River, which would be quite unique. It would also increase the bird-life on that stretch, and would perhaps provide a perfumed atmosphere for the occupants of boats.

The committee believes that the history of the river is essential to its tourist potential. So, the committee considers areas like the naval stores, which are not being dealt with adequately by the council.

I believe that the council is still negotiating to take over the naval stores, which have been very badly vandalised, on the Kangaroo Point cliffs. The naval stores are the only remaining vestige of history as regards Queensland's own navy. They deserve to be treated with the utmost respect and to be looked after. If an honourable member had

a home that was derelict, with grass growing up all around it and people vandalising it, he or she would be told by the Health Department of the council to shape up or ship out. Yet the council is not taking the slightest bit of notice of that very valuable property. It is waiting for it to be vandalised. People have actually tried to have a barbecue on the floor inside the stores. A large hole has been burnt in the floor. It is a shame. It breaks my heart to see it.

The Brisbane River Committee is a committee of achievement. It has created a beach at the Kangaroo Point site, extending out from Captain Burke Park under the Story Bridge. That beach has not cost the State Government one cent because the committee was assisted by the sand and gravel association.

Time expired.

Registration of QATB Vehicles

Mr EATON (Mourilyan) (12.37 a.m.): I want to raise an issue that affects the whole of Queensland, that is, how the QATB service in this State has been affected since the Government amended the relevant legislation and the problems that it is facing in the first year of the implementation of the new scheme.

First of all I want to refer to registration. As all honourable members know, all QATB vehicles are registered on 1 July each year. Up until the amendment last year to the Motor Vehicles Insurance Act regulations, QATB vehicles came under the classification of 1 (a). Up until 1 July this year, it cost \$178.10 to register vehicles under that classification. Because of the amendments to the Motor Vehicles Insurance Act, there is no such classification, so QATB vehicles have been put in classification 10. Under that classification, it will cost \$616.10 to register a QATB vehicle.

Many of the ambulance centres throughout Queensland have more than one motor vehicle. Many centres have one permanent ambulance officer and two motor vehicles that are operated by voluntary staff who are trained for the job and relieve on various occasions to give that officer his week-end off. He does not always get a week-end off, despite the fact that he is entitled to it, because the centre cannot afford to pay other ambulance officers to come in as relieving staff.

Because they cannot be classified, QATB vehicles are put in a classification that makes their cost of registration disproportionate. To emphasise that point, I will read from page 733 of *Hansard* on 4 September 1985, the Motor Vehicles Insurance Act (Motion for Disallowance for Regulation) moved by the Leader of the Opposition, and show the foresight that he demonstrated. The Leader of the Opposition asked the Government to reconsider and try to do something about the regulation. *Hansard* records as follows—

“When the Deputy Premier announced the changes, he had the gall to say, in a scoffing way—

‘In no category would premiums increase more than 100%. Cabinet’s decision shows that the Government is responsive to public concern.’ ”

After getting that assurance from the Deputy Premier that it would not increase by more the 100 per cent, he went on to state—

“In a recent debate in this House, I made reference to a number of serious anomalies in the Schedule, which we are now discussing, caused by the National Party Government’s failure to carry out a much-needed review.

Class 10 in the schedule relates to ‘any motor vehicle of a class not specified’. Incredibly, Queensland’s ambulances fall into that category. It is also incredible that the proposal of the Deputy Premier and Minister Assisting the Treasurer (Mr Gunn) means an annual premium for Queensland ambulances of \$606—an unbelievable rise of \$550 in less than six years. In 1982, only three years ago, the premium was \$52 per annum.

If under the schedule that is being debated Queensland's ambulances were to be defined as buses used exclusively for school, hospital, charitable, benevolent or religious purposes, as they are in class 6 (c) of the schedule, the annual premium would be only \$156. It must be remembered that a premium is not payable on fire brigade vehicles. I do believe that those vehicles or ambulances should attract a compulsory third-party insurance premium. Under the new regulations, ambulances will attract a premium of \$606."

I have been informed that the figure is \$616.10. The Government has to take cognisance of that fact. I am sure that everyone in Queensland would forgive the Government if it wanted to charge a nominal fee for the collection of third-party insurance.

The ambulance centres are still having to raise money and work harder under the new Government system of financing ambulances. The ambulance centres are taking out overdrafts in order to allow officers to go on holiday.

Every day of the week the Babinda ambulance committee mans a caravan supplying hamburgers, coffee and tea to the travellers along the Bruce Highway. That service is manned on a voluntary basis in order to raise money for the community ambulance. Every person travelling along that road sees that service, which is advertising the plight of this Government in its administration of the Queensland Ambulance Transport Brigade centres. Other centres are having trouble meeting their commitments and are having to conduct drives.

Time expired.

Conservation in Queensland

Mr HENDERSON (Mount Gravatt) (12.42 a.m.): I want to address myself to the question of conservation in Queensland and in particular I am concerned about the ongoing accusations that the Queensland National Party Government really does not—

Sir William Knox interjected.

Mr HENDERSON: Perhaps I should change my speech and talk a little about the Redcliffe hospital and the Liberal Party corruption that is associated with it. When I have finished that, perhaps I could talk about the bug in the Lord Mayor's office and tell the truth about that. When I have finished that, it might be a good idea to talk about the tendering for the refurbishing of City Hall and, when I have finished that, I might talk about the tendering for the Boondall Sports Complex.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row): Order! I draw all honourable members' attention to the provisions of Rule of Practice No. 11, which prohibits the prosecution of a quarrel in the House.

Mr HENDERSON: I could go on but perhaps that can wait for another day.

To return to the matter of conservation, the Queensland Government can feel justifiably proud of its record in that regard. It is time that this House acknowledged the fact that the Queensland Government's record is a unique and valuable one in this State in terms of adding areas to the Queensland estate.

Queensland's national parks estate has almost trebled in size during the past 10 years. In 1975 1.15 million hectares were set aside as national parks in Queensland. Earlier this year the figure stood at 3.34 million hectares. That is in addition to the fact that there are 128 environmental parks covering more than 43 000 hectares. Recent actions by the Queensland Government saw very valuable breeding-grounds for turtles and bird-nesting islands on the Great Barrier Reef included in the Queensland national park estate. The Queensland Government is now actively working towards the expansion of the national park estate into every biogeographical zone in Queensland. In the very near future the Queensland Government hopes to have represented in the national park estate any area that is not currently represented.

I was very pleased to see that the magnificent area of the Johnstone River Gorge, which covers some 10 698 ha, has now been added to the Palmerston National Park in north Queensland. I believe that that was an extremely valuable acquisition and one that the people of Queensland will appreciate in the years to come.

Australia has 29 574 636 ha of national park and about 15 700 000 people, which means that Australia has set aside approximately 1.88 ha of national park per Australian. It is rather interesting, therefore, to look at the Queensland comparison. The national record is 1.88 ha. New South Wales has 3 346 665 ha of national parks. For its 5 474 000 people there is only 0.61 ha of national park per person. That is not a record of which New South Wales can feel proud. Victoria has 1 278 544 ha of national park. It has a population of 4 121 000, or 0.31 ha of national park per person. That is way below the national average.

Queensland has 3 370 177 ha of national park and a population of about 2 546 000, which gives it about 1.32 ha of national park per person.

Mr Innes: We have got five times as much national park desert.

Mr HENDERSON: That is the type of nonsense that I would expect from the honourable member for Sherwood. He believes that national park is simply the mangroves along the Brisbane River at Oxley or something like that.

Mr Innes: I am talking about the national park in the south-east corner of the State.

Mr HENDERSON: That is only a small part of the national park estate in Queensland. Almost every biogeographical zone is now represented in national parks in Queensland. As I said earlier, it is a record of which the Queensland Government can feel very proud. I am tired of hearing people knocking the Queensland Government's record. An analysis of the statistics shows quite clearly that Queensland has a national park record of which it can feel justifiably proud. The Queensland National Party Government has added a considerable area to the existing national park estate. This can only benefit future generations of Queenslanders. Most importantly, as I have stressed already, the Queensland Government is endeavouring very hard to ensure that every biogeographical zone is represented.

Time expired.

Motion (Mr Wharton) agreed to.

The House adjourned at 12.47 a.m. (Wednesday)