

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 18 SEPTEMBER 1986

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

REPORT OF PARLIAMENTARY LIBRARY COMMITTEE

Mr SPEAKER announced the receipt of the Parliamentary Library Committee's report for the year 1985-86.

Ordered to be printed.

PETITION

The Clerk announced the receipt of the following petition—

Australia Acts (Request) Act

From Mr White (160 signatories) praying that the Parliament of Queensland will repeal the Australia Acts (Request) Act and allow a referendum in terms of the Queensland Constitution.

Petition received.

USE OF MINISTERIAL AIR UNIT**Return to Order**

The following paper was laid on the table—

Return to an Order made by the House on 6 August last, on the motion of Mr Booth, in relation to the operation of the Ministerial Air Unit aircraft, a return of travel by Ministers of the Crown during the year 1 July 1985 to 30 June 1986, showing—

- (1) Total flying time;
- (2) Total number of passengers carried;
- (3) Names of Ministers who travelled on any of the aircraft.

PAPERS

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

Reports—

Queensland Electricity Commission for the year ended 30 June 1986

Queensland Museum for the year ended 31 December 1985

Community Services for the year ended 30 June 1985.

The following papers were laid on the table—

Regulations under—

Financial Administration and Audit Act 1977-1985

Small Claims Tribunal Act 1973-1985

Green Paper on Mobile Homes

Queensland Government Telecommunication Strategy Planning Project Report No. 8 Management Strategy.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Parliamentary Sitings

Hon. C. A. WHARTON (Burnett—Leader of the House) (11.5 a.m.), by leave: I refer to reports in the media today, particularly the *Daily Sun*, which in its editorial claims that this Government is “one of the most frenetic sausage machines in the Westminster system.” The *Daily Sun* and any others who wish to back the pretence fostered by the Opposition in this House on that subject should do a bit more research before shooting from the lip.

Let me say, first of all, that this House sits longer than most other Parliaments in Australia. In the period since this Parliament commenced, back in November 1983, the Queensland Parliament has sat for a total of 141 days, which is longer than any other Lower House, with the exception of Western Australia and the Commonwealth.

By comparison, in that time the New South Wales Lower House has sat for 121 days and the Victorian Parliament 124 days.

During 1986, as far as days of sitting are concerned the top Parliaments are Queensland and Tasmania. Those two Parliaments have sat for a total of 28 days which, incidentally, is double the number of sitting days of the South Australian Lower House.

Now let me look at the claim that the Queensland Parliament is “one of the most frenetic sausage machines in the Westminster system”. In the 18 months to June this year, the New South Wales Parliament declared 145 Bills urgent legislation in order to push those Bills through that State’s Parliament. Let me further inform honourable members that that represents almost half the total legislation that came before the New South Wales Parliament in that 18-month period.

During the same period, in this House Standing Orders were suspended on a total of 10 occasions to allow the passage of Bills through all stages in less than the time normally allowed under Standing Orders between the first and final readings.

Let me look at the Federal Parliament where it is now the practice to bracket several Bills together and handle them that way instead of debating each separately as happens in Queensland. In that same 18-month period more than 200 Bills were handled in that way by the Federal Labor Government. Does the Labor Party in this House speak out on behalf of our citizens when that happens? No! There is a deafening silence from the so-called watchdogs of democracy on the Opposition benches. The fringe benefits tax, which has caused such confusion and anxiety, was a good example of rushed legislation.

Let me look at the use of the guillotine. In the Federal House of Representatives during that 18-month period the guillotine was applied nine times to a total of 49 Bills. In New South Wales it was also applied nine times, and in Victoria a total of 18 times. Those Parliaments all made greater use of the guillotine than did the Queensland Parliament. Also contrary to what the *Daily Sun* says, the House did not deal with 12 Bills yesterday but with six, including four for which set times were provided.

Let me point out that three of the four Bills dealt with in that manner were in fact related Bills; and that in other Parliaments, such as the House of Representatives, they could well have been bracketed together and handled as one cognate Bill. However, in this House provision was made for debate on the individual Bills. In all, a total of 5 hours 30 minutes were allowed for debate on the four Bills and that, I would say, is a satisfactory time allowance for Bills of that nature.

In spite of all the grandstanding inside the House, I want to say that I received no complaints from anyone outside.

Electricity Supply Industry

Hon. I. J. GIBBS (Albert—Minister for Mines and Energy) (11.9 a.m.), by leave: I wish to make a ministerial statement regarding statements made in this House yesterday by the honourable member for Sherwood (Mr Innes) during the Matters of Public Interest debate.

The honourable member claims to have some knowledge—I will not say expertise—about the electricity supply industry in this State. But, like others who believe they have inside information, having a little information can prove to be a dangerous thing.

First of all, let me answer the claims by the honourable member for Sherwood that the Queensland Electricity Commission is a mega-monopoly. The job of the QEC is to plan ahead effectively so that this State has an ample supply of power to meet all its needs. It is very easy for the critics to come out of the woodwork seven or eight years after a decision is made to develop a new power station and say that there is no real need for it at the present time. It is very easy for the honourable member for Sherwood to say that responsible people are troubled by the QEC's operations.

But could he, or indeed anyone else, have predicted the fluctuations that were to occur in world trade and, in particular, in the aluminium industry? And can he predict that the Stanwell power station will not be needed in the mid-1990s for Queensland's industry requirements?

Of course he cannot, and so the Innes chart of what the stars foretell has the same authority as all the astrology charts seen in the newspapers.

What has been done here—I might add it is in contrast to other States where there have been fluctuating periods of over and undersupply—is to plan ahead intelligently by providing more efficient and more economical power stations such as Tarong, Callide B and Wivenhoe. It is those stations, and Stanwell too, that will enable the consumers in this State to enjoy the cheapest power in mainland Australia. To hear the member for Sherwood talk, one would think the whole planning system of the QEC should be scrapped and that it should sit back and hope that everything turns out all right. If that is what the honourable member would do, heaven help this State if he ever had the responsibility of my portfolio.

When it comes to reserving land for future power stations, I certainly make no excuse for my decision. The member for Sherwood appears to have been given information about the Windsors' claim for compensation at Dudgeon Point. But, as usual, he has distorted the facts and, in doing so, cast aspersions on the Government and on QEC employees. The Windsors did make a lawful claim for compensation. The advance was made when additional information obtained later indicated that the QEC's valuation of the land should be reduced. That was done, and handled correctly. Indeed, the member of the Land Court complimented the valuer concerned for his professional integrity.

As to the lease-back terms, the member for Sherwood (Mr Innes) has again given only a fraction of the pertinent information. The former owners of all the leased-back Dudgeon Point properties have, in addition to the lease rental, to pay the local authority rates, keep the land and all buildings in first-class condition, insure the buildings and meet other lease conditions, which are claimed by the legal representatives of some owners to be onerous. I repeat for the benefit of the House, and in particular the member for Sherwood, that a little information is a dangerous thing. I suggest that the next time the honourable member for Sherwood speaks, he makes sure his brain is engaged before he puts his mouth into gear.

Aboriginal and Islander Communities

Hon. R. C. KATTER (Flinders—Minister for Northern Development and Community Services) (11.12 a.m.), by leave: Yesterday in the House some disparaging remarks were made about people living in Queensland community areas, who are performing successfully. The National Party State Government has created local government powers for each of the communities, private, as opposed to Government, ownership throughout these areas

and a driving determination to provide the acceptance of a background philosophy that there is no such thing as a free meal.

The price paid for the hand-outs and the cargo-cult mentality, which are the hallmarks of the Canberra approach, has been high and most unfortunate. The loss of pride, the resulting collapse of a society, the unemployment figures, the alcohol figures and the trauma injury figures are the harvest of such hand-outs and their underlying philosophy.

It is with a great deal of pride that I rebut the statements made yesterday in the House and that I revise a ministerial statement I made in the House last year. In the field of artefact-making, to all intents and purposes two years ago no Aboriginal artefact-making was taking place in the Gulf and Peninsula areas. Now, in two places alone, artefacts worth more than \$20,000 are being produced each year. Three years ago effectively only two privately owned businesses were on all of Queensland's community areas. Now 20 privately owned businesses are run and managed in the communities.

Almost all of the positions for foreman and above in community areas had belonged to outsiders. In fact, the positions of power in the work-force in the communities belonged almost exclusively to outside people. This year the council overseer in the department's biggest work plant area, the northern Peninsula area, is a local person. The workshop overseer at Woorabinda is a local person and the cattle-manager of one of the department's biggest cattle herds in Queensland is also a local person.

The commencement of award wages for 110 employees was on 1 July. I hope that all of the employees under the Department of Community Services will be moved on to the new pay scales before December. The only reason for delay on this is an Aboriginal Co-ordinating Council directive that it wishes to discuss these matters with the Federal Government.

The introduction of block-making machines and timber-cutting units on almost all of the communities in Queensland means that locally made blocks can be used for housing and general construction for three-quarters of the population of Queensland's communities. It means that more than 75 per cent of the money involved in house-building will stay in the local community, since the houses will be built using bricks and timber made by the local community residents themselves. That will inject millions of dollars into the local economies, creating a great thrust to economic self-sufficiency as well as maintenance-free homes.

The philosophy of the Queensland Government has been implemented and an example has been set for the rest of Australia at Weipa south, which has the first of the council clerks trained under the newly created training unit under Mr Eric Law. That project was given national prominence in a recent story on *60 Minutes*.

Cattle production on the communities has risen by 300 per cent over the last two years, while in the islands there has been a remarkable success story with the cray-fishing industry. The cray-fishing industry has grown from approximately \$150,000 per year to the stage when the Badu freezer has now hit production levels of \$50,000 per day. Although that is the biggest freezer in the islands, it is still only one of 10 that are either owned or controlled by the Torres Strait Islanders themselves.

Although credit for these changes must be given to the National Party policy committee headed by Lady Logan and the National Party parliamentary committee and the members on the Government side of the House, the real heroes are the people living in the communities themselves who, in 20 short years, have had to move from a period of oppression brought about by the Governments of the day prior to 1957. These people, who have been able to hold to a determination to better themselves in spite of the most heart-breaking odds against them, are setting an example not only for other people of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent, but also for all people of Australia. They have shown that the statement that all men deserve a fair go is not just a cliché but has been the lodestar of this Government, and I hope that no person in this House who might influence policy-making in the future will lose sight of these fundamental principles, which will make this a great State and nation.

Computer Literacy Project in Secondary Schools

Hon. L. W. POWELL (Isis—Minister for Education) (11.17 a.m.), by leave: In the 1984 State Budget, \$3.5m was allocated for the purchase of computers in connection with the computer literacy project in secondary schools. That project focuses on developing awareness of the functions of computers and their implications for society, and also skill in using them in the most common applications in the home and in employment.

Schools are being supplied with computers at approximately the following scale—

- (1) High schools of 1 000 students and over—30 computers.
- (2) High schools of under 1 000 students—15 computers.
- (3) Secondary departments—5 computers.

It was made clear when the computer literacy project was first announced in late 1984 that approximately 3 300 computers would be procured over three years, that is, during the years 1985, 1986, and 1987. This will happen, despite a crashing Australian dollar due to the gross mismanagement of the Australian economy by the Hawke Labor Government.

The Government only recently passed the half-way mark of the three-year project, and already in excess of 60 per cent of the total number of computers has been supplied. Furthermore, I am informed that a further 729 computers will become available in the near future, and it is expected that orders to supply the balance will be filled during 1987.

As the project has in excess of one full year to run, it is clear that claims recently made that the State Education Department has failed to meet its commitments to provide computers to secondary schools are both misleading and mischievous. It is obvious that some people want certain schools to receive a full issue of computers in the first year of the program, thus resulting in others not receiving any until the last year of the program. I am not prepared to condone such a selfish and inequitable approach. Computers have been and will be supplied to all schools fairly and progressively, as they become available.

Mornington Island Telecom Service

Hon. M. J. AHERN (Landsborough—Minister for Industry, Small Business and Technology) (11.19 a.m.), by leave: This morning my attention was drawn to a report that the Mornington council has been made to commit an amount of \$30,000 per year for an indefinite period to Telecom Australia for a satellite earth station that is used solely by the Mornington council to provide a telephone service. I am aware that that facility has been installed—

- (a) because of Telecom's refusal to take advantage of the Queensland Government's investment on the island and allow the council to use the identical facility installed by the State of Queensland for health, education and police use; and
- (b) because of the inadequacy of Telecom's single-channel radio system that is used to provide public network services to Mornington Island.

I am aware of correspondence going back as far as July 1985, when the Mornington Shire Council asked for a connection to the Queensland Government's Q-Net satellite network, which has been installed and operating since December of that year. That request has been supported by regular lobbying by the honourable member for Mount Isa (Mr Price), requesting a similar use of Q-Net facility for Mornington Island public switched telephone network services. In August 1985 the shire clerk at Gununa was advised of the legal issues involved and both the shire clerk and the Department of Industry Development have pursued the matter with Telecom.

Since then my department has written to the Chief General Manager of Telecom, the State Manager of Telecom Queensland and the General Manager of Aussat asking that their agreement be given to what is in fact a low-cost and technically simple solution to provide the required facilities for Mornington Island. The only formal response from

Telecom was a letter asking for technical details of the Q-Net installation on Mornington Island, and this information was forwarded. To date, no response has been received on this issue, in spite of the matter's being on the agenda of the regular meeting between officers of the Department of Industry Development and senior officers of Telecom Australia. It appears that the only other response from Telecom was to use the lead provided by the Queensland initiative to despatch a super-slick Iterra salesman to Mornington to secure the sale of an Iterra network service.

Clearly in this case, Telecom has given a higher priority to the profits from sales of commercial equipment than to the duty imposed upon it under its charter and the Telecommunications Act. Such action could be construed as being neglect of its responsibilities under the Telecommunications Act, especially section 6, which instructs Telecom to make its services available throughout Australia and to operate those services as efficiently and economically as practicable. The repeated offer that the Queensland Government has made to Telecom would, if accepted, have reduced the cost of providing communications at Mornington Island by up to 75 per cent. Telecom's blatant disregard for the people of Mornington Island is not only racial discrimination at its worst, but is also contrary to their legal responsibility as a common carrier, and therefore must bring into question their continued right to operate with the protection of a legal monopoly.

As I have mentioned in this House on previous occasions, the working relationship between Q-Net and Telecom has been quite co-operative over recent months, mainly due to the good intentions of the parties involved at the working level. Notwithstanding the co-operation that exists, Telecom has obviously taken advantage of the Government's goodwill in this instance and has clearly demonstrated to me the need for the Queensland Government to maintain a continuing element of political pressure on Telecom to ensure that it does act in accordance with its charter in serving all people of Australia.

I can only advise the House that I will be taking this matter up with the Department of Communications as soon as practicable. Furthermore I believe that the Department of Local Government should investigate the financial arrangements which surround the installation of that facility.

Plumbers and Gasfitters Employees Union, Work Bans

Hon. V. P. LESTER (Peak Downs—Minister for Employment and Industrial Affairs) (11.23 a.m.), by leave: I bring to the notice of the House reports that have been made regarding the actions that the Plumbers and Gasfitters Employees Union proposes to take next week to once again endeavour to hold employers and the people of Queensland to ransom. Reports have indicated that the State Secretary of the Plumbers and Gasfitters Employees Union has stated that work bans will be placed on all major construction sites by next week. That will be as part of a campaign for wages and conditions completely outside the Federal wage-fixation principles. The union is going against the law.

I inform the House that the Queensland Government is determined to ensure that this type of industrial blackmail must cease, and the Government will be taking all steps at its disposal to make sure that militant union leaders carry out their duties to their members and that this country be allowed to prosper in a responsible manner.

The Queensland Master Plumbers Association has indicated that it is seeking legal advice to ascertain the action that it can take, possibly under the State Government's Industrial (Commercial Practices) Act, to avert any irresponsible industrial activity by that union. I remind the people involved in the union movement that any strikes or bans imposed under these circumstances could result in fines of \$250,000 for any union involved and for any members taking part, \$50,000 each. In addition, the Government will sue for damages. The Queensland Government will not muck around.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr LESTER: The Queensland Government has not mucked around this week and has had results.

Even the Federal Government is deeply concerned about the activities of the Plumbers and Gasfitters Employees Union. Perhaps it would do the Opposition some good to listen to the Federal Government's response on this matter.

The Federal Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations (Mr Ralph Willis) recently sent a telex to all State Ministers responsible for Industrial Affairs in which he stated that the Commonwealth Government is most concerned to see that the threat posed by the PGEU campaign for industrial gains outside the system does not succeed. Although the Federal Minister is also concerned, the Opposition has chosen to make cynical remarks. Mr Willis indicated that he had taken steps to secure the resolve of employers in the building industry to resist claims. Mr Willis is telling the Queensland Government to make sure that the employers stand up, as they have done in other areas, and resist the claims.

I seek leave to table and to have incorporated in *Hansard* copies of those telexes from Mr Willis.

Leave granted.

Whereupon the honourable gentleman laid on the table the following documents—
10:29 MON 18-AUG-86

To: Mr George R. Crawford
General Secretary
Plumbers and Gasfitters Employees' Union of Australia

CC: Mr Bill Kelty
Secretary
ACTU

From: Hon. Ralph Willis, MP
Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations

I refer to your union's consideration of claims for a \$60 per week wage increase and a 36 hour week which are clearly outside the national wage principles.

I understand your Federal Council is meeting today to determine whether to adopt such claims as union policy and to consider a campaign in their support.

I therefore wish to convey to you, and to all members of your Federal Council, the Government's total opposition to the pursuit of such claims.

Your Federal Council must understand that the Australian economy is in an extremely precarious position at present. This is not due to any failure of the accord which has been magnificently successful in enabling us to recover from the worst recession in 50 years and to achieve remarkably high levels of economic and employment growth in the last couple of years.

Rather, our economic difficulties stem from a large and continuing decline in prices for our agricultural and mineral exports and loss of some export markets. This has already reduced our national income, greatly weakened our currency and massively increased our national debt.

Furthermore, our future growth prospects have been severely prejudiced by higher inflation resulting from the devaluation and high interest rates needed to prevent further falls in the \$A. However, with a tough budget which considerably reduces our budget deficit, and wage increases no higher than those of our trading partners, we believe we can maintain the level of the \$A, reduce interest rates and suffer little further increase in unemployment.

Our chances of achieving this outcome will be zero, however, if large wage increases occur. A surge in labour costs would have disastrous consequences by further increasing inflation, causing a further large devaluation of the \$A, a further large rise in our national debt, and a further rise in interest rates. Such developments would greatly accentuate our external difficulties and would certainly plunge the economy into a severe recession with rapidly rising unemployment.

I ask you, therefore, to fully and carefully consider the implications of your decision. The decision to go ahead with any claims outside the national wage fixing principles should be taken with the clear understanding that you are voting for a severe recession and greatly increased unemployment.

Accordingly, I call on your Federal union to drop the claims and to join all other building unions in making the commitment to the national wage fixing principles.

If you persist with the claims, the Government will have no alternative but to take whatever action is necessary to ensure that they are not successful.

Text of telex sent by the Honourable Ralph Willis, M.P., Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations to Employers.

I refer to claims by the PGEU for, among other things, a \$60 per week overaward payment and a 36-hour week.

These claims are clearly outside the National Wage Principles and would, if successful, have disastrous consequences for the Australian economy leading ultimately to further falls in the value of the \$A, a further large rise in our national debt, and a further rise in interest rates.

Such developments would greatly accentuate the nation's external difficulties and would plunge the economy into a severe recession with rapidly rising unemployment.

The Government has informed the PGEU of its attitude to these claims and has made it clear that it will take whatever action is necessary to ensure that they are not successful.

The Government likewise expects builders, developers and plumbing employers to strongly resist these claims.

It should be clearly understood that the Government's code of conduct for the building industry continues to apply and that action will be taken against any company that makes concessions to the PGEU's claims.

Such action would include exclusion from consideration for Government contracts and leases.

These views will be made known to all parties in the industry.

Mr LESTER: In those telexes, Mr Willis has reiterated that the claims are clearly outside the national wage-fixing principles and would, if successful, have disastrous consequences for the Australian economy, leading ultimately to further falls in the value of the Australian dollar, a further large rise in our national debt and a further rise in interest rates. That is the action that the plumbers propose to take. I repeat that it will lead to further disastrous consequences.

Such developments would greatly accentuate the nation's external difficulties and would plunge the economy into a severe recession with rapidly rising unemployment. It is clear that the union wants unemployment. Those statements were made by the Federal Minister. However, the Opposition chooses to scorn them. The members of the Opposition have been caught out.

The Federal Minister also stated that the terms of the code of conduct developed during the process of BLF Federal deregistration and aimed at both immediate and long-term industrial reform in the building industry will continue to apply. That is a suggestion that firmer action needs to be taken.

Mr Willis also stated that the Commonwealth Government requires all firms operating in the industry to respect the code and that it will not hesitate to use its provisions on any firm conceding claims outside the accepted procedures. The Commonwealth has said that if any employers do not stand up, it will tackle them. That is usually what the Commonwealth does; it attacks the employers rather than the unions. But that is par for the course.

In his telex Mr Willis urged all State Ministers to adopt similar measures where a similar code operates or to take whatever steps are available to ensure that the threat to the economy of Australia posed by the PGEU is not realised. Mr Willis has said, "Go ahead and use your Electricity Authorities Industrial Causes Act. Go ahead and fine the unions and the employees." That suggestion has come from Mr Willis himself. The Leader of the Opposition (Mr Warburton) is in a spot. He does not know what to do about it. I have outlined what the Federal Minister said. He has told the Queensland Government to use whatever legislation it has. The Leader of the Opposition is carrying on in a most inappropriate manner. He is acting like a ship with a broken propeller and a broken rudder—he is going backwards with the current.

The Queensland Government has a vital interest in this matter. Apart from the question of law and order—at present, numerous Government projects are under way. The Government is determined that the construction of those buildings will not be delayed because of the activities of a handful of left-wing militant union-organisers. The Queensland Government will make sure that the construction of those buildings proceeds. Employment will be generated and there will be jobs for our sons and daughters.

The Queensland Government will be liaising with the Queensland Master Plumbers Association to ensure that all action possible is taken to ensure that construction work is able to continue. A meeting is set down for 12.30 p.m. today.

The Plumbers and Gasfitters Employees Union just cannot be allowed to hold this country to ransom when there are proper avenues for it to follow to argue any case that it considers it might have. I urge any plumbing contractor or building contractor who experiences any type of threat or industrial action to make immediate contact with his appropriate employer organisation and my industrial affairs advisory unit and to provide full details to enable appropriate action to be initiated against any such union moves. I assure honourable members that the Queensland Government is fair dinkum. The threats by the unions will not be realised.

Application by ETU for Federal Award Coverage

Hon. V. P. LESTER (Peak Downs—Minister for Employment and Industrial Affairs) (11.31 a.m.): I seek leave to make a further ministerial statement.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Is leave granted?

There being no objection, leave is granted.

Mr LESTER: Before I commence that statement, I point out that one can see the contempt that the ALP has for sound industrial relations.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr LESTER: Thank you, Mr Speaker, for your protection. It is appreciated.

Yesterday, this Parliament was notified by my colleague the Minister for Mines and Energy that the Australian Conciliation and Arbitration Commission had decided to take no further action on the application by the Electrical Trades Union for a Federal award covering the power industry in Queensland. That decision by the commission marks the end of a long series of cases before the Australian Conciliation and Arbitration Commission and the High Court. It is important that some of the ramifications be considered.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I do not wish to interrupt the Minister, but I draw to his attention the fact that this morning the House has a very big program. I ask him to give a precis of the statement.

Mr LESTER: Thank you, Mr Speaker. However, the program that I have here affects the future destiny of Queensland.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr LESTER: With hindsight, it is evident that the Federal Labor Government needs to closely consider its industrial policies. In its fetish for supporting the unions against the Queensland Government the Federal Government chose to ignore some of the facts; but more seriously, it tried to alter the law in their favour.

Had the Hawke/Willis axis succeeded in its endeavours, the decision of the Arbitration Commission yesterday would not have been possible. It must be made clear that

the 2 to 1 majority decision was based on an exercise of discretion of the commission that further proceedings in relation to a Federal award were not desirable in the public interest. That is provided for in section 41 (1) (d) of the Commonwealth Industrial Act.

Honourable members would be aware that on 21 May 1985, the Federal Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations introduced legislation into the House of Representatives titled the Conciliation and Arbitration (Electricity Industry) Bill 1985. The two critical clauses of the Bill, as Mr Willis pointed out, were clause 9—designed with the shortening of proceedings in mind, and making it easier to move into a Federal award—and clause 8, which was designed to take away the discretion of the commission to dismiss proceedings in the public interest. In other words, it did not want the public interest further involved, and that is definitely taking away people's rights.

It is now history that the High Court held that that legislation discriminated against Queensland. However, it has been possible to overturn that legislation in the public interest.

If the Federal Government had been able to get away with the legislation, a proper examination by the commission of all of the facts of that long-running case would have been impossible.

Even more alarming is the fact that the Arbitration Commission would not have been permitted to make the decision that it so correctly made yesterday. The commission would also have been effectively prevented from dealing with the public interest.

The Queensland Government has introduced industrial legislation for the protection of the public interest of the people of Queensland. The ETU case shows clearly that the Commonwealth Government will suppress the public interest if it comes into conflict with its allegiance to the trade union movement. However, the Queensland Government puts the public first, and it will continue to do so, because that is the way that this Government operates.

LEAVE TO MOVE MOTION WITHOUT NOTICE

Mr BURNS (Lytton): I seek leave to move a motion without notice in relation to the stated intention of the National and Liberal Parties to deny Queensland workers their annual leave loading of 17½ per cent.

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

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The representatives of the press are requested to move from the public gallery, especially the person who is smoking a cigarette.

AYES, 34		NOES, 43	
Braddy	Smith	Ahern	Lingard
Burns	Underwood	Alison	Littleproud
Campbell	Vaughan	Austin	McKechnie
Casey	Veivers	Bailey	McPhie
Comben	Warburton	Bjelke-Petersen	Menzel
D'Arcy	Warner, A. M.	Booth	Miller
De Lacy	White	Borbidge	Muntz
Eaton	Yewdale	Cahill	Newton
Gibbs, R. J.		Chapman	Powell
Goss		Clauson	Randell
Gygar		Cooper	Row
Hamill		Elliott	Simpson
Innes		FitzGerald	Stephan
Knox		Gibbs, I. J.	Stoneman
Kruger		Glasson	Tenni
Lee		Gunn	Turner
Lickiss		Harper	Wharton
Mackenroth		Hartwig	
McElligott		Henderson	
McLean		Hinze	
Milliner		Jennings	
Palaszczuk	<i>Tellers:</i>	Katter	<i>Tellers:</i>
Price	Davis	Lane	Kaus
Shaw	Prest	Lester	Neal

Resolved in the negative.

LEAVE TO MOVE MOTION WITHOUT NOTICE

Hon. Sir WILLIAM KNOX (Nundah): In relation to item No. 17 on the Business Paper, I seek leave to move a motion without notice.

Leave granted.

GENERAL BUSINESS—NOTICE OF MOTION No. 17

Hon. Sir WILLIAM KNOX (Nundah) (11.42 a.m.): As I have proposed that the matter of the fringe benefits tax be debated forthwith, I bring to the attention of the House the terms of General Business—Notice of Motion No. 1. Of course, in terms of notice of motion No. 17, I merely seek that the general business of the House proceed. I hope that the House will support me.

Page 8 of the Business Paper contains item No. 17. I move—

“That Item No. 1 under General Business—Orders of the Day standing in my name be debated forthwith.”

There is a matter of urgency attaching to the debate, because on 28 October the very first levy of the fringe benefits tax will have to be paid.

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

“That the House do pass to the next business.”

Question put; and the House divided—

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

Resolved in the affirmative.

Mr NEAL: Mr Speaker—

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: Mr Speaker—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is no further “Other business”. The House has passed to the next business.

QUESTIONS UPON NOTICE

Questions submitted on notice were answered as follows—

1. Point Henry and Portland Aluminium Smelters, Victoria

Mr NEAL asked the Premier and Treasurer—

“With reference to the recent flying visit to Queensland, at taxpayers’ expense, of the Victorian Premier, Mr Cain, and to the futile attempts by the ALP to promote Mr Cain and his counterparts as effective and efficient financial managers—

(1) Is he in a position to outline the latest situation with regard to the clumsy attempt by the Victorian ALP Government to become involved in Point Henry and Portland aluminium smelters in association with Alcoa of Australia Ltd?

(2) What will this pathetic socialist government foray into the business world end up costing the Victorian taxpayer?”

Answer—

(1 & 2) Under the terms of the 1984 agreement with Alcoa of Australia Ltd the Victorian Government was committed to fund part of the energy consumption at both the Portland and Point Henry smelters if world aluminium prices, as measured by US spot prices in 1982 terms, fall below \$US1,700 per tonne. Currently, the US spot price is about \$US1,050 per tonne in 1982 terms and there is little likelihood of any significant real increases in the aluminium price in the next few years.

The Victorian Government agreed to subsidise the electricity tariff for Alcoa by 0.2c per kWh for every \$US100 that US spot prices fall below \$US1,700 per tonne in 1982 terms. This means that Alcoa is currently paying for its electricity consumption at the Point Henry smelter at only about half the base electricity tariff of 2.669c per kWh agreed to in 1984. The Victorian tax-payer is subsidising Alcoa’s electricity bills for the Point Henry smelter to the extent of between \$20m and \$30m a year. What a wonderful business proposition that is for the people of Victoria.

The revenue drain to the State arising out of this flexible tariff arrangement can only worsen over the next few years as the Portland smelter comes on stream and builds up to full production. It has been estimated that the total cost of subsidising Portland’s energy bill in the period from 1986-87 to 1988-89 will amount to \$93m. The Victorian tax-payers have to pay for the Victorian Government’s bungle. In addition to the problems associated with the flexible tariff arrangement, the Victorian Government has been obliged to make compensation payments to the SECV arising out of delays to the start-up of the Portland smelter. The Government has already paid out \$126.5m to the SECV in this regard, with a further estimated payment of \$45m in 1986-87. It is scandalous—\$126m because of the delay and now another \$45m! What a racket the poor old Victorian tax-payer is suffering from because of these people.

The Victorian Government has also been forced to increase its equity stake in the smelter project from 25 per cent to 35 per cent as a result of last-minute withdrawals from the project by the South Korean Hyundai Corporation and the Commonwealth Superannuation Fund Investment Trust. They were clever enough to pull out of it and leave the Victorian Government holding the baby. That means that the Victorian Government’s exposure to the project has increased at a time when Alcoa has been seeking to reduce its exposure. The Government is also required to fund its contributions to the cost of construction of the smelter at a much higher level than was originally budgeted for. The Government will therefore have to find \$150m over and above the amount expected when the agreement was signed in 1984. What an operation by the Victorian Government!

The Victorian Government will be responsible for the sale of its own share of the aluminium produced by the project. Imagine what it will sell that for! Imagine what a mess it will make of that! That will be a difficult exercise, given the current state of the

aluminium market and the fact that the Government has virtually no expertise in that area. Its expertise is nil.

Is it not amazing? It is typical of the way in which the blood brothers of the members opposite run the Victorian Government. What a way to run a State! What a way to run a business! It is exactly what one would expect from the Labor Party. It demonstrates beyond any doubt the complete lack of capacity of the ALP to deal effectively with complex business matters in the world market. No wonder Victoria is going broke. No wonder that State had to get its full loan requirements at the Premiers Conference when all the other States took a 10 per cent cut.

Mr R. J. Gibbs interjected.

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: I am glad that the member for Wolston agrees with that. The way that members of the Labor Party carry on, they must be mad. There is no doubt about that. What has happened in Victoria would quickly happen to Queensland if the ALP members opposite were ever given the opportunity to manage or, should I say, mismanage the Queensland economy. Consequently, the people of Queensland could not, under any circumstances, entrust them with that responsibility.

2. Gold Coast Milk Pty Ltd

Mr BURNS asked the Minister for Primary Industries—

“With reference to the recent finding of the Milk Appeals Tribunal that Gold Coast Milk Pty Ltd is in breach of the 1975 Order in Council by processing Beaudesert milk and the various alternatives open to him arising out of that finding—

(1) Does he propose to allow Gold Coast Milk to continue to operate in defiance of the Order in Council?

(2) Will he restore it to Logan and Albert in compliance with the 1975 Order in Council?

(3) Will he refer it to the Milk Pasteurisation Tribunal for determination?

(4) Does he intend to change the Order in Council in order to accommodate the National Party clique that runs the dairy industry in Queensland?”

Answer—

(1 to 4) In reply to that charismatic character from the coast, the Lee Marvin of the Labor Party—the honourable member for Lytton has been misinformed about a recent finding of the Milk Appeals Tribunal concerning the processing of Beaudesert milk. The tribunal did not, as indicated by the member for Lytton, determine that Gold Coast Milk was in breach of the Order in Council in question. To be specific, the tribunal, in its judgment, stated in part that it “cannot make any determination or order under Section 101 (4)” of the Milk Supply Act. However, the tribunal did direct that the file on this matter be forwarded to the Minister for Primary Industries for his information, and I advise the honourable member that I am in possession of that file.

On Monday, 15 September 1986, I was informed that the appellant in the tribunal hearing, Logan and Albert Co-operative Dairy Association Limited, was contemplating legal action against the Chairman of the Queensland Milk Board in regard to the matter earlier brought before the Milk Appeals Tribunal. As I am not aware of the extent of any such action, it would be inappropriate for me to make any comment at this time.

3. Queensland's Public Debt

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

“With reference to the acknowledgement of the Auditor-General that it would be highly beneficial to present in consolidated form a total estimate of the public sector debt of Queensland, either on a gross or a net basis—

Given the fact that the separate publication in the Budget Papers and departmental accounts subsidiary to the public accounts of the State debt under

the Financial Agreement, and both guaranteed and non-guaranteed financial arrangements of departments, local authorities, statutory and other bodies involves considerable double counting which cannot be discerned from the accounts as published, will he provide a detailed presentation in consolidated form of (a) the public debt under the Financial Agreement (gross and net as at 30 June 1986), (b) guaranteed financial arrangements of departments, local authorities, statutory and other bodies as at 30 June 1986, (c) non-guaranteed financial arrangements of departments, local authorities, statutory and other bodies as at 30 June 1986 and (d) the total estimated State, semi-government, local authority debt and other obligations as at 30 June 1986, both on a gross and net basis, after adjustment to exclude double counting and together with the identification of credits in sinking funds arrangements?"

Answer—

(a) The gross and net public debt figures in regard to arrangements pursuant to the financial agreement, which are the figures of primary concern, are set out in table 26 of the Budget document entitled *Summary Tables Relating to the Public Accounts*. The relevant figures at 30 June 1986 are—

	\$
Gross public debt	2,459,160,691
less credit balance of Sinking Fund	<u>2,312,932</u>
	<u>\$2,456,847,759</u>

(b to d) The document entitled *Departmental Accounts Subsidiary to the Public Accounts 1985-86*, which has been tabled in the Parliament, provides very preliminary information in summary form in regard to guaranteed financial arrangements. I must stress that these figures are compiled from early returns from the many organisations and bodies involved, and are qualified as such in the document.

In view of the comprehensive nature of the information sought and its relative importance, I believe the most accurate information possible, rather than estimates, should be provided. That could not be done until the audits of the many organisations and bodies involved have been completed by the Auditor-General. The information sought will be provided at that time.

Mr MILLINER: I rise to a point of order. In view of the time, would it be possible to have the answers to my two questions incorporated in *Hansard*?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Is it the wish of the House that the questions remaining on the Notices of Questions paper be incorporated in *Hansard*?

There being no objection, that course will be followed.

The following questions and answers were laid on the table—

4. Isolated Patients' Travel and Accommodation Scheme

Mr MILLINER asked the Minister for Health and Environment—

“With reference to the recent announcement by the Federal Government that responsibility for the administration of the Isolated Patients' Travel and Accommodation Scheme has been transferred to the State with increased funding—

Will the guidelines for the operation of the scheme remain the same and, if not, what changes does he envisage?”

Answer—

It is correct that the Federal Government has announced changed responsibility for the administration of the Isolated Patients' Travel and Accommodation Scheme from its jurisdiction to that of the State. Guide-lines are yet to be developed for the operation of the scheme. I cannot foreshadow what changes might be involved.

5. Vehicular Ferry Sir James Holt

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

“With reference to the vehicular ferry, Sir James Holt, which was operated by the Brisbane City Council on the Brisbane River—

(1) When was the last time that the Sir James Holt underwent maintenance and what was the total cost of this maintenance?

(2) Has the Sir James Holt been sold and, if so, to whom and what was the purchase price of this vessel?

(3) Were tenders called for the sale of this vessel and, if not, what are the reasons?”

Answer—

I am informed—

(1) that the ferry Sir James Holt last underwent general maintenance in January 1986 and that the cost of that maintenance was \$43,104;

(2) that the ferry has been sold to James Penny Pty Ltd at a price of \$160,000; and

(3) that tenders for the purchase of the ferry were called by the Brisbane City Council in January 1986.

6. Young Farmer Establishment Scheme

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

“(1) What were the amounts unspent in the funds available to the Young Farmers Scheme for the years 1984-85 and 1985-86 and what is the amount currently held in those funds?

(2) What were the number of applicants for 1984-85, 1985-86 and in 1986 to date?

(3) How many applicants failed to qualify and of those how many applicants sought ministerial review of their cases?

(4) How many applicants qualified and what were the amounts and terms for each applicant (without disclosing names)?”

Answer—

(1) The balances in the Young Farmer Establishment Scheme Fund were \$926,021 at 30 June 1985 and \$1,306,907 at 30 June 1986. The amount currently held is \$771,217.

(2) The number of applicants for 1984-85 was 47 and for 1985-86, 34.

(3) The number of applicants who failed to qualify in 1984-85 was 36 and in 1985-86, 21. Records are not maintained to show the number of declined applicants who have sought ministerial review of their applications.

(4) In 1984-85, 11 applications were approved and, in 1985-86, 13. In each case the terms of the approval were a commencing interest rate of 8.2 per cent per annum

for the first two years of the 25-year term for the loan. The amounts approved for the individual loans were—

1984-85	1985-86
\$	\$
114,000	93,500
150,000	80,000
160,000	135,000
170,000	196,000
138,000	80,000
150,000	120,000
84,000	98,000
97,000	84,500
170,000	110,000
180,000	117,000
79,000	100,000
	150,000
	120,000

7. **TAB Agencies**

Sir WILLIAM KNOX asked the Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing—

“Which persons or business entities have been granted TAB agencies in the last three years to date, in particular in each case, what was (a) the date of grant, (b) the name of the grantee or grantees and (c) the place of business?”

Answer—

I am informed that the information sought will take some time to extract from records held by the Totalisator Administration Board of Queensland. Arrangements are accordingly being made to obtain the information sought by the honourable member, and I will provide him with relevant details as soon as possible.

At 12 noon,

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

SUPPLY

Seventh Allotted Day—Reception of Resolutions

The Resolutions reported from Committee of Supply on 16 September were presented and, on motion of Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen, received.

Adoption of Resolutions

The Resolutions being taken as read—

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

“That the Resolutions be now agreed to.”

Motion agreed to.

WAYS AND MEANS

Opening of Committee

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

“(a) That, towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty, for the service of the year 1986-1987, a further sum not exceeding \$2,984,004,969 be granted from the Consolidated Revenue Fund of Queensland.

- (b) That, towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty, for the service of the year 1986-1987, a further sum not exceeding \$5,817,346,222 be granted from the Trust and Special Funds.
- (c) That, towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty, for the service of the year 1986-1987, a further sum not exceeding \$202,873,663 be granted from the moneys standing to the credit of the Loan Fund.
- (d) That, towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty, for the service of the year 1985-1986, the Statement of Unforeseen Expenditure to be Appropriated, not exceeding \$318,575,820, be granted from the Consolidated Revenue Fund.
- (e) That, towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty, for the service of the year 1985-86, the Statement of Unforeseen Expenditure to be Appropriated, not exceeding \$222,190,731, be granted from the Trust and Special Funds.
- (f) That, towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty, for the service of the year 1985-1986, the Statement of Unforeseen Expenditure to be Appropriated, not exceeding \$8,962,343, be granted from the Loan Fund.
- (g) That, towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty, on account, for the service of the year 1987-1988, a sum not exceeding \$940,000,000 be granted from the Consolidated Revenue Fund of Queensland.
- (h) That, towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty, on account, for the service of the year 1987-1988, a sum not exceeding \$1,550,000,000 be granted from the Trust and Special Funds.
- (i) That, towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty, on account, for the service of the year 1987-1988, a sum not exceeding \$70,000,000 be granted from the moneys standing to the credit of the Loan Fund."

Motion agreed to.

Resolutions reported, received, and agreed to.

APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 2)

First Reading

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

Second Reading

Hon. Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN (Barambah—Premier and Treasurer) (12.9 p.m.): I move—

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

The Bill is the second and final Appropriation Bill for the current financial year. It seeks parliamentary approval to cover expenditure included in the Budget Estimates for this year, unforeseen expenditure incurred during 1985-86 and expenditure for the first two months of the financial year 1987-88 to maintain Government activities until further Supply can be granted.

An amount of \$14,574.2m is provided for 1986-87 to cover anticipated expenditures for Supply services from the Consolidated Revenue Fund, the Trust and Special Funds and the Loan Fund. That amount represents the total of Parts III, IV and V of the schedule to this Bill. It also incorporates the amount of \$2,290m for Supply services previously appropriated in the Appropriation Act 1985-86 (No. 2) and the further amount of \$3,280m appropriated in the Appropriation Act 1986-87 (No. 1).

Unforeseen expenditure for 1985-86 totalling \$549.7m is also incorporated in the Bill. That amount has had executive authority, but now requires parliamentary approval.

Full details of the amount are set out in Parts VI, VII and VIII of the schedule to the Bill and the document *Statement of Unforeseen Expenditure to be Appropriated*, which was recently tabled in the House.

The Bill allows for an amount of \$2,560m to provide Supply for the Consolidated Revenue Fund, the Trust and Special Funds and the Loan Fund for the first two months of the financial year 1987-88. Adequate provision has been made within that amount to cover cost escalations in the intervening period.

This Bill is primarily the legislative enactment of the State Budget for 1986-87, which I presented to this House on 26 August. I had hoped that in introducing this Bill to the House, it would have been unnecessary for me to spend time on matters that had been adequately covered in presenting that Budget. Such is not the case.

It is clear from the statements made within this House and in the media that the realities of the State Budget have not yet been grasped in certain sectors, and I refer in particular to the Opposition. I shudder every time I think that some of those people, who cannot accept reality, also aspire to high office in this State.

Let me take a few moments to restate the fundamentals. The overriding objective of a State Budget must be good, sound, responsible economic and financial management. The Budget must meet the reasonable aspirations of the various sections of the community. It must be funded in a way that is acceptable to the community and must not impose too great a tax burden. It must also be framed to ensure that the Government lives within its means.

The Budget, which I presented some three weeks ago, fulfilled those basic requirements.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row): Order! There is far too much movement and audible conversation in the Chamber. I ask the honourable member for Callide to return to his seat. I also ask other honourable members to either resume their seats or carry out their intentions.

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: The Budget is a balanced Budget. It is also a responsible Budget. There should be no misunderstanding about that, and the people of Queensland must not be misled by biased and untrue statements to the contrary.

In very simple terms, all Government receipts and expenditures are channelled through the public accounts, which consist of the Consolidated Revenue Fund, the Loan Fund and the Trust and Special Funds. Of those, both in the 1985-86 Budget and the 1986-87 Budget, the Consolidated Revenue Fund was in balance, the Loan Fund was in balance, and the Trust and Special Funds were in substantial credit, despite claims by Opposition members. We continually hear as much about a deficit, but, there is no deficit. The only deficit is in the minds of those few people who are afraid to acknowledge the quality of Budget management demonstrated by this Government. The balanced Budget outcomes have been achieved without the cuts in staffing and services that are emerging as the theme of Budgets in other States. The Government has not had to do such things in Queensland.

Yesterday, the Victorian Government brought down a horror Budget—it was an absolute horror—with cuts in staff and real Government expenditure right across the board. The Victorian Labor Treasurer's counterpart in South Australia was forced to bring down a Budget that left a deficit of \$7.3m to be funded. The other Labor Governments are in exactly the same mess.

Through sound and responsible management, this Government has been able to bring down Budgets that are positive and do none of the horrendous things being inflicted in other States.

The Queensland Budget has consistently more than maintained services. It has consistently offered enhancements in growth-related areas. It has introduced no new taxes. Above all, the Queensland Government has consistently balanced its Budget without the need to borrow to fund day-to-day services.

It would be easy to balance a State's recurrent Budget if any shortfall between receipts and expenditure was simply borrowed, as is the case with other Governments in other areas. Any simple fool could do that. That is not, however, a responsible course of action. It is not a course that the Government would accept or even contemplate. It is important that the point be made crystal clear. Just as households that borrow to fund the everyday expenses of living would quickly end up in financial ruin, so would a Government that engaged in similar financially irresponsible actions. In assessing the performance of Governments, that point must be carefully considered.

Borrowing for largely self-funding capital assets such as ports, power stations and so on is another matter. It is an acceptable, responsible and indeed desirable financial measure in a progressive modern community. It is to the great credit of the Government that not only has careful management enabled it to achieve that balance over a long period, but more than \$1,300m has been able to be diverted to capital works from its operating Budget over the last 10 years. That is an amazing achievement. It has, of course, had the effect of reducing the demand for borrowing and thus reducing debt-servicing costs for the future.

One alternative open to a Government to ensure that its Budget is balanced is to increase taxes. As I have already indicated, that is a course that the Government does not accept as reasonable or responsible in the present economic circumstances. I am sure that all honourable members are well aware of my views on taxation.

Mr R. J. Gibbs: Yes, you want to rip the system off. Look at what you have done over the years.

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: Let me remind the honourable member for Wolston, who happens to be living in dreamland, that Queensland is a low-tax State.

Mr R. J. Gibbs interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row): Order!

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: I know that it annoys the honourable member. He is annoyed because Queensland has a good Budget and things are good in the State. It often amazes me that he does not go and live in one of the other States.

Queensland is a low-tax State—and it will stay that way. Its record is unequalled. It has—

- no petrol tax;
- no financial institutions duty;
- no tobacco tax; and
- the highest pay-roll tax exemption level in Australia for the smaller employer.

In the other States, the position is exactly the opposite. That is the simple reality. Queensland does not place the same impost on Queenslanders as other State Governments impose on their citizens.

The claims that Queensland's taxation revenues are increasing at some unacceptable rate is nonsense when the position in other States is examined.

Honourable members should look at the effects of the tax imposts in other States that Queensland does not even have—

- In Victoria petrol tax revenues have increased by almost 160 per cent in just four years.
- South Australia's tobacco tax revenues have increased by almost 175 per cent in four years.

I would also point out that in South Australia, with a State population half the size of Queensland's, the Government receives around \$100m in petrol, tobacco and gas taxes.

So honourable members can see how the people of South Australia are being fleeced by that Government and why industry is coming to Queensland.

The Queensland Government does not ask one cent from Queenslanders for any of those taxes. It amazes me that the South Australian Labor Government still cannot balance its Budget—like all the other Labor States—despite all the additional revenue it obtains from taxes. To run a deficit of \$7.3m in such circumstances is unbelievable. I am sure that the people of South Australia will wake up to the Government at the next election. Let me say here and now that no-one would like to reduce taxes more than I would. The Government would get rid of the lot if it could. However, realities have to be faced. Taxes must be collected to pay for services required by the community. Expenditure must be financed in a responsible way.

I assure the House that the Government is committed to keeping the tax burden as low as possible to fund those services. I have indicated that the Government is responsible in recognising that taxes must be levied at a minimal level. I always find those who suggest massive cuts in taxation to be a little hypocritical because they neglect to say how the services might be provided or how funds might be obtained without taxation.

It was only this week that the Leader of the Opposition spread the good news of a grand economic policy package that included substantial reductions in taxation. Honourable members will remember that the Prime Minister travelled the length and breadth of the nation promising, if his Government was elected, reduced taxation, lower petrol prices and thousands of new jobs. In a similar fashion, the Leader of the Opposition is telling people throughout Queensland that he will reduce taxation. The Leader of the Opposition would know very well that any such statement is a lie and that he will not reduce taxation at all.

Mr Warburton: It is not a lie.

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: Of course it is. Such a statement would be in keeping with the tactics and methods adopted by the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr Warburton: We will take care of it and reduce taxes.

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: Who would trust members of the Labor Party when they support the fringe benefits tax?

In the Budget debate, the honourable member for Nundah (Sir William Knox) referred to pay-roll tax cuts. If cuts were to be made in pay-roll tax or land tax, or any other State tax, corresponding adjustments must be made to maintain the critical balance of the Budget. It was interesting to hear the honourable member even suggest such a thing, when it is remembered that he played a part in implementing the system of pay-roll tax collection. If services are not to be affected, the only alternative is for new taxes to be imposed or for alternative revenue sources to be found. If the Leader of the Opposition is to be believed, every revenue item is a tax in some form or other.

Those who advocate cuts in taxes should present Queenslanders with the full picture and not just glossy platitudes. There are always two sides to an equation; similarly, there are two sides to every grand economic policy package.

When 40 000 farmers assembled in Canberra, the Prime Minister (Mr Hawke) promised them that he would offer them a good package. What he gave them was exactly the opposite—higher taxes and more taxes than have ever previously been imposed.

It is not only suggested that revenue available to the Government should be reduced but it is also proposed that more revenue should be spent. It is difficult to believe it, but I assure the House that the proposal is to do more spending. I do not know how the Australian Labor Party puts the two propositions together; but, of course, no-one would be able to work out how members of the Australian Labor Party think.

By virtue of his grand-plan solution for Labor's 30 years in the wilderness as the Opposition in Queensland, the Leader of the Opposition says that he will reduce pay-roll tax, stamp duties, electricity tariffs and all other fees and charges while at the same time increase expenditure on artificial employment schemes, tertiary education and tourism. What a joke! If ever there was a joke, that is one. The people of Queensland will be able to see through that plan on election day.

A school student with any mathematical ability at all would be able to tell members of the Labor Party and the Leader of the Opposition that for an equation to remain balanced, whatever is done on one side must also be done on the other. The Leader of the Opposition has probably never heard of that before. A reduction in revenues on one side of the equation must mean reduced expenditures on the other side, not the reverse. If expenditure is to be increased, so must revenues.

To decrease revenues and increase expenditure at the same time is not only irresponsible but it is also a recipe for financial disaster. The initial balance in the Budget, which the Government sees as fundamental to responsible financial management, would be destroyed. Not only would the State Budget go into deficit but it would also be in deficit to a massive extent.

The only alternative for a Government that follows that path is borrowing for recurrent purposes, which is the height of financial irresponsibility. That is what the Federal Labor Government has done. What a mess it has made of the economy, in a short period.

I fail to see how honourable members opposite can expect to be taken seriously when they suggest to the people of Queensland that the State should follow that path. They would lead this great State to ruin in a very short time.

Balancing the legitimate needs of the community against the resources available to the Government is not an easy task. To do that requires hard decisions, and this Government has shown its willingness to take those decisions to ensure that the Budget is properly balanced.

I wait with great interest for the next instalment in the saga of the Opposition's continuing attempts to find a grand economic policy. On its statements to date, it really needs to go back to the drawing-board. That is quite clear. The Opposition has obviously become completely lost and bewildered in the exercise that it has undertaken to this point.

It clearly does not understand the fundamentals of State financial management. The Opposition's lack of responsibility contrasts markedly with the Budget that this legislation formalises. The Government has again cut its cloth according to its means.

The Government believes in responsibility as the key to its budgetary policy. It does not believe in wild promises. The Budget underlying this Appropriation Bill reflects that responsibility completely. The overwhelming response of intelligent comment on the Budget has recognised just that. It is a pity that others in this House cannot find it within themselves to admit it also. In the situation in which they find themselves, I suppose that can be expected.

The people of Queensland have every reason to be proud of the Government's economic and financial management record, a record that has enabled this State to establish and, more importantly, retain the highest possible credit-rating in the world's financial markets.

Therefore I commend the Bill to the House.

Mr WARBURTON (Sandgate—Leader of the Opposition) (12.26 p.m.): In addressing the Appropriation Bill, it is indeed sad to say that Queensland, under the misguided leadership of the National Party, ended the year 1985-86 in a way that causes me and, I know, many people in the community very deep concern. During the year there was a record deficit, a leap in public spending and a huge State debt.

The Queensland Government's economic management performance has recently been criticised in a report by the Premier's Department itself. The report entitled *Queensland Competing in a Changing World* slammed the performance of many of the State's quangos, arguing that the Government had received an abysmal return on its investment and that many quangos had few results to show after years of operation. Its main conclusion was that the Queensland Government had lost the opportunity that it had to develop and promote value-added industries based on Queensland's natural resources. That loss was ascribed to inappropriate taxation policies and incentives. The thousands upon thousands of phantom projects are testimony to that failure. Naturally, the report has been canned by the Government. It has been very deviously placed in the bottom drawer.

In addition, from my point of view, it is passing strange that the Queensland Confederation of Industry Ltd has not released its regular March and June quarter pulse surveys on Queensland business performance this year, which gives—and I am aware of the position—very poor projections for the Queensland economy. The June survey was, I am told, suppressed because it showed that 65 per cent of business in Queensland expected economic conditions to deteriorate over the next six months. That gloomy outlook for the Queensland economy and the continuing deterioration expected by business was apparently too much in an election year. It is my sincere hope that the Queensland Confederation of Industry has not succumbed to Government pressure to suppress the survey because of the coming election.

I want to take this opportunity, if I may, to correct something that I said yesterday in the Matters of Public Interest debate when I said that the honourable member for Nundah (Sir William Knox), when he was Minister for Employment, presided over the highest level of unemployment in Queensland since the Great Depression. My error was that I said that that occurred in February 1984. The real fact is that the honourable member presided over that horrific employment position in February 1983.

Earlier this week I predicted that the National Party would yet again use its numbers, based on its contempt for correct parliamentary procedures, to bring this parliamentary session to a close. All of us here have been witness to what today's newspapers properly describe as the National Party Government's contempt for the role of Parliament.

With our State's economy in tatters, mainly as a result of inaction and gross mismanagement by the National Party State Government, it is reasonable for Queenslanders, particularly our State's 112 500 jobless, to believe that this Parliament should apply itself in some way to the real needs of our State. But that is not to be the case; it never will be the case whilst there are people in our State who allow themselves to be persuaded to support the National Party by way of the persistent National Party diatribe that permeates throughout our State at public expense.

Fortunately for Queensland, much of what we thought to be the role of the National Party and could never quite bring to the surface has now emerged. To put it more appropriately—it has now erupted for all to see. I have said on a number of recent occasions that cronyism has been made an art form by the present Queensland National Party Government. As *The Australian Financial Review* so very aptly put the position recently, there is widespread concern that National Party antics are harming business efficiency, that investment decisions are being made not on grounds of commercial feasibility, but on the assumption that if a project gets into trouble, a mate in Government will help stop the rot.

The Australian Financial Review continued by saying that people hoping to expand their businesses, or get new projects off the ground—that does not include those who laud the State Government for being quick to waive red tape and remove unnecessary hurdles to help get their visionary projects up and away—are getting very peeved indeed that some seem to have friends at court and get unfair help.

The churning through of Bills in this Parliament, which are destined to become the laws of our State, is certainly not new; nor are the numerous Bills to amend rushed legislation that all honourable members know will most certainly follow. I can well recall

some very important stamp duty legislation being steam-rolled through the House in late November 1984 in similar circumstances to those that resulted from the disgraceful performance yesterday in this Parliament.

Stamp duty collections form a major part of State Government revenue—about \$365m this financial year. Maybe it was that huge figure that dazzled the Deputy Premier (Mr Gunn) into forcing through one of the most discriminatory pieces of legislation ever to hit the table of Parliament. The National Party Government gave selective stamp duty exemption to the owners of rural properties and certain businesses. If the owners decided to give or hand down the property to their children or grandchildren, it would be a tax-free transfer. It is now a tax-free transfer. That was considered to be a very commendable proposal until it was realised by many in this House that the tax relief stopped at the Gunns, the Petersens and other privileged property-owners. The elderly pensioner couples, who, for example, live in my electorate or in the electorates of my colleagues would dearly love to hand on in their lifetimes their humble homes to their children or grandchildren free of tax, were not included in this grand scheme.

If the Deputy Premier and the Premier, particularly with his extensive land-holdings, decide to hand down their properties, they pay no tax on the transfer, but the great majority of Queenslanders miss out on the benefits of this extraordinary, discriminatory and selective piece of legislation. In this place in November 1984 I said about people such as the Premier and the Deputy Premier—

“They are too fond of making life good for themselves. That is their whole philosophy in life. Their whole philosophy is to look after themselves and their friends.”

The point I make is this: not only is the power bestowed upon the Premier and his Ministers in this place by virtue of their being in Government used to foster cronyism away from this Parliament, as has been seen in recent times that cronyism has crept into Queensland legislation in the way I have just described.

It is no longer good enough for Ministers to give away “a lousy \$145,000”, to use the Premier’s words; nor is it good enough for the Premier to receive an extraordinary pay-out from the Bond Corporation, as he did earlier this year. This National Party Government now legislates to legally entrench tax benefits for itself and its mates.

I want to deal with small business, which is a sector that contributes significantly to the State’s economy. I believe that, contrary to what National Party members think, they are going to face a massive media attack by small business in the lead-up to the election. I will tell honourable members why. The attack will be led by the retail industry in respect to the Government’s atrocious record of fostering the proliferation of shopping centres and the havoc that it has brought to the town-planning and Local Government Court system through ill-conceived and biased changes to the Local Government Act and rules of the court. Small business will demand that the Government revoke the legislation giving the court open-ended power to award costs against appellants. This new law has already been used to blackmail small-business retailers to withdraw appeals against unwarranted shopping complexes.

Over the past six years, the Government has made promises to curb the rash of shopping centre developments. Not only has it failed to keep those promises, but it has also moved in the opposite direction and created laws that assist developers and deny the small-business sector the ability to seek justice in the courts. Last week-end the Premier had the absolute gall to announce the formation of a committee to investigate the shopping complex problem. It has been a problem for ages under this Government.

The fact is that small business is treating that move as a joke. One only has to consider who is on the committee—the Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing (Mr Hinze), who has been responsible for all the damaging amendments to the legislation; the member for Surfers Paradise (Mr Borbidge), a man whose attitude towards small-business retailers is well known through his support for deregulated trading hours and shopping complex development, a man who is hardly in the good books of

small business; and Mr Arthur Muhl, who is second-in-charge of the Local Government Department; a representative of BOMA, which is a developers' organisation; and a representative of the Queensland Retail Traders and Shopkeepers Association. That is four against one. No wonder this so-called investigating committee is being treated as a joke by the small-business community!

While this charade is going on, the Government continues to kick small business in this State in the face. I will cite two examples of that: ministerial rezoning of big shopping complexes at the Beenleigh Railway Station and ministerial rezoning for the Jaldale land at Bundall, including the scrapping of the flood mitigation channel. The latest news on that gem is that last Friday a meeting was called by the Minister for Local Government at the Gold Coast City Council, at which the engineers—can honourable members believe it—were made to toe the line and were gagged from making any comments on what would result in flood devastation to many areas of the Gold Coast—

Mr BORBIDGE: I rise to a point of order. The Leader of the Opposition is deliberately misleading the House. The engineers are considering the flood mitigation program. At that meeting it was indicated that the committee would accept their recommendations.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row): Order! I do not think there is any personal reflection. However, I will acknowledge that there has been an explanation from the member for Surfers Paradise.

Mr WARBURTON: As I said, those gentlemen were gagged from making any comments on what would be flood devastation to many areas of the Gold Coast through the scrapping of the flood channel on the Jaldale land. The report of the Local Government Department engineers, compiled in July this year, shows clearly that the Robina residential area faces flood catastrophe.

Of course, the Minister for Industry, Small Business and Technology (Mr Ahern) made a decision to exempt Keith Williams's Hamilton Island from the provisions of the Retail Shop Leases Act on the illogical grounds of a five-year licence being given to tenants. Any small-businessman knows that that is commercially useless and is just a blatant favour for one of the National Party cronies. I have been talking about cronyism. Everybody in this State is talking about National Party cronyism. A dangerous precedent has been set. It leaves the door open for a complete collapse of the Retail Shop Leases Act.

Queensland small business is well aware of the Government's track record of false promises and treacherous contempt of the priority issues affecting small business. It is a repeat of history. In the lead-up to the past two elections a rash of empty promises were made, but after the elections this Government proceeded to progressively dissociate itself from small business and shrink small business out of existence. I believe that this Government really does have a big surprise coming to it in the lead-up to the coming election. At this stage, small business has unshakeable contempt for the National Party and, hopefully, small business will use its enormous voting muscle in the ballot-box to oust the worst Government this State has ever had.

The parliamentary Labor Party in this House has, during 1986, exposed shortcomings, failures and inadequacies associated with the Bjelke-Petersen administration. The role of an Opposition is to probe the Government to identify those shortcomings and expose wrongdoings and improper practices. I believe very sincerely that the Opposition has fulfilled that role. It has accepted its responsibilities. The Opposition has exposed the public funds scandal, also known as the Callaghan affair. One person is in prison for having had her fingers in the till right under the Premier's nose. Another two are to stand trial for alleged misappropriation of public funds, this time right under the nose of that incompetent Minister for The Arts (Mr McKechnie). That of course has been followed by another scandal in his area of jurisdiction, about which I had to advise him. Then of course is the Behan "lousy" loan affair, as it has become known, when \$145,000

was directed to be advanced to a National Party officer at a National Party Minister's direction.

That leads me to a matter in which much more money is involved. It is true to say that those people fortunate enough to have hundreds of thousands of dollars to play with can increase their capital substantially by simply placing it in a bank. If one had enough money to be deposited in a merchant bank—such as Partnership Pacific Ltd, for example—the money could earn about 17 per cent. In fact, information I have received from a merchant bank source is that on the 7 April 1986 an amount of \$400,835.62 was deposited with merchant bankers Partnership Pacific Ltd. I emphasise that amount—\$400,835.62.

I am advised that that particular amount was placed with the merchant bank by a company called Ciasom Pty Ltd. Would you believe it, Mr Deputy Speaker? As members of this House would be aware, Ciasom Pty Ltd is a Bjelke-Petersen family company. May I suggest through you, Mr Deputy Speaker, that such information could be of assistance to the Australian Broadcasting Tribunal?

As honourable members would also be aware, notice was given in the Supreme Court of Queensland on 2 April this year that the Premier's defamation action against Channel 9, owned by the Bond Corporation, had been dropped. I might add, for those interested in a touch of irony, that the principal office of Partnership Pacific Ltd is 60 Martin Place, Sydney, which just happens to be the principal location of Dawson Waldron, the Bond Corporation solicitors. The question naturally arises: Was this simply a case of walking down the passageway and handing over the cheque?

Mr Hinze: Super-sleuth Warburton.

Mr WARBURTON: That is right.

On numerous occasions the Premier has had an opportunity—I say this very seriously—in this House to come clean on the matter, but he has refused to do so. I conclude by saying—and again I say it very, very seriously—that as a result of the revelations that I have made today the Premier and his Government should resign.

Hon. R. J. HINZE (South Coast—Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing) (12.44 p.m.): I do not wish to take up much time, as there are many members who wish to speak to the Bill.

I want to put the record straight in regard to the meeting that took place at the Gold Coast City Council's chambers and at which the Leader of the Opposition alleged that engineers were gagged. That statement is contrary to the facts.

As honourable members would realise, for some months during the past year I was hospitalised. However, at the first available opportunity, I invited the mayor of the Gold Coast and interested bodies to a meeting at the Gold Coast City Council chambers to try to clear up the concern that had been expressed about the flood plains in the Nerang River area. A meeting was held with representatives from the council, the Government, the race club, engineers from the Local Government Department, and the members representing the area, Mr Borbidge and Mr Jennings. The outcome of that meeting was that engineers would submit proposals for work that may be considered necessary in future to eliminate any concern about the flood plains.

Mr Borbidge: The engineers actually spoke at a public meeting on Sunday about the flood mitigation plans.

Mr HINZE: I am trying to put the record straight.

As I am the member for the area, and as honourable members know that a flood area has resulted from canal development over many years, and having been in the area in 1974 when floods occurred, I would be the last person to do anything to make floods any worse in the future.

The engineers have said that there are three or four ways of relieving the problem in that area. The recommendations made to the Government and to the council will be considered.

Some people have referred to the eastern canal. The creation of that canal was never intended. Those people who know something about the area would know that originally it was a borrow pit. The race club took fill from that area to build up its race-track. Although the area looks like a canal, it is not; it is land that is owned by the race club. Fill was taken from that area to raise the level of the race-track. Anyone who believes that the eastern canal was constructed for the purpose of flood mitigation should be told the facts.

Although the Leader of the Opposition is laughing, I think that he is only laughing because of his ignorance. Perhaps someone has told him a cockatoo story, which he so readily believes.

The matter is in good hands. Officers of the various organisations are considering proposals. Before any further work takes place, those proposals will be considered. I assure the people who reside on the flood plains situated behind the proposed works that they have nothing to fear from the Government, the council or the race club.

Debate interrupted.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Hon. N. E. LEE (Yeronga) (12.48 p.m.), by leave: Yesterday, the honourable member for Balonne (Mr Neal) in an intemperate outburst on the Liberal members in this Chamber told many untruths about my party. However, there is one particular matter with which I wish to deal.

The honourable member claimed that on 15 July I made approaches to join the National Party and that I demanded that I be made a Minister. That statement is totally untrue and without foundation. In fact, when it was reported in the *Daily Sun* that I had joined the National Party, I served a writ on Mirror Newspapers and an apology was printed.

The fact is that I have never made an approach to the National Party or to any person connected with the National Party. The statement attributed to me by the honourable member is offensive, untruthful and objectionable to me. That is why I wish to have that untruth corrected.

APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 2)

Second Reading—Resumption of Debate

Mr GOSS: Mr Deputy Speaker—

Mr HENDERSON: Mr Deputy Speaker—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row): Order! I call the honourable member for Mount Gravatt.

Mr DAVIS: I rise to a point of order.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! It is entirely within my prerogative to determine who speaks. I have called the honourable member for Mount Gravatt.

Mr Davis: I will rip the bloody list up, then, if that is the way you are operating.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Brisbane Central has used offensive language in the House. I warn him under Standing Order No. 123A.

Mr Davis: Thank goodness this is the end of the session!

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I have warned the honourable member under Standing Order No. 123A. I understood what he said from the movement of his lips. I now ask him to leave the Chamber.

Whereupon the honourable member for Brisbane Central withdrew from the Chamber.

Mr HENDERSON (Mount Gravatt) (12.50 p.m.): I consider that the expenditure of money on the parliamentary process of this State is one of the most sacred of all expenditures, because the Parliament is the watch-dog of the people.

I was interested to read the headlines in today's *Daily Sun* which stated, "Uproar As Joh Gags House". The article commences—

"Amid calls that Parliament was a cesspool, the State Government last night slashed debate to ram through 12 Bills before the House rises."

That is an absolute and blatant lie!

It is also interesting to note that in *The Courier-Mail* this morning the very same incident has been reported correctly. The headlines read, "MPs angered by gag on four Bills". The fact of the matter is that 12 Bills were not rushed through this House last night. Therefore, the *Daily Sun* owes this House an apology. The statement made in the *Daily Sun* is an absolute lie. However, *The Courier-Mail* was able to correctly state the facts.

The article in the *Daily Sun* continued—

"It passed a motion to gag debate on each Bill to an hour."

That is also a blatant lie. This Parliament did not pass any such resolution whatsoever. In fact, the debates on those Bills began at 3.37 p.m. and were completed at 10 p.m. There is no excuse whatsoever for that type of statement.

The editorial in the *Daily Sun* contained the comment that the Queensland Parliament has become—

"... one of the most frenetic sausage machines in the Westminster system."

That is another blatant lie. An examination of the statistics and an analysis of the performance of Australian Parliaments show clearly that that statement cannot be substantiated in any way whatsoever. The Leader of the House pointed that out this morning.

I turn now to some statistics, compiled by the Parliamentary Library, which show that that statement is untrue. I take great pride in the performance of this Parliament, and I get sick and tired of reading such statements, because they are simply a fantasy of the minds of distorted individuals who attempt to defame both me and the Parliament of Queensland.

I now wish to cite the figures for the number of sitting days that each Parliament of Australia sat during the 18 months from 1 January 1985 to the middle of this year. The House of Representatives sat for approximately 109 days. The New South Wales Parliament sat for 69 days. In Victoria, the Parliament sat for 65 days; in South Australia, 43 days; and in Queensland for 61 days. As the Leader of the House pointed out this morning, to claim that the Queensland Parliament is the shortest-sitting Parliament in Australia is a blatant lie. That statement is not substantiated by any statistics whatsoever.

Mr FitzGerald: Figment of his imagination.

Mr HENDERSON: Yes, it is a figment of someone's imagination. The repetition of that lie by those newspapers that purport to tell the truth is totally unjustified.

Returning to the assertion of a sausage machine, I wish to mention the number of Bills that were passed by each House during that same 18-month period. The House of Representatives passed 327 Bills. In New South Wales, 328 Bills were passed. In Victoria, 150 Bills were passed. In South Australia the figure was 78; and in Queensland, 142 Bills were passed.

A critical examination of those statistics reveals that in New South Wales 328 Bills were passed in 69 days. In Queensland, 142 Bills were passed in 61 days. That figure represents less than half the total number of Bills that were passed through the New South Wales Parliament during the same period. The House of Representatives passed 327 Bills in 109 days.

Yesterday, honourable members witnessed the pious harping of the Opposition and the Liberal Party in relation to the application of the gag, and the gagging of Parliament.

I point out to the Parliament, readers of *Hansard* and people in the gallery that, when the Liberal Party was in coalition with the National Party, time and time again it was a party to gagging debates. How its members can wring their hands like Pontius Pilate and claim that they would never do a thing like that is the ultimate in hypocrisy.

I asked how many times the guillotine was applied to debates in each House. In the House of Representatives, 49 Bills were guillotined. In New South Wales, that occurred nine times. In Victoria, it occurred 18 times. In South Australia, it was not used. In Queensland, it was applied six times over an 18-month period. That puts to rest once and for all the lie that has been paraded in the media and the Parliament about the application of the gag in this House.

I also asked how many times Standing Orders were suspended to allow the passage of Bills through all stages in less time than that normally permitted by the Standing Orders between the first and final readings. That question arises because the Opposition and the Liberals claimed in the Parliament yesterday that they did not have time to consult the people and their constituents who would be affected by the Bills.

The House of Representatives has an enviable record, because that has not occurred. In New South Wales, 145 Bills that came before the Legislative Assembly were declared urgent and were rushed through the House in less time than that normally permitted by Standing Orders.

Sir William Knox: It was not a case of urgency with any of those Bills yesterday.

Mr HENDERSON: I will return to the honourable member for Nundah shortly. They call him "two bob Bill", and he is appropriately named.

In South Australia, it is standard practice to suspend Standing Orders to enable the third reading to immediately follow the Committee stages.

In Queensland, Standing Orders were suspended to allow a Bill to pass through its remaining stages in one day on seven occasions, and all stages in one day on one occasion. The debate was closed on two occasions. That makes a total of 10 occasions on which Standing Orders were suspended. Once again, that statistic puts the Opposition's argument to rest.

I further asked how many times cognate debates were allowed. In Parliaments in Australia today, so many Bills have to be passed that many cannot be debated individually. They are put together in what are called Bill packages and discussed in a cognate debate. That means that any member of the Parliament can speak on any one of the Bills, or all of them.

In the House of Representatives, 213 Bills were bundled together in 66 cognate debates. In New South Wales, the practice of conducting cognate debates is now the usual procedure of the House. It has so much business to get through that it does not debate the Bills individually. In Victoria, a cognate debate was allowed on only one occasion. But in Queensland and South Australia, in the past 18 months and, indeed, in the time that I have been in Parliament, there have never been any cognate debates on any Bills. That means that each Bill is debated individually and fully.

I further asked how many times Ministers tabled speeches for incorporation in *Hansard* without reading them to the House. Today Australian Parliaments are becoming correspondence Parliaments. In other words, members do not read their speeches at all. They simply table them in the House and say, "If you are interested enough, read them."

They are incorporated in *Hansard*. That is not permitted in the House of Representatives or in Queensland. In New South Wales, it occurred on 17 occasions. In South Australia, Ministers and members who introduce Bills generally seek leave—and inevitably do so—to incorporate second-reading speeches in *Hansard* without reading them to the Parliament.

Mr Gunn: It is shocking.

Mr HENDERSON: It is shocking, yes. They cannot even be bothered to debate an issue. They simply table the speech and say, "Let it be printed in *Hansard*."

Mr Gunn: They haven't got a democratic Government left there.

Mr HENDERSON: Quite true.

I further asked how many times Bills were passed without debate? Surely, the ultimate condemnation of a parliamentary system and of democracy is when a Government does not permit debate on a Bill. In the Queensland Parliament, the House of Representatives and the South Australian Legislative Assembly that has never occurred. But in New South Wales the Labor Government has such contemptuous disregard for democracy and Parliament that on two occasions Ministers delivered their second-reading speeches and the Parliament was immediately gagged and the Bills passed. In Victoria, on one occasion there was no debate.

Mr Borbidge: Passed without debate?

Mr HENDERSON: Yes, passed without debate. It is disgusting. It is the Labor Party, that great advocate of liberty, freedom of speech and other things, that is doing that in the New South Wales Parliament. It is despicable and disgraceful. How those people can piously stand up in the Parliament and preach democracy, when they do things like that, surely stretches one's imagination to the ultimate limit.

Sitting suspended from 1 to 2.15 p.m.

Mr HENDERSON: Before the luncheon recess, I presented to the Parliament irrefutable, objective evidence that suggests that the front page of this morning's *Daily Sun* contains a story that is little more than unmitigated lies. I believe that it amounts to defamation of the Queensland Parliament and contempt for its readers. I suggest that the *Daily Sun* should show some nous and grace, and back down; it should admit its mistakes.

I have been gravely concerned about the comments made by members of the Liberal Party in advertising during the campaign leading up to the State election. I want to examine the available material in the light of past actions that have been taken by that party in this Parliament and other Parliaments throughout Australia. When the evidence is examined, it is difficult not to conclude that the election advertising of the Liberal Party amounts to double standards.

Advertisements have been placed in a local paper and in other newspapers by the Liberal Party, implying that the recent increase in the size of the Queensland Parliament was agreed to by the Australian Labor Party and the National Party. The advertisements give the impression that the party that voted against the increase in size was the Liberal Party. Members of the Liberal Party have tried to convince the electorate that they have adopted a policy of small government. The staff of the Parliamentary Library researched the redistributions and the increases in representation that have occurred.

During the time that Queensland was governed by a Country-Liberal coalition, and, finally, a National-Liberal coalition three redistributions took place. The first came into effect on 28 May 1960. As a result, the Parliament was increased by three members and the Liberal Party voted for that increase. Then followed an election that was won by the Country-Liberal coalition, which held 44 of the 78 seats. On 27 May 1972, another election was held with an increased representation of an additional four seats. Again, I remind honourable members that the Liberal Party voted in favour of the increase.

Mr Hamill: And they voted for the zonal system.

Mr HENDERSON: That is right. Members of the Liberal party voted for the zonal system, too.

On 12 November 1977, an election was held based on redistributed boundaries. It resulted in no increase in the number of electorates. It is interesting to note that the boundaries were fiddled generally in the south-east corner of Queensland. That was done principally at the request of the Liberal Party.

The honourable member for Mansfield (Mr Kaus) represented an electorate that was altered with a view to shoring up the electorate of Mount Gravatt for the Liberal candidate. It is interesting to note that the honourable member for Mansfield was subsequently blamed for the loss of 14 per cent of support for the Liberal Party in his electorate, although that 14 per cent had been taken away from him by virtue of the redistribution and alteration of the boundaries.

It is also interesting to note that during any period of Government by the Liberal Party, the size of the State Parliaments has been increased. Since World War II the Liberal Party has held the record for increasing the size of Parliaments.

Mr Gunn: They are frauds.

Mr HENDERSON: That is right. The master-mind was Thomas Playford, the former Liberal Premier of South Australia. I do not know why the term "gerrymander" is used; it should be called a "Playford-mander" because Playford would have been the world's greatest expert at redistribution.

Mr Gunn: "Corkscrew Tom" they called him.

Mr HENDERSON: That is right.

When I read propaganda from the Liberal Party that states that the Liberal Party does not believe in increasing the size of Parliaments, I realise that its actions do not match the statements. I am therefore forced to conclude that members of the Liberal Party are hypocrites.

Mr Borbidge: They have advocated increased staffing for members of Parliament, so they must believe in an increase in the number of public servants but not an increase in the number of parliamentarians.

Mr HENDERSON: That is true. I noticed that they advocated in this Parliament an increase in the number of quangos to include a health commission and so on.

The honourable member for Ipswich mentioned that the Liberal Party has embraced the zonal system and voted for every redistribution that has taken place in Queensland. Because members of the Liberal Party are no longer part of the Government, they have washed their hands as though they are Pontius Pilate. They claim that they do not want to have anything to do with an increase in representation, but their track record shows that they have agreed to the operation of the zonal system.

Mr Borbidge: It must be a matter of principle.

Mr HENDERSON: It must be a matter of principle, all right; but it is strange how principles alter when the Liberal Party is not in Government. The Australian National Opinion Poll that will be published tomorrow will probably shock them.

Members of the Liberal Party are masquerading in the community as the disciples of lower tax levels. When the National Party Government wanted to abolish death duties, who was it that mounted a rearguard action and fought the proposal every inch of the way? It was none other than the Liberal Party, despite the fact that there could be no more immoral tax than death duties.

When the National Party wanted to abolish road taxes, who was it that fought their abolition every inch of the way? The Liberal Party, and particularly the then Liberal

leader, Sir Gordon Chalk. The Liberal Party did not want to have a bar of it. When the National Party wanted to do something positive about reducing the tax burden on people, who was it who opposed it? The Liberal Party.

Let us think a little bit about the fringe benefits tax. Who was the first person in Australia to attempt to introduce a fringe benefits tax? It was none other than the Liberal Leader, John Howard, when he came up to Queensland in the 1970s to try to force the coal-miners, teachers, policemen and so on to pay tax on their residences.

Mr Borbidge: They were advocating a consumer tax.

Mr HENDERSON: That is right, a consumer tax. I find it interesting that on the Business Paper, under the heading, General Business—Orders of the Day, appears the following motion moved by the Liberal Party—

“That this House rejects and condemns the Federal ALP Socialist Government Fringe Benefit Tax on the following grounds:—

- (1) That it is an iniquitous anti-social Payroll Tax.
- (2) Destroys harmonious relations between Employer and Employee.
- (3) Increases unemployment.
- (4) Creates inordinate administrative costs, both for the Government and private enterprise.
- (5) Has confused thousands of law abiding Australian taxpayers who now run the risk of unwittingly breaking the law.”

What the Liberal Party forgot to add is—

- (6) The Liberal Party apologises to the people of Queensland for having the gall and the hide to advance such a tax in the first place.

Of course, that would be too much.

I will now make some comments about quangos. The Liberal Party is running around the place saying that it is going to get its hook into all the quangos in Queensland and all the rest of it. Again it is interesting that when the Liberal Party was in the coalition Government, it was enthusiastically embracing the establishment of quangos all over Queensland. Many of the quangos that exist today can be traced back to portfolios that were administered by Liberal Ministers. So much for the Liberal Party's so-called opposition to quangos!

One of the interesting things that I have read in the press concerns third-party insurance. A lot of people are critical in their claims that Queensland has the highest third-party insurance rates in Australia. That is a blatant untruth. I was rather interested to read a letter in *The Australian Financial Review* of 4 July 1986, written by the president of the Queensland Law Society, Mr D. M. Byrne. Mr Byrne's letter says—

“Sir, I refer to your article ‘Third party costs run out of control’ (AFR, June 20), in which you highlight the problems facing the Victorian and NSW third-party insurance schemes.”

Further on in that letter he says—

“Queensland has a common law system which is fully funded, solvent and viable.

Our scheme has as its aim the proposition that victims of road accidents should be compensated for their injuries with awards that will reinstate them—insofar as money can—to the position they were in before being injured through the negligence of another.

Queensland is living proof that the common law system can and does work.

The common law system cannot be blamed for the massive deficits facing the Victorian and NSW third-party insurance schemes and the tax payers of those States.

The Governments of those States must shoulder that responsibility squarely. They have continuously opted for a politically attractive solution rather than face economic reality.

The sound economic option is to raise premiums to ensure the generation of sufficient funds to pay claims.

The politically expedient option is the maintenance of unrealistically low premiums with a consequent diminution of the level of compensation.

The Queensland Government has always bitten the bullet and accepted this basic economic truth."

The letter further states—

"To remove the right of access to a court and put in its place an assessment procedure by a government officer, possibly a political appointee, is to surrender in one hit rights which the community has cherished for generations."

I also find interesting an article in *The Australian* of 19 March 1986 dealing with third-party insurance in New South Wales. The article points out that last year the Government Insurance Office in New South Wales recorded a landmark deficit of \$111m in compensation payments made under the scheme. The article also said that this year the Wran Government was determined not to let that happen again. The New South Wales Government has come up with some radical proposals.

On Saturday, 14 June 1986, *The Sydney Morning Herald* published an article about third-party insurance. Contained in that article were the third party insurance rates for the respective States. For example, the annual cost of insuring a six-cylinder vehicle—I think that is the correct vehicle—in New South Wales is \$213; in the Australian Capital Territory, \$235; in Queensland, \$168; in Victoria, \$210; and in the Northern Territory, \$174. So Queensland rates very, very well.

Mr FitzGerald: And no petrol tax.

Mr HENDERSON: That is right, Queensland does not have a petrol tax. I notice that it is a Liberal Government—in Tasmania—that has the highest petrol tax in Australia—7.5c per litre!

Mr Clauson: Do you remember in 1972 when everyone had stickers on their cars that read, "Vote Labor. Stop the petrol rip-off"?

Mr HENDERSON: Yes. They have been in hard labour ever since.

The *Telegraph* of Tuesday, 2 September 1986, contained a most interesting article. All honourable members know that the Victorian third-party scheme is \$1.3 billion in debt. The Victorian Premier (Mr Cain) recognises that he has to bite the bullet. He has warned Victorian motorists that compulsory third-party insurance premiums may have to increase to \$500 a year. That is disgraceful.

I have already pointed out that the Liberal Party's claims on the size of Government and the redistribution are examples of hypocrisy. I have dealt with the Liberal claims about low taxes. I have pointed out that the Liberals opposed the abolition of death duties and the abolition of road taxes. The Liberals were the first to move for a fringe benefits tax. The Liberal claims on third-party insurance in Queensland are false. The pious claims of the Liberals about reducing the number of quangos does not bear critical scrutiny.

I find it interesting that the Liberals have now proposed a solution to unemployment in Queensland. I reiterate what the Leader of the Opposition reminded the House earlier today, that is, the current leader of the Liberal Party (Sir William Knox) while Minister for Employment presided over the highest rate of unemployment recorded in Queensland since the Great Depression—11.5 per cent. The Liberals did not have the solution in February 1983 when the member for Nundah (Sir William Knox) was the Minister for Employment; they do not have the solution today. Anyone who believes that the Liberals have the solution to unemployment is gravely deluding himself.

I find it interesting also that in the debate on the Appropriation Bill (No. 1) in this House in early August, the leader of the Liberal Party (Sir William Knox) said that most of the problems impacting the Queensland economy were beyond the control of the Queensland Government and that the most that the State Government could do was cushion them. However, his public utterances are an absolute denial of that statement, because he sheets the blame home entirely to the Queensland Government. Either he misled the House when he made that statement or he is lying in public. I leave it to the people of Queensland to make their own decision on that.

In the Fourty-fourth Parliament the Liberals have supported the National Party Government in less than 50 per cent of all divisions that have been held, yet they say they want to get back into coalition. I know that they twist and turn, trying to justify their voting patterns in the Parliament, but the most absurd thing I have ever heard in my life is the inane prattling of Mr Gary Neat that the Liberals have voted with the Government more than 3 000 times. I wish to set the record straight. What Mr Neat is saying is that every time the House wants to suspend sittings for lunch, adjourn for the evening so that we can all go to bed, receive petitions, allow Ministers to make statements and so on, for which the permission of the House is sought, the Liberals have supported the motions—but so has the Labor Party and every Independent in this Parliament. On the basis of Mr Neat's comments, one can safely say that not only have the Liberals voted with the Government on more than 3 000 occasions in this Parliament, but so has the Labor Opposition.

Mr Borbidge: Mr Neat has tunnel vision.

Mr HENDERSON: Yes, he does. Perhaps we should call him "Mr Bleat" and be done with it.

It is very interesting that Mr Neat continues his bleating about those more than 3 000 occasions that the Liberals supported the Government.

Mr Yewdale: Do you think the Liberals will worry you?

Mr HENDERSON: No, they will not worry us at all.

Mr Borbidge: The honourable member won't like tomorrow's opinion poll, either.

Mr HENDERSON: No, he will not. That will bring home to him the mess that the Labor Party is in.

In looking back through the records of this Parliament, one of the things I find interesting is the way in which quite a number of Liberals consistently criticise the Government over its firm approach, for example, to street-march legislation, amendments to the Justices Act and so on. I remind the House that they were all proposed by Liberal Ministers. They were embraced by the National Party, approved by Cabinet and subsequently passed by the House. Once again, that is an interesting contradiction between what the Liberals say and what they do.

In this Parliament we have heard their untruths on tertiary funding, special schools, bankruptcies, construction of dwellings, motor vehicle registration and so on, all of which figure prominently in their advertising. All of that has been exposed for what it is—lies! That is exactly what is happening today. The Liberal Party believes that it will lie its way into Government by telling half-truths and so on.

It is interesting that in every instance when the Liberal Party is caught out telling untruths or when its record is put under scrutiny, it does not stand up to the test. Members of the Liberal Party do not appear as the great disciples of liberty, truth and so on.

Mr Borbidge interjected.

Mr HENDERSON: That is probably right.

I remind the House of some of the comments made yesterday by the Leader of the Opposition about the Liberal Party. I am disposed to believe that what he said may in fact have been close to the truth.

Today something made me feel rather sad. I will speak briefly about it. Just prior to retiring from the New South Wales Parliament, Neville Wran expressed the view that perhaps the greatest threat to freedom that exists in society today is the misuse of parliamentary privilege. In particular, he commented that the stage has now been reached at which it is no longer required that a person be proved guilty; that the onus of proof has been reversed so that a person is required to prove himself or herself innocent. Of course, that is very true of what has happened in this Parliament.

I heard the Leader of the Opposition boast in this Chamber about how the Labor Party had exposed this and exposed that. Not one of the so-called scandals that the Labor Party has raised in this House has come to any fruition. A matter that the Opposition referred to as a scandal was already being investigated by the Government agencies responsible and, as a result of those investigations, people were prosecuted.

I prophesy this afternoon in this House that the Leader of the Opposition will never become Premier of this State. He will not survive the next election. The countless hundreds of innocent Queenslanders whose reputations and actions have been defamed by him in this House will remember that to the day they die, and will haunt the Labor Party for ever and a day. Those tactics may have been suitable when the Leader of the Opposition was an ETU official; they are not suitable tactics in a Parliament in Australia.

It must be accepted that an individual is innocent until proven guilty. Parliament cannot usurp the role of the courts of law. I find it interesting that often the accusations made in Parliament, under the cover of parliamentary privilege, are not made out on the street, as a result of which they could be tested by an independent court of law. The stage has been reached in Australia at which parliamentary privilege and the ways in which individuals are able to defend themselves against onslaughts in Parliament should be considered carefully.

In conclusion, I suggest the *Daily Sun* should be reported to the Press Council of Australia for purposely printing an untrue article. If that happens, the outcome will be very, very interesting indeed.

I commend the Premier on his leadership, and I commend the Government on its management of Queensland. The National Party will be returned to Government after the election, and I look forward to being a part of that Government.

Mr GOSS (Salisbury) (2.34 p.m.): First of all, I want to refute the latter comments made by the previous speaker. It is an absolute joke to say that matters raised in this Parliament by the Opposition never come to fruition and are never proven.

Only last week I made a number of serious allegations about the Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing (Mr Hinze) and backed up each of those allegations with documents—documents signed personally by the Minister. Those documents demonstrated, for example, that the Minister had a personal liability to relocate the Oxenford-Tamborine road, a liability under a development agreement that he never disclosed to this House when he made an answer last year, a development agreement and a course of conduct by him which, in the final analysis, led to a benefit to him of \$500,000.

That is a serious allegation. As I have said, it was backed up. Yet, in a demonstration of the contempt that this Government has for this Parliament, the Minister did not even bother to enter the House to respond. If there was an innocent explanation, and if the claims made were spurious, the response could have and should have been prompt and swift. It was not. The failure of the Minister for Local Government to respond was the action of a guilty man.

Mr Veivers: Does silence mean guilt?

Mr GOSS: In this case what are the public expected to think when there is no response? That is the only conclusion they can come to in the absence of a defence being raised by the person in question, a defence to the charge that the Minister has profited to the extent of \$500,000 by means of the use of tax-payers' money. The checks and balances that exist in other places simply do not exist in Queensland. Queensland has no public accounts committee and over the last couple of weeks there has been no opportunity to question Ministers. That is a situation that will lead to even more abuses of the kind that have already occurred.

Mr Borbidge: If the deputy leader of your party had not called for a division, you would have had question-time today.

Mr GOSS: That is absurd. This is typical of the superficial and cynical response from the honourable member for Surfers Paradise (Mr Borbidge) that this House hears all the time. That kind of response misleads the public and the House. Look at the absurd statements made by the clone himself and other Ministers, both in prepared ministerial statements and in answers to so-called questions without notice.

The most ludicrous example of that was when the Deputy Premier gave two answers to one question from the honourable member for Aspley (Mr Cahill). The Deputy Premier did not realise that he had finished his first answer and had moved on to his second. He is supposed to be the second top gun in the National Party Government. Heaven help the National Party! The National Party is on the way out because when it comes to the Cabinet and the back bench, the Deputy Premier and the honourable member for Aspley have demonstrated that they are on a par. The Deputy Premier is the Cabinet's answer to the honourable member for Aspley and the members of the National Party know it. The Deputy Premier should have seen them laughing at him the other day when he mucked up the answers to the Dorothy Dix questions that he had prepared. He handed them out and he could not even handle his own script.

Mr FitzGerald: Haven't you got a speech today?

Mr GOSS: Yes, and the honourable member for Lockyer—I am speaking to the fox-terrier of the Government back benches—is about to hear it.

I want to refer to the Minister for Local Government's deliberately misleading the House. I refer to *Erskine May—Parliamentary Practice*. Most Government members probably have never heard of this book, or, if they have, they pay very little regard to it. I refer to page 149 of the 1983 edition where a number of references are made to Ministers or members deliberately misleading the House. It states—

“The House may treat the making of a deliberately misleading statement as a contempt.”

The famous precedent that is cited is the 1963 case of Profumo where the House resolved as follows—

“. . . that in making a personal statement which contained words which he later admitted not to be true, a former Member had been guilty of a grave contempt.”

I refer to the *House of Representatives Practice 1981* edited by J. A. Pettifer and to the examples given there of ministerial resignations for other than personal reasons based on individual or collective ministerial responsibility and accountability to Parliament. One example, which is regarded as a proper example of calling for such resignation, is where somebody misleads the Prime Minister or, through him, misleads the Parliament. I believe that situation to be on a par with what has happened here. It states—

“Although there is no constitutional distinction between resignation and dismissal, reasons for ministerial dismissal would be more expected to concern questions of ministerial responsibility and accountability.”

On page 654 in regard to deliberately misleading the House, there is further reference to the Profumo case and the author goes on to say—

“The circumstances surrounding the decision of the House of Commons in Profumo’s case are of importance because of the guidance provided in cases of purported ‘misrepresentation’ by members. Mr Profumo had sought the opportunity of making a personal statement to the House of Commons to deny the truth of allegations currently being made against him. Later he was forced to admit that in making his personal statement of denial to the House, he had deliberately misled the House. As a consequence of his actions, he resigned from the House which subsequently agreed to a resolution declaring him guilty of a grave contempt.”

The attitude to questions and allegations of impropriety by the Minister for Local Government is one of contempt for the Parliament and for the people. The latest allegations are sufficiently serious to warrant a reply, particularly because of the documents which were tabled and which supported those allegations. The defence, if one exists, should be prompt and swift. There was no defence. That leads one to believe that the allegations are proved and that the Minister has something to hide.

In the past, when allegations have been made, in all instances a response had to be forced out of the Minister. One of those instances on which the response was forced out of the Minister was on 15 October last year. The Minister read a prepared statement in answer to serious allegations made by the member for Ipswich (Mr Hamill). Those allegations were made six days before the Minister made his statement, so there was plenty of time for careful consideration of the matter. A response was forced out of the Minister by the pressure of the press and the public who were clamouring for an explanation.

To refer back to the Profumo case—it was stressed that the person concerned had sought the opportunity of making a personal statement to the House of Commons to deny the truth of allegations being made against him. That is what the Minister for Local Government did. Like Profumo, the Minister in this instance deliberately misled the House. That has been proved by the documents that were tabled last week.

Before dealing with two new aspects of the activities of this person in the Albert shire, I want to make reference to a statement by Mr Bjelke-Petersen, as he then was, in this Chamber on 4 December 1968, when he took very seriously the suggestion that he had misled the House. His explanation or excuse in a debate on the suggested appointment of a committee of privilege is reported in *Hansard* on page 2053. The Premier said—

“There is no dispute that in answer to a question asked in this House on a matter for which I have ministerial responsibility, statements were made to the House that were not true in fact. On further inquiries arising out of a subsequent question on a later date, the true facts were discovered. The House was informed forthwith of the matter. Although I was unwittingly involved in wrongly informing the House, I was at the time in no way personally responsible.”

That is quite different to the response from the Minister for Local Government. He has not entered the Chamber to defend himself. If he has misled the House, it is a case for a resignation or a dismissal. No response has been made by the Premier or the Minister. They both stand condemned for their failure to respond.

The activity on the part of the Minister demonstrates the need for a code of conduct in this State and the need for a register of pecuniary interests to be held by the Clerk of the Parliament. Other aspects of the code of conduct should include: firstly, Ministers divesting themselves of shares in public companies; secondly, divesting themselves of decision-making in family companies—that would particularly have an effect on the Minister for Local Government, who should perhaps be described as the Minister for Hinze family companies; thirdly, to declare to Cabinet any matters likely to cause a conflict of interests, which the Minister did not do in the case of the TAB agency; and, fourthly, to accept the Westminster system of collective responsibility—which is something that is badly needed in this State.

Before dealing with two new aspects of activities in the Albert shire, I want to deal briefly with the comments I made last week and the failure of the Minister to respond to them. I want to demonstrate how this House was deliberately misled and how important omissions were made on two occasions. Important facts were denied to the House when the Minister was answering allegations made by the member for Ipswich. Firstly, I stress the importance of the Minister's covering the tracks of the people involved in relocating the Oxenford-Tamborine road and shifting the cost for that from the person concerned, who had a personal liability, to the tax-payer.

Crucial in this matter is the origin—the very start—of moves to relocate the Oxenford-Tamborine road. The starting-point of the move to relocate the road was in 1975, when a development agreement was signed between R. J. Hinze and the Albert Shire Council whereby R. J. Hinze was liable 100 per cent to relocate that road at no cost to the Albert Shire Council. The benefits that flowed to the Minister from that agreement were twofold: firstly, the ministerial rezoning of the land from rural to extractive; and secondly, the gravel operations, which have resulted in considerable benefit to the Minister and his family. Those gravel operations were sold to Farley and Lewers during 1976.

In this House on 15 October 1985, the Minister made a ministerial statement in which he claimed that when he sold the rights to Farley and Lewers it was "long before any proposal to relocate the road". That statement was clearly untrue, but it was not a slip of the tongue because the Minister was reading from a prepared speech.

The Minister went on to say that in June 1979 the engineers of the Albert Shire Council, Cameron, McNamara and Partners, made the first suggestion to relocate the Oxenford-Tamborine road.

The Minister then stated that the second step in the process was a conference in August 1981 between those engineers, representatives of the Main Roads Department—of which he was the Minister—and the Albert Shire Council. The Minister also stated that the first preliminary proposal was formulated in December 1982. That was also untrue, and that is the reason why I claim that this House has been deliberately and seriously misled.

How can the Minister claim that, when he sold the rights in 1976, it was long before any proposal to relocate the road? The very year before that he had signed an agreement to relocate that road himself at his own cost. The Minister's statement was clearly calculated to give the impression that the idea for and responsibility of relocating the road came from elsewhere and at a much later time. That statement was designed to hide the Minister's liability and to hide the fact that that liability had been transferred to the tax-payers. Does the Minister suggest that he forgot; that he simply happened to overlook the fact that he had signed a legal agreement that promised the relocation of the road? I do not believe that the people of Queensland would accept that. One does not sign an agreement to relocate an entire road and then somehow forget about it.

The Minister failed to disclose both the 1975 agreement and the 1982 agreement. However, it was important—from the Minister's point of view—to cover up those agreements, because the 1982 agreement purported to bring about an agreement between the Minister and the council whereby the Main Roads Department agreed to contribute towards the cost of the road. When the Minister signed that development agreement in 1982, he was aware that his engineers had met with council and departmental officers in an endeavour to formulate that very same proposal. However, where was the declaration of that interest when the Minister gave his response? How can honourable members believe an explanation from a Minister when it omits such important facts and misleads them? How can honourable members trust such a Minister?

The essence of the allegations was that those activities occurred for the purpose of obtaining a benefit for the Minister and/or his family company.

The honourable member for Ipswich (Mr Hamill) pointed out that one of the clear benefits to the Minister was the more efficient operation of the quarrying activities. The

Minister's own engineers, Burchill and Partners, admitted that that was the case. Another benefit to the Minister is the reduction in the cost of relocating the road from 100 per cent to 30 per cent, representing a benefit of half a million dollars.

I now turn to a further benefit to the Minister. The position, as I understand it, is that the Minister's company, Maralinga Pty Ltd, has applied to close the old section of that road. I also understand that that section of road will then be transferred to Maralinga Pty Ltd at a nominal cost. In other words, a further benefit to the Minister is that he gets the land, the road and, undoubtedly, the opportunity to quarry that area of land. Therefore, that represents three benefits to the Minister—not one!

If there is nothing wrong with what the Minister has done, why did he not give this House the full details of the closure of that road? I believe that the public are entitled to know such a significant matter. I ask the Minister to inform the House where that land will end up, what costs will be involved, who bears those costs and what will be the benefits. Why did the Minister not inform this House and the public about that?

Throughout the whole episode the role of the Albert Shire Council has been vital and convenient. In the case of the unpaid royalties and development bonds payable under those three development agreements by the Minister personally or by his family company, it was subsequently found out that they were either not paid or paid late. Perhaps the Albert Shire Council and chairman Laver do not even know the situation of the liabilities; certainly according to that memo that was subsequently made public, they do not know.

The Minister never paid the development bonds, particularly the bond of \$100,000. If anybody should lodge his development bond, surely it is the Local Government Minister. However, he failed to do so and failed to give any explanation to the public or the rate-payers of the Albert shire as to why he does not have to pay development bonds when others do. Some lame explanation was offered by Mr Laver to the effect that the development bond was required mainly to cover the cost of relocating the road, and, "That has now been done, so why does the council need it?" But the road was relocated years after the bond was due. That is the purpose of the bond—to safeguard the interests of the council and the rate-payers. Their interests were sacrificed in favour of the personal interests of the Minister.

When that matter was finally uncovered, the Minister did not give an explanation in response to the key allegations and subsequently the council officer who was suspected of being involved in researching those matters was engineered into a certain position and had to resign.

It is important that this House knows what the relationship is—what interest Mr Laver has in all those matters. I do not know fully the situation; but, clearly, honourable members saw the chairman of the council defending the interests of the Minister and even claiming that the development agreements that the council had signed were somehow not legally binding. I do not know what the rate-payers of the Albert shire think about the competence of a council that signs a development agreement providing for substantial royalties to be paid and then subsequently has to admit that the agreement may not even be binding and that it did not inspect the books monthly, as it was entitled to do, in relation to the material extracted. I do not know how that is supposed to protect the interests of the rate-payers.

The further new questions that arise in relation to the Albert Shire Council and its involvement with the Minister are essentially those that revolve around the possible case of a further conflict of interest, about which the public and the rate-payers of the Albert Shire are entitled to know. Is it true that the Albert Shire Council's strategic plan is being renewed now, two years ahead of the time when a review is due? Is it also true that the proposed strategic plan will rezone chairman Laver's own land in the town of Mudgeeraba from Rural C to Urban?

According to my shire council sources, that land is quite appropriately zoned Rural C. It is poor quality land of the lowest value and should be zoned Rural C, which is the lowest zoning one can obtain. It is little more than a cow paddock.

Is it true that this planned rezoning from Rural C to Urban is to go before Minister Hinze for approval, therefore presumably delivering a substantial benefit to chairman Laver? Is it also true that the Minister's own department, the Main Roads Department, has indicated its intention to resume a strip of chairman Laver's land, paying handsome compensation?

I will not mention the amount of compensation that has been mentioned to me by my Main Roads Department and Albert Shire Council sources at this stage, because the figure is so fantastic as to be hard to believe. One would hope that it was not true. The public and the rate-payers of the Albert shire are entitled to know the offer that has been made or will be made to Mr Laver in respect of that land. Is it true that the Minister has been in communication with the department's valuers about raising their assessment of the compensation?

How much of the land is being resumed? At what rate is the owner being compensated? On the basis of what zoning is the compensation occurring?

In an ideal situation, those sorts of matters would not be raised in this manner but I received no response from the Minister last week so I am compelled to raise them in this manner. Over the last three weeks or so, I have had no opportunity to ask questions. No system of checks or balances is available to members of Parliament so that those matters can be raised and the expenditure of public money can be scrutinised. No public accounts committee has been set up to oversee the use or abuse of the tax-payers' money.

During the last week or so, the honourable member for Rockhampton (Mr Braddy) raised serious allegations about the payment of compensation to a Mr Cox of \$1m more than the land resumed was worth. It may well be that appeal proceedings will expose the wrong-doing that has occurred in that case, but it makes one wonder whether the new methods of conferring favours or distributing largess are resumption and negotiated compensation techniques. What about other people whose land has been resumed? Are they to be given the benefit of a rezoning as part of the resumption and compensation process? If an innocent explanation exists, then the Government should inform the Parliament. Last week, no explanation of the matter raised by the honourable member for Rockhampton was given and that can only raise further grave doubts about the propriety of the conduct of the Minister.

The incestuous relationship that appears to exist between the Albert Shire Council and the Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing (Mr Hinze) is certainly not tolerable. Even if there is nothing untoward about the matter I referred to earlier, it demonstrates the need to have a system of checks and balances to maintain public interest. The public should have confidence in the way in which revenue is being expended and confidence in the way in which decisions are made that affect the interests of Ministers personally and shire councillors or shire chairmen. If the people of Queensland are to have confidence in the Government, the Government must engage in open dealings. A system of checks and balances is essential.

Other questions about this matter remain unanswered by the Minister. I refer briefly to five key questions that the Minister has a duty to respond to. If the Minister fails to respond to those questions, one can only assume the worst; it can only be assumed that the Minister has engaged in misconduct that he wants to hide and run away from. All of the questions that should be answered relate to the relocation of the Tamborine-Oxenford road and the suggestion of benefit either to the Minister or to Maralinga Pty Ltd. I pose these questions against the background of a ministerial statement that was made on 15 October 1985.

Why did the Minister not disclose to the House the fact that he was signatory to a 1975 development agreement with the council that required him to "provide at no cost to Council a suitable river-crossing, the nature and position of which shall be to the reasonable satisfaction of the Engineer"?

In view of the fact that the 1975 development agreement between the Minister and the Albert Shire Council contains reference to his constructing a new crossing, did the Minister mislead the House when he said that the first suggestion of relocating the road came in 1979 from the Albert Shire Council engineer? In view of the claims that the contribution of 30 per cent towards the cost of the road by Maralinga Pty Ltd is in fact greatly exaggerated, and in truth was limited to a token contribution of gravel and the use of some trucks, is the Minister prepared to seek from his good friend Mr Laver and the Albert Shire Council the original detailed engineer's report that assessed and outlined the value of the contribution that the company made? Will the Minister table that report in Parliament to prove that Maralinga made a true 30 per cent contribution? In view of the fact that the 1975 agreement between the Minister and the council required the Minister to be 100 per cent responsible for the new river-crossing and that, when the relocated road was finally constructed, the majority of the cost was borne by the taxpayer, is it not true that the reduction of the Minister's liability from 100 per cent to 30 per cent represents a substantial benefit to the Minister and/or Maralinga Pty Ltd?

I regard those questions as crucial because they go to the very heart of the question as to whether or not benefit accrued to the Minister because of actions taken by him that were not disclosed at the time. If a benefit was obtained, the Minister has no choice—in any reasonable or legitimate parliamentary democracy—but to resign or be dismissed. Because of the demonstrated lack of commitment to those principles by the Premier and Treasurer in particular and by the Queensland Government in general, I do not hold my breath waiting for that to happen.

That highlights, I think very dramatically, the need for checks and balances such as would be effected by a parliamentary public accounts committee. For example, if a parliamentary public accounts committee were established——

Mr FitzGerald: It's his last speech.

Mr Gunn: Valedictory speech.

Mr GOSS: Mr Gunn—small calibre, big bore. That has been said before in this Chamber and it is so true. Whenever that is said to people, they just cannot help but comment on how accurately that sums up the clone from Somerset.

In concluding my remarks, I would just say that the matters that I have mentioned demonstrate the need for checks and balances. If a public accounts committee were established, the relevant people could be questioned about the role of the Albert Shire Council, about the role of the Minister and about the true costs involved in the steps taken by the Government in relocating the road. By that means, and only by that means, would the truth be ascertained. If checks and balances or a code of conduct based on the five principles that I outlined at the beginning of my speech were implemented, there would be more confidence in the Ministers and the way in which they conduct the State's business on behalf of the people. At this stage that confidence simply cannot exist because of the contempt for the parliamentary system and because of the contempt for the appropriate checks and balances and codes of conduct that should exist. A grave disservice is being done to the people of Queensland by the Government's conduct, and it is a grave disservice that I believe, and hope, will in due course, be reflected in a substantial rejection of this Government by the people.

Hon. Sir WILLIAM KNOX (Nundah) (3.2 p.m.): I deal with matters on which I was denied the opportunity of speaking this morning by the Government. Before I do so, I would like to deal with some of the matters raised by the honourable member for Mount Gravatt (Mr Henderson). He claimed that the Liberal Party had deserted certain causes with which it was very much associated. For instance, he claimed that the Liberal Party opposed the abolition of death duties. I will shortly quote from the record.

It was I, as Treasurer of this State, who introduced the abolition of death duties. That was done with the full authority of the Cabinet of the day and the unanimous support of all members of both the National and the Liberal Parties. I will now quote

an extract from my speech at that time as it appears in *Hansard*, Volume 271, page 781—

“Succession duties will be abolished in respect of the estates of persons who die on or after 1st January, 1977, and Gift Duty will be abolished in respect of gifts made on or after that date.”

That was the statement that I made on 30 September 1976. It was Liberal Party policy to abolish succession duties and gift duties, as it was National Party policy to abolish them.

Mr Hartwig: Sir Gordon Chalk introduced it.

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: No, I introduced it. I was the Treasurer who introduced those changes. There was no shortage of support from members of both the Liberal and National Parties.

Mr Gunn: What about Chalkie?

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: He was not a member of Parliament at that time. Again the honourable member for Somerset (Mr Gunn) has made a mistake. Sir Gordon Chalk had ceased to be a member of this Parliament. I do not know what his personal views were, but he certainly would have supported the Liberal Party's policy, which was the abolition—

Mr Gunn: He was dead against it.

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: He may have had a view about it, but it certainly was not translated into this Parliament.

The policy of the Liberal and National Parties was the abolition of succession and gift duties. I was the Treasurer who introduced that legislation into the Parliament. I announced it in the Budget and then, following the Budget, introduced the legislation. That legislation had the full support of every Liberal and National Party member; so smart double-talk about Liberals not supporting the abolition of succession and gift duties is absolute rubbish.

The honourable member for Mount Gravatt ought not to read speeches in this House provided for him by people who have no association with the Parliament and who are not familiar with it. He would be more accurate in the presentation of his speeches in the House if he prepared his own speeches instead of relying on others to give him briefs.

He said that the Liberal Party was opposed to the abolition of road tax. In the very same speech on 30 September 1976, which is recorded on page 783 of *Hansard*, I said—

“Road Transport Permit Fees will be further reduced by 50 per cent. from 1st November”—

Mr FitzGerald: You know of the brawl between Sir Gordon Chalk and the others on that matter.

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: Back in 1957, before there was the open-road policy? At that time, before there was the open-road policy, there was a very big brawl. Who were some of the people who wanted to stop the open-road policy? The honourable member for Lockyer knows whom they were—they were strong Country Party people—very prominent people in the Country Party. It was only because Chalk and others fought strenuously for an open-road policy—some members of the Country Party also fought for it—that the open-road policy was adopted. It was only because of that change to the open-road policy that the road permit fees became significant.

Up to that time the road permit fees had protected certain interests in this State and gave them monopolies of the road. Those interests worked very hard to stop the open-road policy that the Government of the day wanted to implement. Both Liberals

and Country Party people wanted to implement that policy, but powerful people associated with the Country Party of the day lobbied very strongly to stop that change in policy. When it was changed, hundreds of transport-operators, instead of a handful, learned about road permit fees, which had existed to protect the small group of monopolies that ran road transport in this State. The open-road policy highlighted the iniquitous and uneven distribution of the road permit fee taxes. Because of that, Liberal and National Party people lobbied at their conventions, successfully passed motions at both conventions and successfully passed motions in the joint parties room to bring about firstly a reduction and ultimately an abolition of the road fees.

Mr FitzGerald: Where did the leader of the Liberal Party stand on that at the time?

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: I was the leader of the Liberal Party. Bill Knox was the leader of the Liberal Party. I will quote what I said about road fees in the speech that I made to the House on 30 September 1976. I said—

“Road Transport Permit Fees will be further reduced by 50 per cent. from 1st November to 33½ per cent. of the level which applied when the Government first announced its policy of complete elimination.”

So it was done in stages. I went on to say—

“This further reduction will reduce road transport operators’ costs by \$1.2 million this year and \$2.1 million in a full year.”

There was no qualification. There were no reservations. There were no people standing on the sidelines in ones and twos saying, “We do not agree with it.” It had the unanimous support of both the Liberal and National Party people at the time. That had been so for some time, because it was a continuing policy.

For the member for Mount Gravatt to read in the House a brief prepared for him by somebody who has nothing to do with the Parliament and who is without an intimate knowledge of the politics of this State and to claim that the Liberals opposed the abolition of road permit fees is absolute garbage and rubbish. The honourable member should be ashamed of himself. Next time he should check his facts before he trots out this rubbish in the House.

The honourable member claimed also that the Liberals were opposed to relief in land tax, of all things. Let me quote from the very same speech.

Mr HENDERSON: I rise to a point of order. I did not mention land tax at all in my speech.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row): Order! I really do not think the honourable member has a valid point of order. The member for Mount Gravatt was given a great deal of liberty when he made his speech. I will not accept any points of order on what was said and what was not.

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: The honourable member for Mount Gravatt is one of the most ineffectual members of the House. Obviously he is smarting under the simple corrections I have made.

I will deal with land tax. Again, in my speech on page 783, I said—

“It is proposed that the exemptions applying to resident landowners under the Land Tax Act will be increased from \$20,000 to \$25,000 for town land and from \$60,000 to \$75,000 for land used for primary production purposes. Further, no tax is at present collected where the assessment would result in a payment of \$6 or less, and this figure will be increased to \$12.”

The last two State Budgets have provided no relief at all in regard to land tax. In this State today people who had previously never heard of land tax are paying land tax. Hundreds of people are asking their members of Parliament, “What is this all about? Why am I now paying land tax?” People in this State who had never paid land tax before in their lives are now paying it. Many other people who did pay very nominal

amounts of land tax have had imposed on them in the last two years increases of 1 000 and 2 000 per cent.

Mr FitzGerald: What is the percentage increase in the Budget?

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: The Budget does not contain a percentage increase. The value of the land——

Mr FitzGerald: You are saying it has gone up 1 000 per cent. I am saying it is a lot less than that.

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: The honourable member for Lockyer knows perfectly well what I am talking about, because it affects people in his electorate. The reason why people have to pay more land tax is that the value of their land increases. It is not because the rate increases but because the value of the land increases.

Years ago, when Sir Thomas Hiley was Liberal Treasurer of this State—again with the full support of all members of the Liberal and Country Parties—he outlined the Government policy that it was not intended that land tax should be a source of revenue for the States; it was simply to stop aggregations of land. That is all. He repeated that in Budget after Budget. Yet, now some people in this State who had never before heard of land tax are paying an enormous amount of land tax.

The policy that was implemented progressively over a number of years has been abandoned. Many people in this State who are now paying land tax should not be paying land tax. It is wrong and, again, it is an anti-social tax when it is applied in that way.

Mr Lickiss: And this is a low-tax State.

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: This is supposed to be a low-tax State.

Land tax has sky-rocketed in this State because of the refusal of the Government in the last two Budgets to give any relief in regard to land tax, which is necessary because of the increase in the value of land in this State.

I again correct the honourable member for Mount Gravatt—and I could keep on doing so, because his whole speech was full of errors and inaccuracies. It was a cheap political stunt that was engaged in by his adviser or ghost-writer, or whatever he calls him.

It is about time that this Parliament got rid of ghost-writers for members who apparently cannot write or prepare speeches of their own. It used to be a rule in this Parliament that a member could not read a speech. Yet, in recent times, that rule has been abandoned.

The only members who need to read their speeches into the record are Ministers. It is important that Ministers do read their second-reading speeches into the record of the House. It is important that people be able to read what the Minister said at the time when legislation was introduced, so that they can understand its purpose and intent and there is no misunderstanding about it. That is why Ministers read their speeches. Ministers have an obligation to read their speeches to ensure that the record is correct in the first instance and there are no errors.

However, it is almost a crime for other members of Parliament to read their speeches into *Hansard*. It is about time that this Parliament went back to the way in which it used to operate, when members were on their own, when they were examined on their own and did not go round carrying briefs for people outside Parliament who do not understand the legislation.

I refer now to the fringe benefits tax, which I was forbidden by the Government to debate this morning. On several occasions the Government has prevented a debate on the fringe benefits tax, and I do not know why it is frightened to allow such a debate.

Mr FitzGerald: It was in the middle of question-time.

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: It was not in the middle of question-time; it was during the part of the proceedings that is reserved for members of Parliament, the time for general business. That is when members of Parliament are entitled to behave as they are expected to behave. That is what that time is for, to give to members of Parliament an opportunity to raise matters of public importance. Such matters are relevant and important to the community, but this Government's view is that the Parliament belongs to the Government. The Parliament belongs to the Government only for certain hours of the day. The remaining hours of the day belong to the members generally. It is to the Government's detriment that it is trying to make this House the private preserve of the Executive Government. That is a great pity. It is to the detriment of not only the Government but also this Parliament.

The fringe benefits tax has a very great bearing on the finances of this State. The tax has been referred to obliquely in the Budget Speech, and also in relation to this Appropriation Bill. I am pleased to see that, because of my insistence in raising the matter in this House on many occasions, this Government has taken action in the High Court to challenge the legislation. I was sure that it would, and I am pleased that it has.

Mr R. J. Gibbs: That's through none of your initiation. You compliment yourself.

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: It is about time I gave something to myself. I have been handing out a few compliments to other people, so I thought I would give myself a mention.

The Government has acted wisely and correctly in challenging the legislation. It is true that, if that challenge is successful, the legislation will not be made invalid. However, those parts of it that are invalid will not be operable, so it will be more than a token demonstration against the legislation, which is iniquitous, bureaucratic and designed to destroy the dynamic qualities of the Queensland community. It is certainly designed to destroy private enterprise and is a doctrinaire approach to the handling of the affairs of this nation. It is time that the fringe benefits tax, in the various forms that it takes, was aired in this House.

If the Queensland Government's challenge is not successful in the High Court, it could cost the State Government a few million dollars in tax, and the cost of administration of the tax could actually be higher than the actual amount paid. The fringe benefits tax legislation is a shocking piece of legislation. The tax was designed allegedly to tackle the millionaires of this nation. According to the Commissioner of Taxation, there are approximately 25 000 millionaires in Australia. The few millionaires whom I know are not even worried about the fringe benefits tax and are not the least bit concerned about it. My friend on my left is one of them, and he is not concerned about the fringe benefits tax. He would like not to have to pay it, but he is the last person to be inconvenienced by it. I assure the House that the other 24 999 millionaires in this nation feel the same way about the tax. It is going to be a nuisance to them, but they will not go without. The people who will go without are the little people in the community who the Labor Party claims to protect and look after.

I turn to some of the things that have to be done in regard to the fringe benefits tax, which, as I say, will be felt not by the millionaires but by the little people.

First of all, an employer has to register to pay the fringe benefits tax if he supplies his employees with fringe benefits. The little shop-keepers in my electorate have to register under this scheme because they provide their staff with a few benefits that are classified as fringe benefits. Motor car dealers and shop-keepers of nearly every description who employ any number of people have to register under the Act. I do not know whether honourable members have read the Act, but it contains 300 pages covering the fringe benefits tax, and there will be the many regulations that will appear from time to time. No separate registration is required by taxable employers, because the registration number will be the same as the employer's tax file number. The additional people will have to register.

Exempt employers, including State and local authorities, which do not have to register but will have to pay the tax, will need to obtain a file number from the taxation office. That is another example of bureaucratic nonsense. Then they have to make their own assessment. "Self-assessment" means that each employer is required to calculate the amount of fringe benefits tax that is payable and to remit the tax to the taxation office.

The first date for the payment of that fringe benefits tax is 28 October, which is approaching very rapidly. A large number of employers have not even thought about it yet. They will be caught. No formal assessment notice is sent. Incidentally, the taxation office does not want employers to send in vouchers, papers or material in support of a claim. They have been told, "Please keep it at home or at your business." If someone is called upon to produce the documents, he must produce them. How long must a person keep those documents? Employers will be required to keep all their records for seven years!

Employees will not be exempted from that requirement; they will have to keep their records for 3½ years. Could honourable members imagine itinerant workers and other persons keeping records received from their employers? The employee does not have any obligation; the employer will be paying the tax. Why should the employee be required to keep records? When the taxation office, having requested the documents from the employer, calls on the employee to produce his documents so that a cross-reference can be made, one can imagine what the employee will say when he is asked for any supporting documents or evidence of the fringe benefit that he received and which the employer, through his records, claims that he gave to the employee. What ridiculous bureaucratic nonsense! The fringe benefits tax is imposed on the nation at enormous cost to private enterprise as well as to the Taxation Commissioner.

Fringe benefits tax returns must be lodged annually, within 28 days of 31 March, and paid every six months. This is becoming an abomination. Is the fringe benefits tax to be audited? Yes! The fringe benefits tax return must be audited by the taxation office, but, believe it or not, the employer is not required to submit an audited statement with his return. By golly, any employer who does not have his accountant check on it could be in real trouble at any time within the next two, three, four, five or seven years when he is asked to produce records of fringe benefits given and tax paid or, as alleged by the Taxation Commissioner, not paid. Where will the employer stand if he does not have an audited report of the return that he made? He is not obliged to obtain one for his own protection.

Mr R. J. Gibbs: What about the tax cuts the Liberal Party promised federally that come to more than \$6 billion?

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: That is very good.

Unless somebody does something about reducing the cost of government in this nation, we will go right out the back door. After all, the socialist Government of this nation reduced Australia's credit rating from AAA to AA1. That means an increase in interest rates for all public utilities in this nation. It will mean increased interest rates for State Governments that must raise money to provide public services.

I am sure that the Deputy Premier and Minister Assisting the Treasurer (Mr Gunn) could go overseas at any time and borrow \$100m for this State without any trouble at all because of Queensland's reputation and because of the nation's AAA credit rating. Now, all of the people who were allowed to lend money to Australia under the AAA rating will not be allowed to lend it to us any more. They were the people who provided the best interest rates. In future, when the Minister Assisting the Treasurer of this State goes overseas, he will be told, "We are very sorry, Mr Gunn, but your nation's credit rating is AA1. We used to lend money to your country, and it was underwritten by the loan council. We are very sorry. Our policy is that we are not allowed to lend money to countries that do not have a AAA rating. You have to go down the road to our associate company or to other people with whom we have very close relations to do

this business.” That means an increase in the interest rates for public utilities. The Labor Party has created the problem and it is sending Queensland well down on the road to becoming a banana republic. The only words that the Labor Party should introduce into its policies are “banana socialist republic”, and everybody would be crying out for help.

Mr Vaughan: What about your policies and your party’s consumer tax and across-the-board tax on everything? That is what your policy is.

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: The policy of the Liberal Party is to reduce some taxes and eliminate others, so that people can make ends meet.

Returning to the fringe benefits tax saga, what happens if an employer makes a mistake in his tax return? Human beings make mistakes. Even the most honest person can make mistakes. If that employer does make a mistake, he is then in all sorts of bother. Such are the sanctions that, unless that employer completes a statutory declaration as to why the mistake was made, he could find himself paying a very heavy fine simply because of his error.

Can employers in the other States dodge the fringe benefits tax? No! Each State is required to have a separate operation. In each State those people are required to report to the Deputy Commissioner of Taxation as to the circumstances of fringe benefits and the tax paid on them. They have a multitude of people to deal with.

Is it possible for an employer to object to the fringe benefits tax? Yes, provided that he does so within 60 days of an assessment. Of course, that employer must produce all the pertinent records. Therefore, he must keep very faithful records, because the onus is upon him.

Mr Hartwig: Wouldn’t it be easier to get rid of Hawke, and then that would do away with all this?

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: The policies of both the Liberal Party and the National Party are to abolish the fringe benefits tax on the day that the Liberal Party begins its term of office in Government.

Mr Vaughan: It is not the National Party’s policy.

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: I was told that it was.

Mr Vaughan: At the tax summit last year the Premier opposed it.

Government Members interjected.

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: Honourable members can engage in their own argument on that matter.

The Fringe Benefit Tax Assessment Act allows the commissioner to issue amended fringe benefits tax assessments in order to reduce an employer’s liability. In order to have an assessment reduced, an employer must apply within three years of the original assessment. Provided he keeps records, that employer has all the time in the world. Although an employer has three years in which to apply for a reassessment, if he should happen to realise that an error has been made, he must still be very much on the alert. That is an example of the type of nonsense that the Federal Government is imposing upon employers.

I now turn to some rulings that have been made by the Taxation Commissioner in relation to fringe benefits tax. In relation to the question, “Are reimbursements by an employer of an employee’s private expenses subject to FBT?”, the answer is, “Yes, it is assessable.” The Taxation Commissioner has stated that the taxable value will be reduced to the extent that the employee was entitled to a deduction if he had not been reimbursed for the expense.

Those sorts of benefits were once part of the wages package. Nobody was cheating. Those benefits were part of the normal arrangement between an employer and his employees. The Taxation Commissioner will now intrude on those benefits.

Mr Vaughan: They were all tax-free.

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: What the hell if they were tax-free!

Mr R. J. Gibbs: They were income.

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: They were not dodging paying their taxes. The employee, who took home his employer's car at night, looked after it, cleaned it and had it back at work the next day is the person to whom I am referring.

Mr Vaughan: They got that in lieu of wages.

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: That is exactly what I am saying. It was part of the wage package.

Mr Vaughan: And it was not taxed.

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: It was not taxed in a direct way. However, tens of thousands of employees in this nation enjoyed those benefits. I am not referring to millionaires. I am referring to the little people within the community who will now lose those benefits. They will no longer be able to obtain those benefits.

Mr Vaughan: The poor devils who never got those fringe benefits are paying for that.

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: Name some.

Mr Vaughan: The wage and salary-earners.

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: I am talking about wage and salary-earners.

Mr Vaughan: They are paying for all those fringe benefits.

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: Is the member for Nudgee saying that employees of the State Government and the Federal Government who take home cars at night with the authority of their departments and drive them back to work the next day do not pay tax? Of course they do not. They did not pay tax then and they will not pay tax now. The State Government and the Federal Government will pay the tax. The stupid people in the Opposition do not even understand what is going on with the fringe benefits tax. It is true that the employee did not pay tax on the benefit, and it is true that he does not pay tax on it now. He simply loses the benefit; that is all.

Mr Lee: That is what they can't see.

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: They do not understand it. It is part of the wage package. Those people lose the benefit and the Government does not collect the tax. They were not paying tax on the benefit before FBT and they will not pay tax on it now.

That is the absolute nonsense of the fringe benefits tax that is imposed on the community at large and requires thousands of employers to keep records that they cannot afford to keep. Tens of thousands of people in the community will lose benefits that they enjoyed for years.

Mr FITZGERALD (Lockyer) (3.31 p.m.): It is with pleasure that I rise to speak on the Appropriation Bill 1986-1987 (No. 2). The Bill is primarily the legislative enactment of the State Budget for 1986-87, which was recently presented to the House.

Towards the end of his allotted time, the previous speaker referred to the problems associated with the fringe benefits tax. I agree with much of what he said, although I do not necessarily agree with all of it.

Fundamentally, Governments have a right to tax and they suffer the consequence of collecting tax. That is what Budgets and Appropriation Bills are all about. Governments have to decide where to collect revenue from and they must suffer the electoral consequences of collecting it from places that the people do not regard as appropriate.

Who should pay for a fringe benefits tax? The Government collects so much tax from salaries and wages. If an employee receives a fringe benefit and is circumventing taxation laws by accepting it as a fringe benefit, he, not the employer, should be paying the fringe benefits tax.

Mr Vaughan: That is National Party policy.

Mr FITZGERALD: But the ALP does not have the intestinal fortitude to levy the fringe benefits tax where it should. It says, "We will not tax the working man. We will shine it off and make the employer pay for it." The ALP will suffer the consequences because its little mates, the working class people—the people that I associate with—will suffer. They are being denied cars and all the other fringe benefits that they used to receive. They could decide for themselves whether they should receive the fringe benefit or whether, as a collection of unionists or as individuals, they should say to the employers, "I do not wish to have that car because I do not want to have to pay the tax on the fringe benefit. I would rather take money in lieu and pay tax on that." They had the option to do that.

Now, the option is not being given to them. The ALP is asking the employer to pay for it, whether the business is financial or not. An employee pays tax on his income only. However, if an employer receives no income or runs at a loss for the year—and plenty of businesses run at a loss—he still has to pay the fringe benefits tax, which is an income tax. That is absolutely ridiculous. The ALP will suffer the consequences of that.

Sir William Knox said that the first payments of the fringe benefits tax are due by 28 October. I will give members of the Opposition a tip. Not long after 28 October, the people will pass judgment on the policies of the Australian Labor Party. Members of the opposition had better make good speeches during this debate because I believe that many of them, irrespective of whether they are directly to blame, will suffer the consequences of Federal Labor Government policies. It has happened before, and the National Party Government knows that it can happen again. I am sorry for members of the Opposition who may not have supported those policies. I feel sorry for members of the Opposition who have been tangled up in the web of Labor policy and have lost the battle, despite the fact that they have tried. Obviously, the honourable member for Nudgee (Mr Vaughan) supports the fringe benefits tax, because he constantly interjects.

Suggestions have been made by members of the Liberal Party that State Budgets must always be balanced. The Budget that was presented to the Parliament in August was a balanced Budget. In the Budget presented on 30 September 1976, reference was made to the 1975-76 Budget presented by Sir Gordon Chalk. The State Budget for 1975-76 was not a balanced Budget; it was a deficit Budget. The speech made by Sir Gordon Chalk when that Budget was presented reads, in part—

"After budgeting for a deficit of \$5.6 million in 1975-76, including the elimination of the accumulated deficit at 30th June, 1975, of \$5.9 million, the actual Consolidated Revenue result for the year was a small surplus of \$714,000."

That extract proves that a State Government definitely has the right to present a deficit Budget, if the rules that applied then are the same as those that apply now.

Sir William Knox: There is no problem about presenting a deficit Budget; but the Budget had better balance, otherwise the Treasurer would go to gaol.

Mr FITZGERALD: I accept that the Budget must be balanced; but a deficit Budget can be presented.

Some confusion may have been created in the minds of members of the public that it was impossible to present a Budget that is not balanced. I acknowledge that what the honourable member for Nundah had said is correct, in that a deficit Budget can be presented.

Mr Eaton: A surplus Budget can also be presented.

Mr FITZGERALD: That is right.

In my opening remarks, I said that it is a responsibility of the Government to raise revenue through taxation. It can fairly be said that it would be wonderful to eliminate all forms of taxation, irrespective of whether the taxation is imposed by the State Government or collected by the Federal Government for redistribution to the States. I would support any move to eliminate as many taxes as possible.

I have strong views about the imposition and collection of taxes. A system of taxation should be efficient. Taxes should be levied equitably. Taxes should be paid by all members of the community who derive benefit from the services provided by Government. The fringe benefits tax does not fit into the category of equitable and efficient taxation. A previous speaker mentioned the considerable cost involved in its collection. There will be a heavy onus on people to justify their books of account. The increased paper-work will be horrendous. It would be a dream for any tax-collector to be placed in the position of asking people to assess benefits they have received and prove that they are not liable to pay a tax on those benefits. It will be particularly difficult for operators of small-business to prove that that tax should not apply to them.

Previous speakers have also mentioned land tax. Recently a revaluation took place in the Gatton shire. People in that shire, although not engaged in primary industry, nevertheless live on farms that do not qualify for exemption. To set the record straight, I point out that exemptions do apply to land tax and that most people engaged in primary production would qualify for an exemption. All that is required is the completion of a form. Any reference to farmers having to pay land tax is misleading, because the majority of farmers do not buy and sell large properties for capital gain, or profit. Simply to make a decent living, it is necessary for farmers to own land of reasonable value and size. Primary production is a capital-intensive industry, which is why the State Government provides exemptions. I am sure that most honourable members would recognise the truth of what I am saying.

Having said that, I express my disappointment that it was not possible to raise the level of land tax exemption in this year's Budget. However, if the same amount of money is collected in each Budget it will be found that in the shires that have just recently been valued, the percentage of what the people in those shires are paying will come down. Because annual valuation of land is being introduced, big gaps in valuations will not occur as happens when valuations are carried out in jumps of five to eight years. Therefore, because of the introduction of annual valuations, people will find that increases in their valuations will be much more even. I believe that when that happens people will be paying a more equitable and fair share of taxation. I would like to see the amount of the exemption increased next year. I will be making submissions to the Treasurer on that point.

Another matter of great concern to the people in the Lockyer Valley about which I would like to speak in the debate on the Appropriation Bill today, is the recent changes that some of Australia's trading partners are making to their regulations concerning the importation of produce from the valley. I have said before that Australia, as a trading nation, suffers the consequences of decisions that are made by overseas Governments. On that occasion I cited as an example the US Farm Bill and the horrendous effect it was having on Australian farmers, not only the wheat-farmers but all grain-farmers because the price of wheat quickly relates to the prices of all the other grain products. The price of cotton and oilseeds is also affected. In a complex farming situation, such as exists in Queensland, the price of one crop will eventually affect the price of other crops because many substitute crops can be grown on one block of land or somewhere else in the State. When a couple of major industries in the State suffer a downturn, it is found that other areas are affected very, very quickly.

From time to time in this House I have spoken about how European trade policies affect the farmers and other primary producers of Queensland.

However, the latest regulation is rather horrifying to the Lockyer Valley, and in particular to the Gatton shire, which is a major vegetable-producing area in Australia.

On 1 September this year, regulations were enacted by the Fijian Government to stop the importation into Fiji of a lot of Australian produce. The Fijian plant quarantine regulations now require that just about all of the produce that is imported into Fiji must be accompanied by a certification that it has been produced in an area that is entirely free from cattle tick infestation. On that pretext, onions that are now being produced in the valley cannot go to their traditional market at this time of the year, which is Fiji.

Fiji is a tropical island, and has a warmer climate than the Lockyer Valley. Fiji has tried to produce onions in the past, and in fact it now does produce some onions. For most of the year Fiji imports onions from New Zealand or the southern States of Australia, Fiji has a close trading relationship with New Zealand. At this time of the year Fiji is trying to import onions from Australia. The people in the Gatton shire are now finding that since the regulation saying that the onions must be produced in an area that is free from the infestation of cattle ticks, problems have occurred. That is absolutely ridiculous.

Australia does have areas that are cattle tick free. The Darling Downs area, most of New South Wales, all the southern States and the bulk of Queensland are free from cattle ticks. Onions from the Lockyer Valley can be sent to any of those places without any problems at all. The properties in the Lockyer Valley that produce onions do not have cattle on them at all. The cattle run on the grazing lands. It is very rare to see any cattle in any area that produces onions. Yet the Fijian Government has introduced that regulation. Not only does Fiji stop onions from being imported, but it also stops potatoes, garlic, zucchinis, squash, honeydew and rock-melons unless they are produced in an area that is entirely free from cattle ticks.

Other products that have to be produced in a tick-free area are capsicums, tomatoes, beans, carrots, silver beet, beetroot, brassicaeae,—that is the English cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower, brussel sprouts, swede, turnips and radish—and lettuce and celery. The list concludes with “etc.”, so it is not exclusive. They must bear a certificate to prove that the area in which they have been grown is entirely free from cattle-tick infestation. That is absolutely ridiculous and will have major consequences to primary producers in the Lockyer Valley.

Honourable Members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row): Order! There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber. A great amount of liberty has been allowed in the debate. This debate is not to be turned into a bonanza. If the Chamber does not come to order and if there is not some relevance to the Budget, I will take some action.

Mr FITZGERALD: This will have a major consequence, because much of this type of produce is exported from Australia to Fiji at this time of the year.

If Fiji is to pass legislation like this, those crops will not be able to be exported to it. Those islands have every right to protect their communities from cattle-tick. Fiji is a warm tropical island, so cattle-tick could be a problem. However, I believe that its legislation goes miles too far. There are other ways in which they could ensure that the cattle-tick is not imported onto the island. I do not believe that the cattle-tick would be carried in by cabbages, melons and similar crops, provided that they are not packed in any hay or straw that could have been in contact with cattle. The legislation will be a disaster to producers in the Lockyer Valley.

I wish to refer to the recent controversy over the amount and quality of onions that have been imported into Queensland from other States and overseas. Last week I took action to make sure that the poor quality product that is coming on to the market in competition with excellent quality Queensland produce has to be of a marketable standard. As a result of my actions, between last Thursday and yesterday 1 132 bags of New Zealand onions were seized and condemned, and 267 bags of South Australian onions and 295 bags of New South Wales onions were ordered to be picked over.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I ask the honourable member for Lockyer to refer to the Financial Statement that is under review. The honourable member is getting so far off the subject-matter that I am forced to bring him to order.

Mr FITZGERALD: Thank you very much, Mr Deputy Speaker. I am referring to the inspectorial staff of the Department of Primary Industries who have condemned this produce. The allocation of funds for that department is included in the Budget.

One matter that is often raised in debate is ministerial expenses. I know that the Queensland press has had quite a bit to say about it. I wish to refer to a debate on Channel 2 between Quentin Dempster and the former Auditor-General (Mr Doyle). Mr Dempster said—

“How does the level of ministerial expenses in Queensland compare with those Ministers in other States?”

The former Auditor-General said—

“I don't know. As far as I am aware, Queensland is the only State where there is this requirement that ministerial expenses be specifically identified within the departmental reports to the Parliament.”

I leave that point with the House.

The member for Surfers Paradise (Mr Borbidge) drew to my attention a letter by Ian McLean, who is the State President of the ALP, that appeared in *The Australian*. He said—

“Many of those squealing about the fringe benefits tax have never paid their share towards funding the services most Australians see as government responsibilities.”

The letter continues, but I will quote no more of it. To show the inconsistency of the ALP I will cite a report in *The Bulletin* of 23 September 1986 which is headed “Taxpayer Peters paying Paul” and deals with the fact that the Treasurer (Paul Keating) claimed travelling allowance for 184 days during 1985-86, for which he was paid a total of \$17,600. He spent all but two of those days in Canberra, where he has set up house with his wife and children. He is claiming that he is living away from his electorate where he claims to have his principle place of residence. So for 182 of those days he was in Canberra and was claiming an allowance for that. Talk about accountability!

Mr R. J. GIBBS (Wolston) (3.50 p.m.): I am quite amazed by the two previous speakers. I will refer firstly to some of the comments made by the leader of the Liberal Party (Sir William Knox), who had the audacity to tell the House what his party would do in office—forgetting, of course, that for 27 of the last 29 years his party has shared the responsibility for the administration of Queensland.

On this the last day of this session of this Parliament, it is worth while reminding every Queenslanders of what happened during the 27 years that the Liberal Party was in coalition with the National Party. Under the stewardship of Sir William Knox as the Treasurer of Queensland, Government charges in this State rose by an Australian record; under the stewardship of Sir William Knox as Minister for Labour Relations, the incidence of industrial disputes in this State was the highest in Australia; under the stewardship of Sir William Knox as Deputy Premier and leader of the Liberal Party, a party that was committed to a fair and equitable electoral redistribution, the Liberal Party kowtowed and lackeyed to its bosses in the National Party. Those are the things that happened over 27 of the last 29 years.

In other words, Sir William Knox never had the political guts to implement the measures that he stood and spoke about today. Is it any wonder that he would turn to one of his colleagues on the Liberal Party back bench, the honourable member for Yeronga (Norm Lee), and say that the honourable member for Yeronga, who is a self-confessed millionaire, is not worried about the fringe benefits tax!

Why would the honourable member for Yeronga be worried about the fringe benefits tax? Every person in Queensland who follows racing knows about his extensive racing

interests. It is frequently reported in the press that he pays up to \$40,000 cash for a horse and that he wins handsome prize-money. The honourable member for Yeronga does not need to be reminded that it is only recently that the Federal Labor Government has given horse-breeders, horse-owners and the racing industry in this country handsome taxation and financial benefits. Of course the honourable member for Yeronga would not be screaming about the fringe benefits tax!

Mr Innes interjected.

Mr R. J. GIBBS: Members of the Liberal Party cannot cop it. When they are flushed out, they cannot stand the criticism.

I want to make another point. I listened very carefully to the comments of the leader of the Liberal Party about the fringe benefits tax. I listened also, of course, to the honourable member for Lockyer (Mr FitzGerald), who said that the National Party hates the fringe benefits tax, and that it is a dreadful thing that that party cannot support.

I have a document titled *Queensland's Taxation Reform Package including Single Rate Tax Proposal*. Honourable members know who would be favoured by the single-rate tax proposal. It would favour Senator Florence Bjelke-Petersen and the Premier. The front page of that document states—

“As presented to the National Taxation Summit in Canberra, 1-4 July, 1985 by the Honourable Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen, Premier and Treasurer of Queensland.”

Under the heading “Summary”—these are the proposals that the Queensland Premier took to Canberra in regard to taxation reform in this country—the document states—

“A fringe benefits tax on the beneficiary (but with employers to be required to record such benefits on group certificates).”

Lo and behold! In other words, the only difference between the proposal of the Queensland National Party Government and the proposal introduced recently by the Federal Labor Government is that under the National Party's proposal the employee would pay the tax instead of the employer. Of course, I can understand why the Premier would put forward such a proposal.

Only a short while ago, the honourable member for Nundah said that not so much small-business people as big-business people were not cheating or defrauding the taxation system. I will tell honourable members of a fellow in my electorate who would be a multimillionaire, who owns four companies, and who screamed till he was yellow about the fringe benefits tax. It is well known—and this occurs in every section of the business community—that he was having his club fees paid by his company, his children's education was being paid for by his company, he had a couple of racehorses that were purchased by his company, and he took people out to dinner virtually five nights a week and on holidays, all at the expense of the company.

All he took home in his pocket every week was a lousy \$200 for the family. That amount was just for spending money or pocket-money for himself, his wife and his children for the seven days of the week. In addition, his living expenses, such as the cost of milk, bread, meat and everything else, were written off against company expenditure. He was the reciprocal beneficiary of a major rort in this company.

By the introduction of this tax, the Labor Party has attempted to establish a fair and equitable system so that people's incomes can be declared right across the board.

There are a few very important matters that I wish to raise and that should be drawn to the attention of all Queenslanders. I call on the Premier and Treasurer to immediately instigate an inquiry into the operations of Carlton and United Breweries (Qld) Ltd. This Government talks about its concern for the future of this State, business and employment. I predict that not too long after the State election, in the vicinity of 2 500 jobs will be lost in this State because of the activities of Carlton and United Breweries.

Three weeks ago, most publicans who conduct hotels belonging to that chain received advice through the mail that, on a date to be fixed in November, their hotels would be put onto the market and auctioned off. This matter is very important and is relevant to the debate of the Appropriation Bill, because it will have a massive effect on the payroll tax in Queensland. If all these hotels are auctioned off, it will mean that Carlton and United Breweries will be left with no more than 46 outlets throughout the whole State for its own brand of beer. Any person who purchases one of these hotels on the open market will obviously make the premises totally freehold, and will sell both Carlton and Fourex beer.

One of the reasons why this matter needs to be investigated is that, contrary to the laws of this State, representatives of that brewery are currently doing the rounds of these so-called free houses in Queensland. The publican, owner or licensee of one of its hotels is required by law to sell both brands of beer, but the brewery is directing the publicans not to sell both brands of beer. Alternatively, representatives of the brewery are walking into the hotels and using stand-over or thug tactics by saying to the publican, "You have got too much Fourex in stock. You will get it out and you will sell our product only." It is illegal to use such tactics in this State, and they need to be looked at.

If all these hotels are auctioned off in November, it means that Carlton and United Breweries will be left with only 46 outlets in Queensland and this State will become nothing more than a branch office for the brewery's main office in Victoria. The brewery in Queensland will be virtually shut down and the jobs of those people employed at the brewery will be lost. In addition, the jobs of many people operating in the brewery's outlets and promotional areas, such as salesmen, will be lost. Approximately 2 500 jobs will be lost. As a result, the beer will not be brewed in Queensland, but will be brewed in the southern States and shipped to Queensland by rail for distribution.

All that sounds bad enough, but the crunch is this: in this wonderful State of Queensland, where terms such as "free enterprise", "right to operate in the marketplace" and "right of business people to do as they please" are used—and there are times when that is probably in the best interests of the community, because some of the sharper operators who do not deserve to be in business cannot compete—when those hotels are auctioned in November, if a hotel is not sold on the day of auction, the licensee of that hotel will not be left with any option.

If they want to sell, they are required to give two months' notice that they want to move out, but they have to find a buyer for their hotel. For a number of reasons, it is highly unlikely that they will find a buyer. One of the reasons is that the brewery has already issued an instruction that until such time as the hotel premises are sold at auction, it will not compensate the existing licensee or publican for the stock or fittings in his hotel. In some instances the hotel may be worth hundreds of thousands of dollars. It could affect a giant liquor outlet or a small liquor outlet. The owner of a hotel could have built a beer garden, furnished it and updated his premises. That person would not be liable for any compensation until such time as the premises are sold at auction. Whilst that person is waiting to enter another business, his capital will be tied up.

I sound a warning to any person in the State of Queensland who is contemplating going to an auction and purchasing a wooden hotel from Carlton and United Breweries. He would be well advised to consider his financial position very carefully. The loud and clear message being given by the insurance industry throughout Queensland—not one particular company but all insurance companies across the board—is that they are no longer prepared to issue comprehensive insurance coverage on any wooden hotels or any wooden licensed premises in Queensland. One does not need to be a genius to figure out why. I do not say that to disparage any person who is operating a business. The simple facts are that everyone knows that a number of hotels and licensed premises are going through bad times at present.

Over the years, accusations have almost become frontier stories. One hears stories about publicans who torch hotels or pay somebody to do it. Because of the possibilities of that happening, insurance companies are no longer prepared to provide comprehensive

insurance for those premises. Imagine the financial incentive for a person who fronts up to one of those auctions on a date to be fixed in November and, to pick a phantom figure, bids \$300,000 or \$400,000 for a hotel. It may be a reasonable business concern. He puts his money up front and goes to his bank to get the rest. The banker says, "OK. What is it?" The person says, "It is a wooden premises." The banker says, "Sure. We are prepared to lend you \$250,000 as our part of the financial deal." The person then goes to the insurance company, and he is told, "I am sorry. The company is not prepared to comprehensively insure the premises that you have just purchased." What an unenviable position to be in! It is a dreadful financial position to borrow money from a bank and not to be able to obtain insurance coverage. The bank must then do one of two things: leave the borrower with the loan, obviously causing him some problems; or withdraw the loan. That then opens up the whole question of the legal position of the person who made the successful bid for the premises at the auction, agreed to purchase under the terms of the auction and then found out that he could not obtain insurance coverage on it.

It is dreadful that such a thing can happen in Queensland. It is virtually a repeat performance of what happened recently with the Bond Corporation's take-over of the Castlemaine brewery in Queensland. The thing that Castlemaine has going for it is the sweetheart deal about which honourable members can read on the front page of the *Telegraph* this afternoon. Maybe the way for Carlton and United Breweries to overcome the problem is to issue a handsome writ on the Premier next week. Who knows; the Premier may even co-operate by going out and defaming the company publicly. Some sort of sweetheart deal could be done there.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row): Order! According to Standing Order No. 120, it is not considered proper to impute improper motives.

Mr R. J. GIBBS: Mr Deputy Speaker, I take absolute cognisance of your ruling. You know only too well that I would not be prepared to cast a slur on any member in this Chamber. I have referred to that matter because I think that it is something that needs to be considered.

Of course, this is my last opportunity to speak about those issues which might affect the results of the next State election. I now mention one matter that I believe needs to be aired. I believe that the community should view it with a great deal of concern. Over the last three years I have seen some of the greatest hypocrites in this Parliament sitting at the back of the Chamber in the "six-pack" of the Liberal Party. For 27 out of the last 29 years the Liberal Party has been party to all the financial wheeling and dealing, the rapid growth in industrial disputation, and the financial failings of the State. The economy has been going backwards. All of a sudden, following a term on the back benches, the Liberal Party has realised the errors that it has made.

A couple of weeks ago the president of the Queensland Liberal Party, John Moore, spoke about corruption. He obviously regarded it as a major issue.

Whenever the Labor Party has exposed an issue in this Parliament, the weasels of the Liberal Party have come into this House on the coat-tails of the National Party and tried to score points. If the Liberal Party wants to talk about corruption, let me talk about it. I refer to the corruption within the Liberal Party and the Brisbane City Council. The members of the Liberal Party should not fool themselves. If they intend to play any type of a significant political role at this level of politics ever again, the same standards will apply.

Brisbane presently has a Lord Mayor who has had more overseas trips than a Qantas jet. I cannot remember any other Lord Mayor who has travelled overseas as extensively as the current one.

The Lord Mayor is a front runner in the Liberal Party. She recently set up an economic development steering committee. Included on the membership of that committee are an architect and a developer who, I believe, could be constantly faced with a conflict of interest.

A section of that committee's brief concerns planning for the development of the city of Brisbane into the twenty-first century. However, one of the key members of that committee, Mr D. W. J. Cunnington, is involved in a number of companies that have interests in the field of development.

Recently, Mr Cunnington, together with the Lord Mayor, led a business mission overseas to promote business investment in Brisbane. It is interesting to note that Mr Cunnington is the only business person in Brisbane who has benefited from that overseas trip, and, to a degree, from the massive amounts of money that the tax-payers of Brisbane paid to finance that trip—because the committee did contribute some money of its own. Mr Cunnington is the only person who has actually received a financial benefit from that overseas trip. Why would he not? Where else could a person such as Mr Cunnington obtain such a cosy, sweetheart deal? Mr Cunnington had the ability to advertise a business and investment mission to Japan, with a photograph of the Lord Mayor (Sallyanne Atkinson) in the top corner and his own beaming photograph at the bottom. In that advertisement Mr Cunnington stated that it was not an opportunity to be missed. He also stated that seminars would be arranged in Kobe and Tokyo; group meetings would be held in Kobe and Tokyo; inspection tours of Kobe, Osaka and Tokyo would be conducted; and that people could attend the Brisbane/Kobe sister city proclamation ceremony. What a lovely little sweetheart deal that was!

That is a prime example of how the Liberal Party is in cahoots with the Lord Mayor of Brisbane and how they are currently developing a new town plan, which has come under severe criticism from some of the people best qualified to make those observations in Queensland. It is not in the best interests of Brisbane, but there is a sudden emergence of financiers and developers who are all in cahoots with the Lord Mayor.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Booth): Order! I remind the honourable member for Wolston that this is essentially a money Bill that we are debating. I ask him to inform the House how what he is talking about ties in.

Mr R. J. GIBBS: I am delighted that you should ask that, Mr Deputy Speaker, because part of the money Bill that is being debated today covers some of the Estimates for the money that we as tax-payers of Queensland are extending to the Department of Local Government. Local government plays a major role throughout the State of Queensland, particularly in Brisbane, where tax-payers' money needs to be protected and looked after to the best possible degree. However, this same person, Mr Cunnington, frequently sends out a personal letter on none other than the Lord Mayor's letterhead. Where else could that happen? I can table a copy for members to look at.

Would honourable members expect to see a back-bench member of the National Party send a letter out on the Premier's personally autographed paper? I suggest not.

Mr Cunnington, together with the Lord Mayor, has led a business mission overseas to promote business investment in Brisbane. His role in that exercise and his position on the steering committee means that he is in a position to write letters to potential business associates and clients on city hall letterhead. He has featured in numerous advertisements by the council to develop overseas contact. That gives him the opportunity to gain a significant advantage over other competitors in Brisbane.

The City of Brisbane Town Plan is being redeveloped and zonings are being changed. Property values in the Brisbane metropolitan area are being enhanced by the rezoning under the Liberal Party's stewardship in council. Is it a healthy situation for the council to base its future development and rezoning proposals on the advice of people who are involved in that very area?

Why does the council need to co-opt non-elected advisers to do the work that should be carried out by their own officers—officers whose integrity is guaranteed? That is the important point. Their integrity to carry out those duties is guaranteed by the Acts of Parliament that we as members of the Assembly lay down. But we have no

control over a person such as Mr Cunningham, who is obviously acting in an advisory capacity for the Lord Mayor of Brisbane.

I will look at the business interests of Mr Cunningham. The companies in which he is involved include Cunningham McKerrell Project Management, Cunningham McKerrell Constructing Management, Architects—Cunningham McKerrell, Cunningham-McKerrell Consulting Group, Cunningham-McKerrell Developments, Josiah Pty Ltd, C.M. Group Pty Ltd Brisbane, C & McK Pty Ltd, Cunningham McKerrell Consultant Group, Lib (131) Pty Ltd, and Heart Beat Centre Pty Ltd.

In addition, the address listed for Mr Cunningham as a principal of C.M. Group Pty Ltd is given as 484 Milton Road, Auchenflower. That happens to be a property owned by Josiah Pty Ltd—a company in which Mr Cunningham also is a director, and which owns other properties in the area.

The people of Brisbane are entitled to know if those business interests conflict with the important, non-elected posts to which Mr Cunningham has been appointed.

The Minister for Local Government has an obligation, as the responsible Minister and the Minister who can deal with the sort of thing that I am about to call for, to immediately act to ensure that those vital matters of conflict of interest are immediately investigated on behalf of Brisbane's rate-payers.

I do not believe that Mr Cunningham at any time has declared his interests in those areas when his professional services were offered to the Brisbane City Council. Without a shadow of a doubt, what honourable members are seeing is one of the most corrupt, rotten business practices that has been witnessed in Brisbane for a long time.

What is taking place in Queensland today on the part of the Liberal Party is a case of jobs for the boys and feathering of nests, not to mention ripping-off the tax-payer. I call on the Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing to immediately investigate the business practices engaged in by the Brisbane City Council and also into the activities of Mr Cunningham.

Mr MENZEL (Mulgrave) (4.15 p.m.): I rise to join in the debate on the Appropriation Bill and again commend the Queensland Government on its well-balanced Budget. Despite set-backs that have occurred throughout Australia and despite an economy that is failing rapidly because of the policies of the Federal Labor Government, the Queensland Government has performed very well.

I note that the Premier and Treasurer (Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen) made reference to the deficit of \$7.3m faced by the South Australian Labor Government. To my mind, such a deficit is typical of the mismanagement of State and Federal economies by the socialist Government in Canberra.

Previous speakers mentioned mismanagement in local authorities, and it should be remembered that the local authorities are under the jurisdiction of the State Government. An article appeared in today's *Cairns Post* stating that the Mareeba Shire Council is calling on me to apologise for comments that I made about one of its councillors, Councillor Mealing. I certainly do not intend to apologise for telling the truth.

The Mareeba Shire Council—a Labor council—has certainly misused the tax-payers' money, and a glaring example of that misuse was expenditure of Community Employment Program funds to employ people to work on private land, thereby reflecting credit on one of the Labor councillors. People complained, and the practice ceased. The point I wish to make is that that is a clear breach of accountability and abuse of tax-payers' money to benefit individuals. I call upon *The Cairns Post* to check with people such as Mrs Margaret Jones, the former owner of the Honey House and the Snow Bonneau, to confirm what I have said.

I call on the Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing (Mr Hinze) to investigate the activities of the Johnstone Shire Council. A previous speaker called on the Minister to investigate the Brisbane City Council, and the principle of proper use of the tax-payers' money extends to all local authorities. There is no doubt in my

mind that the majority of Labor councillors on the Johnstone Shire Council have misused public money.

Local authorities are part of the jurisdiction of the State Government, and I believe they should be more accountable.

Councillor Mealing is the present owner of the Honey House. He received notification to clean up the toilets that are part of the premises and, despite the fact that on 2 June he was given 60 days in which to complete that task, he has as yet failed to do so.

I refer to what may be described as the loans affair. I made a comment that has been misconstrued by the Federal Minister for Finance and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister on Public Service Matters (Senator Walsh). I did not say that the Minister overrode decisions on applications for loans on hundreds of occasions when people had been knocked back by the Rural Reconstruction Board. I simply said that I had appealed to the Minister to have decisions reviewed. Obviously, the Minister has directed officers of the Rural Reconstruction Board to re-examine the applications, which does not amount to overriding decisions. I reiterate that I never said that the Minister overrode the decisions.

It is a typical example of the slanderous attitude adopted by members of the Australian Labor Party——

Mr Alison: It is muck-racking.

Mr MENZEL: The Federal Government is engaging in muck-racking and is trying to twist the way things should be construed.

Senator Walsh has mentioned conducting an investigation into the Natural Disasters Organisation fund. I call upon him and encourage him to investigate the spending of funds allocated to the Johnstone Shire Council for disaster relief. I have raised those matters before. It is about time that the Labor Government in Canberra investigated some of them.

Mr Eaton: Mr Uren has already been there—last week——

Mr MENZEL: I will comment on what the honourable member for Mourilyan has just said. The fact is that officers of the Co-ordinator General's Department have been to the area. Some of the applications under disaster relief arrangements have already been knocked back because the department found that the Johnstone Shire Council was pulling the wool over the department's eyes. The council was charging incorrectly for metal that was supplied out of the council's own quarry. When it charged the Disaster Relief Fund, the council put up the price by a few dollars a metre. It is my understanding that because I intervened and drew that to Parliament's attention, the council will not be able to rake off tax-payers' money from the Disaster Relief Fund. That has occurred only because I raised the matter.

The council normally charges 50c a metre for overburden that is supplied by its quarry. It is my understanding that the council purchased about 70 000 metres of overburden, which was necessary to cover debris, from its own quarry. The price charged by the council's quarry to the council itself was increased from 50c a metre to \$1.50. In other words, the Johnstone Shire Council—a Labor council—was trying to misappropriate \$70,000 of tax-payers' money. It probably would have got away with it if I had not raised it in this House. Fair enough, I agree with the honourable member for Wolston (Mr R. J. Gibbs) that it should be investigated by the Minister because a lot of other things probably will be discovered.

I now want to quote from a letter——

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Booth): Order! There will be fewer multiple interjections.

Mr MENZEL: I will quote from a letter dated 2 September 1986 from the shire clerk of the Johnstone Shire Council to one of the councillors. The letter says—

“Dear”—

and it has the councillor’s name—

“I refer to your recent enquiry regarding expenditure on the construction of Leichhardt Street and advise as follows:—

With the exception of approx. \$400.00 on planning there has been no expenditure on Leichhardt Street in 1985/86 or 1986/87 Financial Years to date from either the General Fund or Loan Funds of Council other than that from funds received by way of Natural Disaster Relief Arrangements.

As you are aware Council resolved at its August Meeting to seal Leichhardt Street and it is my intention to bring a Report to Council on the usage of the Street when Plans are submitted to the September Works Committee Meeting.

Yours faithfully,

E. L. McEachan
Shire Clerk”

That is clear evidence that the council tried to—and I have drawn it to the Government’s attention—misuse disaster relief funds. That road has never been used either for the carting of debris after the clean-up by the council or by the public. Everyone in Innisfail knows that. Yet the council tried to book the work up to the Disaster Relief Fund. Hopefully, I have saved the tax-payers of Queensland and Australia from having their money misappropriated by the Labor council. I hope that the council will be made to pay that money back.

I agree that the Government should have checks on councils, as has been previously said. But Senator Walsh, in his usual muck-raking attitude, picked on the Michael Behan case. I believe that Michael Behan had as much right as anybody else to receive a loan. It is pretty poor when the Federal Government tries to deny farmers assistance to carry on when they have been hit with a disaster.

Mr Eaton: A few farmers in my area would like some “lousy” loans.

Mr MENZEL: It is true that the farmers in the electorate of Mouriiyan desperately need carry-on finance. The cane-farmers will be hit in a month or two when their cash-flow dries up. They have to rely on the sugar industry money that keeps flowing from the previous year. Now that they have a very small crop, they will start feeling the pinch. I know a few banana-growers in the Innisfail area who have gone broke.

Mr Eaton: And papaw-growers.

Mr MENZEL: Yes, and papaw-growers.

Councillor Les Scheu is quoted as saying at a recent council meeting that he intended to tell the Commonwealth Government to investigate the sums of money distributed as disaster funds by the Agricultural Bank because the farmers were receiving too much. That is what the Labor Party in Innisfail thinks of farmers! Les Scheu felt that they were getting too much. He is probably the one who instigated the so-called inquiry that Senator Walsh is on about. They are only using Michael Behan as an excuse; it came from Les Scheu, that great Labor man from Innisfail. That is an absolute disgrace. Shame on him! It is typical of the attitude of that rather peculiar council in Innisfail. Not all Labor councils are like that one. Most of them would conduct themselves with more dignity than the Innisfail council. Councillors are involved in punch-ups. One meeting had to be adjourned when two councillors had a brawl over a private matter.

Mr Eaton: They are very energetic councillors.

Mr MENZEL: The honourable member for Mourilyan would know the score. They are especially energetic in using their fists. When they have disagreements, a few of them pack some pretty hard punches.

Much is said about accountability for Government expenditure. The parties who urge the establishment of a parliamentary public accounts committee are probably the ones who need accountability. For argument's sake, the Federal Government is building a new Parliament House at a cost of \$1 billion—it could end up costing \$1.5 billion—and a Peking embassy for \$48.5m. That is an example of accountability. That means that less money is available for distribution to the States by the Commonwealth. That is an absolute disgrace. The Federal Labor Party certainly needs Government accountability.

Mr Comben: Do you reckon we should have an embassy in China?

Mr MENZEL: Not for \$48.5m. A reasonable place could be built for \$100,000 or so. The one that is being built will be an absolute palace. I cannot believe that the honourable member for Windsor (Mr Comben), who is not such a bad bloke really, would think that the expenditure of \$48.5m on an embassy in Peking is reasonable.

Mr Comben: What about the offices of the Agents-General in Bombay and Tokyo?

Mr MENZEL: Palaces worth \$48.5m were certainly not built there.

I commend the Government on the sound way in which it has managed the economy. I support the Bill.

Mr PREST (Port Curtis) (4.28 p.m.): I have great pleasure in speaking to the Bill. When the Premier addressed the House shortly prior to the luncheon recess, I was somewhat interested to hear that he has completely changed his tune, especially since the Deputy Leader of the Opposition (Mr Burns) and the Leader of the Opposition (Mr Warburton) spoke yesterday in the Matters of Public Interest debate about Government expenditure and reductions in taxation and State Government revenue. Today the Premier said—

“To decrease revenues and increase expenditure at the same time is not only irresponsible but is a recipe for financial disaster.”

Until today the Premier has said that taxes are too high and that Australia should have a flat rate of tax of 20 per cent. Today he seemed to agree with the way the Federal Labor Government is handling the finances of Australia. That is somewhat different from the Federal Opposition Leader (Mr Howard) who, in his reply to the presentation of the Federal Budget, said that he would introduce massive tax cuts which would reduce Government revenue by \$5.9 billion. In other proposals, Mr Howard would reduce taxation by \$600m. Overall, he would increase spending by \$1 billion. The total grand commitment by Mr Howard, therefore, is some \$7.5 billion. As the Premier said, once taxes are reduced, that money has to be found somewhere else.

I am quite certain that the Government is very pleased that this session of Parliament is drawing to a close this afternoon, as many issues are still fresh in the minds of the people of Queensland. I refer to the Mr and Mrs X affair; the \$400,000 Bond defamation hand-out affair; the mystery tennis club affair; the Behan hand-out affair; and also the \$2m land deal involving David Cox, who is a brother of a former National Party member, Mrs Kippin.

I am quite certain that the Government is hoping to put all those incidents out of the minds of the people of Queensland as soon as possible. Unfortunately, some of the editorials about the Premier that I have been reading of late—especially in Rockhampton's *Morning Bulletin* of 6 September and in the *Daily Sun*—seem to indicate that the next six to eight weeks will be a very tiring time.

Recently in this Chamber I spoke about the Premier of this State trying to provoke the grain-growers at a conference in Rockhampton into taking to the streets to revolt against the Government—to overthrow the Government. It is amazing that Australian farmers, who are supposed to be having such a hard time under the Federal Labor

Government, can string together a fighting fund that, even in July, was in excess of \$11m. I am quite certain that if those farmers put that money to good use, it would alleviate some of their problems.

The Estimates of the Transport Department reveal that massive amounts of money have been spent on propaganda, particularly for the opening of the electrified line between Rockhampton and Gladstone. The newspapers reported that Special Branch police were engaged to stand at all of the railway crossings along the route. I did not attend the opening function. I did not go on the train. I remember quite well as I crossed Auckland Street railway crossing noticing three persons standing there, whom I thought were railway officers. Now I realise that they were three members of the Special Branch.

The honourable member for Brisbane Central (Mr Davis) pointed out the wastage of money on that opening. An article in *The Gladstone Observer* of 13 September 1986, headed "Rail opening 'waste' claims investigated", states—

"Transport Department staff are making checks before Minister Don Lane comments on claims that thousands of dollars were wasted in order to stage last Saturday's commissioning of the Gladstone-Rockhampton rail line electrification.

A spokesman for Mr Lane yesterday said the Minister did not yet have knowledge about some of the matters which were raised this week by railway, union and contracting sources.

The sources claim that thousands of dollars worth of temporary electrical gear fitted to electric passenger train units (brought from Brisbane for the occasion) was 'written off' after it was used.

They claim that the three visible sides of the Port Curtis signal box were painted despite the fact that the structure is due to be demolished within a few weeks.

Sources said the long grass beside the railway line was cut all the way from Gladstone to Rockhampton whereas it was normally only cut at crossings. They said plain clothes policemen were stationed at every crossing along the route.

Other claims were that a huge wooden floor constructed at Rockhampton Railway Station for the commissioning ceremony was dismantled afterwards. Two old sheds at Gladstone Station were torn down and tracks covered with filler material so a large area of ground could be levelled out for the ceremony. This was scooped up afterwards.

Hundreds of commemorative medallions and bottles of port were handed out to invited guests travelling on the commissioning journey.

Sources said train rosters were altered to allow two coal trains to pass the commissioning train during the journey.

Mr Lane said he had been advised that most of the materials used for the Rockhampton station floor had been put back into store for future use.

The Minister said the floor had been necessary in order to accommodate the hundreds of invited guests for the ceremony.

'There's been some outlandish claims made about costs of the ceremony,' Mr Lane said.

'Most appear to be false, while the whole exercise represented an important historical occasion.' "

I am certain that if the Minister for Transport (Mr Lane) has these claims investigated, he will find that there is more to it than meets the eye. That kind of wastage must be of tremendous concern to railway people when their jobs are also in jeopardy.

One matter that has been brought to my attention by the people who live at small country railway sidings between Rockhampton and Bundaberg is that they have to go to Rockhampton or Gladstone from Bundaberg to buy their daily provisions and do their shopping. At the present time the train leaves Bundaberg in the wee small hours

of the morning and arrives in Gladstone at 6 a.m. or thereabouts. That gives these people sufficient time to shop and return home to their stations, such as Miriam Vale or to sidings beyond, in the one day. Similarly, for people who live between Rockhampton and Gladstone, the train leaves Gladstone at approximately 6 a.m. and arrives at Rockhampton at 8.45 a.m., or thereabouts, and they are able to carry on their business in Rockhampton during the day and depart Rockhampton at 5 p.m. to return home.

When the daylight train between Brisbane and Rockhampton, which departs Brisbane at 8 a.m. and arrives at Rockhampton at 4.15 p.m. is operating, those people who reside at sidings between Bundaberg and Rockhampton will not be able to carry out their normal daily or weekly shopping in Gladstone or Rockhampton. They will have to stay overnight in those centres. The Minister might have to consider the possibility of the introduction of a rail motor that leaves Gladstone at daybreak, or 7 a.m., arrives at Rockhampton and returns the same afternoon. That would allow those people working on the railway or living at those sidings to do their normal shopping. I would like the Minister to take that matter on board and give some consideration to the people living in those sidings.

A matter that concerns me in this Budget are the insufficient funds allowed for the police force. Unfortunately during the debate on the Budget and the Estimates, the police were never discussed. The Budget leaves the police struggling to cope with their current problems. It has been stated that 280 extra policemen will be allocated in the State Budget. That will mean there is a considerable shortfall, considering that the crime rate in Queensland in the past 12 months has increased by approximately 53 per cent. Queenslanders are told that the police have a fairly good clean-up rate in some areas—something like 42 per cent of homicide and 83 per cent of robberies. The police are carrying out their duties to the best of their ability but they are short-staffed. Break-ins throughout Queensland are costing insurance companies and others in the region of a staggering \$15m per year.

Although the police are doing everything possible, they are unable to cope with the increased incidence of crime. Because of the present economic climate in Queensland, the number of breaking-and-entering offences will increase until the economy improves and more employment is provided.

Statistics show that Queensland's gaols are badly overcrowded. Some prisoners should be detained for longer periods than they are at present. Because of overcrowding, the length of sentences that have been imposed has been reduced considerably. The number of violent crimes throughout Queensland is also increasing.

In April I wrote to the Minister for Police. On 18 August, I received the following reply from the Minister—

“I refer again to your letter of 26 March 1986 making representations concerning the number of police serving the Gladstone Police District generally and in particular the excessive overtime being worked in the Tannum Sands/Boyne Island area of the District.

I have had this matter examined and have been informed that the Department is aware of the amount of overtime worked at Tannum Sands; however, current manpower/resources do not permit any allocation of additional staff at this time.

The staffing situation within the District will be monitored and should the need arise further consideration will be given to the matter consistent of course with available manpower which must be allocated on a strictly State wide priority basis.”

I thank the Minister for that letter.

I hope that, when the 280 extra police are being allocated, some of them are placed in my electorate to allow the officers at Tannum Sands and Boyne Island some relief so that they enjoy more recreation-time and do not have to work the amount of overtime that they must work at the moment.

Throughout the year I have been concerned about the problems in local government. 1986 would have to go down as the year in which many senior officers in local government have either lost their jobs or been sacked. One that comes to mind is the sacking by the Brisbane City Council of the Town Clerk. The Livingstone Shire Council sacked its engineer. Recently I read that the Woongarra Shire Council had sacked its clerk. In many other local authorities throughout the State, for some unexplained reason senior officers have lost their jobs. Those persons have been employed by local authorities for long periods. It appears that some have lost their jobs for no apparent reason. No explanation has been given for that. The Minister has taken no action on the sackings of those persons.

It is high time that the Minister took more notice of what is happening in local authorities. Some members of local authorities think that they are untouchable. Following the budget brought down by the Gladstone City Council, seven senior staff were sacked, one of whom was the deputy clerk. That is something that should have been avoided. That has caused some problems in the Municipal Officers Association, and some explanation should be given.

I admit that an increase of 4.7 per cent in a council budget is not a large increase. Usually the increase is 8 or 10 per cent. Although the Gladstone City Council's receipts will increase by 4.7 per cent, its expenditure will decrease. Expenditure in 1986-87 will be \$1m less than the expenditure in 1985-86.

That causes me concern, because late last year I wrote to the Minister in relation to the local government conference that was held in 1985 and pointed out to him that the city council had changed banks because the Commonwealth Bank had refused to fund a dinner for that local government conference, which would have cost the bank approximately \$30,000. At that time I stated that, as a result of the change in banks, an increased amount of money had to be paid by way of interest on loans.

The Minister wrote back on 1 March 1986. Prior to that, on 18 December, he wrote stating that the banks had already been changed.

The officers of the council and the aldermen believed that a change of banks was in the best interests of the council.

The receipts of the council will now be increased by approximately 4.7 per cent. However, expenditure is down \$1m on the previous year.

I ask the Minister to inform this House where that money has gone. Because of the change of banks, that money will now be paid out in interest on the loans that have been transferred from the Commonwealth Bank to Westpac.

In August of this year, I asked the Minister a question in relation to the payments that are made to the engineers of local authorities for their supervision of Main Roads Department work.

In June this year, I attended a local government conference in Yeppoon, held at the offices of the Livingstone Shire Council. At that conference a motion in relation to the percentage received by engineers for the supervision of Main Roads work was defeated. The Livingstone Shire Council stated that, because that work had been carried out during council time, and because the people who were undertaking that work were already being paid, the money should go back to the council. The reason for the defeat of that motion was that the aldermen and councillors who attended that meeting decided that because those people were receiving a percentage of the money provided for the supervisory work that they were carrying out in council time, that was creating a good relationship between the Main Roads Department and the city council.

My question appeared in *Hansard*, but the reply did not. I seek leave to have the Minister's answer incorporated in *Hansard*. Because of the detailed information that I requested, the Minister stated that he would post an answer to me. However, that answer never appeared in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

Office of the Minister for
Local Government,
Main Roads and Racing.

PO Box 31
North Quay
Brisbane 4000

Telephone (07) 224 6768
Telex QLGOV 42391

15 Aug 1986

Dear Mr Prest,

I refer to your question on Notice of 6 August 86 regarding supervision fees paid to Local Authority officers for work carried out on behalf of the Main Roads Department during 1983/84, 1984/85 and 1985/86.

You will recall that Hon. M. J. Tenni, M.L.A., undertook to have this matter researched and to advise you by letter of the particulars.

The information you have requested is as follows:

1. Main Roads has supervision agreements with one hundred and thirty Local Authorities in Queensland however in a number of instances supervision work is performed by consulting engineers and in other instances no supervision work was carried out in a particular year.

The numbers of Local Authorities in which supervision fees were paid to Council officers in a particular year are as follows:

	Engineers			Clerks		
	83/84	84/85	85/86	83/84	84/85	85/86
Cities	18	18	18	18	18	18
Towns	3	3	3	3	3	3
Shires	48	50	51	109	109	105

Mr W. G. Prest, M.L.A.,
Member for Port Curtis,
Parliament House,
BRISBANE. 4000

Mr PREST: I point out that the question I asked of the Minister related to the highest amount paid to individual officers of local authorities during a three-year period. The amounts that were paid out were such that the city with the highest figure for 1983-84 was Townsville, with \$6,900. During 1984-85, it was Maryborough, with \$9,344. In 1985-86, it was Townsville, again with \$6,900. During 1983-84, it was Dalby, with \$1,126. During 1984-85, the figure for Dalby was \$2,155; and during 1985-86 the highest was once again Dalby, with \$5,081.

Of course, the Livingstone Shire Council moved that that money be returned to its coffers instead of going to the engineer, who was paid approximately \$60,000 per annum. The shire engineer in the Banana shire received \$7,547 during 1984. In 1984-85, the shire engineer at Livingstone, apart from his \$60,000 salary, received a benefit of \$20,448 for doing work in council time.

Mr Burns: We are cheap, aren't we—politicians?

Mr PREST: Yes, that is right.

In 1985-86, he only received \$15,935. I will leave that there for everyone to see. I am running out of time. The Minister wants to finish. I would like all honourable members to read the answer to my question, because it shows the perks and the money that senior officers receive to do supervisory work in council time. Not only do the engineers receive that money, but also the town clerks and shire clerks receive a percentage for signing a docket when the work is completed. The shire clerk may not get too much for it—it may be only \$5,000 or \$6,000—but it is not a bad perk.

This is the last day of the session. Some members may not be re-elected. I sincerely hope that is not the case and I wish them well. I look forward to working as a member of the Government after the election.

Mr JENNINGS (Southport) (4.51 p.m.): I refer to a statement made in the House today by the honourable member for Salisbury (Mr Goss). He attempted to malign and smear the very fine man who is the chairman of the Albert Shire Council. I refer to Councillor Bill Laver.

The honourable member for Salisbury talked of an incestuous relationship involving Councillor Laver and told the House that he had reliable information that Councillor Laver's property was to be rezoned from rural to residential by the Minister for Local Government as a ministerial rezoning. That is completely untrue. Councillor Laver has not even applied for such a rezoning. The honourable member for Salisbury should be completely condemned.

The honourable member also said that the Main Roads Department was going to acquire an area of land from Councillor Laver at an enormous price. He said that he was not prepared to state the price but that he had been reliably informed of the amount. That is also completely untrue and another attempt to discredit a very fine man's integrity.

The facts are that the Main Roads Department is resuming some of Councillor Laver's land and some of the Albert shire's land for an interchange. That has been public knowledge for months.

Councillor Laver objected to the resumption. The proposed resumption and the compensation will be decided by the Land Court, which will also make a decision on the Albert shire's land. That is the third resumption of Councillor Laver's property for Main Roads Department purposes.

Councillor Laver has owned his 300-plus-acre property for over 34 years. He has contributed his energy to the community in many different ways, being chairman of SEQEB, chairman of the Gold Coast Waterways Authority and chairman of the Albert Shire Council, which is one of the finest councils in the State. It is terribly wrong that someone in this House, on the last day of the session, should try to destroy his reputation because he is in the unfortunate position that the Main Roads Department wants to acquire some of his property.

Everything Councillor Laver has done is completely above-board and on the public record and the honourable member for Salisbury should be completely ashamed of his misrepresentation.

Hon. W. A. M. GUNN (Somerset—Deputy Premier, Minister Assisting the Treasurer and Minister for Police) (4.54 p.m.), in reply: The standard of debate by the Opposition on the Bill has been way below even the standard honourable members have come to expect from them, which has never been high.

Mr Burns: You are a bit lucky. Claudie Wharton was going to gag you.

Mr GUNN: You can't trust anybody!

It is deplorable that, when given an opportunity to make a worthwhile contribution to the quality of debate in the Parliament, Opposition members have resorted to personal smear tactics in a vain attempt to discredit the sound and responsible Government that has been a feature of the past three years.

I refuse to be drawn into any low-level debate engaged in by the Opposition. It is not the intention of the Queensland Government to descend to the same level as the Opposition. Members of the Opposition will receive their just deserts in the near future.

In spite of assertions made by the Leader of the Opposition, the small-business sector supports strongly the free enterprise Government in Queensland. The Queensland Government has provided the highest level of pay-roll tax exemption in Australia; moved

to assist small-business proprietors cope with unsatisfactory conditions imposed by certain landlords; implemented the recommendations made by the Savage committee to remove a host of regulations that tended to inhibit the development of business in this State; increased the funding available to the Small Business Development Corporation by 30 per cent to in excess of \$1.8m; and set up the Queensland Industry Development Corporation to assist small business with funding. If they are examples of an anti-small-business policy, I say that the Opposition does not know what it is talking about.

The honourable member for Nundah (Sir William Knox) drew the attention of the House to the land tax. I make the point that land tax exemptions that are provided by the Queensland Government are among the highest and most generous in Australia. The family home is exempt from land tax, irrespective of its value. Primary production land owned by individuals is also totally exempt. In addition, the unimproved value of land must reach \$60,000 before land tax is applicable. I find it difficult to accept the claims made by the honourable member that thousands of people are now paying land tax who did not previously have to pay it. The exemptions that apply mean that a person could have property with an improved value of hundreds of thousands of dollars before any tax is payable.

I do agree with the honourable member for Nundah about the impact of the Federal Labor Government's fringe benefits tax. It will be the death knell of that Government. That Government will die in a welter of paper-work that will be generated by compliance with its record-keeping requirements. Honourable members should make no mistake—the State Government will win the High Court challenge to the fringe benefits tax. The fringe benefits tax is iniquitous, particularly as it applies to State Governments.

I thank the honourable member for Mount Gravatt (Mr Henderson) for his research on parliamentary proceedings. As usual, his speech was enlightening and accurate. The honourable member has represented his electorate very well indeed, and I have no doubt that he will win an increased majority at the next State election. Government members have demonstrated a sound understanding of matters that pertain to the management of this State.

The Queensland Government can afford to walk tall in its management of this State. Queensland is the growth State of the future. Queensland is the jewel of the Australian crown, and will continue to expand and develop under a National Party Government for many years to come.

Motion (Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen) agreed to.

Committee

Clauses 1 to 5, and schedule, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

Third Reading

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

SELECT COMMITTEE OF PRIVILEGES

Report

Mr NEAL (Balonne) (4.59 p.m.): I hereby lay on the table of the House the report of the Privileges Committee of the Forty-fourth Parliament, and I move that it be printed.

Whereupon the report was laid on the table and ordered to be printed.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Settlement of Premier and Treasurer's Defamation Action against Channel 9

Hon. Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN (Barambah—Premier and Treasurer) (5 p.m.), by leave: Earlier today the Leader of the Opposition made reference to a transaction involving my family company, of which I am not a director and in which I have no shares, and asserted that the transaction had links to a defamation settlement reached between my legal representatives and legal representatives of the Queensland television station Channel 9.

I have always maintained both inside and outside this House that I am happy to have the terms of settlement made public. However, I am bound by the terms of the settlement, which provide for the non-disclosure of those terms.

I recently contacted the station-owners, the Bond Corporation, seeking a release from those terms in order that I might make the amount public because I have absolutely nothing to hide.

Mr Warburton: Today, was it?

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: No. The Leader of the Opposition is one of the most deceitful fellows that I have met for a long time.

However, the Bond Corporation did not approve that release. Right from the beginning that has been the case.

It advised that full details of the settlement, including the amount of damages, would be presented to the Australian Broadcasting Tribunal and that that was the proper course of action in the circumstances. That has happened.

So I am not at liberty to comment on whether the amount referred to by the honourable member had anything to do with the Bond settlement. I can say, however, that whatever the amount received by me, it was certainly not as much as I sought or expected to receive, according to expert legal advice—nowhere near it.

As honourable members know, it is common for the terms of defamation settlements made out of court to remain undisclosed. Mr Wran and Mr Hawke have been the recipients of a number of awards, the terms of which still remain confidential.

The owners of Channel 9 have already made details of the amount of settlement available to the tribunal. I am quite happy for them to do so, if they want to. The settlement was arrived at in the normal way between their lawyers and my lawyers. There is nothing to compare it with because it was the first writ I have ever issued as Premier. My legal advice was that I could not lose and that a very substantial sum would be awarded to me.

Mr Burns: How much? Fifty bucks?

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: Fifty bucks, yes. That is what the honourable member for Lytton could be had up for.

That advice was confirmed by the QC's opinion sought by the Leader of the Opposition, which indicated that the defence filed by Channel 9 could not succeed. I know that the honourable the Leader of the Opposition is worried because he is next cab off the rank. I hope that he is saving up. I will pursue that matter to the very, very end. There is no question about that. I have said that to him a number of times.

A number of high awards for defamation have been made in Australia, including an award and costs of \$480,000 to an architect and his company who, a newspaper said, had designed a building with a leaking roof. He got \$480,000 for that. Also, reports suggest the West Indian cricket team will receive \$1.2m from its action. In the circumstances, I cannot blame the honourable member for being a little concerned.

In conclusion, I reject entirely any assertion that there was something wrong with the payment to me. Whatever the payment was, it was legitimate in every way and it is disgusting that the Opposition should attempt to use the protection of this House to imply otherwise. To conclude the matter, I can inform the House that counsel for the Bond Corporation has provided an opinion to the Bond Corporation that in his opinion the settlement and the amount of it was proper. That opinion came from Mr Tom Hughes, QC.

SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT

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

“That the House, at its rising, do adjourn until 11 o'clock a.m. on a date to be fixed by Mr Speaker in consultation with the Government of this State.”

VALEDICTORY

Hon. Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN (Barambah—Premier and Treasurer) (5.4 p.m.): Today is the end of this parliamentary session, the last in the three-year term of the Government. It is an interesting one, a very special one and, perhaps, in many respects, a sad one for a number of us.

Opposition Members interjected.

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: The Leader of the Opposition ran away.

Mr Burns interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I am surprised at the member for Lytton.

Honourable Members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I ask for a bit of decorum in the dying stages of this Parliament, please!

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: It is with a great deal of regret that I say that some members who are here now will not be with us after the election. That is particularly so with several of my colleagues, but I will come to that point later.

At the close of this the final session of the Forty-fourth Parliament it is appropriate that, before we depart for the coming election, I pay tribute to those of us who are retiring. It is traditional in the valedictory not to stray into politics. I intend to maintain that tradition. However, I should include in my farewell those members opposite who will not be sitting opposite in this place after the next election.

Opposition Members interjected.

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: As sure as the sun comes up, many honourable members opposite will be looking for another job.

Unfortunately, for a number of them that will be the case, but I thank them for their contributions.

Firstly I would like to say farewell to you, Mr Speaker, John Warner. You have been a member of this House for nearly 12 years. I am sure you will agree that the most demanding period of your parliamentary career has been the last three years, during which time you have occupied Mr Speaker's chair. You have always endeavoured to be fair to all members. We thank you for your efforts and your kindness. I would like to say in a special way that I have always appreciated your most gentlemanly, courteous and kind manner and the way in which you have conducted this House. Mr Speaker, I pay a special tribute to you and to your good wife, Mary Al. You have been very close friends of mine. We wish you a very happy retirement.

Two of my Cabinet colleagues are also retiring. I am sure that every member of this House regrets that Mr Claude Wharton will not be in this House for the next

session. He has been a very close friend of mine for a long period. He has been a member of this Assembly for 26 years. That is a big part of his life.

Mr Mackenroth: He didn't learn much.

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: He has been a Minister of the Crown for 11½ years and Leader of the House for seven years. He attained considerably high positions in his career. Like many of us did, Claude started off with hard work and has risen to his present high position, a position that the honourable member who made that derogatory remark will never attain.

I thank you, Claude—you have been a very good friend to me—for all those years of dedication, the tireless way in which you have represented your electorate, the way that you have travelled the State and worked for other members of Parliament and for the way you have worked in this House. Day and night you have been here at your post of duty. I can only pay you the highest tribute. You have been a friend to us all.

He deserves special thanks for his work as Leader of the House which is, like your position, Mr Speaker, not very easy. He has displayed a terrier-like attitude to this work, which he has carried out with good humour and enthusiasm. All members of the House respect him for the work he has done in the community and in this Chamber.

In a similar way I pay a tribute to Neil Turner, who has been a member for nearly 12 years and a Minister for three years. Neil has certainly left his mark in this building and in the records of this House. In that short time, particularly as a Minister, Neil has distinguished himself to a remarkable degree. I regret that so early in his life and his career he has taken the decision to retire. He has worked hard for the primary producers of the State. He feels he has given a big part of his life to the State. He has been away from his family during a very difficult period. He took over the portfolio during a difficult period for primary producers and for the national economy, but he quickly gained an understanding of the many complex areas under his control and worked tirelessly on behalf of rural Queensland. Neil is a very good, true friend of mine. His wife, Ute, and their family are in the gallery this afternoon. I say "thank you" to Neil and to them for their sacrifice and for the way they have worked.

The Government Deputy Whip, Bill Kaus, has indicated his intention to retire after more than 20 years as a member of this Parliament. Similarly, the member for Ithaca, Col Miller, is retiring after having been a member of this Parliament for 20 years. I notice Col is not in the Chamber for the moment. I thank Bill for his loyalty and dedication to me and to the Government. I appreciate it immensely. Bill has been intensely loyal. Government members wish Bill and his wife every happiness and success in their future business.

The member for Aspley, Brian Cahill, is making an announcement today about his future. I am sure that all members join with me in extending best wishes to Brian and his wife and family, who have given him so much support. I admire and respect Brian Cahill. He has had his problems, but he has faced up to them——

Mr R. J. Gibbs: This is the pits of hypocrisy, and you know it. It is disgusting. You are showing yourself in your true colours.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Wolston! I would appreciate it if the honourable member would show some restraint.

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: I repeat that Brian Cahill has had a problem. However, Government members admire and respect the fact that he has faced up to and overcome that problem. I pay tribute to him—which I would not do for the member for Wolston. I thank Brian for everything.

The member for Callide, Lindsay Hartwig, and the member for South Brisbane, Jim Fouras, have also announced that they will not be seeking re-election. Government members wish them an enjoyable retirement. Lindsay is a country man. He and I worked

together for a long time. I regret that, for particular reasons, we went in different directions. However, Government members wish Lindsay well. We wish Lindsay and his wife a long and happy retirement. He is a man who is very much respected. Government members also wish Jim well, in spite of the many times we have crossed swords.

I thank all my ministerial and parliamentary colleagues. I always say that, because of the team that I have, I am the luckiest Premier alive. All Government members have shown loyalty and dedication to this Parliament and to this State. I thank each and every one of them.

I express my thanks to the officers of Parliament and the staff of Parliament House, who ensure the successful running of the entire parliamentary complex. I thank the Clerk of the Parliament, Alan Woodward, and his staff; the Chief Reporter and his staff; the parliamentary librarian and his staff; and the staff of the refreshment rooms, led by Mrs Brenda Milton. I thank also all the parliamentary attendants, the secretarial staff, the telephonists and the gardeners. I express the appreciation of the Government for their help during the year.

It would be remiss of me if I did not mention the retirement this year of the former Chief Reporter, Bevan Battersby, and the former Deputy Chief Reporter, Robert Gustavson. Those two gentlemen gave devoted service over a long period. I mention also Margaret Hughes, who has recently retired because of ill health. Margaret has been a great friend for many years. Government members thank her for her kindness and the courteous help that she has always given to all members of Parliament.

Finally, I thank my wife, Florence, who has done a tremendous job and shown great dedication. I thank her for her love and support and, indeed, for the assistance she has given to many others. All members of Parliament owe their spouses and families a great debt of gratitude and thanks for their support and encouragement, without which we could not do our job. Parliamentary life places pressures on the family unit in so many ways. Members do appreciate the love and understanding of their wives and children.

Soon we leave for the hustings, and I look forward to that with great confidence and enthusiasm. I look forward to joining my colleagues here in stable Government to continue Queensland's progress in the future.

Mr WARBURTON (Sandgate—Leader of the Opposition) (5.15 p.m.): I welcome the opportunity to thank many people who, over the last three years, have been of tremendous assistance to me and provided a form of comradeship which we all cherish.

I personally thank you Mr Speaker—you have indicated your retirement—for the way in which you have on many occasions, seen fit to consult me on matters of mutual concern. I very much appreciate that.

I express my thanks also and those of my colleagues to the Chairman of Committees and the Temporary Chairmen of Committees for the work they have carried out and the way in which they have conducted themselves and assisted in the running of this Parliament over a period of time.

The Clerk of Parliament, Mr Alan Woodward, and the Deputy Clerk, Mr Bob Doyle, and the table staff have, as always, been of tremendous assistance to both sides of the House. Nothing has been too much trouble for them and I would have to say about those particular gentlemen, and for that matter all of the staff, that I have never heard anybody in this House say a bad word about any of them.

I extend my thanks to the Whips, who are not generally appreciated—Don Neal, Bill Kaus, Brian Davis and Angus Innes, who is the Liberal Whip. Their job is not easy, naturally enough, but our thanks must go to them for their assistance in the running of the House. Our thanks go also to Claude Wharton, Leader of the House, and my own colleague, Bill Prest. Both gentlemen have done a very fine job over the three-year period.

My thanks go to the attendants in Parliament House and the annexe, John Fraser and his team and people of that ilk. Again, nothing has been too much trouble for them when schoolchildren and visitors come to Parliament House. They are only too willing to help people. They are to be commended, and I take this opportunity to do so.

The Chief Reporter, his deputy, the Hansard reporters, the Hansard typists—all the people attached to the Hansard staff—make a tremendous contribution to the running of this Parliament. Their contribution is often unsung, but they make a tremendous contribution to the overall workings of this place.

The media are always vigilant and spend much time in this House reporting the proceedings. We should all be thankful that that occurs.

I join with the Premier in thanking the retiring members of this Parliament for the way in which they have conducted themselves. Certainly some members on this side of the House will miss them. To Jim Fouras I say, "Thank you very much. It has been great having you along." Neil Turner did his own valedictory yesterday, but I wish him well in his retirement. I understand that Brian Cahill is retiring, along with Claude Wharton, Lindsay Hartwig, Col Miller, who has been around the ridges for a long time, and Billy Kaus of bowling, cricketing and shooting fame. The Opposition's best wishes go to them all. We hope you have a very happy retirement.

I could not proceed without mentioning the members of my staff. My staff work against great odds, and I cannot thank them enough for their work and loyalty.

The refreshment-rooms staff are part of the large number of people in Parliament House of whom I have never heard a bad word. The security staff, the gardeners, the telephonists and of course the library staff all do a tremendous job. The library staff have much to put up with because of requests and demands for urgent material, but they are always there, they never whinge and they do their best to help each and every one of us.

To all my colleagues, to all members of the other parties and to the Independents, I extend my best wishes. I must be honest with members of the Liberal Party and the National Party; it is really my sincere wish and my hope that I see them at the next former members' dinner when I address them on the next occasion.

Hon. Sir WILLIAM KNOX (Nundah) (5.20 p.m.): I support most of the sentiments expressed by the two previous speakers. At a valedictory such as this prior to an election, there is always a certain amount of sadness, because members do announce their retirements. I have been very closely associated with some of them. In many ways their retirement is regrettable; at the same time, it is a decision that must be made. Every election has its turn-over of members—it is very high these days— but those able to elect to retire on their own terms are probably the fortunate ones. To those people, on behalf of my party and personally, I extend very warm greetings and good health for their future.

I understand that Mr Cahill has announced his retirement. I wish him well in whatever future endeavours he pursues. He has certainly been a very charming person to know. I am sorry that his circumstances are such that he is not going to be with us. The same comments would apply to the member for South Brisbane, Mr Fouras, who is not retiring by choice. Nevertheless, he has announced his retirement. He and I differ politically, but he is certainly regarded very highly by me and other members and by all people associated with the Parliament. His contributions in the debates over the years have been of a very high standard. He was a very active member of the Subordinate Legislation Committee. He will be remembered as a very sincere member.

I regret very much that the member for Callide, Lindsay Hartwig, is retiring. He is one of the delightful people in this House and one of the characters whom we will always remember. He is very straightforward and blunt and never short of a bon mot to encourage us one way or the other. He has given distinguished service to this State as chairman of the Livingstone Shire Council, as a member of another council, and as chairman of a regional electricity board. I have been with him in his electorate and I

have been enormously impressed with the quality of his representation on behalf of his constituents. While he had certainly had a turbulent political career, as some of us have had, he has nevertheless been a very genuine representative of his constituents.

I particularly want to make some reference to Bill Kaus. I have had a very long association with Bill. I have been with him in this Chamber for over 20 years. He, along with Col Miller and yourself, Mr Speaker, is one of the few members left in the House who served in the war. We tend to forget with the passage of time. I am talking only about the members who are retiring. My records show that Bill Lickiss will be returned with an increased majority, and I know that other members who will be remaining have served with distinction in the fighting forces. However, I am referring only to those members who are retiring. Bill Kaus has served his country with great distinction, not only in war but also in peace-time. He was also an outstanding and distinguished A-grade cricketer who represented his State. He is a great sportsman and a great parliamentarian. I regret that he has elected to retire. I had a happy association with him not only in the House during debates but also outside on committees and in the sporting arena. He usually beats me at golf. As he will now have more time to practice, I suspect that he will leave us all behind.

I wish to mention Neil Turner in particular. He has a very distinguished record in this House as both a Minister and a member. On several occasions, I had the pleasure of campaigning for him in his electorate of Warrego. He is a gentleman who is highly regarded right throughout his electorate and the State. I have immensely enjoyed being with Mr Turner on those occasions. I am sorry that those circumstances do not pertain at the moment. Nevertheless, he will be missed following his retirement. I believe that he is retiring at far too young an age. Neil Turner still has a lot of good years left. I hope that his distinguished public life will be revealed in many other ways. As I said on radio yesterday, if anyone were to attack the probity of Mr Turner, I would be the first to defend him.

I turn now to the honourable member for Burnett, the Honourable Claude Wharton. I have a long-standing affection for him, and I feel sure that that will continue into the future. Mr Wharton has been a Minister since 1977 and Leader of the House since 1979.

I believe that the position of Leader of the House is the most difficult of all positions within this Parliament. There is no doubt in my mind that his is a very difficult and arduous task. It calls for a great deal of patience and diplomacy. There were occasions when Mr Wharton and I exchanged sharp words and then regretted it immediately afterwards. Nevertheless, that is part of the normal cut and thrust of parliamentary procedures.

I used to think that the Leader of the Opposition had a most difficult task. However, I do believe that the task of the Leader of the House is also a difficult one. Mr Wharton has carried out his task with quiet efficiency and, on most occasions, with satisfaction all round.

I wish you, Claude, the very best in your retirement. I also wish you good health. You seem to look a lot younger than your age. Something is certainly keeping you young. Keep on keeping on.

I turn now to the honourable member for Ithaca, Col Miller, with whom I have had a long-standing friendship. I have great respect and affection for both Col Miller and Bill Kaus. Col Miller and I have been very closely associated during our many years in this Parliament, and I regret that he, too, is retiring. He was a Minister for a short time, and he was also a very distinguished Chairman of Committees. Although that is a tough job, he carried it out with a great deal of dignity and firmness, which I believe was respected by all honourable members.

Col Miller also has a very distinguished war record. He served with the AIF, and Mr Kaus served in the air force. He will be very greatly missed. I believe that, because of his personality, people will be telling stories about Col Miller for years to come. He is one of the more interesting members of this House.

I would particularly like to pass some remarks about you, Mr Speaker, and to wish you and your good lady well in the future. You have been accused of being a gentleman. I believe that it is time that honourable members saw some more gentlemen in this House. I say that without any reflection upon the ladies. I believe that being a gentleman in Parliament should be an attribute and not something to be sneered at or frowned upon.

Mr Speaker, you have been more than a gentleman as Speaker. You have extended the greatest of courtesies not only to honourable members but also to those people who are associated with the House.

I do not believe that the media or the visitors to this House have ever had better facilities and arrangements made for them than those that have been provided under your Speakership. I believe that anyone within the media who makes disparaging remarks about you obviously does not realise what you have achieved for those people who have worked under very difficult circumstances during the three years you have been the Speaker.

Mr Speaker had a distinguished record in the armed forces. I thank him for his reforms, principally establishing very clearly in words some of the rulings that were desirable in the House, for which he is owed a debt of gratitude, as well as the arrangements that he has made for visitors to the House. There are many more visitors to Parliament House now than there have ever been. That is as a result of his direction and organisation of the facilities of the House. That helps enormously in the public relations of the Parliament, which is something that tends to be forgotten. We are all so busy worrying about our own positions that we forget about the public relations of the Parliament itself, and that rests very heavily on the shoulders of the Speaker. We thank you for that and wish you and your good lady the very best of health in the future.

To the officers of the centre table, to Hansard reporters, the library staff, refreshment rooms and domestic staff, the gardeners, the security people, the services co-ordinator, Don Duncanson—we also wish them the very best for the festive season, which is not far away, and also thank them for the contribution that they make to the smooth running of the Parliament.

I wish the Leader of the Opposition well and I hope that he stays there for a long time. That is not an unusual thing to wish the Leader of the Opposition at a valedictory, but we do appreciate the role that he plays and the difficulties that he has. We certainly wish him personal good health.

I say to the Premier and his good lady: may they enjoy good health. I hope that everything goes smoothly for them in their personal lives. Both of them are in public life, which is a very busy life. It must place great pressure on the family. Knowing my own domestic worries from time to time and the pressures on my family, which are considerably less than those on the Premier, I know it does take some patience to handle all the difficulties that he faces.

We in the democratic process of Parliament do respect one another, even though from time to time we may have differences of opinion politically or personally. But it all works very satisfactorily in the long run, mainly because the system itself, having been well established for so long, has engendered that sort of respect. One hopes that even in these times it is possible for us to forget about our political difficulties and personal differences and pay some compliments to one another, and I am happy to do it.

Hon. C. A. WHARTON (Burnett—Minister for Works and Housing) (5.33 p.m.): I thank everyone who has made kind remarks about me in the House. I have enjoyed the 26 years that I have been the member for Burnett and a member of Parliament.

The past quarter century has been an exciting time for Queensland. It has been my good fortune to be part of a Government that has promoted the growth of the State during that period.

I am particularly pleased when, as Works and Housing Minister, I can look back on the great amount of building that has gone on in Queensland to make it a better State.

When I first became member for Burnett in 1960, the State had a population of 1.5 million people. Today, the population is 2.5 million, an increase of 66 per cent in those 26 years. It has been a time of tremendous growth, of great progress for Queensland, and of change. That can be seen everywhere, even here at Parliament House.

When I first arrived here, Parliament House consisted of just this building and the lodge. Then the construction of the annexe provided members with new accommodation and administration facilities. Then the sittings of Parliament transferred to the annexe building for a while until this beautiful old building that we now inhabit could be restored and renovated. The renovations have brought about one of the most noticeable changes to Parliament in the past quarter century, that is, the presence of the media.

In the early 1960s, just a handful of political roundsmen covered the Parliament. Their practice was to sit through the proceedings of the House and perhaps contact a member or a Minister at some time during the day. Their tools of trade were a notebook, pencil and a typewriter. Today, the ratio of journalists to members has increased dramatically and, not infrequently, there is barely standing room only in the press gallery. Today, journalists not only report news from the House but also, as often as not, interpret what is happening. Armed with tape recorders, cameras and video machines, they ply a highly electronic trade that can relay the morning's proceedings of the House into the homes of constituents by midday.

The proceedings of the House have also changed; for the better, I feel. One change has been the way in which legislation is handled. In previous years, the first-reading stage of a Bill was a series of long, rambling speeches that in many cases bore little relationship to the legislation. In those days, in the earlier stages of the session the sittings extended for four days and two nights. That situation has changed because honourable members now have the Bills delivered into their hands and are given time to consider them before the debate moves to the second-reading stage. The new procedures ensure that because honourable members still have sufficient time to address matters that are of interest to them, the debate is more relevant to the legislation. The changes have made the processing of legislation more effective and more efficient.

As I look round the Chamber, I see very few faces of honourable members who were here when I first entered Parliament. The honourable member for Nundah (Sir William Knox) is one, and Sir Joh is the other. Sir Joh first entered Parliament in 1947, which demonstrates his wonderful record of service to the Parliament.

I have known Sir Joh for many years. It could be said that we are neighbours because we share a common electorate boundary in the Burnett region. I remember Sir Joh rushing down to Brisbane from the south Burnett area; I remember him at the airport in his small, single-engine aircraft, in a hurry to get to Brisbane and the Parliament. Sir Joh has changed a little over the years, but there are still not enough hours in the day for him to do all the things he wants to do.

Queenslanders owe a great deal to this man who has great energy, foresight and leadership skills. I thank Sir Joh for all his help and encouragement. He has been a great friend of mine and he is a great gentleman. I particularly thank Sir Joh for the help and encouragement he has extended to all honourable members in the interests of achieving and maintaining good Government for the people of Queensland.

It has also been my good fortune to represent the people of the Burnett electorate. The electorate has developed considerably, and I am glad that I was given the chance to work with the people who live in that area and achieve that progress.

Finally, I thank you, Mr Speaker, for your courtesy and the gentlemanly way in which you have conducted yourself in this House. You have endeared yourself to all honourable members because of the way you have lent dignity to the proceedings of Parliament.

I also thank Neil Turner, Brian Cahill, Lindsay Hartwig and Jim Fouras, who also leave Parliament today, for their friendship and co-operation during their periods of representation.

More particularly, I thank the Clerk of Parliament and his staff. I thank all those who work at Parliament House and in the refreshment rooms for their help and assistance and, in many cases, the guidance that has been offered.

I extend to the Premier and my Cabinet colleagues, and all honourable members, my sincere wishes for the greatest gifts of all—good health and happiness.

Mr CAHILL (Aspley) (5.38 p.m.): Mr Speaker, early in this century, one of Australia's most famous poets, C. J. Dennis—sometimes called the “Laureate of the Larrikin”—penned these lines in his best-known work *The Songs of a Sentimental Bloke*—

“The world ’as got me snouted jist a treat.
Crool fortchin’s dirty left ’as smote me soul;
and all them joys uv life i ’eld so sweet
is up the pole!”

I hope that the House is not anticipating something of those sentiments in this address. Granted, the path has not been a smooth one of late; but no-one in politics can be a realist and at the same time expect always that the crooked will be made straight and the rough places plain. My version of the old political motto is—“Sometimes explain, never complain.”

Mr Speaker, it is not my intention in this, my farewell speech to honourable members as one of their number, to indulge in petty squabbles. I know that honourable members will allow me a measure of dignity and a measure of respect.

During my time in this place, I have supported my Government and my Premier consistently, and I shall continue to do so. If I have not always liked the way the organisation of my party has behaved, I am sure that I am not alone in that; nor is any member of this Chamber, no matter what his or her political affiliation. However, it is not dissimilar, for example, to an analogy with the game of Rugby, which is one of my favourite sports, in that if certain players or officials do not conduct themselves always in what some feel are the best traditions of the code, that is no reason to abandon the game. My loyalty to what I see as the *raison d'être* of the National Party is as strong as it ever was.

I deny strenuously that it has ever wavered. I refute absolutely that I have not acted in the best interests of the party. I refute absolutely that I have acted with personal bias to the detriment of the lady who has been chosen as the party candidate for Aspley. I say to you, Mr Speaker, and to honourable members, on my oath as a parliamentarian, that my motives and my actions were always objective and clinical, even though the matter was obviously subjective.

In this I have been supported by hundreds of well-wishers inside and outside the party and they have my gratitude for their unflagging loyalty. Any party, any political system is the better for the interest taken by such people.

There were two occasions last year which brought me a certain notoriety—one an accident, one deliberate. As for the first, it was an unfortunate prank which was never meant to embarrass a fellow-parliamentarian nor the journalist concerned. That it did has been a matter for regret; but neither gentleman has held any grudge. However, two of the most useless words in the language when used in juxtaposition are “if only”.

As for the second matter, I have to say that my implacable opposition to abortion on demand is as firmly fixed as ever, although I grant others the right to hold dissenting views. Given a similar set of circumstances I would act again as I did then, albeit somewhat more smoothly. In any case, I want the House to know how grateful I am to the Premier for his unflagging support and Christian forbearance during that time and subsequently. Likewise, I am grateful for the support of so many of my colleagues from both sides of the House; but especially that which came from the Honourable the

Minister for Education; the Honourable the Minister for Primary Industries; and another Minister whom I shall mention a little later on.

So, for a time I was down; but there is a good deal to be said for being in the prone position. It has great historical precedent. It even happened to the Son of God one night in a garden a long way from here, a long time ago. The difference for me was that had it not been for the support I mentioned, plus yours, Mr Speaker, together with the prayers, the love and devotion of Denise, my family and loving friends, I would still be there, or worse. However the grace was given to me to rely again on the wisdom of Psalm 121 and from there it was a very easy transition to the hope and promises of Psalm 23.

Nevertheless, Mr Speaker, it would be idle to deny that this is something of a melancholy task I have today. After three years of having had the privilege of representing the finest people in this great State, I have to inform you that I have reached the decision not to contest the forthcoming election. I had wished that it could have been different and I know that I am disappointing many wonderful people; but my late father, of blessed memory, taught me that God's ways are not always our ways.

Apart from what I have said, I do not intend to canvass further the background of circumstances which led, ultimately, to my decision. The events of those days are now in the past. Certainly they played a part in my reaching my decision but they were not the most important part. The loss of my party's endorsement, a loss which some trace partially to those previous events, was only another contributing factor.

However, when I joined the National Party I gave my solemn undertaking that I would always give my support to properly endorsed party candidates. Every member of this House who is a party member has given a similar pledge to his or her affiliate group. I would like to be remembered, if for nothing else, as a man who kept his word, despite at times having to counter the most mephitic mendacity.

In recent weeks, as I pondered on my future, I have had the benefit again of very wise counsel from my good friend and colleague the Honourable the Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing. The Minister has been a real friend during my parliamentary life, and I value his experienced judgment. His advice was a major contributing factor in my decision not to contest. I thank him publicly for his advice and his continuing friendship.

I have also had to consider what effect this saga was having on Denise and my family, the love and loyalty of whom, I repeat, have been unquestioning and constant. All honourable members know the strain of public life, but that is a decision they assume for themselves. The strain upon those closest to us is as great; and they are called upon to share many burdens. I could not allow my wife and family to continue to suffer from microscopic media scrutiny, public questioning and the almost intolerable personal anguish of not knowing what my—and their—future held.

I must say, however, that in many cases, Denise has been more steely and resilient than I. For what she is and for what she has been, my admiration for her is boundless.

I do not condemn the media for their coverage of me. I have been a member of the Australian Journalists Association for a long time; and, with very few exceptions, my journalist colleagues have treated me always with decency, honesty and fairness. There have been singular exceptions but they have been far outnumbered by the majority.

I believe that I have fulfilled my duties and responsibilities diligently as the member for Aspley. The electorate has seen over \$2m worth of roadworks and a \$1.5m park 'n ride in that time. All my schools have been painted externally and internally, their facilities have been upgraded, repaired or replaced; and a new swimming-pool opened. With grants to sporting and community bodies there has been something like \$4m spent in three years.

I will continue to make strong representations for the electorate until my retirement; but most importantly, I hope that I will be remembered out there as never having flagged

in my fight for the rights of the little people, who can feel so cowed, helpless and alone when dealing with bureaucracy and big business.

In any case, the situation in Aspley is a positive advertisement for the seat's having been in Government hands and a strong recommendation for having it remain so.

The National Party has endorsed as its candidate Mrs Nelson, my predecessor. I wish her well. As with all other National Party candidates, she has my full support. I am sure that Aspley can look forward to the same sort of representation from her as it had when she was the incumbent.

In farewelling the many friends I have made in this place, I must mention also, the staff from the Clerk down, whose courtesy, kindness and co-operation have been unflinching. I would say that in these tumultuous times not many members have the opportunity of being able to make a formal speech of farewell. It would be an interesting exercise to work out how many members leave the Parliament because of the judgment of their electorates rather than because of their own decision or the decisions of others. I can take some comfort from the fact that I contested Aspley once—and won it handsomely. It has been warming to know how many people wanted the opportunity of having me prove that it could be done again; but it is not to be.

However, as Jack Point says in *The Yeomen of the Guard*—

“For look you!

There is humour in all things.”

I have accepted one of several lucrative offers that have been made to me by private enterprise, in order to begin a new career. What it is I am not yet at liberty to disclose.

There are just one or two things I should like to mention before I conclude. A very large worry of mine is that we are in great danger that our oh-so-wonderful technology could become a runaway juggernaut, creating an unlovely gap between our technical achievements and our cultural and social ideals. It is a situation which needs constant monitoring by our legislators.

Another problem I see is the interference by some churches in political matters. It is not the mission of the church to work out practical methods by which the just state is brought into being. The function of the church is to form public men and women who will be people of Christian conscience and moral purpose, who believe that human beings have a right to live on the plane of morality, dignity and security intended by God.

Mr Speaker, this is a noble vocation, properly carried out. It ought to be ennobling. As Socrates said long ago—

“No one can come to harm in contemplating ideals of love, government, or education.”

So the danger to parliamentarians comes when they begin to feel that they and party hierarchies are more important than the Parliament. They should be aware of the old Latin tag: *sic transit gloria mundi!*

Mr Comben: They do not understand.

Mr CAHILL: Thus passeth earthly glory.

I hope most sincerely that the Parliament, this precious institution, has not been damaged by my having been here. I am human enough to wish that it and the political process are somewhat the better. I have tried to serve this place and the people of Queensland in the terms of the State motto.

With that in mind, I trust that honourable members will think it not too florid if I make to them a similar plea as Hamlet did to Horatio—

“If thou didst ever hold me in thy heart,

Absent thee from felicity awhile;

And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain
To tell my story."

I say that in the unlikely event they ever get around to thinking it worth while!

Mr HARTWIG (Callide) (5.47 p.m.): The time has come for goodbye. I wish to thank those who have already spoken for paying tribute to me and to my colleagues who are departing from this Chamber this afternoon.

I always believed that a parliamentarian must act in that capacity at all times. He must uphold the tradition of Parliament, whether it be here or in a place within his electorate. I wish to say that I have had the pleasure of representing a marvellous part of Queensland and wonderful people. The Hartwig family just celebrated 100 years of settlement in the Burnett. I am very, very proud to say that my ancestors pioneered that area and played an important part in the settlement of this great State.

When I heard the Premier speak, I remembered meeting him on the back of a truck at the Murgon show many years ago. I have always had the greatest admiration for him. Many people try to make play of the fact that there was a difference between the Premier and me. I want to give the lie to that. It was not the Premier who put me in the position in which I am now, nor was it the parliamentary wing of the National Party. My colleagues knew me better than some other people did. In this the last speech that I make in this House, I say that I was sacked from the National Party because I was accused of wanting to form a new party. That is a lie. At no time did I ever try to influence anybody or discuss with anyone the formation of a new party or a new State. My colleagues who were with me at the time would fully appreciate that statement.

However, that is in the past. I have received wonderful support from my wife, Estelle, and my family, who are here today. My grandchildren are here today to witness my last day as a member of Parliament. It is not the end of the world. I look forward to doing other interesting things. I hope to write a book. It could well be a national best seller.

I have pleasure in talking about a man whom I first met in local government, Russell Hinze. To me, Russ Hinze is one man who stands out in this Government. He has put Queensland on top as a great racing State. He has really improved racing. Queensland, once described as the country hack, is now the top State in the racing fraternity of Australia and the southern hemisphere. The tremendous amount of work that Russell has put into racing is a great tribute to him.

Many years ago Claudie Wharton lived just down river from me. I met Claudie long before he and I ever got tangled up in politics and local government. I had the pleasure of being chairman of the Monto Shire Council and the Livingstone Shire Council. I was also Chairman of the Capricornia Regional Electricity Board in Rockhampton.

It might surprise many honourable members to know that I did retire from public life in 1970. Tragically, my wife and I lost our only son, who always wanted me to run for Parliament. To that extent, I have carried out his wishes.

Unfortunately, the privilege of being a member of Parliament is not appreciated by many people. I would like to leave this place as a friend of all members. I wish all members success in the future. It has riled and hurt me, as an Independent, to hear good people from different parties arguing with each other in this Parliament. I hope that the coalition will not fade from people's memories. I believe that a coalition Government is necessary for the administration of this State.

Many years before I became a member of this Parliament I met Sir William Knox. He visited Monto when I was chairman of the Monto Shire Council. Bill Knox was then a young member of Parliament.

I wish you well, Mr Speaker, and I thank you for the many courtesies that you have extended to me. I thank also the other members who are retiring from Parliament.

My good wishes go to Neil Turner, Billy Kaus, Col Miller, Brian Cahill, Jimmy Fouras, Claude Wharton and you, Mr Speaker. I hope I have not missed anybody.

It has been a great privilege to have served in this Parliament. I well recall knocking on an old chap's door in 1972. He opened the door and said, "What do you want?" I said, "I am standing for the Country Party in the next election." He spat rather vigorously and said, "A politician, hey? You fellows annoy me." I said, "Don't get insulting." He said, "You're like bananas." I said, "What do you mean we're like bananas?" He said, "You go in green and you come out yellow." I do not believe that, but I will never forget that saying. It is something that I have remembered.

I am not going out yellow. I am going out while I feel reasonably well. I did intend to stand for the seat of Callide at the next election. However, owing to medical advice, and for my wife and family's sake, I have decided to retire.

I thank one and all. I wish everybody the best of luck.

Mr FOURAS (South Brisbane) (5.55 p.m.): Mr Speaker, as it is my last day of service in this Parliament I would take the opportunity to say a few words. It has been a wonderful experience representing the people of South Brisbane over the last nine years. The electorate of South Brisbane is the most cosmopolitan electorate in the whole of Queensland. It consists of people who are vibrant and vital and they are the friendliest people in this whole State. I have been privileged to serve them.

The role of a parliamentarian is one that I have found exhilarating, fascinating and at times stimulating, but at other times also quite frustrating. Yet if you come here with commitment and want to give of yourself and you have something to give, it is worth while. The role of a politician is to serve his electorate, the Parliament and his party. I would not have been here if I had not been endorsed as a candidate by the Australian Labor Party. I have pledged to continue my loyalty to that great organisation. I am leaving here today the same person as the one who came in here nine years ago. My dignity is intact. The people that I have met have made it a wonderful experience for me.

I would like to see this Parliament work a little bit better. It is a shocking waste of talent. The people from all sides are not utilised on committees and we are not able to exercise our right to behave as parliamentarians. It is a shocking waste. It is unfortunate, in a way, that this Parliament is only being used to legitimise the actions of a Government. It is not being used as a Parliament ought to be used. I say quite honestly that if we allow the public to perceive that illegitimate act as illegitimate, if we allow the people out there to become cynical, then we are in for real problems.

At the time when I ran for Parliament the first time, I was putting a pamphlet in a letter-box and a bloke said, "Don't you dare to do that." I said, "Don't you like me, don't you like my party, or what?" He said, "No, I have nothing to do with politicians." I said, "Think about it. When you go to vote in four weeks' time there will be four names on that ballot paper. One of those names will be your member of Parliament. Why don't you take 20 seconds to think about what is in your interests and what the place is all about?" He followed me down the road about 100 yards and said, "You know, you are right." We must not allow people to lose respect for this great institution.

I would like to thank the staff that works around this Parliament, the library staff, the Hansard reporters, the refreshment room people and the attendants. They make this place very bearable. In fact it is a pity that this Parliament does not function as professionally and with as much commitment and caring inside this Chamber as do those around it.

Having said that, I would like to leave my political differences in this Chamber. I wish all the people, particularly those who are retiring, all the best. Lindsay, Brian and my good friend Claude—we used to discuss housing issues but I think he is a great little bloke—Neil Turner, I have found him very friendly, Bill Kaus and Col Miller. To the rest of you who are going to the polls, I say, may the better man win and may you all have a great time.

Last but not least, Mr Speaker. At the past members' dinner my colleague Tom Burns said that you are one-eyed and cross-eared. I would not be as unkind as to say that. I, too, join with the others in wishing you a very happy retirement. You are a very pleasant gentleman. There is no doubt about that, and I wish you all the best.

I conclude by saying that I have found this to be a tremendous experience, I have enjoyed it, and I thank you all.

Honourable Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. N. J. TURNER (Warrego—Minister for Primary Industries) (5.59 p.m.): Mr Speaker, if I may take just a few moments of your time, although I virtually made a valedictory speech yesterday during the debate on matters of public interest, I cannot let this occasion go past without thanking everyone who has expressed kind words to me on my retirement. Thank you very much. Yesterday I did thank everyone who I believed needed thanking for all that they have done for me. I would like to take this opportunity to thank those people who have done the most for me and have sacrificed the most; my wife and family.

Mr ROW (Hinchinbrook) (6 p.m.): I wish to pay a tribute to you, Mr Speaker, for the very productive partnership that I have enjoyed with you as your deputy over the term of this Parliament. I believe that we have maintained very determinedly a successful partnership in the running of this Parliament. In those remarks I include the retiring Leader of the House (Claude Wharton). Claude has worked very hard in his capacity and probably as hard as you have in yours. It pleased me very greatly to be able to say that between the two of you my duties as Chairman of Committees were made very pleasing, and were probably expedited to some extent.

I pay a tribute to my panel of Temporary Chairmen from both sides who have also carried out their duties creditably. I must say that sometimes, after midnight, they are very hard to find.

I pay a special tribute to the retiring members, whose company I have enjoyed for many years. It is always with a little sadness that one thinks that that long partnership may be to some extent severed, but one knows that it is not totally severed because this place is one place to which members return and continue the strong friendships that they have made over the years.

I also pay tribute to Tom Martin, the Speaker's attendant. He and the other parliamentary attendants have been very kind to me. During my term as Chairman of Committees, I have also been closely associated with the Clerk of the Parliament and the Deputy Clerk of the Parliament. I owe them a great deal of gratitude. Likewise, I have been closely associated with the Hansard staff. Our association has been very pleasant.

If I were to wax lyrical on this occasion, I think that my inspiration would come from the words of that very ancient Persian poet, Omar Khayyam, who said—

“The moving finger writes and having writ, moves on;
Not all thy piety nor wit can lure it back to cancel half a line;
Nor all thy tears wash out a word of it.”

There are no tears in this place but a lot of straight-backed men.

Mr MILLER (Ithaca) (6.3 p.m.): As the last day of this Parliament draws to a close, I take the opportunity to thank the people present for the privilege of representing them in this Parliament for 20 years. I have enjoyed those 20 years immensely. I have appreciated the privilege that the people of Ithaca have given me for those 20 years. To those people I say, “Thank you very much for the opportunity of representing you here in this Parliament.”

I have a great respect for this Parliament and I have a great respect for most people in it. I leave it with regret, but there comes a time when you must close the door on one part of your life and open another door. On 26 September I will be closing the door

on this part of my life. Tonight I take the opportunity of wishing all those members who are retiring the very best of health and success in their future endeavours.

To all those members seeking re-election, I wish them well. Thank you for the opportunity of serving with you. I hope that we meet some time in the future.

Mr KAUS (Mansfield) (6.4 p.m.): As I am retiring, I would like to thank the Premier and all those other gentlemen for their kind words. I can go back 20 years to the time when I stood for the seat of Hawthorne. I lost the seat of Hawthorne the first time that I campaigned for it. People talk about resources. I decided to stand again for the seat of Hawthorne in 1966. I believe that during 1966, Col Miller, Russ Hinze, Charles Porter, Billy Hewitt, one of the Wood boys, Vi Jordan, one or two other members and I entered this Parliament. That was the class of '66, and today there are only three left—Russ, Col Miller and myself.

As Mr Miller said, there comes a time in one's life when other decisions have to be made. I have made the decision to retire. While I have been a member of this Parliament, 350-odd members have passed through this House. That figure includes those members who have either passed away, lost seats or retired. That is a lot of people. Many of those members were very dedicated and they did very good jobs for their electorates.

I now thank all those people of the Hawthorne electorate who originally supported me in my election campaign. When I won the seat of Mansfield, I was virtually going home, because I was born in that area. It was a great pleasure for me to win that seat in 1972. At that time there was a redistribution. I have survived about three or four partial redistributions. That proves the point that a person who looks after his electorate and receives the support of the electorate will always win. It is hard work, but I have enjoyed every moment of it. It was with regret that I decided to retire.

I would also like to thank the staff of this establishment, in particular, the table staff. I believe that Mr Johnson was the Clerk of the Parliament when I first entered this House, so I have seen quite a few different men in charge of the House.

Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen: It was Mr Dunlop.

Mr KAUS: That is right. I believe that Mr Johnson came after Mr Dunlop. I must be getting too old.

I have enjoyed every moment of my time as a member of this Parliament. I will miss it. However, I believe that the time does come in one's life when one must open another door, which I have opened. I intend to go into business. At my age, retirement will also give me the opportunity of looking after my grand-children. I believe that everyone has that in mind. All honourable members have been through the mill, and we must put those youngsters on the bottom of the ladder and show them the right track to take in life.

I thank Sir William Knox for the nice words that he had to say about me. He mentioned the fact that there are only one or two members left who represented our country during the war. The war was quite a traumatic experience for me, although I do not speak about it much. However, I must say that I served for three years in the war, and I was part of a special squadron of 30 different crews. I was a member of the lucky three crews that were left out of that group of 30.

I have already mentioned that I represented two electorates during my time in this Parliament. It has been a great experience for me to have sat in this House.

With those few remarks, I wish all those honourable members who are retiring all the best and good health. It has been a pleasure being in the House with them. I wish all those who have been endorsed for the coming election all the best, and I hope that they come through.

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members. It is not my intention to hold up the House, but it does behove me, I believe, to bring to your attention that your Parliament House

is running as smoothly as anyone could expect. I would therefore like to briefly acknowledge and thank everyone who has contributed to make this so.

In a few minutes, I will leave the chair for the last time and there is no doubt that in the days ahead I will feel a great sense of loss in not seeing you all again. As Speaker, I can assure you all that I have done my best in what could be described and was described even before I took it, as a difficult job. Certainly it has been difficult at times. Be that as it may, my task has been made a lot easier by my staff and, in particular, by the Clerk of the Parliament, Alan Woodward, who has given outstanding service not only in relation to the running of Parliament itself, but in every facet of this great place. I thank him sincerely, as I do Robert, Peter, Doug and Ian, the Deputy Clerk (Procedures) and table officers, who do their part in making this Parliament run as smoothly as it does. I assure you that it is one of the most smoothly run Parliaments in Australia. I thank also their secretaries for the work that they do.

I wish to pay tribute to the magnificent work carried out by the Hansard staff. Many changes in procedure have taken place of recent times in this area, and I believe they have been very much for the better. There have also been major changes in staff due to the retirement of both the chief and deputy chief, which necessitated the appointment and training of new Hansard reporters. I offer my congratulations to the new chief, Warwick Foote, and his deputy, Peter Rohl, for maintaining the high standards.

Honourable members, the Queensland Parliamentary Library is somewhat the envy of every other State Parliament in Australia because of the work that it does. At this juncture, I would particularly like to thank Nick Bannenberg for his unstinting dedication to his job, and offer my thanks to Helga and the entire library staff, who, without exception, have given tremendous service to honourable members. I include here, of course, Don Rogers, our audio-visual monitor. I wish to pay tribute to the hard-working staff in administration, to Len Smyth, Deputy Clerk (Administration) and Bob Fick (Clerk-Assistant Administration) for the excellent job they do in this area. There have been great transformations over the past 12 months with the introduction of computerisation and word-processing in the areas of salaries, and accounts generally. The streamlining of those procedures will provide greater efficiency and be more beneficial to honourable members. My sincere thanks also go to our switchboard operators and, in particular, to Mrs Margaret Hughes, who recently retired on the grounds of ill health. Her courtesy and efficiency will be greatly missed.

I also bring to your attention, honourable members, the co-operation and friendship I have received from the parliamentary attendants under the guidance of their chief, Jack Montgomery, and deputy, Alan Clayton. Many problems which had developed a couple of years ago have now been solved, and I am sure you will agree that we now have a team of men second to none. I thank them most sincerely for a job well done.

I know that all honourable members will endorse my vote of thanks to the stenographers in the correspondence-room for the consistently high standard of secretarial service they provide. My sincere thanks go to Joan Turner and her staff.

I feel sure, also, that honourable members will join me in paying tribute to the tremendous job done by Don Duncanson and his team of maintenance and cleaning staff. It is no mean feat to keep this place spotless and in perfect running order. Thanks to Don and his staff, this is the order of the day at Parliament House. Many structural improvements have been made to the complex in the last three years under Don's expert guidance, and I thank him for his help in turning my ideas into reality.

Honourable members, this brings me to the excellent job done by Mrs Brenda Milton, the chefs, Tina and all members of the hard-working refreshment-room staff. In just three years, thousands of visitors from all over Australia and every part of the world have visited Parliament House to attend many different types of functions held here, and I have received nothing but praise for the way they have been looked after. I pay great tribute to Mrs Milton's undoubted ability and the support from her staff, and I thank them all.

I personally wish to thank Joan Smerdon, my personal assistant, not only for looking after my interests, but also for the friendship she has extended to me and to my wife over the years. I also extend my thanks to Heather Clarke, who has been my acting secretary on occasions, to Tom Martin, my aide, and also Damien Glancy, my driver, for their great support and friendship. Finally, my thanks go to the security staff and police for the excellent job they do in keeping this place safe and secure. My thanks go also to John Pullman and his gardening staff for the well-groomed appearance of our gardens and lawns. Our rose garden, in particular, is a joy to behold at this time of the year.

Honourable members, it has been a great privilege for me to have worked with every one of you. There is no doubt that I will miss the many friends I have made in this place. I mention Neil Turner, Claude Wharton and Tom Burns. It may surprise people that I mention Tom Burns, but he is one of the friends I have made over the years—although he continually says nasty things about me!

I look to my right and see my big friend, who has been such good a friend to me for so long, Russ Hinze. I also mention Sir William and Nev Warburton and thank them for their kind words tonight. I thank my deputy, the Chairman of Committees, very sincerely for all the work that he has done for me.

It has been my great privilege to have served as Speaker of this Parliament, headed by a Premier whom I consider to be not only a friend but also one of the great statesmen of our times.

My wife, I give very special thanks to. She has stood by me on every occasion over the years. I thank her most sincerely.

I extend my best wishes to all honourable members for the future. I hope the future brings to all of you what you wish for yourselves.

I invite all honourable members, all members of the staff of Parliament House and members of the press gallery and the electronic media to join me for a drink in Function Room B.

Motion (Mr Wharton) agreed to.

The House adjourned at 6.18 p.m.

BILLS ASSENTED TO AT CLOSE OF SESSION

The following Bills, having been passed by the Legislative Assembly and presented for the Royal assent, were assented to in the name of Her Majesty on the dates indicated—

(19 September 1986)—

Appropriation Bill 1986-1987 (No. 2).

(25 September 1986)—

Community Services (Aborigines) Act Amendment Bill;
Community Services (Torres Strait) Act Amendment Bill;
Criminal Law (Rehabilitation of Offenders) Act Amendment Bill;
Farm Produce Marketing Act Amendment Bill;
Futures Industry (Application of Laws) Bill;
Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act Amendment Bill;
Land Act Amendment Bill (No. 2);
Pay-roll Tax Act Amendment Bill;
Regulation of Sugar Cane Prices Act Amendment Bill;
Small Business Development Corporation Act Amendment Bill;
Wheat Pool Act and Another Act Amendment Bill.

DISSOLUTION

On 30 September 1986 the following Proclamation was issued by His Excellency the Governor—

A PROCLAMATION by His Excellency the Honourable Sir Walter Benjamin Campbell, one of Her Majesty's Counsel learned in the law, Governor in and over the State of Queensland in the Commonwealth of Australia.

[L.S.]

W. B. CAMPBELL,
Governor.

In pursuance of the power and authority vested in me as Governor of the State aforesaid, I, Sir Walter Benjamin Campbell, do, by this my Proclamation, dissolve the Legislative Assembly of Queensland.

Given under my Hand and Seal at Government House, Brisbane, this thirtieth day of September, in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and eighty-six, and in the thirty-fifth year of Her Majesty's reign.

By Command,

JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN.

God Save the Queen!