Queensland

Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 17 MARCH 1987

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Mr SPEAKER (Hon. K. R. Lingard, Fassifern) read prayers and took the chair at 10 a.m.

PRIVILEGE

Tabling of Documents; Judge Pratt, Criticism by Member for Logan; Conduct of Minister for Family Services, Youth and Ethnic Affairs

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, during the previous week of the sittings of the House several points of privilege were raised by honourable members. Those matters are—

(1) the tabling of a document or file by the Honourable the Minister for Works and Housing relating to the Builders Registration Board;

(2) references made by the honourable member for Logan during the course of his personal explanation about the chairman of the Police Complaints Tribunal, Judge Pratt; and

(3) the claims by the honourable member for Wolston against the Honourable the Minister for Family Services, Youth and Ethnic Affairs.

Those matters were to be considered by me.

Before proceeding to deal with each matter in turn, I would like to remind the House that the term "privilege" when talked about in the parliamentary sense covers two broad areas.

Firstly, it refers to those powers possessed by the House collectively, such as the right of the House to regulate its own internal affairs and procedure. This power enables the House, for example, to deal with members who may be guilty of disorderly conduct within the House and so on.

Secondly, there are those privileges which may be identified as attaching to members of this Assembly individually, such as the freedom of speech in the House and other rights which enable members to carry out their functions as elected representatives.

The Select Committee of Privileges which is set up in this House is empowered to meet, determine and discuss these kinds of privileges from time to time. However, it is a fact that neither the Speaker nor the committee can decide on such matters. In the final analysis, the whole House alone is competent to do that and it has to decide by resolution that some breach of privilege has been committed.

In March 1979 that committee considered procedures for raising matters of privilege. The committee recommended that Standing Order 115 should remain for members who feel aggrieved and who must raise the matter publicly and suddenly arising, but for all other members the following practice should be followed—

(a) a member should write to Mr Speaker stating the matter;

(b) the Speaker may confer with the Chairman of the Committee of Privileges;

(c) the Speaker then informs the House either—

(i) the matter be referred to the committee; or

(ii) that he does not intend to refer the matter to the committee; and

(d) if it is (ii), the member has the right to move in the House that a matter be referred to the committee.

It can be seen, therefore, that the Speaker does not rule on the matter in any way other than to suggest that the matter be referred to the committee or that he does not intend to refer the matter to the committee.

With respect to the matters subsequently raised, I have decided that—

(1) The timing of the tabling of the document or file by the Minister for Works and Housing is a matter for him to decide, taking into account all other factors relating to the matter.

(2) The honourable member for Logan made a personal explanation and, in doing so, made certain remarks about Judge Pratt. The rule says, ". . . reflections on a Judge's character or motives cannot be made except on a motion. No charge of a personal nature can be raised except on a motion and any suggestion that a Judge should be dismissed can be made only on a motion." This rule has been brought to the attention of the honourable member, and, taking all aspects into consideration, I see no point in the matter being referred to the Select Committee of Privileges.

(3) In considering this matter, I am guided by previous reports from the Select Committee of Privileges, particularly a report tabled during the Third Session of the Forty-fourth Parliament. This report indicates that the Select Committee of Privileges is not a committee of inquiry. A member in raising matters in Parliament has a right to do so subject to the constraints of the Standing Orders. The Minister has available similar rights under the Standing Orders to respond to the allegations. The Select Committee of Privileges sees itself as a body to protect the privileges of members individually and of the House. It is not an investigative committee with the standing to inquire into matters raised by the honourable member. As I mentioned before, it is not the role of the Speaker to judge the matter. Only the House is competent to do that. Furthermore, it has been reported that the honourable member for Wolston has taken action to have the matter examined by the Director of Prosecutions. In conclusion, I do not believe that this is a matter for the Select Committee of Privileges at this time.

BUILDERS REGISTRATION BOARD; TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

Hon. I. J. GIBBS (Albert—Minister for Works and Housing) (10.07 a.m.): Following my answering of a question without notice last Tuesday from the honourable member for Nundah concerning the registration as a builder of Mr D. C. Smith, the honourable member moved that I table documents relating to this matter. I now table the relevant documents.

Whereupon the honourable member laid the documents on the table.

PAPERS

The following paper, which was laid on the table on 24 February, was ordered to be printed—

Financial Statements of the Public Trustee of Queensland for the year ended 30 June 1986.

The following paper was laid on the table, and ordered to be printed—

Report of the Licensing Commission for the year ended 30 June 1986.

The following papers were laid on the table—

Proclamations under—

Forestry Act 1959-1984

Queensland Grain Handling Act Amendment Act 1986

Orders in Council under—

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

Forestry Act 1959-1984

Harbours Act 1955-1982

Canals Act 1958-1984

Primary Producers' Organisation and Marketing Act 1926-1985

Regulations under—

Main Roads Act 1920-1985

Primary Producers' Organisation and Marketing Act 1926-1985

Reports—

Auditor-General on the Accounts of the Queensland Coal Board for the year ended 30 June 1986

Lower Burdekin Rice Producers Co-operative Association Limited Grain Research Foundation

Registration documents of Mr D. C. Smith as a Builder.

ELECTION POLLING DETAILS

Return to Order

The following paper was laid on the table—

Return to an Order made by the House, showing details of polling at the general election held on 1 November 1986 and by-elections held since the general election of 22 October 1983.

Ordered to be printed.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Policies and Initiatives of Queensland Government

Hon. Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN (Barambah—Premier and Treasurer) (10.10 a.m.), by leave: The Queensland Government's enviable record of economic growth stands in stark contrast to the mismanagement of Australia's economy by the Federal Government. I am concerned that, under current Federal policies, Australia's economy does not have the initiatives, flexibility and, in some cases, the capabilities needed to succeed in an increasingly competitive and changing world.

Today I intend to highlight briefly a number of more important new initiatives by the Queensland Government.

Policies and initiatives which my Government intends to implement over the forthcoming term will continue to set the pace and direction for national policies necessary to secure Australia's future—and, in particular, Queensland's future. These policies and initiatives are part of an overall strategy for State development to help Queensland grow and diversify.

As in the past, my Government will seek to move in support of the private sector. Policies to be implemented will seek to encourage and stimulate private sector activity. Low taxes are critical in this regard, and Queensland's reputation as Australia's lowest-taxed State is well known.

Several recent investigations are aimed at improving further the overall climate for business activity and increasing the flexibility of the Queensland economy. These include—

- The Savage committee investigation into business deregulation to cut red tape and save business and administrative costs. Government agencies are progressively implementing the recommendations of the committee. That has been in full swing for some time.

- Sir Ernest Savage now heads a committee to identify the opportunities for improving the productivity and management structures of the Queensland public service.
- The Government has also released a Green Paper on ways of achieving increased labour-market flexibility based on a system of voluntary contracts between employers and employees.
- A committee has also been established to consider the ways in which shopping hours can be adjusted to the advantage of both consumers and retailers.
- The Government is giving consideration to the establishment of business development zones in Queensland. Within these zones, regulations and other restrictions could be reduced to encourage greater business activity in areas such as tourism, trade and advanced technology. Many lessons can be learned from the operation of such zones for wider application in Queensland and elsewhere.

The Queensland Government is very much aware of the need to continually improve the skills of the State's work-force. Consistent with its strategy, the Government is working closely with the private sector to achieve this objective, to encourage technological development and to improve our penetration of overseas markets. Such initiatives include—

- The Bond university. That university will open in 1989 and set new trends in private sector education.
- An advisory council on education for economic development is being established to improve educational programs aimed at economic development.
- The Queensland Government is also examining the potential for establishing a world trade centre in Brisbane and stimulating private sector interest in its development. Recently I opened and addressed a conference dealing with that subject.
- In addition, as honourable members are aware, the Queensland Government has stolen the march on other States and the Commonwealth in plans for the development of space launch facilities on Cape York.

The Queensland Government is also working closely with our centres of higher learning. In particular, I refer to Queensland Government support for the establishment of an Australian international business centre within the University of Queensland.

Such projects will enrich Queensland's knowledge base and provide many opportunities for further private sector initiatives. Over the next 12 months I will outline progress in the development of these and other initiatives, including those announced prior to the last State election.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Queensland Government Development Authority Loan to Sanctuary Cove

Hon. W. A. M. GUNN (Somerset—Deputy Premier, Minister Assisting the Treasurer and Minister for Police) (10.14 a.m.), by leave: Following recent press reports relating to ill-informed and maliciously misleading statements concerning a $10.16m facility provided by the Queensland Government Development Authority to Sanctuary Cove, I would like to advise the House of the facts. They are quite simple, but still apparently difficult for the Opposition to understand.

The loan was a legal and valid financial arrangement for the Queensland Government Development Authority; the loan was provided on fully commercial terms; and the loan has since been repaid in full on the due date, with a benefit to both the Queensland Government and the tax-payers of Queensland.

Let me elaborate. The Queensland Government Development Authority was established on 1 September 1982 pursuant to the Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements

Act 1982-1984. Although a significant purpose behind the establishment of the authority was for it to act as a central borrowing authority, this was not the sole purpose behind its establishment. In this regard, the Act provides that the function of the authority is to—

> ". . . negotiate, enter into and perform financial arrangements and other arrangements that in the Authority's opinion have as their objective the development of, or the provision of services in, Queensland."

Furthermore, the authority has the specific power to—

> " . . . lend money on such terms and conditions and upon such security as it thinks fit".

In accordance with its charter, the authority has the capacity to act for the Government when the Government wants to assist a particular development in the State.

In this regard, the history of the Queensland Government is one of assisting with the development of the State of Queensland. A classic example of this is the Government's involvement in the Greenvale nickel mine, which initially created and, in more recent times, has ensured the retention of some 800 jobs in the Townsville region. Another example is the guarantee provided to Queensland Cement and Lime to assist in the estabishment of a cement clinker plant in Gladstone.

Large projects such as Sanctuary Cove do not arise every day, however, and, as a consequence, the authority's participation in such projects is inevitably infrequent. The Government would like to see more projects such as the Sanctuary Cove development, as would every State in Australia.

Mr Davis interjected.

Mr GUNN: The honourable member for Brisbane Central, who is on the other side of this House, would never induce any development to come to Queensland. Prior to 1957, Queensland slept for many years.

As has already been pointed out, the authority provided the funds in question on fully commercial terms with interest paid in advance. As a consequence, the authority has achieved a net return of almost $700,000, including approximately $70,000 over and above what would have been earned if the funds had been placed elsewhere. Under the Act, such earnings accrue to the Consolidated Revenue Fund, and, as a result, Queenslanders will benefit from both this revenue and the continued development of the Sanctuary Cove project.

In closing, I point out that, in accordance with the provisions of the relevant loan agreement, the loan to Sanctuary Cove was paid out in full on its maturity yesterday.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

South East Queensland Electricity Board Contract with Discovery Bay Developments Pty Ltd

Hon. B. D. AUSTIN (Nicklin—Minister for Mines and Energy and Minister for the Arts) (10.19 a.m.), by leave: Mr Speaker, last week, the honourable member for Sherwood made a number of claims about an electricity contract between the South East Queensland Electricity Board and Discovery Bay Developments Pty Ltd, the developers of the Sanctuary Cove resort. Detailed information subsequently supplied to me by the South East Queensland Electricity Board proves beyond any doubt that the agreement with Discovery Bay Developments is a completely legitimate business arrangement.

Mr Davis: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr AUSTIN: The honourable member for Brisbane Central is a little premature.

The evidence given to me shows clearly that this a financially prudent and sound investment by SEQEB to maximise its return from the sale of electricity to the Sanctuary Cove development. The honourable member for Sherwood claimed that this is a secret deal, implying that only a select few knew of its existence prior to his outburst last week. That statement is absolute rubbish. In fact, the deal is listed among a large number of development projects on pages 27 to 31 of SEQEB's annual report for 1985-86, which I tabled in this place at the beginning of this session.

An honourable member interjected.

Mr AUSTIN: I have not finished with the honourable member yet.

The report plainly states for all to see that negotiations between the developers of Sanctuary Cove and SEQEB resulted in the board's taking over responsibility for electrical reticulation within the development. It is some big secret if it is published in a document.

Mr Speaker, I am informed that the SEQEB management initiated negotiations in May 1986, after becoming aware of plans to install reticulated gas to the whole Sanctuary Cove estate. These negotiations were conducted under specific policy guide-lines adopted by SEQEB in 1977—another big secret—and approved by the Queensland Electricity Supply Industry Consultative Council in 1979.

I seek leave to table copies of SEQEB memorandum No. 63 and memorandum No. 209 of the Queensland Electricity Supply Industry Consultative Council, both pertaining to this policy.

Leave granted.

As a result of those negotiations, SEQEB secured an agreement under which it would share the costs of electrical reticulation in return for Sanctuary Cove becoming what is termed an all-electric development. The essence of this agreement is that no other form of energy will be reticulated within Sanctuary Cove without the written approval of SEQEB, which greatly enhances the potential electricity consumption within this development.

The Sanctuary Cove agreement incorporates standard tariffs throughout, and provides no concessions in this respect to Discovery Bay Developments Pty Ltd.

SEQEB agreed to provide a second full-capacity 11kV feeder to the area by the end of June 1988. However, this work would have been required in due course to reinforce the high-voltage reticulation to the northern end of the Gold Coast district.

SEQEB also agreed to treat all roadways in the development as public throughfares and to design and construct the high-voltage and low-voltage systems on these roadways in accordance with standard procedures.

Mr Innes: But they are private.

Mr AUSTIN: I have not finished yet.

Whether SEQEB installed the supply network and recovered costs from Discovery Bay Developments, or Discovery Bay Developments installed the supply network and SEQEB bought it back under a cost-sharing formula, did not affect the final sharing of costs. Discovery Bay Developments' portion amounts to $1m, and costs are progressively shared on a fifty-fifty basis until that figure is reached. That is an excellent agreement, which has considerably benefited SEQEB from the replacement of reticulated gas with electricity. It will mean estimated additional revenue of $1.7m per year from the development once it is completed, taking SEQEB's total estimated annual revenue from Sanctuary Cove to $3.2m. Securing this additional electricity load and revenue at very profitable rates will ultimately benefit all electricity customers in Queensland, including the honourable member for Sherwood, as increasing sales volume is a significant factor in enabling the industry to keep future price rises to no greater than half the CPI.

Those people in SEQEB who were responsible for negotiating this agreement deserve to be praised for their part in securing such a lucrative deal. They certainly do not need

to have their integrity and reputations called into question by baseless and unproven allegations of impropriety.

The Sanctuary Cove agreement is only one of many business arrangements negotiated by SEQEB with commercial and industrial customers under various cost-sharing categories. It is common in the case of commercial and industrial installations where the revenue return is clearly in excess of 22½ per cent for SEQEB to provide the necessary supply of electricity without any guarantee or capital contribution from the developer or subdivider.

SEQEB has provided me with a list of examples of estates and developments which have been completed under nine different categories. I seek leave to table that list.

Leave granted.

The fact is that many millions of dollars would be forgone if SEQEB did not negotiate agreements of this kind. This would mean that SEQEB would be considerably less profitable and the ordinary electricity-consumer would be paying more.

The Sanctuary Cove agreement is a credit to the expertise and business acumen of the officers of SEQEB who negotiated the deal. One of those officers, business development manager Mr Max Bond, has submitted to me a report on this issue, in which he says in respect of the negotiations leading to the agreement, "At no stage was there any involvement by any Minister or Government agency." I emphasise that statement.

In a covering letter, SEQEB General Manager, Mr Wayne Gilbert, stated—

> "As general Manager of SEQEB, I can state categorically that I have not discussed this project with Mr. Gore, or with any Member of Parliament, or with any Government agency, and that no representations have been made to me in any way by any persons in support of this project."

The honourable member for Sherwood has used the privilege of this place to launch a cowardly attack on legitimate and creditable business activities of SEQEB. In so doing, he has denigrated the work of loyal and dedicated officers of SEQEB and reduced them to these humiliating denials in an effort to protect their reputations and those of their families. That is their reward from a member of this place for helping to keep the electricity industry competitive and reduce costs to the average consumer.

It is reported that the honourable member intends to ask detailed questions of me in this place about the matter. What a great pity he did not bother to ask the questions last week before he launched his ill-informed tirade in this place.

The honourable member for Sherwood seems to relish in using parliamentary privilege in this way for some cheap political mileage. Not long ago, for the sake of a few headlines, he stood up here and attacked a dead mother—a woman who died after childbirth; a person who is no longer alive to defend herself.

That is the sort of person that the Federal Opposition Leader, John Howard, has sent forth—has enlisted his help—in a grubby little attempt to smear the Premier and the Queensland Government in relation to the Sanctuary Cove development.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I ask the Minister to withdraw that comment.

Mr AUSTIN: I withdraw it.

I believe that the honourable member for Sherwood, in fabricating these claims about the electricity supply to Sanctuary Cove, was on an errand for his Canberra colleagues. The honourable member has succeeded only in discrediting himself and further undermining the credibility of the Liberal Party. If he and his colleagues do not support the necessity and the validity of business activities such as those conducted by the SEQEB at Sanctuary Cove, they should be prepared to stand up in this place and say so.

The honourable member and his colleagues should tell the public that they do not want statutory authorities such as SEQEB striving to operate on a private-enterprise

model. They should also tell the public that they do not want the benefits of those activities, such as lower electricity costs, industry development, job creation and more competitive electricity prices.

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

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr De LACY (Cairns) (10.27 a.m.), by leave: Last week, in this House, I implied that the Queensland Industry Development Corporation—the QIDC—had granted a loan to Sanctuary Cove developer, Mr Mike Gore. In fact, I meant to refer to the Queensland Government Development Authority.

I apologise to the QIDC for my error. Its financial integrity and judgment remained impeccable throughout the whole sordid exercise.

My mistake was understandable. The QIDC has a commercial lending arm as well as a rural sector lending role. However, never in my wildest dreams did I imagine that this Government would lend $10.16m directly from Treasury to a failed used car dealer——

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member has now moved beyond a personal explanation. I ask him to resume his seat.

QUESTIONS UPON NOTICE

1. Compulsory Unionism; Use of Union Fees to Support Political Parties

Mr STEPHAN asked the Minister for Employment, Small Business and Industrial Affairs—

> "With reference to the landmark decision of the Victorian Equal Opportunity Board in connection with the legality of closed shops and compulsory unionism wherein, by a majority, the board found that a Mr Frank Heir, who was dismissed by his employer because he refused to join a union (the Australian Metal Workers' Union), was treated less favourably by that employer than those employees who had chosen to join that union, which refusal was a substantial reason for his dismissal, and to the board's finding that the Australian Metal Workers' Union is engaged in political activities and that an increase in members automatically results in an increase in fees paid to the Australian Labor Party by the union—
>
> Does he believe that there should be freedom to choose to join, or not to join, a trade union or political party of a worker's own choice without coercion or fear of recrimination where fees are directed to a political party from that union?"

Mr LESTER: Let me say at the outset that the Queensland Government does not support conscription into closed shops or other forms of compulsory unionism. Whether an employee joins a union or refuses to join should be left for him to decide.

Some employers, for reasons best known to themselves, demand as a condition of employment that their employees remain financial members of an industrial union. Apparently, this was the case with the Melbourne firm of Jaques Ltd., which was recently ordered by the Victorian Equal Opportunity Board to pay over $9,000 damages to one of its former employees, Franz Hein. Mr Hein was sacked for refusing to join the Amalgamated Metal Workers Union. In his defence, Mr Hein argued with the union and the employer that the United Nations universal declaration of human rights said, "No-one may be compelled to belong to an association".

The penalty aspects of that decision highlight the weakness of those quasi-legalistic tribunals set up by Labor Governments in Victoria and other places. They are heavily weighted against employers. In that case the employer had to pay over $9,000 while the

other partner, the union, in the closed-shop agreement continued to force more people to join the union. How silly can one get! The union in this case was found to be engaged in political activity. Most unions are.

The Queensland Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act requires that a union shall not expend money on political objects unless it maintains a separate fund for this purpose. The Act clearly states that subscriptions for membership of an industrial union shall not include a contribution to the political objects fund of the union. Any union that is using members' fees for political objects is acting illegally unless that member has consented to it in writing.

2. Closer Economic Relations Agreement

Mr STEPHAN asked the Minister for Primary Industries—

"With reference to the Closer Economic Relations Agreement between Australia and New Zealand and the competition from New Zealand as that country gears to take advantage of this agreement—

(1) Are Australian producers fully aware of any difficulties resulting from the opening of trade between these two countries?

(2) Is he aware of any damage C.E.R. is likely to do on this side of the Tasman?

(3) Have we seen any increase in produce exported from Australia to New Zealand, or have the New Zealand interests received an increase in their exports to this country?"

Mr HARPER: (1) During the last five years during which negotiations have been conducted on the formalisation of Closer Economic Relations between Australia and New Zealand there has been close ongoing consultation with producers. This has been undertaken at both Government and industry levels. Of particular note has been the close producer-to-producer contact in the dairying, horticultural, fishing and tobacco industries.

(2) The Closer Economic Relations agreement between Australia and New Zealand has not been free of problems in the agricultural sector, particularly in Tasmania and Victoria, where berry fruit and potatoes have been adversely affected by New Zealand imports.

From Queensland's point of view, I raised the absolute importance of employing fair trading practices between the two countries when I attended the last meeting of the Australian Agricultural Ministerial Council in New Zealand in February.

I emphasised to the New Zealand authorities that I expected fair trading practices to apply on Queensland horticultural exports to New Zealand and that restrictions on quarantine grounds would need to be properly applied.

(3) There is no doubt that New Zealand has been the major beneficiary of CER to date. New Zealand exports to Australia have increased very substantially, admittedly from a small base, while Australian exports have risen only marginally. Australia is now New Zealand's largest overseas market, while New Zealand is still a relatively small yet important market for Australian exports. It is my opinion that Australian industry should respond to any challenge to its internal markets by equally aggressive marketing strategies. It should take full advantage of its opportunities under the CER agreement. Likewise, it must closely examine any further development which may be suggested under that agreement.

3. Travel Centres of Australia; Compensation Fund for Travel Industry

Mr BRADDY asked the Minister for Employment, Small Business and Industrial Affairs—

"(1) Is he aware that the collapse of Travel Centres of Australia has resulted in bad debts owing to consumers and business of about $400,000, a significant

portion of which would have been returned to the consumers if Queensland had set up a compensation fund as requested by the Australian Federation of Travel Agents in conjunction with the other mainland Australian States?

(2) As he is one of two Queensland Ministers who refused to set up such a compensation fund, will he, in his capacity as the Minister responsible for Consumer Affairs, assure the House that he is now supportive of both the compensation fund and legislation which will protect Queensland consumers?"

Mr LESTER: (1 and 2) I point out for the information of the honourable member that the Queensland Government has established an interdepartmental committee comprising representatives of the Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation, Justice Department and my department to examine this whole question. I am advised that in Victoria alone some 350 travel agents may cease to operate because of the legislation in that State. That is not very clever.

Needless to say, there could be other factors also that may come to light. Therefore, the Queensland Government will not be rushed into taking precipitate action when alternative measures may be available to protect consumers.

4. Suncorp

Mr BEANLAND asked the Premier and Treasurer—

"With reference to Suncorp—

(1) What are (a) the names and registered office, (b) the number of shares held and their value, (c) the percentage of shares held as to the total shares on issue and (d) business undertaken of each company in which Suncorp has an investment?

(2) What is (a) the designation, (b) the location, (c) value and (d) percentage of ownership of any property in which Suncorp has an investment of $500,000 or more?

(3) What are (a) the names and registered office, (b) the amount invested and (c) business undertaken of any other Suncorp investments?"

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: (1 to 3) Details of Suncorp investments are set out in the Suncorp Insurance and Finance annual report 1986, to which I refer the honourable member. This report has been tabled in the House.

5. Third-party Motor Vehicle Insurance

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

"With reference to his proposal which he announced on 1 February foreshadowing the introduction of a two-tier system of third-party motor vehicle insurance—

What is the present position regarding the finalisation of this structure and when can we expect him to present legislation to Parliament?"

Mr GUNN: The Motor Vehicle Compulsory Third Party (Personal Injury) Insurance proposal, which I publicised early in February for the purpose of testing public reaction, is only one of a number which the Government presently has under review.

When the Government is satisfied that it has secured modifications which guarantee the most equitable treatment across all sections of the community, legislation will be introduced into the House as required.

When the question of ceilings on damages was previously floated, the Queensland Law Society and the Bar Association came out very strongly in opposition to it. I will

now read an extract from the *Courier-Mail* of 9 March 1987, which shows that even those esteemed associations can have double standards or wear two hats. It states—

> "The Queensland Law Society has called for a statutory ceiling on the amount of damages clients can recover against their solicitors. Its president, Miss Elizabeth Nosworthy, said yesterday that recently renegotiated solicitor's compulsory insurance would provide cover up to $500,000."

What a bunch of hypocrites!

6. Salinity Problems

Mr ALISON asked the Minister for Primary Industries—

> "(1) What research is being done to tackle the salinity problem in certain areas of Queensland where agricultural land is being rendered useless as a result of increased salinity?
>
> (2) What experiments and tests are being carried out to assist in this problem?
>
> (3) What Government funds are provided in the 1986-87 Budget for this work?
>
> (4) Are there any solutions in sight to this serious problem and, if so, what are they?"

Mr HARPER: (1) Saline seepage, the most common soil salinity problem, occurs on lower slope positions following land-clearing and inappropriate land management. The soil and water processes involved are well understood from research by my department in collaboration with the Queensland Water Resources Commission, Forestry Department and the Bureau of Sugar Experiment Stations. Areas studied include the Burdekin irrigation area, Rockhampton, the Callide Valley, South Burnett, Maryborough/Bundaberg area, Lockyer Valley and the Darling Downs.

(2) Experiments and tests are being conducted to provide the following information which is helping us control the soil salinity problem—

- identification of susceptible landscapes based on landform and salinity of ground water;
- management of susceptible cleared areas, such as reduced and more efficient irrigation, reducing time under fallow, and reducing stocking intensity; and
- methods of draining or revegetating of affected areas.

(3) Expenditure by State Government organisations during 1986-87 will be in excess of $700,000.

(4) The best and only real solution to the problem of saline seepage is prevention. Susceptible landscapes should not be cleared or irrigated. It often takes many years after clearing for the problem to become evident, so many susceptible areas have already been cleared. In these circumstances it is necessary to optimise land management to reduce the severity of the problem using the techniques I mentioned earlier.

In addition, my department has conducted educational workshops throughout Queensland to train officers from a number of other State Government departments in processes and methods of control of soil salinity. This will allow them to provide better information on this problem to both planners and land-holders.

7. Fire Brigade Boards

Mr ALISON asked the Minister for Corrective Services, Administrative Services and Valuation—

> "(1) Is he aware of recent negative criticism by the Opposition spokesman for Administrative Services, Mr Comben, the Member for Windsor, who described

Queensland fire brigade boards as being run like Dad's Army and as a bunch of meddling amateurs?

(2) Does he agree that Mr Comben's statements were grossly insulting to the dedicated fire brigade board members and their staff across the State?"

Mr NEAL: (1 and 2) Yes, I am aware that Mr Comben sat in his ivory tower in Brisbane making statements, which were nothing more than a trivial nit-picking exercise——

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Minister will withdraw those comments.

Mr NEAL: I withdraw those comments, Mr Speaker.

Mr Comben made those statements without seeing for himself the tremendous work the people on the boards do to maintain the State's fire services.

A continual review of the manning levels of fire brigade boards is in operation. With any emergency service there will be times of disaster when the numbers of staff might not be adequate to overcome the difficulties, but the dedication of staff, particularly in the State Fire Service, is such that these problems are overcome.

Members can be assured that the State Fire Service is the most cost-effective service in Australia. It is also one of the most dedicated services.

Part of that effectiveness stems from the enthusiasm and local input by board members in each brigade. Let me warn the honourable member for Windsor that his statements on a Dads Army approach will attact strong criticism from fire-fighters and his own party alike. I consider it nothing more than an insult to the integrity and dedication of board members through the State. I believe that local people have good knowledge of local needs and conditions and are competent to administer the local fire brigade boards.

8. Disabled Persons Service

Mr HAMILL asked the Minister for Family Services, Youth and Ethnic Affairs—

"With respect to the activities of the Disabled Persons Service—

(1) Have officers from the service been engaged in planning with officers of the Expo Authority for the purpose of making adequate provision for the needs of disabled visitors to the exposition?

(2) If so, what contacts have been maintained by the service and the Expo Authority for this purpose?

(3) Is the Disabled Persons Service monitoring the work of the Expo Authority to ensure that the special needs of the disabled are given proper recognition?"

Mrs CHAPMAN: (1) Yes.

(2) An officer of the Disabled Persons Service is meeting with Expo officials on a weekly basis.

(3) The service does not have to monitor the work of Expo, as it is working very closely with the authority to ensure that these special needs of the disabled are fully recognised.

9. Voluntary Social Welfare Organisations

Mr HAMILL asked the Minister for Family Services, Youth and Ethnic Affairs—

"With reference to the Department of Children's Services Report of 1983 wherein it was revealed that the Queensland Government wished to move towards greater involvement of non-Government agencies to take increasing responsibility for welfare services—

As the Queensland Government's per capita expenditure on family services and, in particular child welfare, continues to be well below that of the other

States, will she acknowledge that it is her Government's attitude to take advantage of voluntary social welfare organisations and deny them adequate financial support as claimed by Brother Paul Smith of Boys Town in *The Courier-Mail* of 19 February?"

Mrs CHAPMAN: In accordance with the statement in the annual report referred to by the honourable member, the Government has made considerable progress in its objective of encouraging greater involvement of non-Government agencies in the delivery of services in the community.

That has been achieved principally by very close consultation and co-operation with community organisations and substantially increased support of their activities, particularly funding. In the current financial year, my department will make available no less than $23m in grants and subsidies to non-Government organisations. This represents an increase in State funds of 27.4 per cent over the previous year, which is more than significant when it is realised that the general Budget escalation rate was 7 per cent.

A typical example of this positive action to support community bodies is the assistance provided to groups which are conducting licensed institutions for children. The funding in this area has been increased from $3.2m in 1984-85 to $4.7m this financial year—an increase of 43.4 per cent in two years.

That, of course, explodes the myth perpetrated by the honourable member and, of course, his colleagues that welfare spending in Queensland does not support the non-Government sector compared with other States. No other State Government in Australia can equal the performance of the Queensland Government in this area in recent years.

The Government has always recognised the invaluable contribution which the non-Government sector can make in the delivery of services to those in need, and it has formed a very strong partnership with those organisations. The support that the Government and my department in particular are receiving from community bodies is fully appreciated and we will continue to encourage their involvement.

This is in stark contrast to the performance of the Federal Labor Government in Canberra, which has pulled the plug on numerous community organisations and hundreds of thousands of voluntary workers now that it is paying the debt for its extravagant and wasteful policies since it was elected to office.

My department has been inundated by applications from organisations and individuals who have been left in the lurch by funding cuts by the Federal Government without any prior notice to or consideration of the effects on those in need.

The honourable member once again based the second part of his question on wrong information in that he quoted from an article which apparently was incorrect. He quoted a reported statement by Brother Paul of Boys Town. After the article appeared it was interesting to receive a letter from Brother Paul stating that the reporter had quoted him out of context and had tried to provoke rather than to report. He apologised to me and said that he saw himself as a victim of poor reporting. The honourable member would have been well advised to check his sources of information before attempting to use it for his own political purposes in this House.

10. Rail Services, Rockhampton-Yeppoon

Mr HINTON asked the Minister for Transport—

"Will he assure the House that the people of the Capricorn Coast, in particular, those associated with the pineapple industry, will not be disadvantaged by the withdrawal of rail services from Rockhampton to Yeppoon in the foreseeable future?"

Mr LANE: I can assure this House and the honourable member that there is no intention to reduce rail services between Rockhampton and Yeppoon in the foreseeable future.

11. Aboriginal Communities, Deeds of Grant in Trust

Mr BRADDY asked the Minister for Northern Development and Community Services—

"(1) Which Aboriginal communities have received title to their land by way of Deeds of Grant of Land in Trust to date?

(2) Which Aboriginal communities have not received title to their land by way of Deeds of Grant of Land in Trust to date?

(3) Is it the Government's intention to issue Deeds of Grant to those communities which have not yet received such title to date and, if so, when will the Deeds of Grant issue?

(4) Have any of the communities which have already been issued with Deeds of Grant to date been required to make any payments to (a) Consolidated Revenue or (b) the Aborigines Welfare Fund, in return for the issuing of the Deed of Grant and, if so, what is the amount in each case, and how has this been determined?

(5) Has any Aboriginal community in Queensland been asked to make any payment for fixed improvements on their reserves and, if so, on what basis was such a request made in each instance?

(6) What is the current balance of funds held in the Aborigines Welfare Fund, and how are these funds currently invested?

(7) What has been the end of year balance of this fund for each of the last five financial years?

(8) What have been the sources of income for this fund for each of the last five financial years?

(9) Who is responsible for authorising expenditure from the Aborigines Welfare Fund, and what other public positions are held by this person or persons?

(10) What is the Government's approach to expenditure of Aborigines Welfare Fund moneys for development on Aboriginal Trust Area communities?

(11) Have any Aboriginal Community Councils made any formal proposals for the expenditure of Aborigines Welfare Fund moneys for costs associated with any enterprises which are under their control and, if so, have any of these proposals been approved and, if not, what is the reason?"

Mr KATTER: (1) The elected councils of the trust areas of Hope Vale, Cherbourg, Woorabinda, Palm Island, Umagico, New Mapoon, Cowal Creek and Yarrabah have received deeds of grant in trust over the land which comprised the former Aboriginal reserves and which is now held in trust by these councils for the benefit of the residents in each place.

(2) Kowanyama, Edward River, Lockhart River, Weipa South, Doomadgee and Wujal Wujal.

(3) Yes, when the final mapping and other detailed arrangements are progressively settled. These include finalising land arrangements with private interests near Lockhart River; legislation in relation to adjustments between the Aurukun Shire and the Weipa South trust areas which have been agreed to by both councils; and some specific land needs which have been requested by the Wujal Wujal community in addition to those currently held within the boundaries of Wujal Wujal.

I might also add that some difficulties exist between Kowanyama and Edward River and still need to be finalised before the deed of grant for both of those communities is exercised.

(4 and 5) As the properties of Zamia Creek, Foleyvale, Duaringa and Sorrell Hills, which comprise part of the Woorabinda deed of grant in trust, involved the use of moneys held in the Aborigines Welfare Fund to purchase improvements—and in one case, land—thereon, and because of that fund's principal purpose of benefiting all

Aboriginal people in Queensland, the Woorabinda council has been advised that it will have to meet the associated costs of $611,000 on terms and conditions to be agreed upon. Plant and chattels situated on these four properties will also transfer to the ownership of the Woorabinda council, as will cattle grazing thereon, again upon terms and conditions to be settled with the council. The council has agreed in principle to this, and the matter will be settled when terms and conditions have been developed satisfactorily.

Plant and chattels and fixed improvements on the Woorabinda portion of the trust area will be transferred to the council at no cost. Similarly, no payment has been sought, nor is it intended to ask, for fixed improvements on any reserve where deeds of grant have issued.

(6) I have been advised by my department that the balances are—

Trading, pastoral and other operations: $2.3m.

Commonwealth housing grant funds: $3.3m.

These balances are as at 10 March 1987. The funds are not invested but are part of the public accounts administered by the Queensland Treasury.

(7) Full details for an answer to this part of the question should be able to be given by the end of next week, either by letter or in the House, if the member so desires.

(8) The principal sources of income have been from retail store sales, the sales of livestock, surplus interest from departmental banking operations conducted on behalf of clients and income from agencies conducted by the Department of Community Services for other instrumentalities on trust areas such as the Commonwealth Savings Bank of Australia, Australia Post and Air Queensland.

(9) By virtue of section 5 of the Community Services (Aborigines) Act 1984-1986, the Aborigines Welfare Fund is vested in and maintained by the Corporation of the Under Secretary of Community Services. This is a corporation sole consisting of the person who at any time holds the appointment of Under Secretary, Department of Community Services. I must add and stress to the House that the Aborigines Welfare Fund will simply cease to exist as time goes on and as the cattle operations are taken over by the people themselves. Hopefully, the retail operations will also be taken over by the people themselves. Already two of the retail businesses have been taken over. I would hope that by the end of this year another six or seven will be taken over by various individuals and groups of individuals.

(10) Such of those funds as might be available within the Aborigines Welfare Fund for developmental use on trust areas are applied from time to time for purposes as identified in consultation with the Aboriginal Co-ordinating Council. The matter of the use of those funds for the creation of a small loan fund is before the ACC and the Attorney-General. Under my instructions, a full program for the expenditure of those funds has been prepared as a discussion paper for the next meeting of the ACC.

(11) The Aboriginal Co-ordinating Council, a number of separate councils and also some individual residents have put forward proposals to my department for the use of Aborigines Welfare Fund property. Some of these proposals have been approved, including assistance to an Edward River man to conduct a pastoral operation, to a Yarrabah man who assumed responsibilty from the Department of Community Services for the retail store and to a Cherbourg partnership which also took over responsibility for the community retail store. Other proposals, including an expansion of the production and marketing of artefacts, cattle agistment and many others are presently under consideration. I might add that, to date, all of them have been enormously successful.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Federal National Party Criticism of Queensland Premier

Mr WARBURTON: In asking a question of the Deputy Premier, Minister Assisting the Treasurer and Minister for Police, I refer him to a report compiled by Federal National Party officials and quoted in the *Times on Sunday* of 15 March, in which the

Premier's Federal colleagues describe him as a high tax gatherer relying on hidden taxes and charges and criticise the Bjelke-Petersen Government for overregulating business, allowing a huge growth in the public sector, allowing Queensland to have the fastest-growing public debt and for its reliance on propaganda about phantom projects. I repeat that this is a Federal National Party document, not one prepared by the Australian Labor Party. I table a copy of that document.

Whereupon the honourable member laid the document on the table.

Mr WARBURTON: The report also says that the Premier's track record on taxes does not match his low-tax rhetoric and that in the last 10 years Queensland's growth in tax revenue outstripped that of the Federal Government.

I now ask the Deputy Premier: in view of this stinging but accurate criticism of the State Government by its own Federal National Party colleagues, will he now admit that he and the Premier must take responsibility for the abysmal state of Queensland's economy in general and its public finances in particular? Or does he disagree with the comments that are attributed to his own National Party Leader, Mr Sinclair?

Mr GUNN: I can assure honourable members that the remarks are neither stinging nor accurate. Of course, that is one of the reasons why Gallup polls show that Mr Sinclair attracts only 3 per cent support throughout Australia. One of his main problems is that he has been prepared to run in the shadow of the Liberal Party in Canberra. That is one of the reasons why it would be better if Mr Sinclair saw the light and gave away the leadership of the National Party. Surely we could then go ahead and put the Hawke Government out of office. That will happen—

Mr Warburton: He's your leader.

Mr GUNN: He is not my leader. He is a has-been. That is all there is to it. Members of the Opposition will know about that very soon.

Oil Exploration

Mr FITZGERALD: In directing a question to the Minister for Mines and Energy, I refer to an article that appears in today's *Courier-Mail* and some public statements that have been made and reported in the press by the Federal Minister for Resources and Energy, Senator Evans. In the article to which I refer, Senator Evans makes reference to other matters but says that possibly by 1990 the import bill for petroleum will be about $3 billion a year. He refers also to the fact that imported fuel will take an increasing percentage of the fuel market and that more fuel will have to be imported. I now ask: what has been the effect on exploration in Queensland of the Federal Government's policy with regard to oil exploration?

Mr AUSTIN: I did see the article in this morning's *Courier-Mail* to which the honourable member referred, in which Senator Evans predicts gloom and doom for the Australian exploration industry, particularly in relation to oils. I am concerned that a Federal Minister would make such a statement without proposing any satisfactory method of overcoming problems that might arise in that regard.

All honourable members would be aware that international and domestic oil prices are still severely depressed. A year ago, the price of oil in Australia was around $43 a barrel, compared with today's figure of $30. Exploration activity remains at a low ebb. However, there are some signs—and they are very small signs—of some recovery following the introduction of the OPEC plan to stabilise prices at around $US18 a barrel.

A recent worldwide study of exploration plans shows that initial 1987 programs are based on the expectation that the international oil price will average around $US15 a barrel this year and will therefore continue to decline, but that 52 per cent of the major companies and 70 per cent of the large independents will look to increase their spending if the price does stabilise at around $US18.

A study of Australian exploration programs for 1987 indicates a continuing sharp decline in seismic drilling activity in Queensland. That does not augur well for future drilling. However, some improvements could be made in drilling activity. Programs currently planned allow for about 8 800 kilometres of seismic work this year, compared with 8 497 kilometres last year. However, compared with 1985, the figures are a disgrace. Approximately 21 941 kilometres of seismic survey work was carried out in 1985.

This year in Queensland drilling activity is expected to show a slight improvement over 1986, when only 50 exploration wells were drilled. Present plans allow for 52 to 71 wildcat wells and six appraisal wells. However, this is still considerably lower than 1985 activity, when 88 wildcat wells and 21 appraisal wells were drilled.

It is interesting that at a time when the Federal Minister is calling for increased exploration to be carried out in the future, the Federal Parliament has before it a piece of legislation titled the Rent Resources Tax Bill. I think that it is widely known in Australia that all of the people involved in exploration work in this country are totally opposed to the Rent Resources Tax Bill. The Queensland Government also is opposed to that Bill. Another tax also is imposed on exploration. That is a secondary tax on onshore production.

The Queensland Government is convinced that the current tax rates of the order of 70 per cent on new oil discoveries are out of kilter with Australia's prospecting and exploration costs. It is hypocritical for the Federal Minister to issue a statement in regard to the crisis faced by this country. Australia does indeed face a crisis in regard to oil exploration.

It is particularly significant that there is an impending substantial decline in the Gippsland Basin production. The forecast of Australian oil production for the years 1992 and 1993 that is contained in the Federal Government's own paper reviewing market arrangements, which was released recently, has been little publicised to date, but the figures show a medium-term economic problem faced by Australia, with the net imports of oil in 1992-93 being between $3.2 billion and $3.6 billion a year.

Quite clearly, Australia is facing a crisis in the oil industry, and the present Federal Government has done very little to attempt to resolve some of these problems. It will be interesting to hear the Federal Liberal Party's taxation proposals in regard to the oil industry. I have heard nothing about that party's policies. It might foster, develop and encourage developers to develop oil-fields in this State and in this country. If this is not done, and because of the volume of oil that will have to be imported, Australia will be faced with a crisis.

Criticism by Honourable N. A. Brown of Queensland Government's Green Paper on Voluntary Employer/Employee Agreements

Mr FITZGERALD: I ask the Minister for Employment, Small Business and Industrial Affairs: is criticism by the Federal Liberal Opposition spokesman on Industrial Affairs, Mr Brown, of the Queensland Government's Green Paper on employment growth justified? If not, why not?

Mr LESTER: It is quite obvious that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition in Canberra, Mr Brown, is very upset that Queensland has beaten him to the punch. His party is now suggesting that Queensland's Green Paper is not strong enough. I say to Mr Brown that it is very, very clear indeed that the Queensland Government has given the matter of employment contracts a great deal of attention in regard to making them flexible in order that more jobs will be generated. At the same time, the Queensland Government has inserted a protection for the workers. Obviously Mr Brown does not want to protect the workers and does not care about them.

I remind everyone in this House that it is clear that an agreement on contracts will create more jobs and will open up the job market to a great extent. I remind Mr Brown that he was a Minister in the former conservative Government and that that Government did very little in the field of industrial relations. It had an opportunity to act, but did

not do so. As a result of that inaction, it was beaten by Mr Hawke, and now Australia has the fringe benefits tax, capital gains tax and everything else. Mr Brown can hold at his head much of the blame for what has happened and need not begin to criticise this Government until he gets his act together.

Builders Registration Board

Mr R. J. GIBBS: In directing a question to the Minister for Family Services, Youth and Ethnic Affairs, I refer to the Minister's statement in last Friday's *Courier-Mail* that she was not aware of the charges when she "first went in to bat" for the Cartwrights on 19 February 1986.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I am not prepared to allow discussion on that matter, which, I believe, repeats matters that have already been mentioned in the House. I ask the honourable member for Wolston to put this question on notice to enable me to determine whether such a question has been asked before.

Builders Registration Board

Mr R. J. GIBBS: My second question is in regard to the Minister's friend Mr A. J. Cartwright, and I ask: was Mr Cartwright present at the opening——

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Once again I ask the honourable member to put this question on notice to enable me to judge whether such a question has been asked before.

Mr R. J. GIBBS: I will read it out.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member will resume his seat. The time allotted for questions has now expired.

MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Queensland Government Development Authority Loan to Discovery Bay Developments Pty Ltd

Mr WARBURTON (Sandgate—Leader of the Opposition) (11 a.m.): This morning this House witnessed a somewhat pathetic attempt by the Deputy Premier to explain away what amounts to a deliberate, calculated misuse of funds designed specifically for lending to Queensland's statutory bodies. No matter how much this National Party Government tries to suggest otherwise, the intent of the Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangments Act 1982 was to set up a new authority——

Mr GUNN: I rise to a point of order. This matter has been canvassed over and over again. Like the question asked by the member for Wolston, it is a tedious repetition of the same old thing that honourable members have heard for days. I believe that I answered that amply this morning.

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

Mr WARBURTON: No matter how hard the Deputy Premier tries to hide behind what has happened and the National Party tries to suggest otherwise, the intent of that Act was to set up the new authority known as the Queensland Government Development Authority, which would act as a borrowing agency for Queensland's statutory bodies. That is what the House was told clearly by the then Treasurer, Dr Llew Edwards, in his speech to the House on 24 August 1982. Honourable members are now expected to swallow this rubbish that the original intention was to lend to other than statutory bodies.

The Deputy Premier is asking honourable members to accept that the Queensland Government Development Authority, which is simply a group of people within State Treasury undertaking the job of raising loans for statutory bodies, was intended to supply multimillion-dollar loans to friends of the Government. In fact, the authority is a

corporation sole, meaning, of course, that in this particular case it is the Under Treasurer who is the authority for the purposes of the Act.

Honourable members continue to hear a number of different stories, supposedly from Treasury spokesmen. I do not know whether the following matter conflicts with what the Deputy Premier said. This morning's *Australian Financial Review,* under the heading "Gore repays Sanctuary Cove loan", states—

> "Queensland Treasury sources"—

they seem to be privileged people—

> "said that although the QGDA, set up in 1982, had acted as guarantor for private loans for the Queensland Cement and Lime Co and Greenvale Nickel, it had never made an outright loan to a private company before the 1986 loan to Mr Gore."

It is pertinent to say that, today, which is St Patrick's Day, in response to a question about legal advice on the National Party constitution, Mr Sinclair, the Leader of the National Party in this country, said—

> "Well I think if that is the basis of legal advice of the Queensland National Party has it's no wonder they're in trouble with loans to Michael Gore and others."

That is typical of the situation. It is a fair comment from the Leader of the National Party in this nation.

The very title of the Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Act is explicit enough. It contains no reference at all to anything other than statutory bodies; nor is there any room for ambiguity in the full title under which the Act appears in the statute-book—

> "An Act to provide for the constitution, function and powers of the Queensland Government Development Authority; to provide for guarantees by the Treasurer of statutory bodies' financial arrangements; to confer on statutory bodies power to enter into and perform financial arrangements; to confer on statutory bodies authority to invest moneys and for related purposes."

Once again, the Act contains reference to nothing other than statutory bodies.

Mr GUNN: I rise to a point of order. The Leader of the Opposition is trying to mislead the House. The Act provides—

> ". . . negotiate, enter into and perform financial arrangements and other arrangements that in the Authority's opinion have as their objective the development of, or the provision of services in, Queensland."

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

Mr WARBURTON: When the Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Bill was introduced into this House on 24 August 1982 by the then Treasurer, Dr Llew Edwards, his second-reading speech did not give rise to any doubt or uncertainty. There was no mention of or reference to anything other than statutory bodies. The legislation was meant to cover only statutory bodies. If the intention was otherwise, in late 1982 the Parliament was misled completely by the National Party-led Government.

The interpretation of "statutory bodies" as contained in the legislation further reinforces its application to statutory bodies exclusively. Admittedly, the reference "or other body" is included at the end of a list of examples of statutory bodies—namely, any association, authority, board, commission, co-operative or trust. The inclusion of the reference "or other body" in this manner means that such other body must belong to the same category of bodies as nominated. In other words, it must be a statutory body—a body set up by statute. Discovery Bay Developments Pty Ltd is not such a body.

Further, that section of the legislation dealing with the function and powers of the Queensland Government Development Authority does not provide the basis for the

Bjelke-Petersen Government's $10m loan to the Premier's firm friend and ardent admirer Mr Mike Gore. Clause 11 (2) (b) provides—

> "Subject to this Act, the authority may . . . lend money on such terms and conditions and upon such security as it thinks fit".

The crucial words here, of course, are "Subject to this Act".

Loans by the Queensland Government Development Authority are subject to the legislation—the Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Act—in its entirety, and that includes the definition and interpretation of what constitutes a statutory body. I repeat: Discovery Bay Developments Pty Ltd does not qualify as a statutory body.

It makes sense that the power of the Queensland Government Development Authority to make loans is circumscribed by the legislation under which it was set up. Otherwise the authority would be at liberty to make loans to anybody and everybody, without limit, without restriction; for instance, even to the Bjelke-Petersen Foundation. Clearly, an absurd proposition is being put forward by this Government. Or does the Government seriously ask us to accept that the Queensland Government Development Authority is empowered to advance loans to whoever and for whatever it likes?

The Opposition raised this very matter during debate on the Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangement Bill in August 1982. At that time, the Opposition voiced its concern as to whether the provisions of the Bill were wide enough to embrace any semi-Government or statutory body, and that what could be described as commercial authorities, because they had commercial undertakings—such as SEQEB—would be given carte blanche in the money-market.

In response, the Government, through the then Treasurer, assured the House that "the power contained in the Bill will not be abused. Indeed, ministerial responsibility will be the major factor in the operation of this authority."

Let us examine more closely the ministerial responsibility for the Gore loan. So far, this Parliament has been provided only with the barest details relating to this extremely generous, massive loan of public money to one of the self-confessed captains of the National Party's white-shoe brigade.

Surely it is not asking too much for the Government to come clean with a full explanation of the circumstances surrounding the application for and approval of that loan. Certainly, no such explanation was given this morning by the Deputy Premier. Today I gave notice of questions dealing with a number of aspects of the loan approval. At this stage I wish to make one point clear. An Act was passed by this Parliament late in 1985 by way of the Queensland Industry Development Corporation Bill. The Minister who is today attempting to give some reason as to why the Queensland Industry Development Corporation gave the loan—or why the money was given by way of the loan—is the very same Minister who said at that time that the Queensland Industry Development Corporation's clients would include farmers, manufacturers, tourist developers, small-businessmen, exporters and entrepreneurs. He also stated that the scope of the corporation's financing activities would be limited but would encompass all industries and sectors of the Queensland economy.

Any loan granted should have emanated from the Queensland Industry Development Corporation.

Time expired.

Beautification of Brisbane River

Mrs HARVEY (Greenslopes) (11.10 a.m.): Members of the public have made a large number of inquiries about the aims and activities of the Brisbane River Committee. As chairman of that committee, I take the opportunity to outline in the House those aims and activities.

First of all, the committee's general aim——

Mr Innes interjected.

Mrs HARVEY: The honourable member for Sherwood is grossly misinformed. All honourable members should be working together for the Brisbane River, not chiacking one another.

The first broad aim of the committee is to beautify the Brisbane River and, by doing that, to beautify Brisbane as a whole, not only for aesthetic appeal but also for its tourist potential and its recreational potential for the people of Brisbane and the rest of Queensland. That would encourage use of the river by the public. The committee envisages cleaning up the river so that it is free of pollution and debris floating on the river. Many eyesores exist along the riverbanks. They will be removed. The committee places special emphasis on the beautification around the Expo site. Expo commences in April 1988.

As I outlined, to date the first achievement is the beach created at the Captain Burke park, at no expense to the Government—to the tax-payer—with the assistance of the Sand and Gravel Association, the organisation that supervises the dredging on the river. That association put together the program to provide the sand for that park, which now provides a soft mooring for boats. Soft moorings are rare along the riverbanks. That is a great boon to the ordinary small-boating enthusiast. It also adds to the use of the park. The council has done a good job of developing the park and putting in barbeques. Children can now visit the park with their parents and play on the beach with buckets and spades and paddle in the water. Along that stretch is a clump of mangroves. Because of the improvements, schoolchildren can now walk along the beach and study the mangroves. That project was quite an achievement, and I repeat that it was at no expense to the tax-payer—to the Government.

The committee has placed emphasis on the use of voluntary assistance in upgrading the river. It feeels that everyone should participate in beautification of the river and that people will appreciate it if they have a role to play rather than leaving the work to the Government.

Mr Davis interjected.

Mrs HARVEY: The honourable member for Brisbane Central is certainly invited. No-one stopped him. Why did he not show an interest?

With the assistance of the Mount Gravatt Apex Club, the Brisbane River Committee has planted the area under the freeway. As the honourable member for Mount Gravatt, Mr Henderson, would appreciate, the members of his Apex club are very enthusiastic and they have come with their children and planted quite a few hundred trees under the freeway. That is not merely for beautification. The plan was put together by the Main Roads Department. I thank the Minister for Main Roads for his participation and co-operation. The project was to provide a screen to partition the car park from the Expo site, which is across the river. When one looks across the river from the Expo site, it is unsightly to see a wall of coloured cars on the opposite bank. When Expo commences, the trees should have grown to the extent of providing an attractive screen.

The committee has also provided for jetty construction and boat access to Wolston House, which involved much red tape. Those facilities have been needed for some years. Not only does it provide a small tourist attraction that will become more popular with time, but it also assists the historical home at Wolston to attract more visitors. The trip to Wolston House by road is not a very attractive one. The motorist has to fight his way through heavy trucks on a busy road. Travel to Wolston House by river is a tranquil experience. Wolston House will benefit greatly from the jetty construction and boat access.

The committee has also launched a sculpture competition on the river, which closes towards the end of this month. Four of the pylons in the river are eyesores. Because it would be impossible to shift the largest of the pylons—and terribly expensive to even attempt to do so—it was decided that it would be best to disguise it by putting a sculpture on it. That plan is in progress, and a number of maquettes, which will be judged at some stage, have been received by the Brisbane River Committee. Depending

on the design, the winning entry will be placed on to the pylon or will become part of the pylon.

The sculpture will be of great benefit to the people of Brisbane as it is expected that it will represent a part of the river's history. In addition to being something that all can take pride in, it will have a role as a tourist attraction. The committee has checked that the very large boats are able to come directly up to the pylon. As people will be able to almost touch the pylon, they will be able to obtain a close view of the sculpture when it is erected.

Negotiations have also taken place with the Brisbane City Council. I add for the benefit of the honourable member for Sherwood, who, having said his bit, has now left the Chamber, that those negotiations were not in competition with the council. The Brisbane River Committee has been negotiating and acting in co-operation with the Brisbane City Council for plantings at the historical location at Six Mile Rocks, Yeronga, that will represent the landscape and plant life that would have been seen by John Oxley when he discovered the Brisbane River. That location will be developed, in conjunction with the Brisbane City Council, as a kind of picnic area, which will enhance its historical value.

Part of the Brisbane River beautification project concerns me. It is not as though one can plant trees along the riverbank and say, "Well, we'll just stick a tree here and we'll just stick a tree there." The development that stretches along the river must be taken into account. A number of developers have very good plans for areas that lie alongside the river. In the light of the American experience, though, I sound a warning to those who are concerned about proper development along the Brisbane River. I have been to America and have seen the way riverbank areas have been developed. In particular, I mention Fishermen's Wharf in San Francisco. Surprisingly, many so-called experts, when they come to Australia, refer to Fishermen's Wharf as the be-all and end-all of developments. I have seen Fishermen's Wharf, and it is a very grotty, dirty place that has very little to recommend it because it is timber and not much else.

In Australia, the job of developing riverbank areas is being done properly. Developers are tuned in to what is happening and are aware of the beautification requirements for areas of land alongside the river. They realise that they must take their share of responsibility at their own expense—not at the expense of the Government—and that they must produce something that is better than a lump of concrete if it is intended to be situated along the riverbank.

I sound a further note of warning. The idea of putting pylons into the riverbed is not an acceptable one. In Chicago, the river is a very beautiful green colour but it has been narrowed almost to the size of a creek because many years ago development was permitted adjacent to the river that involved many pylons supporting structures over the riverbed. Having witnessed that, I am aware that care must be taken. So far, the Brisbane River Committee has achieved incorporation of plants and landscaping into development plans while keeping concrete away from the edges of the banks of the river. People will be able to look at the landscape and use the areas for their enjoyment.

Heed must be taken of the mistakes that have been made in other countries that have embarked on river improvement. I believe that cognisance has been taken of this and that the people of Queensland—in particular, Brisbane—have much to be proud of in their capital city. I believe that the focus of pride and attention is increasingly becoming the Brisbane River.

I congratulate the Government on its forward-thinking and on being aware of the potential of the Brisbane River. Other matters still need to be addressed; for instance, not as many people as one would like choose to stay in Brisbane as tourists. They seem to get on a bus at Brisbane Airport and go straight to the Gold Coast. Beautification of the river may be a way of encouraging tourists to stay in Brisbane. The Government should also be aware of re-creating history along the banks of the river, even if historical scenes have to be reproduced. The American experience—particularly in Boston—is that

development has been in the form of re-creation of history that has long since passed. The historical content will provide an interest for those who travel along the river.

I commend the Government also on Chinatown. I make the suggestion that at some stage the Government look to unique Chinese landscaping to make Queensland's Chinatown something different from the other Chinatowns in the world. Chinatowns are really quite common, but unique landscaping could lend a different emphasis that has not yet been highlighted elsewhere. The suggestions I put forward now indicate that a great deal more still needs to be done. Planning for, and the careful rehabilitation of, the river are well under way.

Builders Registration Board

Mr R. J. GIBBS (Wolston) (11.20 a.m.): Today I shall speak about some new aspects of the continuing saga of the Builders Registration Board. I can assure all honourable members that in the next couple of days freshly documented evidence will be laid before this House and before the people of Queensland that will show a major scandal involving the Minister for Employment, Small Business and Industrial Affairs, Mr Vincent Lester.

As this saga continues, the honourable member for Pine Rivers, Mrs Chapman, sinks deeper into the political mire. I submit to this House and to the people of Queensland: how can she be believed when she says that she was not aware that charges were pending against Mr Cartwright prior to her representations to the then Minister for Works and Housing, the Honourable Claude Wharton?

In a new aspect that I shall reveal today, I have correspondence dated 17 February 1986, which states—

> "In May 1985, the Board decided to prosecute the directors of Furwick Pty. Ltd who traded under the name of Hi-Ten Homes, as unregistered builders for eleven dwelling constructions.
>
> During the investigations into eight of these dwelling constructions, sufficient evidence was obtained to prosecute A. J. Cartwright for knowingly assisting an unregistered builder."

That was as far back as May 1985. I do not accept and I do not believe that the people of Queensland would accept that, because of the close friendship between the honourable member for Pine Rivers and the Cartwrights—which she has denied in the last couple of days—she was not fully aware of the problems being experienced by the Cartwrights or of prosecutions which were pending against Mr Cartwright. Again, I point out to this House that in correspondence to the member for Pine Rivers dated 20 March 1986, the then Minister for Works and Housing, Mr Claude Wharton, advised her that in the case of Mr Cartwright—

> "The former is being charged with knowingly assisting an unregistered builder, namely Hi-Ten Homes . . ."

He went on to make further points.

What the honourable member for Pine Rivers has not explained to the people of Queensland is that, in spite of her having received that correspondence from the then Minister on 20 March 1986, in which he went into explicit detail pointing out the failings of Cartwright as a builder and how Cartwright knowingly broke the law, she must have then at least known that charges were pending against Cartwright. In spite of that, the honourable member for Pine Rivers then went further. She then personally approached the former Minister for Works and Housing, Mr Claude Wharton, and arranged for a conference to take place between herself, Mr Wharton and Mrs Cartwright. I noticed in a recent newspaper report that the Minister, Mrs Chapman, claimed that she was not aware of charges pending against the Cartwrights until that meeting took place, when Mrs Cartwright herself—and I will use the Minister's terms—made the point that she asked the then Minister for Works and Housing to withdraw the charges. Because in that letter of 20 March the then Minister for Works and Housing clearly pointed out

that those charges were pending, it cannot be accepted that the Minister, Mrs Chapman, did not know of those charges. Yet in spite of that, she still went ahead and organised a top-level conference between herself, the then Minister for Works and Housing and Mrs Cartwright.

However, I shall go on to show how the Minister interfered further. I refer to a document which I tabled previously in the House but from which I have not quoted. It came from the then Deputy Registrar of the Builders Registration Board, Mr Ganter, who said—

> "However, because of this submission"—

and this is a submission by Mrs Cartwright—

> "and the other disturbing submission by the Honourable Yvonne Chapman's office, both of which I believe are linked, I respectfully request my detailed response of my personal actions in the Cartwright file be given to our Minister's staff."

At that time "our Minister" was Mr Claude Wharton. The fact is that those investigations and the decision to prosecute Cartwright were before the board as a recommendation one week before the Minister, Mrs Chapman, even wrote making representations on behalf of the Cartwrights.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Previously I allowed the member to raise a matter of privilege, and I have ruled on that matter of privilege. I have also allowed the member to put various questions to the House. I believe all of those matters were on this particular subject. Unless the member quickly shows me how he has new information, I will ask him to resume his seat.

Mr R. J. GIBBS: I shall leave it in your hands, Mr Speaker, as to the direction in which this should proceed.

I refer to further correspondence from the Builders Registration Board dated 22 August 1986, again signed by the Government's own representative on the Builders Registration Board, Mr John Pidgeon, which has not been quoted before. It reads—

> "All seven prosecutions against Cartwright for assisting an unregistered builder, have been fully investigated and considered by the Board to warrant a continuation of prosecution.
>
> . . .
>
> No new evidence has been provided by Mr or Mrs Cartwright to now change the Board's position in this matter. Mrs Cartwright is now asking the other builders and the other insurance fee payers, to pay for her husband's negligence which he refused to rectify."

That certainly warrants my asking questions in this House today, which I hope will be answered tomorrow.

I now wish to expand on the point even further. The appointment of Mr Wharton as the overseer or as the administrator of this board raises serious questions. As the former Minister for Works and Housing, he was responsible for enforcing the Builders' Registration and Home-owners' Protection Act. He had the overriding responsibility for the Builders Registration Board. Why did Mr Wharton, in his ministerial capacity, have an audience with Mr Pidgeon in which events that I will outline happened? A letter from the Director-General of Works reads as follows—

> "The Honourable the Minister afforded Mr John Pidgeon an interview at 2.30 p.m. on 15th September, 1986 at which I was present. Initially the matter discussed concerned Mr. Pidgeon's Company.
>
> Subsequently, the Minister raised the 'Cartwright' Case having had further approaches from Mrs Chapman who was anxious to have the matter resolved."

Taking into account and understanding fully the Minister's concern and her personal friendship involved in this matter, I ask: what was discussed between the Ministers at

certain times during these whole proceedings that led Mr Wharton to give a direction to Mr John Pidgeon, the Government's representative on the Builders Registration Board, to drop those 11 charges relating to 11 homes—which has left 11 Queensland families in dire circumstances—and why did Mr Wharton in his ministerial capacity advise Mr Pidgeon to reduce the fine of $11,364 to $5,000? Those questions have to be addressed.

If this Government operated with honesty and integrity, at the very least Mr Wharton should be called to account for his actions in this whole dirty, rotten, sordid affair. When he was a Minister of the Crown he defied provisions of an Act for which he was responsible, an Act that had been debated and passed by this House and which, as a Minister of the Crown, he deliberately set out to sabotage.

I shall now quote from a section of the Criminal Code that I have cited before. It is worth quoting and worth while remembering. Under the heading "Other conspiracies", part of section 543 of the Criminal Code states—

> "Any person who conspires with another to effect any of the purposes following, that is to say—
>
> (1) To prevent or defeat the execution or enforcement of any Statute law."

I believe that it is as plain as the nose on my face and as plain as my being here today that Mr Wharton directed Mr John Pidgeon to defeat the execution or enforcement of a statute law passed by this House.

Mrs CHAPMAN: I rise to a point of order. I believe that this is a slight on Mr Wharton, who is not here to defend himself. It is also an insinuation against a Minister of the Crown.

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

Mr R. J. GIBBS: The fact is that the member for Pine Rivers and the former Minister for Works and Housing, Mr Wharton, stand exposed for fraud——

Time expired.

Motoring Costs and Electricity Charges, New South Wales

Mr STONEMAN (Burdekin) (11.30 a.m.): I want to acquaint honourable members with facts and figures that I tried to outline last week, only to be thwarted on that occasion by the Labor Party's coalition partners, the Liberals.

Recently I travelled south of this State, deep into the heart of the much-touted socialist State of New South Wales. In many ways it was a sad journey, because, in going back to our old home town, my wife and I were confronted with a continung tale of depression and what one could only call despair.

During my short journey, several very graphic illustrations of the true position in relation to State Government charges were sheeted home to me. On other occasions, I have drawn to the attention of this House, as have many of my colleagues, the inaccuracy of statements by members of the Opposition about the relativity of Queensland's charges and taxes. In perpetuating this myth, the Opposition parties are aided and abetted by some sections of the media. No doubt, all of this is done in the hope that, if a lie is told often enough, it will ultimately be accepted as the truth. The voters at the last State election were certainly able to see through that misrepresentation. One would have thought that there might be a return to a less selective use of comparative figures and a more considered approach to the real core of this nation's economic ills, that is, high interest rates and uncontrolled social welfare payments that are turning the nation's heart into a compliant and complacent jellified mass.

The enormity of the deception struck me as I filled my car with petrol at the mid-western New South Wales town of Young, which is about 370 kilometres south west of Sydney. The price per litre at the BP service station in Young was an incredible 62.9c a litre. That price led me to observe the varying but dramatic effects of a State fuel tax on rural and provincial communities—the nation's productive heart. It also caused me

to consider the possible implications of other energy costs in this socialist Garden of Eden, this epitome of management, this State that calls itself the "Premier" State, this State where entrepreneurial depression and stifled free enterprise now reign supreme.

To simply select one item out of what is only a part of any picture is simple and simplistic. The Labor and Liberal Parties have made it an art form. However, the two areas to which I wish to draw the attention of honourable members underline a sad tale of deception.

Let honourable members consider comparative petrol prices and power charges; let them make real comparisons; let them extrapolate those charges into the reality of operating a car and a home or business; let them compare like with like; and let them be aware that this is a story that can be told in relation to so many other goods and services so that the Queensland Government is able to proclaim proudly the truth of being a low-taxation State.

I have decided to compare three towns: Young, which as I have said is approximately 370 kilometres south west of Sydney; Goondiwindi, which is almost exactly the same distance west of Brisbane; and Ayr, which is in the heart of my electorate and approximately 1 280 kilometres north of Brisbane.

On 3 March 1987, the BP service station in Young charged 62.9c a litre for petrol, the BP service station in Goondiwindi charged 57.9c, or 5c less than in what I will call its sister town, and the BP service station in Ayr, which, I might say, is run very efficiently by Karl and Denise Schneider, who have supplied my family with fuel for a number of years, charged 54.9c a litre.

I will leave those charges aside for a moment and turn to other car-related costs. In New South Wales the total annual cost of registration and third-party insurance for a four-cylinder car and a driving licence is $330.10. In Queensland, the total is $291.80. That is a difference of $38.30 per year. A six-cylinder car costs a total of $11.20 per year more in New South Wales than in Queensland.

That is only the first part of the story. The great "Premier" State then whacks 3.5c a litre onto that at the bowser to add to Paul Keating's one-armed-bowser-bandit rip-off. In Young, New South Wales, a motorist with a four-cylinder car will end up paying $923.50 to put his car on the road and to run it for 10 000 kilometres at a rate of 10.6 kilometres per litre, compared with $838.03 for his counterpart in Goondiwindi and $809.72 for a person fortunate enough to live in the town of Ayr. That is a difference between the two sister towns of $1.65 per week. If the same car travelled 20 000 kilometres, the difference in operating costs would be $2.55 more per week in Young than it is in Goondiwindi. For a six-cylinder car, the figures are $1.36 more per week for a distance of 10 000 kilometres and $2.48 more per week for 20 000 kilometres.

The fact of the matter is that the New South Wales State charges create an additional cost factor of approximately 10 per cent more than the cost to motorists in this State. Where are these figures displayed? Where is the real story being told? When will members of the Opposition accept the truth that their selective garbage will not stand up to any decent and worthwhile analysis? The costs that I have outlined flow right through the community. They flow on into increased shelf costs, running costs, farmers' debts—the list is endless.

I turn now to that other much-used whipping-horse of the opposition parties—electricity charges. Has either of those parties ever undertaken a genuine study? Has either of them ever looked at the true effects of the equalisation of tariffs in terms of the gains that are able to be made in a productive sense? I believe they have not. I will again use the comparisons that were made on 3 March of this year by direct contact in the New South Wales farming town of Young and in the Queensland sister town of Goondiwindi. In this State the tariffs are the same, regardless of the area, so in actual fact Cloncurry could be compared with Young.

Over a two-month charge period, the average house using 750 units of power in Young will have to pay $10.60 more than if it were located in Goondiwindi, or anywhere else in this State. This is a difference of 15.17 per cent.

Mr Palaszczuk interjected.

Mr STONEMAN: The honourable member for Archerfield says that this is a complete distortion. I would ask the honourable member to show me on some future occasion how this is a distortion. I believe that it would be impossible for him to do that, and he will go to ground.

Using 1 250 units, the difference jumps to 29 per cent greater in New South Wales. For the average shop using 1 000 units, the charge is 10.21 per cent greater in New South Wales, and for a large shop the difference falls to just over 6 per cent. In Young the country council allows a rebate of 7.5 per cent for payment within 7 days, but, with the exception of the very large stores, Queensland's charges compare very favourably with every comparative figure I have given.

Comparisons of farm tariffs are somewhat more difficult to make, but a figure of at least 10.35 per cent emerges in favour of Queensland for normal farm electricity use. I have not been able to make a comparison yet of irrigation power charges. When I was researching this information, a very helpful county council officer at Young said—

> "Of course, it must be remembered that we are a long way from the power house—over 200 miles."

Imagine the impact that Queensland's tariff equalisation charges would have in New South Wales.

In conclusion, in regard to these comparisons, I again make the point that the continuing denigration of this State, its Government and its leader has developed into nothing less than an exercise of blatant deception and selective misuse of comparisons. The people of Queensland recognised this at the polls. When will those members opposite who denigrate Queensland stand up and shout its virtues? This gives positive recognition to the reasons why people throughout Australia are making the call for Queensland's Premier to lead them out of the mire into which successive Federal Governments of both political colours have led this State and nation. There is only one answer, and the people are shouting it loud and clear: "We want to return to the management that Queensland offers this nation."

Audit of Yam Island Council Accounts

Mr HAYWARD (Caboolture) (11.40 a.m.): I refer the House to the *Auditor General's Reports on Audits of the Departmental Accounts, the Accounts of Statutory Bodies and Associated Bodies and the Accounts of Local Authorities* and seek to raise certain matters contained in the report dated 23 February 1987. I draw the attention of the House to page 145, where the Auditor-General states—

> "I am, at the time of writing, unable to consider certification of the annual statements of the Yam Island Council until a certificate is provided thereon by the Chairman and I have received satisfactory explanations on a number of matters raised by audit."

I give the Auditor-General, Mr Doyle, credit. He has noted a number of problems of a reporting and control nature at virtually all levels of councils.

I shall cite some of the problems to which he referred. The Auditor-General stated—

> "Problems encountered by audit to varying degrees at virtually all Councils included—
>
> • inadequate or non-existent accounting records and documentation in support of payroll and other expenditures;"—

Mr McPhie: What page is that?

Mr HAYWARD: Page 143.

The Auditor-General continued—

"• ineffectual controls over the incurring and processing of expenditures;

• collection and bringing to account of revenues;

• inadequate supervision and control of trading activities and associated stocks and moneys."

I am concerned that the Auditor-General wrote to the Minister responsible. He reported the Minister's response at pages 143 and 144. He included it for everyone to see. It states—

"Dear Mr Doyle,

I have read your letter and the attached report on the results of audit of Aboriginal and Island Councils.

The results, as you point out, do give cause for concern. It is my intention to introduce positive steps to upgrade the understanding of Councils and Council employees on the need to follow established accounting systems and practices and in the obtaining of the appropriate authority to incur expenditures.

In relation to specific points you raise, my comments are:—

. . .

Draft legislation has already been prepared, but due to the short sitting of Parliament and the election, this was one of the pieces of legislation set aside . . ."

The Auditor-General has recommended the issue of clear mandatory directions covering all financial and accounting matters. The Minister replied that electoral priorities prevented the introduction of legislation. What legislation is required to issue directions on accounting matters?

Surely it is a simple matter to instruct on accounting procedure. No legislation is needed to establish the principles of book-keeping. Is not the Minister saying in this instance that the election and the political machinations of his party give the safeguarding of tax-payers' money too low a priority?

Let us go further and examine the real issue. On page 143 of the same report the Auditor-General notes that the Acting Chairman and Council Clerk of Boigu Island Council were convicted and sentenced to imprisonment. What offences did they commit? According to the report, they incurred unlawful expenditure of $9,888 of council funds. That is what landed those two in gaol.

In that case was it enough for the Minister to act? Clearly it was, for he has overseen the charging, conviction and gaoling of those two men.

Overall, the statements in the report show a serious concern in the Community Services portfolio and a need for a rigid approach to accounting controls. Specifically, however, honourable members should be concerned with the controls over Yam Island Council because that council's chairman, Mr Getano Lui, was the National Party candidate for the seat of Cook.

On 28 September last year, the Auditor-General wrote to Mr Getano Lui seeking advice as to certain discrepancies. It should be noted that this was five weeks before the State election and that at that time Mr Getano Lui must have been gearing up for his National Party campaign in the electorate of Cook.

Mr Lui was able to take some time off from the campaign trail in Cook to reply to the Auditor-General on 21 October, a mere 10 days before the election. Among the matters that Mr Getano Lui was unable to satisfactorily explain was the personal cash withdrawal of $16,377 made by him from the beer canteen fund. Mr Doyle, the Auditor-General, has pointed out the issues. He has asked direct questions about the legality of those withdrawals by Mr Lui under the Community Services (Torres Strait) Act.

When that report was signed on 23 February 1987, the explanations asked for by the Auditor-General had not been given by Mr Lui. I am referring to the National Party

candidate for the seat of Cook. Mr Getano Lui is unable to satisfactorily explain his personal cash withdrawals totalling $16,377.

The circumstances of Mr Lui's predicament must have been known to the Minister and the Government well before the election of 1 November. I have already quoted from page 143 of the Auditor-General's report wherein he stated that he had written to the Minister prior to that date.

In 1986 the National Party endorsed a person whom it knew was unable to satisfactorily explain his personal withdrawal of $16,377 from the Yam Island beer canteen fund. That matter was known to the Minister and certainly to the party. The National Party endorsed a candidate who was under a cloud.

While officers of the Boigu Island council are in gaol and the Auditor-General is pleading for action and answers, the Minister is claiming that election priorities prevented action and the National Party endorses a very questionable man.

The public is entitled to know about the propriety of this National Party candidate and the use of the funds of the Yam Island's Islander community and tax-payers' moneys. The moneys that were unauthorisedly taken by Getano Lui were due to and belonged to the Yam Island community. The activities of the Aboriginal and Island councils, and the Yam Island chairman in particular, provide yet another example of the need for a public accounts committee in Queensland.

A public accounts committee acts as a watch-dog on public expenditure to improve accountability to the Parliament. Basically, its duties are—

(1) to examine the accounts of the receipts and payments of the State and each statement transmitted to the Parliament by the Auditor-General;

(2) to report to the Parliament with such comments as it thinks fit any items or matters in those accounts, statements and reports, or any circumstances connected with them;

(3) to report to the Parliament any alteration which the committee thinks desirable in the form of public accounts; and

(4) to inquire into and report to the Parliament on any question in connection with the public accounts of the State.

At the very least, a public accounts committee would be able to report to the House and comment on those matters which it thinks should be brought to the attention of the House. A public accounts committee would also be able to examine the accounts of receipts and expenditure of the State, which are transmitted to this House by the Auditor-General.

It is important that financial responsibility begins and ends with this Parliament. However, let me summarise and emphasise what has, in fact, occurred. The National Party has endorsed for the electorate of Cook a candidate who is unable to satisfactorily explain the personal cash withdrawal of $16,377 from the Yam Island beer canteen fund.

This matter must have been known to the Minister and the Government prior to the election of 1 November. I repeat: the public is entitled to know about the propriety of this National Party candidate and his use of tax-payers' money.

I draw the attention of all honourable members to page 191 of *Guide to Public Financial Administration in Queensland*, a publication that was prepared and issued under the direction of Dr Llew Edwards and authorised by Mr Leo Hielscher, which states—

> "The position in Queensland is that neither a Select Committee on Public Accounts nor a Select Committee on Expenditure is or has been appointed. It well may be that parliamentary control could be strengthened by the establishment of such a Committee"——

Time expired.

Labor Party Factionalism; Federal Government Policies

Mr GATELY (Currumbin) (11.50 a.m.): I rise to point out to the nation that a bit of a fiddle has been going on in this country for quite some time. If honourable members want to know why, I will tell them.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr GATELY: You grotty union people are all the same.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member will withdraw the comment.

Mr GATELY: I withdraw the comment.

The union people do not know how to look after the needs of this country. Leading up to the election in 1986, innuendoes and much diatribe were forthcoming from their mouths. The factional fighting within the Labor Party in Queensland was so evident. The party was gutless. It lacked intestinal fortitude and refused to hold its yearly conference so that the grassroots members could have their say.

Honourable members now see the Marxist faction of the member for Wolston, Mr R. J. Gibbs, and the member for South Brisbane, Ms Warner, combine with the Australian Workers Union group to devastate the Trades Hall group—those great supporters of the Old Guard faction, the Leader of the Opposition, Mr Neville Warburton, and his deputy, the member for Lytton, Mr Tom Burns. So devastating has that factional fight been that the member for Logan, Mr Goss, has been looking more bemused, mute and solitary than a mascot on a wrecked party-machine gone wrong and torn apart by itself in a very negative way.

Federally, the Labor Party is also guilty of being as gutless——

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member will withdraw the word.

Mr GATELY: I withdraw the word.

The Federal Labor Party also lacks intestinal fortitude. By indicating that it will not hold its yearly conference, the Labor Party reduces the possibility of further factional fighting.

The actions of the militant unions and the Labor Party are nothing short of treasonable. Unions in this country are conning the average workers. They are pulling workers out of jobs and out on strike. The workers do not get any wages, but the union representatives still receive their salaries. I am fully aware of unions' stopping people from performing work for which they are paid a fair day's wage; yet the employer is not receiving a full day's work.

Union representatives should be made to call at workplaces to collect union fees. Employers should refuse to collect the union fees of their employees. The fees should not immediately be forwarded to the unions.

I turn my attention to a number of issues that the Federal Labor Government has thrust upon the nation and which the nation cannot and will not continue to afford. I refer to capital gains tax, fringe benefits tax, lump-sum superannuation tax, disallowance of entertainment expenses and the abolition of negative gearing. On that point alone, today in the media honourable members read and hear about people paying high interest rates on loans that they use to buy a home. They can no longer afford to buy their own home because the Government in Canberra, whose members are nothing short of traitors to the country, is screwing up the interest rates to unrealistically high levels.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I ask the member to refrain from using such language. I have asked him twice now to withdraw words. I ask him to withdraw those words and to stop using those sorts of words in the rest of his speech.

Mr GATELY: I withdraw the words. Mr Speaker, I do not know the ones to which you are referring.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member will withdraw the words.

Mr GATELY: I said, "I withdraw the words." My apologies.

The increases in interest rates have placed people in the position in which they can no longer afford to keep their homes. Mortgagee sales for both homes and farm machinery on properties are increasing at an alarmingly high rate. It is totally despicable that any country should be placed in such a position that people no longer can afford the one thing that they believe is tantamount to their own castle in this country, and that is their own home. Moreover, the Federal Labor Government has abolished the concessional expenditure rebate and has introduced bureaucratic substantiation provisions, automatic indexation of traditional excises—beer, cigarettes and petroleum. All that it is doing is adding further to the inflation figure that is now so high that it is absolutely ridiculous—ridiculous to the point that Australia's current inflation rate of 9.8 per cent is tantamount to a demonstration by the Government that it is unable to run this country's economy. Australia's inflation rate is absolutely ridiculous when compared with an inflation rate of 1.3 per cent in the United States, nil inflation in Japan, minus 1.2 per cent in West Germany, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development average of 2.2 per cent and the rate of inflation of Australia's major trading partners of 1.7 per cent.

In addition, the Federal Government stated that it would never introduce a wine tax. I point out to all honourable members that that tax is in place. What else has the Federal Government done? It has increased Medicare levies and removed the levy limit. It has introduced large increases to the level of excise on petrol, a new excise on intermediate and new oil and a resources rent tax.

I now turn my attention to the broken promises of the Federal Government. Have a look at inflation. Goodness gracious! I have just spoken about it. Although 13.5 per cent was the old ceiling on home-ownership rates of interest, the rate is now 15.5 per cent. Have a look at that, and have a look also at the increase in the price of petrol and the devaluation of the Australian dollar. Goodness gracious me! I would be ashamed to say that I owned one! What about capital gains tax and simplified taxation laws? Goodness gracious me! What an indictment on a Government! It has thrust upon the nation such things as substantiation of expenses. I invite honourable members to have a look at the list of the other things I have mentioned. It is absolutely ridiculous. It is screwing businesses down, tying them down with red tape.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member will withdraw the word.

Mr GATELY: I withdraw the word.

Mr R. J. Gibbs: What about when you scabbed on the Labor Party, you rat?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The House will come to complete and perfect order. The honourable member for Wolston will withdraw the words.

Mr R. J. GIBBS: Yes, I will withdraw the words——

Mr SPEAKER: That is all, thank you. I call the member for Currumbin.

Mr R. J. Gibbs interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I now warn the member for Wolston under the provisions of Standing Order 123A.

Mr GATELY: Mr Speaker, there is no doubt that the Australian Labor Party, together with the militant unions of this country—and I make the point very clearly that many good and sincere people are in unions but that they are being screwed around by people who have no better idea——

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I now ask the member for Currumbin to resume his seat.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! As this is a day allotted for the debate on the Address in Reply, I ask the Clerk to read the order of the day.

At 11.59 a.m.,

In accordance with the Sessional Order, the House proceeded with the debate on the Address in Reply.

ADDRESS IN REPLY

Seventh Allotted Day

Debate resumed from 12 March (see p. 669) on Mr Sherrin's motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply, to which Mr Warburton had moved an amendment.

Mr COMBEN (Windsor) (11.59 a.m.): In rising to participate in this Address in Reply debate, I bring to the attention of the House the parlous state of Queensland's polluted environment. I support the comments that were made the other day by the honourable member for Mulgrave in referring to pollution in our society and in our State.

Private enterprise, local authorities and State Government instrumentalities each contribute to major pollution problems, and fears, in Queensland. I intend today to show examples of blatant polluting and dangerous practices concerning the transport and disposal of toxic wastes from the length of the State. Firstly, the Queensland Government's record on the management of toxic and hazardous waste is abysmal.

In November 1986, the Australian Environment Council released national guide-lines which had been agreed to by the Queensland Minister for the Environment, sitting and participating with that council. The foreword to those national guide-lines states—

> "There is a need for comprehensive management plans for hazardous wastes to safeguard the environment, and that the guidelines provided that basic framework for satisfactory management. These guidelines describe common national approaches, for implementation by Governments within their own jurisdiction."

Although those guide-lines were agreed to by the Queensland Government, nothing has been done in Queensland to put the guide-lines into practice. The lack of implementation of the guide-lines has made Queensland a waste-disposers' paradise, which threatens the health of every Queenslander. Queensland's support for those guide-lines is a mockery. Queensland has less Government supervision or control of toxic wastes than has any other State or Territory in Australia.

Because of that lack of regulation and control of toxic wastes, Queensland is becoming known as the toxic waste capital of Australia; the dumping-ground for toxic wastes from other parts of Australia. Coming into Queensland are totally unregulated large amounts of polychlorinated biphenyls, otherwise known as PCBs. PCBs are highly resistant, industrial compounds which have achieved a wide variety of uses since they were first introduced in the USA in 1929. They were not discovered as environmental contaminants until 1966, but since that time their ability to accumulate within, and their toxic effects upon, living organisms has been well recognised—well recognised everywhere, that is, except Queensland. The interaction of PCBs with humans, via accidental or occupational exposure or, more subtly, through food-chain accumulation, similar to DDT build-up, has been the cause of grave public concern—again, everywhere except in Queensland. The only universally accepted method of disposal of PCBs is via incineration at incredibly high temperatures—in excess of 1 200 degrees centigrade. Incinerators for this purpose are located in the United Kingdom and southern France. None exist in Australia.

PCBs and problems with their transport have caused such concern that a number of special reports have been written by Governments about those concerns. Among the best known of these are the 1983 Victorian Government technical report No. 33 entitled

PCBs—Some Aspects of Human Health and Disposal Problems in Victoria, and the New Zealand Report, *Disposal Options for PCBs,* prepared in November 1985.

South Australia has produced a series of technical bulletins concerned with the handling, transport and disposal of wastes containing PCBs. Their regulation in South Australia is the model that the Queensland Government should be following, but is in fact totally ignoring. South Australia's regulation system requires that a vehicle containing PCB waste be followed at all times by a second vehicle containing two people—both trained in methods of containing spilled PCB and carrying suitable protective clothing, spades, brooms, cleaning fluid, rags and oil-absorbent material. But none of these precautions are thought necessary in Queensland. As soon as PCBs are transported across Queensland's borders, they can effectively be lost within Queensland. There is not one piece of real regulation over their transport or storage in Queensland.

This lack of control is a major cause of large amounts of toxic wastes coming to Queensland and effectively being lost track of. The most unsettling present practice is the transport of PCBs from South Australia to an industrial site at Seventeen Mile Rocks. A small firm, Dinford Pty Ltd, has successfully tendered for a potentially multimillion-dollar disposal contract from the South Australian Electricity Commission. Although similar contracts had previously been awarded to a company based in Sydney and Melbourne, it was awarded to Dinford Pty Ltd because Dinford's tender was substantially cheaper.

The contract entails disposal of PCB-contaminated electricity generators, capacitors and other wastes. Truckloads of these highly toxic wastes are brought to Queensland and disposed of at a small, unmarked shed in Sinnamon Road, Seventeen Mile Rocks. That material, which could contaminate Queensland for several thousand years, is processed at Seventeen Mile Rocks without the slightest Government supervision. The tin hut—and that is all it is; a small tin shed on the side of the road out there—in which the toxic wastes are distilled or stored is on the banks of the Brisbane River and there appears to be no attempt to contain the working area within a levee bank to stop accidental run-off from entering water supplies or water systems. Such an elementary precaution would be required in most other States.

According to the regulations under the Health Act, refuse tips and similar sites in Queensland are controlled by the State Minister for Health; but, although the Seventeen Mile Rocks area is now one of the most hazardous waste-disposal sites in Queensland, if not in Australia, there is no attempt to control it. The simplest refuse tip in other parts of the State has to be authorised by the Director-General of Health under the Health Regulations, but here on our very doorsteps chemicals of international concern can be stored and treated with no supervision or control at all.

The Brisbane City Council, which has done such an excellent job of cleaning up the toxic and liquid-waste dump at Willawong, is unable to control the movement of PCBs into Brisbane. Its powers to license extend only to waste which is generated in Brisbane. The blame for the major environmental hazard at Seventeen Mile Rocks and this potential danger to Brisbane residents rests, therefore, solely on the State Government's shoulders.

Mr Innes: Are you suggesting there has been any spill or escape from the factory?

Mr COMBEN: No, I am not. I am saying that there is no method of knowing what is happening. There is no regulation at all to say that what is being done out there is adequate to stop any potential spill, etc. At this moment I know of no spill; I know of nothing untoward there. However, in every other State there would be close regulation. There is none whatever over what happens out there.

Mr Innes: How long has it been there?

Mr COMBEN: I do not know. The building looks to have been there for two or three years, but the contract is new. The concern is that elsewhere there would be Government supervision of the movement of this material and that suddenly a two-bob

company with a registered office at Stafford has tendered at a price that is considerably lower than that of anyone else in Australia. This material can effectively "disappear". As I will outline in a moment, my fear is that that PCB material, which should be sent to Europe for incineration, will in actual fact go into the back of an ordinary tip-truck and be taken to an unsupervised waste-disposal area—a suburban dump—and go into the general rubbish. That will happen because there is no way of knowing what is coming in.

Dinford Pty Ltd contracts with the statutory South Australian Electricity Commission to dispose of the PCBs and other contaminated material. The method of disposal is by distilling the PCBs from the oils in which they are contained, washing the PCB residues from electrical generators and capacitors and forwarding the PCBs to one of the European incinerators. Enormous costs are attached to this final disposal. To insure a truckload of PCB-contaminated waste or distilled concentrate from Brisbane to Sydney costs nearly $10,000 per tonne. That is an example of the risk and potential liability that insurance companies perceive of this material.

Although I do not yet have figures, the cost of transport of the toxic material by ship to Europe is phenomenally expensive, as also is the actual incinerating cost in Europe of more than $5,000 a tonne. These combined costs have resulted in Dinford Pty Ltd having a multimillion-dollar contract. But the costs also reflect the risks, the dangers and the fears, yet the State Government does not appear to acknowledge such matters. With such high-cost stakes, there is an additional risk that the principals of companies such as Dinford Pty Ltd will short-cut the expensive disposal costs of shipment to Europe and incineration.

Once the PCBs are distilled from the electrical equipment carrying them, they appear as an oily sludge that to the untrained eye could appear to be any sort of industrial waste. It is not difficult to conceive of unscrupulous operators pouring the sludge into a couple of drums and disposing of them in ordinary, unsupervised commercial dumps. That would save a lot of money and improve the profits. There is no shortage of overseas examples of such short-cuts. Of course, the cost is to future generations. PCBs will not go away; they will be absorbed into the food chain in various ways to remain as poisons for thousands of years. Nor will the matter of proper regulation of toxic wastes in Queensland go away. The type of facility out at Seventeen Mile Rocks should not be tolerated in a normal industrial area. What is needed throughout Queensland is a system of toxic-waste supervision from production to destruction. Such a scheme is envisaged in the national guide-lines to which I referred earlier, but Queensland's lack of commitment to these is amply demonstrated by the way in which even the public telephone number by which further details of these guide-lines could be obtained is wrong.

I have here to show to the House an attractive brochure on this matter. I do so because I realise that Government members are not able to take in much apart from posters of pretty ships and pollutants.

Mr Elliott: It does not become you to be sarcastic.

Mr COMBEN: I thank the honourable member for the compliment. I know that he thinks that I am always a gentleman.

Honourable members will notice that at the end of the poster it states—

> "For further information and a copy of the guidelines please contact Queensland Government Analyst 224 505."

Anyone with a knowledge of this city knows that there are no six-digit telephone numbers beginning with "224".

This Government has not even bothered to correct mistakes on the pamphlets and posters that advise people on how to go about containing toxic and hazardous wastes. So much for the Queensland Government's commitment to protecting the populace!

It is interesting to note that, because of concern about potential outcry over the operation, recently, in total secrecy, the Union Carbide company moved toxic waste

from its New South Wales site to Wales in Europe. Yet in Queensland there would be no hindrance to such an operation. According to a report in yesterday's *Sydney Morning Herald*, which devotes several pages to the topic, Queensland has 114 tonnes of intractable waste. I have scoured the Parliamentary Library but, to date, I have been unable to find any information on the place of storage or type of chemicals stored.

That is the problem today in Queensland. People just do not have a clue what is being stored, where it is being stored or what is going on. If this State had a system of regulation as is envisaged by the national guide-lines for the management of hazardous wastes, it would be a system of licensing and recording from the creation of waste to the disposal of the waste, including transportation. That is the sort of system that is needed.

At present, someone might say, "I have produced 100 tonnes of toxic and hazardous waste that must be disposed of via incinerator in Europe." However, if that waste is produced in Rockhampton, there is no way of knowing whether the transporters of that waste, supposedly heading for the industrial ships in Sydney that travel to Europe, would not get to Bajool just south of Rockhampton and tip the lot into a local creek.

Queensland is now the only State in Australia that is so limited in its control of wastes, especially toxic and hazardous wastes, the effects of which remain for a very long period. I call on the Queensland Government to start implementing properly the national guide-lines to which it is paying lip-service, but doing nothing at all to support in practical terms in this State.

Honourable members will recall that prior to Christmas I raised another issue concerning toxic and hazardous waste. I asked Dr Greg Miller, environmental chemist and toxicologist from Griffith University, to carry out tests on the Pine Ridge liquid waste disposal dump at the Gold Coast. He reported back in December 1986. His report makes interesting reading because it cites examples of the problems experienced with these sorts of contaminations in Queensland. In the introduction to his report, Dr Miller states—

> "On the Gold Coast, disposal of sewage, septic tank wastes, liquid and solid wastes has occurred for many years at Pine Ridge behind the Runaway Bay development. The current disposal operation at Pine Ridge covers a solid waste tip and an adjacent liquid waste disposal area."

I am speaking now only about that adjacent liquid waste disposal area. He continues—

> "Land disposal of biologically-hazardous liquid wastes directly on to sandy soils adjacent to sporting fields and recent urban development is a matter of public health and environmental concern. Consequently, an investigation of possible water pollution and health hazards associated with the Pine Ridge site was requested by several organisations."

He then goes on to detail the work that he undertook.

The third matter that he examined was microbiological contamination. His report states—

> "A wide range of pathogens are known to be present in sewage and septic tank wastes. Liquid organic wastes may also contain pathogens from a variety of sources including food and humans. Many of these pathogens are capable of giving rise to water-borne diseases such as gastroenteritis, hepatitis, virus infections and parasitic infections. The most common of these pathogens are salmonellae, shigellae, enteropathogenic E. Coli, cysts of Entameba histolytica, parasite ova, enteroviruses and infectious hepatitis."

Mr FitzGerald: Spell it out.

Mr COMBEN: I thought that it would be too much for the National Party to cope with. I hope that Hansard is able to cope with it. I will give the honourable member for Lockyer a copy later and he can tell me what the correct pronunciations are.

Dr Miller was concerned at that stage to examine those matters. This liquid waste dump is right next to the new housing development at Runaway Bay and is very close to a number of canals in that area. It is a small hole or dumping-ground that is probably the size of the area between you, Mr Deputy Speaker, and me. Truck-drivers reverse their vehicles towards the hole and dump the liquids. A number of drains radiate into a fairly scrubby kind of area. Little life was to be seen in the area, and it stinks. It is obviously not the kind of place that one would like to see in the middle of an urban development; however, that is what it now is. Perhaps 20 years ago it was miles from anywhere. And who wanted to build on sandy ridges on the Gold Coast in those days? No-one did, so this area was well out of the way. Now, because of the development of canals, this potential hazard is right in the middle of urban development.

Dr Miller's conclusions were as follows—

> "The Pine Ridge Liquid Waste disposal area constitutes a public health hazard and source of environmental pollution. The method of disposal uses an open 'cesspit' dumped on sandy soils to treat septic tank and other liquid wastes known to be biologically-hazardous as sources of pathogens (disease-causing organisms)."

Dr Miller confines himself to stating what is supposedly dumped there and makes no comment in regard to toxic and hazardous materials that are not supposed to be dumped in that area. There is a small sign at the dump which states that it is only to be used for the dumping of septic and other liquid wastes.

When I was first told about this site, my information was that toxic and hazardous wastes from New South Wales were being dumped there. That is why I began to make inquiries. The problem of toxic waste coming over the border into Queensland without any reporting or tracking of any kind and being dumped into totally unsupervised places such as this site should be borne in mind.

Dr Miller further concluded—

> "Surface drainage waters from the disposal site contain high levels of faecal bacteria, and by inference, pathogens. These waters also contain excessively high concentrations of nutrients and organic matter.
>
> Drainage waters are designed to enter adjacent public areas and canal estates via surface runoff and groundwater. Wastewaters from the site would be flushed into these areas during periods of high rainfall."

I was at the site before Christmas. As honourable members will recall, it was still a dry period, yet even at that time the level of the water going along those drains towards the canals was quite high. It would not have needed very much more water running into those drainage ditches to make them flush into the adjacent canal sites.

Dr Miller further concluded—

> "The sandy nature of sub-soil strongly suggests that groundwater contamination would be a serious problem. This applies to sub-divided land adjacent to the southern end of the disposal area.
>
> Faecal contamination of drainage water near the canal (at site 2) was detected. The absence of any other apparent sources of faecal bacteria near site 2 indicates drainage water or groundwater from near site 3 as the source of contamination."

In other words, Dr Miller is saying that faecal bacteria is present in that area, which is giving him considerable cause for concern in regard to the health hazard.

The point of the survey, and the point which I wish to raise in this House today, is the lack of proper observation of and control over refuse tips and the dumping of hazardous wastes in Queensland. Regulations are issued under the Health Act, and all that is required is that the Director-General of Health certifies that something appears to be all right on the surface. In Queensland no attempt is made to properly control to any significant extent the dumping of refuse. This problem needs to be addressed.

I understand that a tender is in the process of being let by the Gold Coast City Council for the cleaning-up of this dump. It is too little too late. I commend the Gold Coast City Council for its action, but it should have been taken several years ago as development began to extend into the area.

A similar environmental issue is to be found in Cairns, and again the city council is beginning to get its act together. It is interesting that both those examples show that although the city councils are getting their act together, the State Government still has no overall plan or strategy for, or the supervision of, waste disposal.

In the Trinity Bay area of Cairns, a council waste dump has for some time apparently been responsible for arsenic entering the sea and killing sand crabs and fish. Since last November, the *Cairns Post* and the Trinity Bay and Inlet Society have been producing solid evidence that that dump has caused severe pollution of Cairns Harbour. However, the Cairns City Council has constantly countered those allegations with excuses, reassurances and its own interpretation of test results. I pay credit to the *Cairns Post* and to the local member in that area, Mr Keith De Lacy, for keeping the issue boiling and for continuing to apply public pressure on the council so that finally something would be done about it.

On 6 February this year, the Lyons Street dump protest was said to have surprised the deputy mayor of Cairns, Alderman Lionel Van Dorssen, who is quoted as saying that he was surprised at accusations against the Cairns City Council about the Lyons Street dump before the results of all tests were known. Although that occurred on 6 February, on 13 February an announcement was made by the council's parks and health committee of a proposal for a $30,000 plastic barrier to make the tip's bund wall watertight. The *Cairns Post* commented in its editorial—

> "For heaven knows how many months before the issue became public in December, a large cement pipe and a drain allowed highly toxic leachate from the dump to gush into the inlet."

Such problems are now being addressed and to some extent resolved on the Gold Coast and in Cairns. Similar problems face every major provincial city in Queensland. Because of a lack of overall planning, other States are encouraged to bring their waste into Queensland. That waste takes the form of obnoxious wastes, which will eventually break down, and which people do not want at local dumps, and highly toxic and hazardous wastes, which will not break down and which need highly sophisticated methods for their disposal.

The problems being faced by Cairns, the Gold Coast and other areas throughout the State should be solved by the State Government. However, there has been no indication of any planning strategy to meet the demands, needs and requirements of a modern industrial State. Queensland is only beginning to come to terms with waste. That must happen quickly.

In the few moments remaining to me, I want to raise the issue of smoke pollution in the Gladstone area. A front-page article in the *Gladstone Observer* on Thursday, 5 March, states—

> "Original power station smoke monitor graphs obtained by the Gladstone Observer indicate at least one boiler has been emitting more than twice as much pollution as allowed.
>
> An expert interpretation of the 'opacity' readings found that, during a 24-hour period, emissions were only below the correct level for less than five per cent of the time.
>
> February readings for two of the six power station boilers were given to *The Observer* by a concerned employee after Energy Minister Mr Austin refused to release any details of recorded emission levels.
>
> The readings for boiler number 1 show emissions consistently above the 50 per cent level and reaching as high as 70 per cent."

That is certainly a disturbing matter.

When the monitoring graphs were given to me, I certainly stated that the problem was appalling and totally unacceptable, especially because a State Government instrumentality was involved. I stated that, because the health of people was involved, the problem needed rectification. At that time, I asked Mr Austin to explain the high readings and to take action to reduce them. I said that that should be done to restore public confidence in the Air Pollution Control Council. However, what was the response from the Queensland Government? Two days later, on Saturday, 7 March, again in a front-page article, the *Gladstone Observer* reported—

> "Energy Minister Mr Brian Austin has thrown a smokescreen up to block official response to a report that at least one Gladstone Power Station boiler has been emitting more than twice as much pollution as allowed.
>
> Spokesmen for the Minister and the Queensland Electricity Commission said they were instructed to refuse to comment on the report."

The health of all Gladstone people is in jeopardy. However, no details are being provided. The concerned employee who had originally contacted the *Gladstone Observer* said that after Mr Austin had been told he instructed everyone to refuse to release any details of recorded emission levels.

A Queensland Electricity Commission spokesman said that he had been instructed at that stage not to release a statement on the matter. The Minister's spokesman said that Mr Austin would not make any statement in addition to that made in the press release of the previous week. No-one has ever seen that press release. It never saw the light of day in any of the papers that I perused.

Mr Prest: No comment was received.

Mr COMBEN: Was there no comment?

I was interested to read Mr Prest's comment that the Gladstone Power Station "had been emitting excess pollution for 10 years", and that, "surely to God something should be done about it." He said also that the State Government took no notice of the Air Pollution Control Council.

The current level of pollution in Queensland from toxic wastes and air pollution is totally unacceptable.

Reference is made to the Gladstone Power House in the annual reports of the Air Pollution Control Council. However, those reports state that everything is fine; that certain gases are being added to the smoke-stacks, and therefore the Gladstone area is not being polluted.

However, environmental pollution in one form or another exists along the entire Queensland coast. The problems relating to air pollution should be addressed at a State Government level. If the Labor Party was in power, it would give urgent attention to ensuring that the health of all Queenslanders would not be affected in any way.

Mr FRASER (Springwood) (12.27 p.m.): In rising to support the motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply, so ably moved by the honourable member for Mansfield and seconded by the honourable member for Townsville, I would firstly like to congratulate the Speaker and his good wife, Alison, on his election to the high and ancient office of Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Queensland and, in assuring him of my support, wish him a long and fruitful term.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I also congratulate you on your appointment as Chairman of Committees and the manner in which it was achieved. As a new member to this place, I was impressed by the fact that the Labor Party did not oppose your nomination. To me, that shows the high esteem in which you are held by both sides of this House. Of course, I am discounting the Liberal members' nomination, because after this Forty-fifth Parliament I believe that they will have more or less departed from the political scene in Queensland.

I also take the opportunity to express my loyalty, and that of my constituents of the new seat of Springwood, to Her Majesty the Queen and her very worthy representative, His Excellency the Governor of Queensland, Sir Walter Campbell. The Governor and his wife, Lady Campbell, are becoming popular and regular visitors to all parts of the State. I wish them both a successful and happy tenure in the position.

At this point, I wish to sincerely thank the electors of Springwood for their strong support in electing me as their first representative to this Parliament. Honourable members would know that there were seven other candidates at the election, and the positive support given to me by the electorate was most encouraging indeed. I intend, in the ensuing three years, to represent the electorate in the same positive manner as I was supported by the electorate on polling-day.

My congratulations go to all members on their election to this Forty-fifth Parliament. Having been in local government for a number of years, I know the personal demands on honourable members and their families in representing their electorates. Sometimes I wonder whether if people had a chance to represent areas, as we do, their opinion of us would change. I believe it would.

I turn now to a few pertinent details of the Springwood electorate. The population is approximately 40 000 persons, of whom 73.5 per cent are under the age of 35 years. A total of 22 000 voters appear on the electoral roll for the Springwood electorate.

Mr Newton: They all vote for the National Party.

Mr FRASER: Of course they do.

There are seven suburbs in my electorate, namely, Rochedale South, Springwood, Slacks Creek, Daisy Hill, Shailer Park, Loganholme and Cornubia. The boundaries of the electorate are Priestdale Road to the north, the South East Freeway and the Pacific Highway to the west, the Logan River to the south, and West Mount Cotton Road to the east.

The residents of the area are mainly young marrieds and business people, with approximately 9 900 children attending a total of 10 primary and three high schools. Of these, seven are State primary schools, with an enrolment of 4 190, and three are private primary schools with an enrolment of 1 148. The breakdown of secondary schools is: Springwood State High, with 1 479 students; Shailer Park State High, with 1 160; and one private college with 940 students. In addition, 658 children attend pre-schools.

One of the private schools is John Paul College, which, I believe, is one of the largest ecumenical colleges in Queensland. It was opened on 26 January 1982, with an enrolment of 144 students and four wooden class rooms on top of a hill. Few schools could ever have had so many obstacles placed in the way of their foundation. The Federal Government, through the Commonwealth Schools Commission, refused to assist with funding on the grounds that the college was not an existing school, nor part of an existing school system. It was a committed group of parents and friends who stepped in and mortgaged their homes and businesses that enabled John Paul College to become a reality.

Its origins make John Paul College a true community school, and the students and staff take seriously their obligation to foster the movement towards unity both within the school and the wider community.

As part of the quest to give students as wide and full an education as possible, John Paul College has also developed an extensive overseas exchange program. In 1987, a total of 25 John Paul College students will live and study in schools in Japan, England, Canada, New Zealand and the USA.

After five years, John Paul College has grown to become one of the largest independent co-educational schools in the State, with 940 students. Stage VI of the building program has just been completed, and the school buildings and sports facilities now extend over 84 acres.

I would like now to compliment the Honourable R. J. Hinze, Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing, on his foresight in creating the local authority area of Logan in 1978. It covers an area of 241 square kilometres and has within its boundaries the Greenbank army reserve covering approximately 39 square kilometres, a very large tract of land for development in future years if the Australian Government decided to divest itself of ownership of the reserve. If any, the only criticism I could make of the decision to create the local authority of Logan is that the southern boundary with the Albert Shire should have been the Albert River instead of the Logan River. My reason for saying that is because Logan City has developed along three major development nodes, namely around the Springwood, Logan central, which has only recently been excised from the suburb of Woodridge, and Browns Plains areas. If Beenleigh had been included originally, it would have given the new local authority an established town around which to create a city centre.

The first council assumed administration of the area, with a population of approximately 70 000 people, after the local government elections in 1979. In 1981, Logan, with a population of 82 568, was given city status. Today, I am proud to be the deputy mayor of the third-largest city in Queensland, with a population approaching 117 000 people. On ABS statistics, by 1990 Logan City will be the second-largest city in Queensland, which is, by any criteria, a massive transformation from a few dormitory areas south of Brisbane in just 11 years. Situated astride the Pacific Highway, midway between Brisbane and the Gold Coast, Logan is the gateway to south-east Queensland, with the Gateway Arterial Road system and the new proposed Logan motorway making it ideally positioned to service a market of over 1 million people. This major growth has naturally put a heavy financial burden on both the council and the State Government. I thank the National Party Government for the infrastructure it provided in Logan during the last few years.

The projects include 35 pre-schools, seven built in the last five years; five special schools, all built in the past five years; 26 primary schools, eight built in the last five years; 26 high schools, three built in the last five years; and the Marsden Industrial Estate that is being developed by the Department of Industrial Development, which extends over 300 acres. The first stage is nearly fully occupied, and a start was made on the second stage recently, with a commitment of funds this financial year of approximately $1m. There are also many millions of dollars spent on roadworks by the Government, too numerous to mention now.

A much-needed technical and further education college is under construction at Loganlea, and the Government, in its last Budget, committed $13m over the next triennium to be allocated towards the construction of a hospital at Loganlea. I, as the member for Springwood, will be asking the Government to commence, as soon as possible, the construction of this facility to serve the residents of Logan City and the northern parts of the Albert and Beaudesert Shires.

At this stage I congratulate the Premier and the National Party on their magnificent result at the last State election. I also support the Premier in his campaign to become the next Prime Minister of Australia. There is no doubt that the Federal Labor Government in Canberra must be changed, and changed as soon as possible.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I will now give an example of why I believe it must be changed urgently. Only the other day I was made aware of one small, obsure art group which operates from a building in the central business district of Brisbane. It is a four-storey building, and is leased from the Federal Government for the paltry sum of $1 per year. Apparently the group is well funded because it leases other areas in this building out to other people and gets the income from the subleasing of the building. It had a five-year lease, with two five-year options. The group is such an efficient one that, some months ago, it forgot to renew its lease when the five-year option expired. Officers of the relevant Government department, who tried to do their job for the people of Australia, attempted to terminate the lease but, on application by the group to the relevant Minister, Tom Uren, were directed to give this group another lease. This is blatant waste of public

moneys and it is just one of the small examples of the waste and of the attitude of the present Labor Government in Canberra.

I believe that this National Party Government has to look at the very important area of valuations. Just to illustrate a point—I was speaking to a couple who are residents of the northern end of my electorate. They have received their revaluation for the Brisbane city area. They live on a block of 20 acres, but they do not have any rural pursuit; it is used as just a normal suburban residence. They cannot subdivide it under the town plan, as it does not have town water or sewerage. They were told by an officer of the council that, on the new valuation, if there was no change in the rateable figure in the dollar, their rates would go from $1,200 to $3,000 a year, which is ludicrous.

I know that the Government has legislated for councils in Queensland to be able to issue differential rating, but there are not many councils taking advantage of this because of the political unpalatability of such a move. I think the Government will have to legislate to stop the massive increase in valuations and also to protect people, such as the ones I have just mentioned, who have no other desire but to reside on their own 20-acre block. I don't think that they should pay the penalty for the large increases in rates brought about by developers speculating in land that abuts their properties.

I know that the National Party has already instituted a committee under the joint chairmanship of the Honourable R. J. Hinze, Minister for Local Government, and the Honourable Don Neal, Minister for Corrective Services, Aministrative Services and Valuation, and I sincerely hope that this committee can arrive at an acceptable solution to the manner in which valuations are carried out in Queensland.

The Government has built a very modern police station at Slacks Creek in my electorate, and I am grateful to have it there; but, in an electorate such as Springwood, with a population of 40 000 people, I think we need at least two patrol cars operating in the area, 24 hours a day. I have already spoken to my colleague the Honourable the Deputy Premier, Mr Gunn, in an endeavour to have one clerical officer allocated to the Slacks Creek Police Station. If this can be achieved, it would facilitate the operation of an additional patrol car, which is something that I think the Government should be looking at in larger stations all over Queensland. I know that it is starting to do this but, due to zero growth in the public service, it is difficult to effect the allocation of these clerical officers to police stations. But I think it should be looked at very closely because the addition of one officer to do the clerical duties can allow extra police to go out and do the job for which they are trained.

With my electorate of Springwood being so close to the centre of Brisbane now via the South East Freeway, during my term in Parliament I will be endeavouring, at all possible levels, to persuade the Government to relocate some Government departments into the electorate of Springwood. I believe it feasible that some Government departments, which are now wholly located within the Brisbane city area, could quite easily be re-established there due to the fast service to the city via the freeway and the electric trains, which now terminate at Beenleigh, but which are later planned to terminate at the Gold Coast. It would be an advantage to take Government departments to the people, especially such a large concentration of people as are in Logan City and the northern Albert and Beaudesert Shire areas, rather than force people to go to the city.

The population of the electorate is very young, with, as I have already mentioned, 73.5 per cent of people under the age of 35 years. Of this group, approximately 40 per cent are 18 years and under, which makes the population of Logan one of the youngest of any city in Queensland.

During my next three years I will be striving to get grants for sporting facilities and coaching services for clubs and groups within my electorate. As an example, at Underwood Park in the Springwood electorate, a group known as the Underwood Park Netball Association has 1 600 members. Another club in my area, the Loganholme Soccer Club at Cornubia Park, is, I believe, this year, the largest junior soccer club on the south side of the Brisbane River. So, as youth is a most important resource of Queensland, I intend to try to get more funds put towards sporting and coaching subsidies for clubs in

Queensland, because I believe that if we keep our young occupied, we will have fewer youths on the streets, less crime and fitter and happier citizens.

Another innovation which I would like to see this Government institute is the allocation of funds to each electorate. All members of this House would agree with me that at one time or another, some club or organisation has come to them when they needed funding, be it ever so small. It might be $5,000, it might be only $2,000, but one feels very frustrated when one is not able to accede to their request. When one goes to the Government and the relevant Minister, it is something that the Minister has to look at for the whole State, in the context of his budget, and he is unable to accede to this request. I believe that it would be a very innovative move for the Government, in its next Budget, to allocate, for argument's sake, $50,000 per electorate, which is really not a great amount in the context of its overall budget. It is a total of $4,450,000, and it could be put into the budget of the Premier's Department, and any member who had some good and worthwhile request from his electorate could then go to the relevant Minister, fully realising that the Government must have some control over how these funds are spent, because it is money from the tax-payers of Queensland.

At the last election they voted the National Party into power, so they must have some overriding veto on where this money may be spent. The member could use his budget of $50,000 to help bodies within his electorate. It might well be a scout group; it could be a subsidy towards something a p. and c. association is building; a sporting body requiring improvements to a field, or whatever. The control mechanism would be that the member has to go to the relevant Minister to get approval for that allocation. I believe that that would give the Government the control mechanism it needs, and I also believe that it would give members a certain responsibility and feeling of achievement if they could see that they could help their constituents in their electorates.

I would sincerely like to thank the Deputy Premier for his helping me campaign in the Springwood electorate, I thank also the Honourable Mike Ahern, the Honourable Yvonne Chapman, the Honourable Peter McKechnie and, last but not least, my good friend the member for Roma, Russell Cooper.

It was a magnificent win in Springwood because as all members would know, there were many other candidates in addition to me—it was damned near a football team. It was probably one of the largest fields of candidates that has stood in an election for a seat in Queensland for quite some time. The result was very gratifying to me, and I thank all those who helped, or offered to help, in the campaign with advice and other means.

I wish to give lie to the fact that the Labor Party outpolled the Nationals in urban areas in Queensland because, in my electorate of Springwood, the final percentages of the votes cast were—

National Party	33.4 per cent
Labor Party	31.9 per cent
Liberal Party	21.5 per cent
Other candidates	13.2 per cent

I see that the Liberal Party members are not present. They are just about out the door, anyway. With 13.2 per cent, the "other candidates" almost outpolled the Liberal candidate. Those figures show that people are now starting to strongly support the National Party in urban areas as the main conservative force in Queensland and that support will definitely increase in the years ahead.

Another aim for the Springwood electorate which I hope to achieve in the next three years is the connection, where feasible, of the service road along the western boundary of the electorate, so local people will not have to drive onto the Pacific Highway. The highway is a major link in the road system in Queensland and, at the present time, is carrying well in excess of 50 000 vehicles a day. Now, to me, it seems wrong that residents of the Springwood electorate have to drive on to the highway to go, say, from the suburb of Daisy Hill to Loganholme, whereas the construction of the

missing links of the service road will facilitate their driving along the edge, parallel with the highway, but not having to actually drive on the highway. That is a problem which is known in the electorate, and one which I intend to endeavour to correct.

Because of the high proportion of young married couples in the electorate—I have previously mentioned that 73.5 per cent of the population is under 35 years and that 78.5 per cent of the population own, or are in the process of purchasing, their own homes—an improved suburban transport service is desperately needed, particularly for the youth in the area. In the next three years, as the member for Springwood I will be trying with all the means in my power to improve the services in Logan City and the Springwood electorate. It is something which the council and the State Government, in conjunction, may well have to look at to bring about an improvement and a more frequent service, especially on the week-ends when the young people want to get into the city but have trouble, after certain hours, getting home. Many parents have to put in most of the week-end running the young people backwards and forwards to sporting functions and the like, whereas, if the transport services could be improved, it would make it much easier for people to travel around.

In conclusion, I wish to thank my campaign manager, Mr Nev Shillington, and my committee, consisting of Gerry Brand, John Barbeler and Bill Sibley, for their sterling work during the campaign. At this stage, I would also like to make mention of Colleen Brand, Dorothy Brown and Fay Callaghan for their tireless work and encouragement during the campaign. Finally, I owe a great debt to my wife, Wendy, for her total support and encouragement during the campaign and to my children, Gina, Jodie and Stuart, for their all-day effort in manning polling-booths on election day.

Mr McELLIGOTT (Thuringowa) (12.48 p.m.): As my contribution to this Address in Reply debate, I wish to concentrate initially on matters affecting my electorate and, later in my speech, I will develop some of the concerns that I have about the Queensland health care system.

Firstly, I wish to congratulate Mr Speaker on his election to that high office and you, Mr Deputy Speaker, upon your election to the position of Chairman of Committees. I do that on behalf of the residents in the electorate of Thuringowa. Mr Deputy Speaker, I offer you our support and good wishes. From my limited experience in this place, it seems to me that one of the worthwhile attributes of a Speaker is to have a sense of humour. Mr Speaker has already indicated his willingness to accept humour in the Chamber and also, at times, to introduce some humour into the Chamber himself.

I wish to thank the campaign workers who supported me very strongly during the election campaign and, in particular, the members of the Australian Labor Party in the branches of Stuart, Wulguru, Rasmussen and Thuringowa, which are of course in my electorate. I thank my campaign director, Tom Greenwood, for his support and hard work and also my wife and family for their support not only during the campaign itself but also in the three years prior to that when I was a member of this place.

The electorate of Thuringowa is a new one that was created in the redistribution. It takes its name from the city of Thuringowa, which in turn takes its name, I understand, from a forest in Germany. Although the electorate includes major residential suburbs of Thuringowa city and the Townsville suburbs of Douglas, Annandale, Wulguru and Stuart, it does not include the townships of Giru, Woodstock and Rollingstone. It also includes Palm Island. The choice of the name of the electorate has caused confusion among residents who find that they live in the city of Townsville but are now in the Thuringowa electorate. The earlier choice of Townsville West would similarly have been confusing to residents of Thuringowa city. I think that more consideration needs to be given to the naming of electorates.

At this point I mention that the election campaign itself was relatively free of mud-slinging and needless point-scoring. I compliment my Liberal and National Party opponents for the way in which the campaign was fought. The candidates campaigned

on both local and State issues. As I said, it was quite free of personal mud-slinging, which I appreciated.

I am proud to represent the constituents of Thuringowa. I notice that the National Party member for Townsville and occasional Independent alderman on the Townsville City Council referred to me as the former deputy mayor of Townsville, now just the member for Thuringowa, as though I had in some way been downgraded. I assure the honourable member that I see my role as working for and with the ordinary people of Thuringowa, who have not taken kindly to his insult.

Many young families live in the expanding residential suburbs of the electorate of Thuringowa. This expansion has resulted in a grave shortage of pre-school places. Pre-school is not, of course, compulsory, but the department has done such a good job in selling the advantages of the pre-school year that most, if not all, parents now feel that they are depriving their children if they do not send them to pre-school—and they probably are. In these circumstances, the Government must make sufficient places available.

The worst affected pre-school in my area is the Bohlevale Pre-school, which this year turned away 39 children. Fortunately, 10 of those children were placed at Bluewater Pre-school, which is approximately 15 kilometres away, while 29 children missed out altogether. Already 63 children are listed for next year, so 13 children have already missed out, and there are 9 months of this year in which registrations may be made. I therefore urge the Minister as strongly as I possibly can to provide a second unit at Bohlevale in next year's Budget and, indeed, to review the position at all of the pre-schools at Thuringowa, as many of them are in a similar position.

While I am on the subject of education, I want to refer to two disincentives to secondary education being perpetrated by the Queensland Government. With the opening of the new Thuringowa High School, three Year 11 students were virtually forced to transfer from Kirwan High School to the new school because of excess enrolments in a subject of their choice at Kirwan High School. That in itself was not a problem. However, because they are not attending the nearest school, those students now no longer qualify for the bus allowance. Surely the nearest school should be the nearest school at which students can enrol, not just the nearest one geographically. It is not the fault of the students or their parents that the nearest school cannot provide sufficient places.

The other and more critical matter to which I refer is the decision by the Queensland Housing Commission to charge rental on the Austudy allowance received by students. I understand that the commission is taking 10 per cent from the $40 per week paid to the students. I could not believe that that would be true in this so-called low-tax State, under the leadership of a man who claims to want fewer taxes. The thrust of Government policy should be to encourage children to stay at school. Austudy is designed to do just that. So what does the Queensland Government do? It taxes it.

I now move on to my shadow portfolio of Health, and probably as good a way as any of doing that is by making reference to the Kirwan Hospital, which is located in my electorate. I have mentioned this subject on a number of occasions in the past. Against good advice, Kirwan Hospital was established as a free-standing women's hospital, offering maternity and gynaecological services to the women of Townsville and Thuringowa. Kirwan Hospital was opened in October last year and will deliver its thousandth baby in May of this year.

I was opposed to the decision to establish Kirwan Hospital as a women's hospital. I, of course, wanted a general hospital incorporating casualty and out-patient departments. In any case, I thought that things had settled down. However, I am now receiving representations to the effect that all of the original problems predicted by opponents to the hospital among the medical profession are now shown to be true.

On 28 February a particularly strongly worded letter appeared in the *Townsville Bulletin* signed by Dr Graham Dutton, specialist anaesthetist. In his letter, Dr Dutton

called for the resignation of the chairman and board of the Townsville General Hospital. Dr Dutton's letter states—

> "Instead of maintaining the high standards of patient care by supporting the services provided at the hospital, the chairman and his board seem to be obsessed with appeasing southern political masters and keeping the Kirwan Hospital open no matter what services have to be withdrawn from the Townsville General Hospital."

Dr Dutton continues—

> "Why is it necessary to spend considerable sums of public money each week transporting medical and nursing staff to Kirwan Hospital when major cases requiring surgery have to be cancelled at the general hospital because of lack of suitable nursing staff to care for those patients in the intensive care ward. What has happened to the essential services of the Pain Clinic?"

Dr Dutton further states—

> "The absolute tragedy is that all the superb equipment and staff specialists in isolation at Kirwan could have been at the Townsville General Hospital providing better patient care, sharing of medical and nursing staff and saving millions in wasted public money every year."

I apologise for quoting Dr Dutton at such length, but his statements appear to confirm that the concerns expressed by consultant specialists and me when the original decision was made to build Kirwan as a women's hospital were in fact valid. I invite the Minister for Health to visit Townsville as a matter of urgency to see the situation for himself, to talk with people such as Dr Dutton and to ensure that the prophecies of gloom do not become self-fulfilling.

I refer now to a matter that I regard as the greatest single issue affecting the delivery of health care in Queensland, that is, the increasing shortage of specialists in public hospitals in Queensland's country and provincial areas. On occasions the Minister for Health himself has expressed concern at the shortage of specialists. It is a difficult proposition to consider because, at the same time as Queensland is concerned about the shortage of specialists, bodies such as the Australian Medical Association are commenting that there are now too many doctors graduating from medical schools. My question is one that the people of provincial and rural Queensland want an answer to: if too many doctors are coming out of the system, why are they not finding their way into country and rural hospitals?

This has a detrimental effect on the operation of the patients' transit scheme, which is designed to finance the transport of and accommodation for residents of isolated areas to specialists at major hospitals. It is impossible for western people to seek specialist treatment at Townsville, Mackay or Cairns. Instead, they are now required to come to Brisbane to seek the specialist treatment which is just not available to them in those centres. The impact of this is that hospital administrators are forced to look very carefully at applications for subsidies under the transit scheme and to reject applications for travel by air, when it is obviously necessary from a medical point of view, and people are being asked to travel by ground transport in order to conserve the reducing balances in the transit scheme.

I do not think that the answer necessarily lies in the production of more doctors, but it clearly does lie in the finding of a formula that will attract doctors, first of all to take up specialties and, secondly, to be prepared to accept appointment in country and rural areas. Principally it comes down to money. There is a growing tendency, particularly among specialists, to work in the major metropolitan hospitals with access to high-tech equipment, seminars and conferences with their colleagues and to work in an area that gives them more status than perhaps they would be given in a provincial area. Additionally in private practice, even in country areas, doctors can make substantially more money than they can in the public sector. They complain about what they see as being the excessive workload upon their services in the public hospital system.

Problems do exist and the Minister for Health is well aware of them. For example, the Townsville General Hospital is without an ear, nose and throat specialist, which is quite incredible in a hospital of that size. There is no neurologist working anywhere in Queensland outside Brisbane. A whole range of specialties are no longer catered for in Queensland's major provincial hospitals. The Minister has to work very hard on this problem and arrive at a solution that will cope with the concerns expressed by consultant specialists about the hospital system and at the same time cater for those engaged full time in the public hospital system. Any decision that is made will not be successful if Queensland ends up with two classes of people: the consultants, with better working conditions and remunerations, and their counterparts, the full-time specialists in the hospital system.

Sitting suspended from 1 to 2.30 p.m.

Mr McELLIGOTT: In the time remaining to me, I want to concentrate on what is potentially the gravest risk to public health this country has ever faced. I refer, of course, to AIDS, or acquired immune deficiency syndrome. I make the point, Mr Speaker, that the subject I am discussing may not be considered suitable for the young children in the gallery, over whom I have no control.

AIDS represents a very great dilemma for politicians in that to create unreasonable fears could easily lead to social, political and medical crises. Yet to ignore the problem or to play it down will certainly result in the spread of a highly dangerous virus that will result in the death of many Queenslanders.

Professor John Dwyer, an immunologist who established one of Sydney's two AIDS clinics, has warned that Australia's heterosexual community faces an AIDS epidemic within a year unless steps are taken to educate people. I hope that all honourable members will reflect on the urgency of the situation. We have one year in which to control the spread of the disease. I am not talking about a cure, because that is much further away; I am talking about controlling the spread of the disease, and that is the best that we can hope to do at this time.

What is AIDS? In Australia, the Federal Health Department has adopted the definition of the US Centers for Disease Control, which has defined AIDS as—

> "The presence of a reliably diagnosed disease at least moderately predictive of cellular-immuno deficiency, in the absence of an underlying cause for reduced resistance to the disease."

Cases that meet that definition are known as category A AIDS; cases that involve clinical illness as a result of infection with the AIDS virus but do not meet the CDC definition are described as category B AIDS. The CDC definition is very narrow and includes only those cases that have progressed to the point of developing a life-threatening malignancy or opportunistic infection. So AIDS, as it is currently defined, is a fatal disease.

The AIDS virus is a native of the Congo basin in central Africa and is thought to have been an animal virus. The African green monkey has been widely suggested as the original host. How the virus transferred from animal to humans and precisely how it was exported from Africa are matters of conjecture. The first recorded case of what is now call AIDS was that of a Danish woman surgeon who died in 1976 after working in a rural hospital in northern Zaire. By the late seventies, the virus had found its way into the American gay male community, and there it found an environment conducive to its spread.

By October 1985, more than 14 000 cases had been reported in the United States, more than 2 000 cases in western Europe and more than 120 cases in Australia. Fortunately, there is strong evidence that the AIDS virus is being spread only by sexual, blood-borne or perinatal means. Any suggestion that the virus can be spread via toilet seats, swimming-pools, communion cups, drinking glasses, eating utensils or bathroom facilities are false; nor is the virus spread by mosquitoes or by kissing.

One case of occupational infection has been confirmed in Britain, where a health worker accidentally fell on a hypodermic syringe containing infected blood. The spread of AIDS via contaminated blood is, to all intents and purposes, solved. With the introduction of blood-testing combined with programs to discourage those in high-risk groups from donating blood, one can be confident that no new cases of infection will occur in that way.

Blood-borne transmission by the sharing of contaminated needles by intravenous drug-users is still a major problem. Intravenous drug-users are particularly vulnerable to infection because of their generally poor state of health and nutrition and because the use of opiates weakens the immune system.

The most common pathway by which the virus can be spread is, of course, sexual. It is known that the virus is present in semen. Therefore, it may be supposed that any form of sexual activity that transfers semen from one partner to another presents a potential risk of virus transmission. However, evidence exists to suggest that various forms of sexual activity carry different degrees of risk.

Detailed studies among homosexual men show that receptive anal intercourse carries by far the highest risk. Studies of specific sexual practices have yet to be carried out among heterosexuals, mainly because the number of instances of the transfer of the AIDS virus between heterosexual partners is still very small. It has been suggested that the rapid spread of AIDS among heterosexual men and women in central Africa proves that it is only a matter of time before that pattern occurs in this country. Because of the vast difference in living standards, hygiene and social values, I personally doubt that this will occur. However, there is cause for concern, especially among disadvantaged groups in this country.

By 1990, Australia can expect a minimum of 500 deaths from AIDS, but, of course, that refers only to the circumstances now known. New people are being infected, or at least running the risk of being infected, every day, and they will not show up in the statistics for three to five years.

What has to be done? I am amazed and disappointed that the Minister for Health has made no statement to this House in relation to AIDS. I understand that Government members have been briefed, but it appears that the Opposition and the community are to be kept in the dark. AIDS has forced the community to rethink its attitudes towards social behaviour. Initially, it was thought that AIDS was God's punishment to homosexuals for their unnatural behaviour. At least one Government member still clings to that belief, and I suspect that there are many more who share his belief. AIDS will not mean that homosexuals will cease to exist or that prostitution will disappear. Australia has approximately half a million gay or bisexual men.

In developing any education program, it must be remembered that 5 to 10 per cent of schoolchildren will become homosexual. It is beyond dispute that homosexuality is part of the life-style in most prisons and detention centres. I have been told that two male students have been expelled from a Gold Coast high school for practising male prostitution.

There is no doubt that sexual experimentation is part of growing up. Australia may have as many as 20 000 prostitutes, and thousands of men use their services. It is accepted that prostitution is the way by which AIDS will enter the heterosexual community.

If Professor Dwyer's prediction is to be accepted—that Australia has only one year in which to prevent an AIDS epidemic—there is obviously no time to solve the moral debates or to reflect upon the religious significance of AIDS. Homosexuality and prostitution will continue to exist. Any threat to homosexuals, prostitutes or the community generally must be treated as a health issue and not as an issue for phoney moralising. To drive the gay community and prostitution underground will only prevent controls, regulation, education and prevention, and must not be contemplated.

AIDS represents a major challenge for politicians and the public service. Honourable members will increasingly come into contact with AIDS-sufferers or their families. I

hope that honourable members will not seek to make moral judgments. Similarly, health workers, prison officers, police officers, child-care officers, schoolteachers and a whole range of public servants will come to have first-hand experience with the disease.

The Professional Officers Association has called for the establishment of an AIDS committee representing all politicial parties, unions, business and community groups to keep Queensland's response to the crisis under constant review. The Opposition supports that concept. However, it believes that such a committee should work in close co-operation and consultation with the national advisory committee and the AIDS task force.

Issues such as compulsory anti-body screening in the workplace, occupational discrimination and segregation in prisons and hospitals will be raised within the community. Racial tension will be severely exacerbated should the AIDS virus be located in, say, an Aboriginal community.

I am not confident that consideration has been given to those likely eventualities. Desperate times call for desperate measures. Issues such as the regulation of prostitution, the free issue of condoms, the exchange of needles for intravenous drug-users and direct and relevant sex education programs now have to be faced.

In answer to a question that was asked recently in this House, the Minister for Education said that, because they promote homosexuality, the *Streetwize* comics that are used in other States to illustrate graphically the cause of AIDS and other diseases should not be permitted in this State. The Minister also indicated that most honourable members would not have seen a *Streetwize* comic. I doubt whether the honourable member who asked the question would have seen one, either. Therefore, I table a *Streetwize* comic dealing with the subject of AIDS. Honourable members can peruse that publication and see for themselves that this type of graphic education material serves a purpose, particularly for those people with slow reading capabilities. As honourable members will notice, it is in comic form. Although the language is plain, it can be easily understood by those people whom one would expect to read this form of literature. It contains very valuable information and the type of graphic illustrations and stark material that are needed if we are to do battle with this horrible disease.

Whereupon the honourable member laid the document on the table.

Mr McELLIGOTT: The attitude that these things cannot be introduced into Queensland will lead to deaths from AIDS in this State. The only question that has to be asked about such material is: will it work in preventing the spread of the virus?

Similarly, it can be said that the condom represents the one real barrier to the spread of AIDS virus through intercourse. It is unacceptable, therefore, that advertisements promoting the use of condoms are not permitted in this State.

Again I make the point that there is no time, nor is it appropriate, to deny to the community knowledge about the use of condoms while honourable members debate the moral issues. Every possible tool needs to be used in the fight against this dreaded disease. The humble condom is one such tool.

Because I have said that, honourable members will assume that I would immediately support the introduction of condom-vending machines. I do, but I do not see that as a high priority, given the promotion and availability of condoms. Promotion of the use of condoms must come first, followed perhaps by vending machines if the community finds difficulty in easily procuring condoms.

There is an argument that the promotion of the use of condoms encourages promiscuity. It is a serious argument, and one that has to be considered. I do not accept that condoms cause intercourse. Sexual activity occurs because the sex drive is the strongest of human feelings. To occur, intercourse requires the opportunity and a willing partner. Given those two ingredients, it will continue to occur with or without condoms. It follows that the use of condoms by those in the high-risk groups, that is, homosexual males, bisexual men and men servicing a variety of partners, must be encouraged.

In that context, it is interesting to cite an article about the South Australian Health Minister, who has recently launched a $60,000 campaign to encourage the use of condoms. It says—

"... the advertisement was a sensible approach to the problem. It was unlikely to offend viewers and would help redress the community's complacency about AIDS.

However, he said he would have no fear of using more explicit, even shocking, advertising if he believed it necessary to prevent the spread of AIDS.

'If, in fact, our future research shows we need to be more explicit, that we need to be into the shock area, then we'll do it, we'll do whatever we have to do to stop the spread of AIDS,' he said.

'We will make sure at the end of the day that people know that we are faced with potentially the greatest problem that we've seen this century.' "

On behalf of the Opposition, I call on the Government to do these things in the interests of all Queenslanders—

(1) immediately introduce a human relationships course into secondary schools with emphasis on sex education and the control of AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases;

(2) produce and distribute easily understood educational material to those in the high-risk groups;

(3) recognise that homosexuality and prostitution do exist in Queensland and seek the co-operation of the gay community and prostitutes in limiting the spread of AIDS;

(4) approve the advertising of condoms and, if found necessary, the introduction of condom-vending machines;

(5) consider the need for a needle exchange program for intravenous drug-users; and

(6) recognise the Queensland AIDS Council and co-operate fully with the national advisory committee and the task force.

I mention that Queensland is the only State Government that is not recognising its AIDS council. The latest obstacle placed in the way of the Queensland AIDS Council is the Government's refusal to recognise it as a charitable institution so that it can obtain funds to carry out its important work.

Another proposal is—

(7) to establish the advisory committee on AIDS recommended by the State Council of the Professional Officers Association.

AIDS will remain an issue for as far into the future as can reasonably be predicted. It will be a great shame if the fight against the virus bogs down in political point-scoring. Of course, the responsibility rests with the Government to implement the programs to limit the spread of the virus.

The Opposition pledges its support for hard-hitting, realistic education programs and advertising. The community must be made aware of the grave risk.

Professor John Dwyer, who is the director of one of the AIDS clinics in Sydney, has been reported in the following way—

"... the hetrosexual community needed to be scared into realising it was as susceptible to the disease as the homosexual community.

The seriousness of the threat meant the Australian public and politicians needed to 'bite the bullet' and implement measures that otherwise would be unacceptable.

'We all have to accept that we may have to take steps to stop this epidemic that many people are going to find distasteful and uncomfortable.'

. . .

He called on Governments to take unpopular, but necessary, steps to fight the disease, such as issuing syringes and needles to intravenous drug users, including prisoners.

'AIDS may be incurable, but it is preventable,' he said.

He said the public also had to accept the need for AIDS education in schools. Surveys had shown Sydney teenagers did not think they could catch AIDS, although many were sexually active and some used intravenous drugs."

I am sure that the Government realises that the position is very, very serious. The point of my raising it today is to ensure that the public debate on this issue becomes just that, so that all of the reasonable ways in which the spread of the disease can be counteracted are considered by all in the community in Queensland, not just by Government members in isolation. An appeal ought to be made to education authorities and community groups to ensure that each individual in this State is aware of the very grave health risk that the population is facing.

Again, I return to the point that was made by Professor Dwyer. If he is to be believed, apparently only 12 months is available to get the spread of AIDS under control, which is not very much time at all. As the Professional Officers Association has stated, it is an opportunity to involve the whole community, including representatives from the trade union and business community and all the political parties that are represented in this Parliament, in coming to grips with this grave risk.

I do not think that there is time available—nor is it appropriate—to continue to debate the moral questions about homosexuality and prostitution. After all, both have been in existence for hundreds of years. There is insufficient time to debate those issues. Instead, the risk that faces the community must be recognised as a health risk. The cures and the progress that have been initiated to prevent the further spread of the disease must be regarded as health issues and should not be ground down, as I said previously, by moral debate.

Mrs HARVEY (Greenslopes) (2.47 p.m.): At this, the beginning of my second term of office as State Government representative of the people of the Greenslopes electorate, I vow my allegiance and that of my constituents to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, and pay our respects to the Governor, His Excellency Sir Walter Campbell.

I also take this opportunity to congratulate you, Mr Speaker, on your appointment to the office of Speaker. I am sure that my colleagues would join me in acknowledging, with gratitude, the diligent and effective control over this House that you have already established.

In the past three years, I have been tireless in attending to the needs of the people of the Greenslopes electorate. I have been heartened by the willing support of a great many individuals and organisations. I count myself as most fortunate to have an electorate that is made up of those increasingly rare people who are still willing to be their brother's keeper, and to be involved for the betterment of those in need and the betterment of our entire community. The results of our combined efforts are indeed tangible in the electorate.

I wish to thank the hard-working people on the executive and on the six committees involved with the Queen Alexandra home. It has been—and still is—a mammoth task to get voluntary programs working and to keep the building financially viable.

I am delighted that the dedicated p. and c. association associated with the Coorparoo primary school has determined to take up my humble suggestion so that the new tuck-shop will serve nutritionally wholesome food only. As a teacher, it was my experience to observe many children, after a morning tea of cream buns and other sweet foods, becoming hyperactive, or at the least fidgety and inattentive, when they returned to class. I would like surveys to be done in all Queensland schools to find out how many children go to school without breakfast. I suspect that the results would give everyone

a shock. It is not only the children of poverty-stricken families who are going to school starved of the nutrition that is needed to concentrate well and to actuate mental and physical activities; it is also the children who get themselves off to school because their parents are busy or those who miss out because, frequently, their parents are running late for work or because of many other reasons associated with everyday, ordinary family life. How many hungry children hang about tuck-shops before school? How many have $5, $10 or even $20 notes and want to buy their breakfast from a nearby shop?

The issue of wholesome food leads me to another matter of great concern. I refer to the rapid expansion of the take-away food and frozen food markets. The future of this country is our children, yet parents are opting for quick, pre-cooked or pre-packaged processed foods—not just as special treats, but as a regular menu. In the long run, the price will be high. More and more children will develop asthma and allergies and the foundations of poor health in adulthood.

Because it is the American way of life that the people are emulating, Australia can learn from the American experience. In America, the rate of obesity and attendant illnesses is the highest in the world. Australia is catching up very fast.

One day busy mothers will find that they were conned; that the so-called better living conditons that they were able to help provide cheated them out of time with their children—time to make them feel loved, secure and wanted in order to ensure their mental well-being, and time to feed them home-cooked, or even home-grown, nourishing food to ensure their physical well-being. When they finally come to clean out the empty kids' rooms and throw away all the out-grown clothes and all the broken toys, they may come to realise, as some of the mothers that I know already have done, that most of the memories are linked to material things. Someone needs to say, "Let's get the priorities right." What do any of the material things matter in the long run when it is all said and done and the children have grown up and gone away?

I am grateful that Campaigners For Christ, a non-denominational Christian organisation, has taken up the community challenge. It is putting a successful living program, to be run every Thursday, into Queen Alexandra Home. The aim of the program will be to help parents understand the complex role and responsibilities of parenting and to come to terms with the values necessary for the successful rearing of children. I think everyone would acknowledge that the most difficult task of life, more difficult than any career, whether the career be teaching, clerical, academic or political, is the rearing of children. I feel that those who want to promote the task of rearing children could be supported much more actively than has been done to date.

The aged are also of great concern. I am particularly concerned about them because approximately a quarter of the people in the electorate of Greenslopes are aged over 60. I am proud of the way in which many of the elderly in the Greenslopes electorate display an independence and resourcefulness that few people give them credit for. Contrary to popular thinking, the vast majority of such people do not have memory defects, nor is their enjoyment and appreciation of life less than that of younger people. Studies show that few old people suffer from boredom, isolation or loneliness, so it can be seen that they are still active participants in the community and should not be mentally shelved by the rest of us. In fact, most of the volunteer work-force of today, which could not be done without, is made up of the elderly. An example of this is the Meals on Wheels organisation. The Holland Park Meals on Wheels service, which I visit regularly, is manned almost entirely by retired folk.

Greater emphasis needs to be placed on the dignity of ageing. Ageing should be viewed as a positive process which can lead to new challenges and new avenues of experience and creativity—always contributing to the wider community.

The elderly, frail and invalided have special needs that are being addressed by home-help services such as Meals on Wheels and Blue Nurses. In that regard the combined Government and volunteer efforts are doing a marvellous job. However, the Federal Government needs to do some soul-searching in regard to those special needs.

It needs to improve the subsidy for nursing homes and rectify the problems created by its heartless policy of treating the aged as statistics, as evidenced by the problems created in the Mount Olivet Hospital.

Because of the time-limit in the main hospital imposed by Federal Government budgetary restrictions, many families of terminally ill patients have become distraught. In one particularly sad case, an aged parent was deaf, blind and extremely feeble and therefore trusting and comfortable with the regular sisters in attendance. Because of those regulations that I referred to, and to comply with the Federal Government's heartless requirements, that person had to be shifted from the main hospital care section to the nursing home section. The Federal Government sees those people not as people but as statistics on a printed page. When families are trying to deal with the very, very difficult problems of frail, invalided and terminally ill parents, that attitude comes through very strongly. I believe that that attitude shows a callous disregard by the Federal Government for the elderly and their very real needs.

Just this morning I visited an 86-year-old lady with very serious heart problems who is trying to cope alone in a rather large house. Only several weeks ago her husband was placed in a private hospital as he suffers from Alzheimer's disease, incontinence and a range of problems associated with ageing and body degeneration. Because after several weeks this lady still did not know what would happen to her husband, she was distraught. She did not know where she could place him.

The entire burden of what to do with her husband fell upon this 86-year-old lady. The hospital would not classify him as requiring intensive care, yet it was known that he could not return home to his wife. She felt that he was in a state of limbo and that caused her a great deal of anxiety. I spent the morning trying to reassure her that somehow, some way an answer to her problem would be found. She is not a rare case; this is quite a common occurrence. The nursing homes in my electorate and beyond—there are quite a few in the area—all have three-year waiting-lists. The special needs of relatives and loved ones simply cannot be met by these organisations, hard as they try. More consideration needs to be given to providing relief to these people, who have earned their right to be looked after, worked for their entire lives in this country and paid their taxes. They should finish their lives with a reasonable degree of dignity.

I am looking to the successful negotiations between the State and Federal Health Departments to prepare the way for the State to take over hospital care. Then I will know that a more caring and concerned attitude will be taken by the State Health Department, which is in contrast to that which is taken by the Federal Health Department. I look forward to accompanying the Minister for Health, Mr Ahern, on a visit to the Greenslopes Repatriation General Hospital in the near future. I am particularly keen to elicit more Government support for the Independent Living Centre situated at the Greenslopes hospital. This organisation does so much fine work for the elderly and incapacitated by providing a constantly updated display of a wide range of living aids such as specially modified kitchen appliances and different types of wheelchairs and beds, just to mention a few. This is a service that needs to be promoted more widely throughout this State, particularly in remote areas, so that all can benefit from the information this unit can supply.

I applaud the report in today's *Courier-Mail* of efforts now being made by interested parties to set up a university chair of geriatric medicine. The article states—

> "The Geriatric Medical Foundation would make it possible to offer a very attractive position for a geriatrician with teaching and research facilities and practical help for geriatrics."

I turn my attention to the paramount concern of the people of the Greenslopes electorate, one that coincides in fact with the concern of the entire nation; that is, how to survive in an economic climate of ever-rising and crippling interest rates and the lack of hope for the future caused by a growing deficit that hangs as a pall of gloom over the entire nation. Is it any wonder that the country is in such a mess? The Prime Minister is a man who jumped straight from providing limitless hand-outs to trade

unions, as president of the ACTU, to providing limitless hand-outs to countless minority groups and projects, as inexperienced politician and Prime Minister.

Mr Burreket interjected.

Mrs HARVEY: There is a great list of them.

His Treasurer, Mr Keating, another trade union official, has no tertiary education of any sort and certainly no background or education in economics. He is the nation's Treasurer. What can be expected of a country that is run by two trade-unionists in its top two positions? Australia has degenerated into a trade-union run country. Is it any wonder that these problems have occurred? The only ray of hope for the people of Australia is experienced leadership, and none could be more experienced—this will hurt the Opposition; wait for it—than the Premier, Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen.

I refer to the words of George Bernard Shaw, prefaced to *Back to Methuselah.* They were—

> "On all hands as I write the cry is that our statesmen are too old, and that Leagues of Youth must be formed everywhere to save civilisation from them. But despairing ancient pioneers tell me that the statesmen are not old enough for their jobs. We have no sages old enough and wise enough to make a synthesis of these reactions, and to develop the magnetic awe-inspiring force which must replace the policeman's baton as the instrument of authority."

Australians are soon to witness a Federal Government mini-Budget. Honourable members can guess that there will be more of the same—more interesting ways of squeezing more taxation out of the Australian people. Business has had all the incentive squeezed out of it. The fringe benefits tax has not only hit business hard but also caused a loss, or drastic curtailment, of benefits for many employees, with a resultant drop in their living standard.

In the September 1986 quarter the real gross domestic product turned around. It has turned around all right; one only has to look at the results! Manufacturing has been more buoyant, but construction has remained weak. Of course manufacturing has been more buoyant. As a result of the drop in the value of the Australian dollar, goods manufactured using Australian parts can be obtained a bit more cheaply than those using imported parts. Of course, devaluation has helped in that regard. However, construction has remained weak. That will not help first home buyers a great deal.

Retail sales and motor vehicle registrations have been squeezed by falling real wages. In 1986 consumer prices rose by 9.1 per cent——

Mr Davis: In Queensland.

Mrs HARVEY: I am not talking about Queensland; I am talking about Australia.

Agricultural prospects have remained bleak. Farm prosperity and values have fallen. The wool industry is to be deregulated. The contraction in the Japanese steel industry has had a strong negative influence on Australia's iron ore and coal industries. The mining sector is fighting back by developing new products and new export markets. In 1986, despite promising finds, oil exploration slumped.

I do not like to be a prophet of gloom. However, I did not write the report to which I am referring. It is compiled from an analysis of economic and political trends. Every quarter an analysis is made of the Australian scene.

The outlook is not good. It is no wonder that people are concerned and are looking elsewhere for leadership. They have had a good dose of the leadership thus far.

In the December 1986 quarter the Consumer Price Index rose by 2.9 per cent. That is the largest quarterly increase in almost four years. In the December quarter the annual rate of inflation was 9.8 per cent—up from 8.9 per cent in the September quarter. In September 1986 the index of weekly award rates of pay was only 6.1 per cent above the

level of the previous year, indicating a drop of 2.8 per cent in real wages, with no general wage increase expected before March 1987—this month. The story is not a very happy one.

Mr Davis: Knocker.

Mrs HARVEY: The member for Brisbane Central says that I am a knocker. I am a realist. It is good to face reality. Unless Australians start facing what is really happening, instead of believing the promises being made by the Hawke Government, this country will never crawl out of the hole it is in. It is time this nation had an opportunity to do so.

The hysterical attacks by both the Federal Labor and Liberal Parties on the Queensland Premier's single-rate tax proposal suggests a very real fear on their part that this proposal will catch the interest and hence the votes of the Australian public, which is looking for a way out of the economic mess.

I will examine Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen's proposal. Not very many people are interested in saying what it really is. The Premier's proposal is for a single-rate tax of 25 per cent on all income and the introduction of a special rebate of $1,150 to compensate for the loss of the tax-free threshold, with appropriate safeguards against income-splitting. The rebate would taper to nil in the range of $25,000 to $35,000, above which tax-payers would gain from the lower tax rate. Honourable members will notice there is no consumption tax and no capital gains tax. That has to be good news for everyone in this country. Existing rebates, except the rebate for concessional expenditure, will be maintained but all allowances, except zone allowances, will cut out at the same level as the special rebate.

There will be a 7.5 per cent across-the-board reduction in Commonwealth Government spending other than on social welfare and interest payments. An interesting way to achieve that would be to eliminate many of the duplicated portfolios, such as the Federal Education portfolio to mention but one. That would effect a considerable saving.

Mr Gately interjected.

Mrs HARVEY: Yes, grants to the unions would be a very good way in which to save a bit of money. If everyone has to pull his belt in, I do not see why the unions cannot do it as well.

For the lower income earners there will be a tax reduction of $5 per week paid as an additional rebate, cutting out at the same level as the special rebate at $25,000 to $30,000, above which tax-payers will gain from the lower tax rate. There will be a $5 per week increase in all social security benefits and, very importantly, an exemption of social security pensions from income tax. The most ridiculous situation I have ever heard of is the one in which people can be given a pension with one hand and have it taken back with the other hand in the form of a tax. The Premier's package is something that I can sell to my constituents, and I have no doubt that it is one that Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen can sell to the Australian public in his quest for the position of Prime Minister.

A freeing-up of funds by such a low tax as the one advocated by the Premier will encourage business, thereby reducing unemployment, which is a major concern in all electorates. It will return incentive to all areas of endeavour. Queensland has had an enviable record of steady, trustworthy National Party Government under the Premier, but it is still hampered by Federal Government interference, by the costs of Federal Government portfolio duplication, endless Federal Government hand-outs, the Federal Government's willy-nilly programs implemented without adequate research and the spending of money to gather votes. Look at all the money that was wasted on the drug initiative; the little booklet that was supposed to have gone out to every person in Australia. I never received a booklet, and I am sure that half of the honourable members present did not receive a booklet in their letter-box. That money could have been put to better use in the creation of real and not artificial jobs.

I am sure that if any domestic household threw money around on paper bags and rubbishy things when it really required food, it would be in the same dire straits as this country is in while money is being wasted on useless things such as that initiative by the Hawke Government. All it amounted to was a wooing of the teenage vote. The Federal Government need not think that young people are so naive as to fall for it. They know a vote-winning activity when they see one and are not nearly as naive as some people would suppose.

The Greenslopes electorate is representative of the whole of Australia. This electorate does not have wheat, wool or some of the other problems that are of great concern in the country areas. Greenslopes does not have the power stations or some of the really big issues, but it has the most important issue: the people. People are trying to cope in Australia's present economic climate and within the Greenslopes electorate it is obvious that its 22 500 people are battling to survive.

Pensioners are feeling downtrodden and unappreciated. Because of a Federal Government that could not care less, they feel that they almost have to apologise for their very existence. The Federal Government does not want to support them and treats them as a necessary nuisance. That is apparent throughout Australia. I have outlined some of the ways that that becomes apparent in the policies of the Hawke Federal Government. Because they cannot get jobs, young people feel that they have no future. Because of high interest rates, families are having to make desperate attempts to hang onto their homes. Because they feel that nobody worries about them and because of the fact that the Federal Government's incentives are not directed towards them, businesses, particularly small businesses, are in dire straits.

The Premier's move is to fill the leadership vacuum. The average citizen is astute enough to realise that what is called for is leadership with experience, firmness and courage. Those values have not been forgotten. They have been masked a great deal by what goes on in the media and by modern trends. However, by and large the values still exist in our communities. The people want to return to those values.

For many years Queensland has been criticised for being the State that is out of step with the rest of Australia. Queenslanders are beginning to realise that Queensland is out of step because it is one step ahead of the rest of Australia. While other States were promoting things such as pornography and experimental ideas that would be considered socially to be trendy or up to the minute, Queensland held back. Now the other States pay the price. Of course Queensland is out of step! Queensland is glad to be out of step and glad to be different.

The Greenslopes electorate has been fortunate to benefit from the Premier's leadership. The people of the Greenslopes electorate would regret having to lose the Premier, but they realise that the only way that this country can be put right is with the strong leadership that is required. The Greenslopes electorate is prepared to make a sacrifice. It is prepared to make sure that the country has the direction that it deserves. Because of the red tape used by the Federal Government and the conditions that attach to various grants and subsidies provided to it, Queensland can go only so far. Queensland must move in the direction I have indicated. It has no alternative other than to get rid of the socialist Hawke Government. It can be seen that everybody is being reduced to a common denominator. Instead of some people having plenty, some people having sufficient, and some people having little, everyone is being reduced to having little. That is reducing everyone to a common denominator, and that is not needed in this country. It is something that the people should not have to accept.

I urge the members of the Opposition to show a little consideration for the country. They should consider the fact that the figures of the Hawke Labor Government do not add up. If the members of the Opposition really cared about the people of Queensland and were worried about where Queensland is going, they would start looking very seriously at some of their criticisms of Government members. If they did that, they would realise that Queensland is heading in the right direction.

The hearts and efforts of members of the National Party Government are in the right place. We will lead the way to a Federal National Party Government. My electorate looks forward to that move with enthusiasm and hope for the future. Some sort of a future must be consolidated for our children. Things cannot be left as they are simply because we think that the problems are too hard to solve and that they are irreversible. Plans must be made now, and that will take time.

The pieces of information I have provided merely scratch the surface of what is happening in the community. Because nobody wants the Australian dollar, it is embarrassing to try to spend it overseas. Honourable members should try going to a bank in America. They would be given half the value of their money. Americans do not want the Australian dollar. They are worried that overnight its value will drop further. What will such an image do for Australia on the international market? There is no point in Mr Hawke's strutting around the international scene when he does not have a dollar to back up what he is doing. Anyone who is travelling overseas at the moment would agree that it is a major disaster for a tourist to travel with Australian dollars. What a country's dollar will bring is a very good indication of that country's standing. It is terrible that a person should be embarrassed by converting his Australian dollars overseas. I can imagine that there is no worse encounter. A person should be proud of his country and proud of his country's economy. However, people who travel overseas encounter other people who turn up their noses at the Australian dollar.

Members of the Opposition find that laughable; I find it very serious. Not only is the Australian tourist overseas in trouble, but also his country has a very poor international standing when it pretends to be part of the world stage but does not have a dollar to back itself up. Overseas, Australia is regarded as a second-rate country or a joke. However, it is the Federal Hawke Government that is nothing but a joke. It can pretend as much as it likes about its overseas status; at the moment it amounts to nothing more than the value of the dollar.

Mr Davis: What Government trip did you get?

Mrs HARVEY: For the information of the honourable member, I point out that, unlike many Opposition members, I did not get any Government trip.

I feel that the thoughts and views expressed by my constituents are fairly typical of those expressed throughout all electorates of Queensland and Australia. Total strangers from as far away as Melbourne have rung my office and said, "We support your Premier for PM. Tell him that we believe in what he is doing and appreciate his efforts."

No other politician has gone to so much trouble, under such difficult circumstances, for the people of Australia. I am sure that those people appreciate the Premier's efforts. The Premier does not stand alone in his campaign. Every Government member of this Parliament is behind him 100 per cent and will do everything possible to assist him in his quest to fill the leadership vacuum that exists in the Federal sphere.

Together with my consitituents and those people from the other States who have contacted my office, I offer my support to the Premier. I hope that he will forge ahead with great resoluteness and carry out the task that he has set for himself for the benefit of Australia.

No election campaign is easy. The last one—my second campaign— was the most difficult so far. It turned out to be the dirtiest election campaign of all time. However, the National Party does not mind the battles and is prepared to fight them in the Federal sphere.

Mr BRADDY (Rockhampton) (3.17 p.m.): The dedication of the loyal Opposition in this Parliament to the advancement of democratic government has been well instanced by the previous speakers from the Labor Party. In common with those honourable members, I am honoured to pay respect to the able and fair manner in which you, Mr Speaker, have presided over the affairs of this Parliament since your election to that office.

The Australian Labor Party has sincere regard for parliamentary tradition and custom. Those traditions help to ensure free and open debate in the Parliament. I am sure that you, Mr Speaker, have noted the respect that has been accorded to you by my colleagues. Such respect will remain and increase with your continued impartial and fair presiding role in this place. Your efficient and fair conduct of this parliamentary session serves to throw into greater contrast the inefficient and unfair conduct of Government business by the incumbent Bjelke-Petersen administration.

As from the date of its re-election, this Government has largely abdicated its responsibilities while the Premier, with the support and avid encouragement of Government members, has set out on the road to Canberra. The self-appointed political Messiah has dashed around the State, the nation and the world seeking to impress, not with his conduct of Queensland's affairs but with his delusion that he alone can govern in Australia's interest.

The Premier and his supporters, such as the Deputy Premier, have abused and castigated their own Federal parliamentary leader and the Leader of the Federal Liberal Party, with whom their party is in coalition. Such amazing political behaviour should not go unnoticed. However, the Premier's behaviour is not the only action to have received attention by the people of Australia. During the abuse and castigation of the National Party's Federal colleagues, Queensland has witnessed the signs of government blunders and injustices.

As the newly appointed Opposition spokesman on Community Services, Small Business and Consumer Affairs, I have witnessed occasions on which many sectors of responsibility have been grossly mishandled by the Queensland Government. Such mismanagement and bad government must be caused partly by the Premier's neglect of his responsibilities to this State.

Last Thursday, 12 March, a prime example of the Premier's neglect was revealed in Australia's unemployment figures, which showed that Queensland's overall unemployment rate was 11 per cent, compared with an Australian adjusted average of approximately 8 per cent. They also showed that in Queensland the unemployment rate for the 15 to 19 year olds was 29.5 per cent.

When Parliament rose that day, did the Premier set out with his Ministers on their ministerial tasks in an endeavour to work in the interests of higher employment for Queenslanders? Not at all. The following day, the media reported that immediately on the rising of Parliament the Premier dashed off to yet another secret meeting with Sir Robert Sparkes in an endeavour to carry out this Messianic role to which he has appointed himself. That time it was to set up a "Joh for PM" committee structure right round Australia. That occurred on the same day as Queensland, for the seventeenth time in the last 28 months, recorded the lowest employment figures in Australia—the worst unemployment record in Australia. What did the Premier do? He went off to set up these committees to promote himself to a position for which he is not qualified and for which he has never set any example in this Parliament.

I will give examples of how the Government, since the last election, has failed to measure up to its tasks and responsibilities. Not one member of the Government party in this Parliament or outside has spoken up in opposition to the man who, immediately after he is elected, seeks to leave it to go to another place. Not one member has publicly spoken out in condemnation of a man who is drawing a high salary as Premier of the State and is clearly not dedicating himself to that task. He is not even a part-time Premier; he is a non-existent Premier.

I recall the recent abolition and then the reinstatement shortly thereafter of the Builders Registration Board. What a farce! That particular farce has led to a massive loss of confidence of the consumers and small-business people—builders particularly—in the National Party Government of this State. The consumers are so concerned that many of them are putting off the decision to build because, having seen the performance of the Minister, they are not sure for how long they will be protected by Government

legislation in this State. Similarly the small-businessman and the small builder are equally concerned.

Last week in Rockhampton I was contacted by a businessman who told me that he had made plans to purchase further equipment to expand his business. Because of the loss of confidence in the community as a result of the extraordinary behaviour of the Government with the Builders Registration Board, he told me that he would not continue with those plans as he was not confident that his business could now expand.

While the Premier is away playing the Messiah in Japan and telling the people untruths and denigrating his own Australian Government in Japan, the rest of the Cabinet apparently approved the removal of the Builders Registration Board and the amazing farce that occurred thereafter, much to the shame and disgust even of National Party supporters. It was a prime example of how, when a vacuum is created at the top, the situation rapidly gets out of hand.

Since the election, other areas have been equally badly handled. Prior to the election, the Small Business Minister, as he now is, Mr Lester, promised support to the small-business community. Immediately after, he went back on that promise and instituted the extended shopping hours trial. Again, the small-business community was devastated. The Government had promised to do one thing and it went the other way.

Unless the Government can find a person to take charge, to become Premier in reality and not just in name, the Government of Queensland will continue to flounder from disaster to disaster as it has in the months since the election and as I have demonstrated in the two examples that I have used.

There is another example that touched on the ministerial portfolios of Mr Lester and other Ministers. This morning in Parliament, Mr Lester answered a question about the collapse of Travel Centres of Australia. In that question, I pointed out that the collapse of that travel company had resulted in bad debts amounting to approximately $400,000 that were owing to consumers and businesses in Queensland. I asked the Minister to tell the Parliament whether his Government would join, belatedly, the compensation fund that had been requested by the Australian Federation of Travel Agents and that had been commenced by all the other mainland States. The Minister's answer was to the effect that an interdepartmental committee had been established, comprising representatives of the Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation, the Department of Justice and the Minister's department to examine the whole matter. The Minister went on to say that the Queensland Government would not be rushed into taking precipitate action when alternative measures may be available to protect consumers. The only basis he advanced for that proposition was that in Victoria alone, according to the Minister, approximately 350 travel agents may cease to operate because of the legislation in that State.

The present position is this: the trade union of travel agents, the Australian Federation of Travel Agents, has asked that legislation of the kind to which I have referred be brought into existence not only in Queensland but also in other parts of Australia. It has also asked that a compensation fund be set up so that people who invest moneys with travel agents for the purpose of purchasing travel tickets and making arrangements for travel will be protected. My information is that the Queensland Government has not acted on that matter because many of the travel agents in Queensland are not members of the Australian Federation of Travel Agents. I understand that in Queensland some travel agents who operate on a very small scale have in turn lobbied Ministers and members of the Government to prevent Queensland from joining in the scheme. What has the Government done? To date, the Government has sold out the Queensland consumers, as it has in so many other respects. The Government has preferred to act in the interests of a few travel agents rather than to act in the interests of the consumers of Queensland.

The previous speaker, the honourable member for Greenslopes, spoke about how the Government of which she is a member supports consumers—supports the people of

Queensland. The reality is that the Queensland Government supports those who cry out loudest and longest to it—those who are the biggest voice in the ear of Government.

Realistically, organisations that have public moneys under their control must act according to some form of public regulation. It is not good enough for the Government to state that it will examine the situation. The collapse of the company to which I have referred is by no means the first that has occurred in Queensland. Many examples have occurred over the years. On every occasion, people who have paid money to purchase expensive tickets to travel overseas have lost considerable sums of money.

For years, negotiations about this matter have been under way with the other States. I understand that it has been 18 months since representatives of the Queensland Government met representatives of the four other mainland States—yet the Minister says that he needs more time. The Minister said that his colleagues need more time to establish the interdepartmental committee and to look into the matter. What nonsense!

Why does this Government support the interests of people who have proved, clearly, that they are not capable of looking after public moneys properly? I point out that the solicitors in this State who handle public moneys are required to be regulated; the solicitors of this State are required to have their trust accounts audited every six months; the solicitors of this State are required to invest in professional indemnity insurance before they are issued with an annual practising certificate, so that people who may otherwise have claims against them will be covered. Yet, because it has been lobbied by some travel agents, this Government says that it cannot do the same for travel agents.

In effect, this Government has said to date, "All right, we know that consumers in Queensland have lost approximately $400,000 in the collapse of this company. Although we make solicitors and accountants accountable and although they must be registered and must carry professional indemnity insurance and so forth, we will not do that to travel agents." Again, it will be the consumers who will pay the price. Apparently, consumers are considered by this Government to have a weak voice and, according to this Government, are not sufficiently organised to be able to prevail upon the Government to do the right thing.

I repeat that, in spite of the fact that the other four mainland States have legislated and have all agreed on a common compensation fund, the Queensland Government has neither the wit nor the character to stand up to the travel agents and say, "Well, if it is good enough for solicitors to be regulated and if it is good enough for solicitors to have a compensation fund, it is good enough for you, too, because you are handling public money." Today in this House the Minister for Industrial Affairs again abdicated his responsibility and spoke about wishy-washy stuff such as interdepartmental committees, which have been talked about continually and which, it is known, do not get anywhere.

I turn now to another area of my responsibility as a shadow Minister, which is Aboriginal and Islander affairs. At the present time the people of the Aborginal and Islander communities in Queensland are in a period of great change. Indeed, that could be said for all of the Aborginal and Islander people in this State. On several occasions the legislation has been amended, but the deeds of grant in trust have been issued, giving legal control over the land to many of the Aboriginal and Islander communities of this State. As the Minister said this morning in answer to my questions, some communities are still awaiting the issue of their deeds of grant in trust.

In relation to that particular area of responsibility, where again is the leadership? Where again is the Premier calling his Minister in and saying, "Minister, you are responsible for a particular portfolio in an area of great change. The people of Queensland are entitled to know where this Government is going in relation to Aboriginal affairs. The Aboriginal and Islander people in their communities are entitled to know where this government is going in relation to Aboriginal and Islander affairs."? The Government must either issue a Green Paper setting out its program in relation to these matters in the light of the important legislative changes in recent times, or issue a ministerial statement setting out what the Minister sees as the role of himself and his department in the affairs of the Aboriginal and Islander people of this State.

These are not normal times for those people, who are looking for some guidance from the Government as to what this Government sees its role to be. In a time of change it is not good enough just to let the people continue to guess what the Government will do. For example, no-one in this State knows what the real role of the Department of Community Services will be in 1987, let alone in 1988 and 1989, in Aboriginal and Islander community reserves of this State. Since the resumption of Parliament, no ministerial statement to the House in relation to that matter has been forthcoming. Guesses are made and some able public servants have given their ideas to the communities of what they believe will happen. They indicate when they believe the responsibilities will be handed over to the Aboriginal and Islander councils.

That is not good enough. The Minister responsible has the ultimate responsibility to tell this House, the people of Queensland and the Aboriginal and Islander people what he is doing. When will the control be handed over? How much money, if any, will be made available by the Queensland Government for the continued running of those reserves? Everyone is aware that those reserves are not areas in which income is collected from rates. They are reserves which have traditionally been supported out of the public purse. Many of them are now moving towards a program whereby, with Commonwealth Government assistance, they surrender their right to unemployment relief in return for a community payment, and they then work for the community.

The Woorabinda Aboriginal community has just announced that it is about to embark on such a program under which all the community will surrender its unemployment benefits. The Aboriginal and Islander communities of Queensland are showing great leadership in their attempt to free themselves from the paternalism which has been present in Queensland, not just under this Government but under previous State Governments. However, the communities have not received the leadership from the Minister and from this Government to which they are entitled.

Mr Burreket: They have the best legislation in Australia.

Mr BRADDY: The legislation to which the honourable member refers is legislation which, for the time being, is accepted by the Aboriginal and Islander people. The point I am making has nothing to do with the legislation. I am talking about a governmental role, not a parliamentary role. This House has seen fit to pass legislation under which people can reasonably progress. However, what those people want is a governmental lead. How many resources will be made available? What experts will be provided to train them in community education and community leadership? It has been seen how some of the reserves have got into financial difficulties in the administration of their canteen moneys. That was revealed in the Auditor-General's report. Many of them say that they simply have not received sufficient training in the administration of public moneys. This Government stands indicted for its failure to provide that administration and training.

Therefore, I am not now speaking about legislation at all. What I am talking about is what help will these people be given—what training, what resources and what funds. The Minister for Northern Development and Community Services dashes round the State, but he has never sat down and issued a paper or a ministerial statement on this matter. The Minister and I both spoke to the Aboriginal and Islander Catholic Council meeting in early January of this year. At that meeting I appealed to the Minister to put out a Green Paper or a ministerial statement setting out what the Government's policy was for this handing-over period. I wanted to know what Government resources, training, etc., would be made available. He has not done that.

The Minister has, in fact, been handicapped again by the behaviour of his Premier on his Messianic role. On his return from the Northern Territory, where he was campaigning, the Premier ordered that all of the community reserves be freeholded. It would appear that the Minister received his orders to attend to that as soon as possible. He in turn attended a meeting of the Aboriginal Co-ordinating Council about six weeks ago but he had announced in advance that the major Aboriginal communities welcomed this initiative. Of course, he made that announcement before the Aboriginal Co-ordinating

Council had even met. I have read the minutes of that council. They show that the council did not welcome the Minister's statement. What the Aboriginal Co-ordinating Council said in its resolution was that it wanted details of the proposal in writing so that it could be considered, be put to their lawyers and be discussed at length. The council wanted to know the pros and cons of the submission so that it could be discussed.

To my knowledge that written proposal has never been submitted to the Aboriginal Co-ordinating Council. The council meets again next week. I have been honoured by being invited to attend some part of its session. I understand that the Minister will also be there. From an answer that the Premier gave in this place and from private information I have from the Minister, it now appears that the freeholding idea has been dropped as it was not consistent with the community ownership freeholding which the Aboriginal and Islander people themselves wanted. It would appear that it was a cynical exercise by the Premier to indicate all sorts of things to the people of the Northern Territory. Again, it was grandstanding to the voters of the Northern Territory; it was not showing an interest in what the Aboriginal and Islander people on the communities themselves wanted.

Mr Burreket: The Aboriginal people do not want the ownership; they have said so.

Mr BRADDY: The Aboriginal and Islander people have long since passed the stage when snake-oil charmers can convince them that they should accept something that is not in their best interests.

The Premier and the Minister for Community Services, Mr Katter, have severely embarrassed themselves by the way they have handled the freeholding of land. It was clearly a political ploy—as Mr Katter was quoted as saying in the *Sunday Sun*—to appeal to the electors. He admitted that the offer of freeholding was a smart political ploy. What a dreadful admission for the Minister responsible for Community Services in this State! He was down-playing the proper role of the Minister who is empowered to care for the interests of the people who live in those communities. The only thing that can be said in his favour is that he clearly did it at the behest of the Premier, the would-be Messiah of Australia.

As the next meeting of the Aboriginal Co-ordinating Council takes place next week, confidence can be placed in these people because they know that they need to plan, discuss and consider before they move. Unfortunately, the same confidence cannot be placed in this Government, which has no clear plan of what it is doing and has no clear foresight as to what it is about. If it did know what it was about, the Government would have been able to tell honourable members what funds are available for the next 6 or 12 months for development projects. It would be able to tell them what training programs would be made available for people to educate the police forces of the communities, to educate the council members of the communities and generally to give them citizenship training, which in many instances they themselves know that they need.

However, this Government shows no foresight. No planning is coming forward from the top level of the Department of Community Services. The Department of Community Services has many able public servants who have given the leadership at the governmental level and who would be able to supply much information of interest and of benefit to the Aboriginal and Islander people of this State.

I again call on the Minister to make a ministerial statement containing a detailed outline of where he and his Government are headed in relation to those Aboriginal reserves that have already been handed over to the control of the Aboriginal councils. Until the Minister does that, he and this Government are letting down drastically these people, for whom they have a particular responsibility.

The portfolios for which I have shadow responsibility in Queensland have been in a sorry state since the re-election of this Government on 1 November 1986. As I indicated at the outset, this Government has abdicated its responsibilities. Apparently the Queensland Government sees its main role now as getting behind the Messiah and pushing him

down that road to Canberra—the road that he believes that only he can travel with success for the Australian people.

Mr R. J. Gibbs: Would you say that he will truly finish up with a crown of thorns?

Mr BRADDY: The election of the Premier of this State to the office of Prime Minister would be the greatest disaster that has occurred in the history of this nation.

If one takes the trouble to read the newspaper reports that are now appearing around Australia, such as those in the *Sydney Morning Herald* and the *Age*, which are conducting detailed studies of the true position in Queensland, one can understand why the latest Gallup polls show that the standing of the Queensland Premier and the National Party nationally has fallen something like 7 per cent in the last few weeks.

The true position in relation to employment in Queensland is now being outlined. The true facts about the Queensland public debt and the so-called balancing of the Budget about which this Government boasts—incorrectly—have now been outlined in every national newspaper.

There are many reasons why the support of the Australian people for the Queensland Premier is now being shown through the Gallup polls to be falling drastically. However, that is a matter ultimately for the Australian people. What the Opposition says to the Queensland Government is this: ministerial responsibility requires that Ministers do their job. The Premier is clearly not doing his job, and the other Ministers are allowing him to get away with it. The other Ministers are continuing to support a Premier who is not even dedicating a quarter of his time to the office of State for which he is paid a very high salary and which is indeed a great honour.

Mr Burreket interjected.

Mr BRADDY: This Government says it does not take any notice of Gallup polls. However, recently a member of the National Party of great importance quoted the Gallup polls to indicate that those polls were more important than the actual vote in the National Party caucus room in Canberra. The Gallup polls show how little this Government is respected by the Australian people. As I have said, it is the responsibility of the Opposition to call on the Government to answer to the people of Queensland.

I call on the Premier to do his job; I call on the Minister for Community Services to do the right thing by the constituents for whom he is responsible; and I certainly call on the Minister for Employment, Small Business and Industrial Affairs, who on two important occasions since the last election has abandoned his role in this regard, to again dedicate himself to the interests of small-business people and look after the consumers of this State rather than the National Party lobbyists who, unfortunately, have had his ear up to the present.

Mrs NELSON (Aspley) (3.45 p.m.): On behalf of myself and the constituents of the electorate of Aspley, I pledge allegiance to the Crown and pay respect to the heavy workload currently being undertaken by Sir Walter and Lady Campbell in Sir Walter's role as Governor of Queensland. There is no doubt that he has fulfilled that role in a very committed manner, and I wish him and Lady Campbell well in the future.

I take this opportunity to congratulate you, Mr Speaker, on your appointment and to add my comments to those of all members of all parties represented in this Parliament in regard to the fair and even-handed manner in which you are administering the affairs of this House.

Before addressing this House on a number of issues that are of importance to the electors of Aspley, I would like to say how nice it is to be back in this House after an absence of three years. I am even pleased to see the honourable member for Brisbane Central. I did not think I would ever live to say those words, because he caused me some degree of discomfort during a previous session of this Parliament. In spite of that, I am pleased to see the honourable member for Brisbane Central.

I wish to comment on the number of National Party women who have been elected to this Parliament for this session. I would like to quote from an article in the February 1987 issue of a magazine entitled *Australian Society*; a magazine that is probably not widely read by honourable members. The article is one that members of the ALP may wish to take issue on. The article is called "Queensland's Gender Gap" and it is written by a lady named Di Zetlin, who is a Labor Party supporter in this State.

In this interesting article she addresses the failure by all political parties, bar the National Party, to attract support from women and endorse women for Parliament in seats in which they can win. The honourable member for Greenslopes, the honourable member for Callide, the honourable member for Pine Rivers and I are all women who fit into the team, are part of that team and represent our electorates in the same way as any other member of Parliament does. It should be put on record that the National Party is the only party that puts its money where its mouth is and endorses women for seats which they can win and hold. I commend the article.

Mr Innes interjected.

Mrs NELSON: Yes, of course I will take that interjection. I think it would be pretty clear to see who lost that seat and how it was lost. The fact is that I have won it, I am here and I will get on with the business of the day.

The electors of Aspley have again given me the privilege of representing them and serving them in this Parliament, and I commit myself to their service. As a result of the redistribution in 1986, there were significant changes in the electorate. It bears pointing out that the electorate has always had a major problem because it was divided by a main highway. That problem has now been exacerbated by the redistribution. I am delighted that the Minister for Main Roads has taken cognisance of my representations in recent months and that, between now and the end of the next financial year, there will be an expenditure of $5.8m in that area. Those roadworks will commence within the next 30 days. It was a program I did have committed in the period 1982 to 1983, and I am delighted that that program has been reactivated and will commence shortly.

I also pay tribute to the Minister for Transport for taking cognisance of representations from electors and developing the Carseldine Railway Station, which services the students of the tertiary institution there.

Mr R. J. Gibbs: Brian Cahill got that.

Mrs NELSON: If the honourable member for Wolston cares to refresh his memory, he will find that that development was funded in the first Budget of 1982-83 and it came about as a result of representations made by what was then called the Brisbane North College of Advanced Education, which is now part of the BCAE. At that time I was very happy to support the representations by the college and delighted that the gentleman who succeeded me in this House followed up those representations.

I refer to the care of the aged in the electorate. Some of these matters were raised by the honourable member for Greenslopes, so I will not go into them in great detail.

Mr Davis: There are only three of them left on the other side.

Mrs NELSON: It is amusing that for the last five minutes Opposition members have made consistent attempts to interject. They belong to a minority group in this Parliament. It is clear that the empty vessel makes the greatest sound. When only one or two of them are left after the next election, goodness knows how much noise they will make.

Mr Beard interjected.

Mrs NELSON: The new member for Mount Isa, since his arrival here, has been one of the biggest smart alecs in the Chamber. He ought to examine the history of the QLP. After the split from the ALP, it had 10 seats. It went from that to 8, 4, 2 and then out the back door. If the honourable member wants to remain a member of this

Assembly, he might take note of that and consider the party to which he belongs. I believe that those discussions have been under way for some time. In fact, I believe that they were under way before the honourable member's endorsement prior to election, so he ought to be careful in this House.

In the electorate of Aspley excellent work is done in cardiac and thoracic surgery. Honourable members may not be aware that the Prince Charles Hospital is one the top 10 cardiac and thoracic units in the world. The special nature of the care available at that hospital is outstanding and worthy of putting on public record in this Chamber. The work is carried out under the auspices of the superintendent, Dr Kevin Kennedy. The service clubs and the local community of the electorate of Aspley have taken great note of the very rapidly increasing aged population in their local community. The Rotary Club of Chermside established a senior citizens centre in Chermside in 1982. I am delighted that, following the redistribution, that centre is now in the electorate of Aspley and that I can represent its members in this Chamber. The members of that club carry out outstanding work. Each week, more than 300 people use the facility at that centre. It barely touches the surface, bearing in mind the large number of very frightened and lonely people in our community who have severe problems, primarily with being widowed and poor, but also, through the normal processes of ageing, arthritic, heart and other medical conditions.

I take heart from the HACC scheme, which is a joint State and Federal program. I hope that some of the recently approved funding arrangements that have been made for my area will work. I am keen to see a review of policies at both State and Federal level that will examine the way in which senior citizens are cared for. I believe that we owe a great debt to our senior citizens.

Mr Comben: Are you supporting Colleen Egan?

Mrs NELSON: The member for Windsor has named a person who deserves to have her name placed on the public record. If the honourable member had read his local newspaper, he would know that I nominated Colleen Egan for a Good Neighbour of the Week Award when that award was first announced. Colleen Egan is the welfare officer for the Roman Catholic Church's deanery of north Brisbane. She is one of the most amazing people I have met. She deserves more than a good neighbour's award. I sincerely hope that, across party lines, we can do something about that in the next 12 months.

In my maiden speech, which I delivered six years ago, I referred to the electorate of Aspley as being a microcosm of all the problems that will challenge us in this decade and beyond. With the expansion of the power of Executive Government and of the bureaucracy, and with rapid advances in technology and the onset of the so-called technology boom and resources boom, many of the State's citizens feel left behind. This nation is in grave danger of becoming a small "have" and a large "have-not" society.

This afternoon I would like to address three issues that cross party lines and that need to be addressed in any major review of government in Australia. The process is afoot in Australian politics, no matter what side one takes, and I am firmly committed as to where I stand—I have the sticker on the back of my car——

Mr Prest: What sticker is that?

Mrs NELSON: "Joh for PM". I am very happy to display that sticker. I will be very sorry to see him leave here, but I am sure that he will win in Canberra.

Across party lines, apart from the fact that a man may want to end his career after 20 years in office as a State Premier and feels that there is such a great need in our society for leadership, no matter which side of the political fence one is on, the fact of the matter is that the community at large is disaffected with both the Labor Party and the Liberal Party. There is no doubt about that. From the polls and the by-elections that have been held throughout Australia during the last three years, it can be seen that the number of Independent candidates and the percentage of the vote that they receive

have increased dramatically. Research that has been conducted following elections has shown that the reason why those Independents achieved a very large proportion of the vote is that their supporters were disaffected citizens.

Other honourable members have already canvassed some of the issues affecting those citizens, namely, interest rates and taxes. I wish to add the growth of bureaucracy. The *Oxford English Dictionary* describes a tax as a "contribution levied on persons, property, or business, for support of national or local government". After reading that definition, I was interested to read the definition of "tax" given in *Macquarie*, because that dictionary is designed particularly for Australia. The *Macquarie Dictionary* states that a tax is "a compulsory monetary contribution demanded by a Government for its support and levied on incomes, property, goods purchased, etc." There is a subtle difference between the two definitions. The *Macquarie* uses the terms "compulsory" and "demand". Because of the compulsory demands that have been made on their pockets during the last 10 to 15 years, Australian citizens are disaffected with Australia's major political parties.

I turn now to what has happened to the middle-income group in Australia. I refer to an article entitled "The Crushing of Middle Australia" by Dr Tim Duncan, who writes for the *Bulletin*. That article appeared in a recent edition of the *IPA Review*. Dr Duncan made the following observations—

> "Community expectations that hard work and enterprise will be rewarded by improving living standards have been shattered by the explosion of government spending and debt. In the last decade and a half public spending has grown from 32 per cent of our GDP to nearly 45 per cent today. This is perhaps the most far-reaching structural change the Australian economy has experienced, and it has brought with it an explosion of taxation and record interest rates which threaten to cripple the middle class."

I turn now to a few examples. An experienced teacher can earn approximately one and a-half times the average weekly earnings based on standard 1985-86 dollars.

Mr R. J. Gibbs interjected.

Mrs NELSON: During the 1960s that figure was approximately—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row): Order! If the honourable member for Wolston wishes to interject, I suggest that he interjects in the proper terms. Personal remarks will not be considered as interjections.

Mrs NELSON: Because I did not hear the honourable member's interjection, I will not ask for its withdrawal. It is obviously not worth a comment.

During the 1960s, a teacher's average weekly earnings were, in 1985-86 dollars, approximately $24,500. That figure is now approximately $32,500. During the late 1960s a teacher with two children retained $19,500 after tax. That figure represented 81 per cent of that teacher's total earnings. Approximately $3,300, or 17 per cent of post-tax earnings, was expended on house repayments. In 1985-86 that same teacher retained $23,000 after tax, or 73 per cent of his earnings. Initially, it might appear that that teacher is better off in dollar terms, until his housing repayments are considered. In fact, there has been no gain. His house repayments have increased to approximately $7,200, or 30 per cent of post-tax earnings. After tax and housing repayments are taken into consideration, people such as teachers retain only 46 per cent of their gross earnings, whereas in the late 1960s they were retaining 62 per cent of their gross earnings. Housing payments and taxation are only two of the increased charges that ordinary families across Australia have had to face.

I turn to the people who might be highly motivated, such as a small-business person or someone such as a marketing manager, who is fighting for a toehold in the private sector. Because those jobs turn over fairly quickly, he has a fairly tenuous hold on a job. He earns twice the average weekly earnings, or $43,400. His earnings after tax have dropped from 75 per cent of his gross to 65 per cent, but for housing he is paying 2¼

times the amount that he previously paid. He is getting it in the neck from both directions.

I turn now to a classic middle-class family of today. The husband receives twice average weekly earnings. He is an administrator and his wife who has returned to work to help pay the bills, is paid average weekly earnings for a part-time job. Those people are not getting ahead. In 1978-79, such a couple brought home after tax a combined income of $48,000 and they spent about $7,300 on housing. Now they are bringing home $46,000 and spending $9,500 on housing. Compared with only seven years ago, middle-class families with one income or 1½ incomes are at least $4,000 a year worse off. Most Australians do not need to be told; they know from their personal family budgets that they cannot go on coping.

For those members who do marathon running, I point out that an article titled *Tax—a Simpler Task after 13 years* says that at some point during the gruelling marathon, runners hit the wall; the body realises it has had enough and starts sending out signals via excruciating doses of physical pain that it is time to stop. That is not an experience that I ever wish to undergo. The tax-payers also hit the wall, which is one experience I have undergone, because of marginal tax rates. Although the marathon-runner can heed his body's advice and stop the nonsense, the tax-payer has no choice but to keep blundering along into new, increasingly unpleasant bouts of monetary pain.

Taxation and interest rates have crippled the innovative, creative and hard-working section of the community, so that the people who are carrying an ever-increasing burden of those who are not prepared to work are revolting against what they consider to be a remarkably unjust system of government.

I now turn to the bureaucracy. The *Macquarie Dictionary* is interesting to read, because it is so subtly different from the *Oxford Dictionary.* The *Macquarie Dictionary* states that "bureaucracy" means "government by officials against whom there is inadequate public right of redress." I thought that that was an absolutely peculiarly Australian definition, and one that again highlights some of the problems that ordinary citizens have in society, why they are rebelling against the major Australian parties of the present time and why the lead by the Premier to give a change of direction in Australian Government and style will succeed.

I highlight the point by turning to two areas very briefly. They are both different but very serious problems for ordinary tax-payers. One is the right of citizens to have a blood test. For many years, in Queensland, the people have taken for granted, whether they live in Brisbane, the far outback, a coastal area or a provincial city or town, that they can visit a doctor's surgery, have a blood test performed and have the results returned to either the doctor or the specialist by the following day. That is because the two major practices in this State, Sullivan and Nicolaides and the Queensland Medical Laboratory, have been able——

An honourable member: A good ad.

Mrs NELSON: Yes, and I am quite proud to give them one, because they lead the world in pathology services. They have been able to provide people with that service by having country collection centres and country laboratories. In a desperate attempt to stop what has been the quite distasteful and unethical abuse of practice in other states—and I particularly highlight New South Wales—the Federal Government has introduced legislation, with the best will in the world, to try to prevent the rip-off by ordinary practitioners pretending to be pathologists. What has the Federal Government done? It said that, if there is no pathologist in the laboratory, there is no Medicare rebate. That might be fine for Sydney and Melbourne, but where does it leave country Queensland? It leaves those people with about 14 laboratories that will have to close. The people who live in and around those country areas will have to drive or be transported hundreds of miles at great expense to simply have a blood test. The regulation and implementation of legislation by the bureaucracy has moved away completely from the intent of the legislation.

The example I have given is one that shows that national legislation can come into real conflict with the successful operation of State health services. It raises a very good argument for what was foreseen by our forefathers, that is, limiting the powers of the Commonwealth and maximising the powers of the States. It is simply not appropriate to have a piece of legislation that is designed to look after Hobart and Cape York at the same time.

The example I have cited is a classic example of the bureacracy running riot over the rights of ordinary citizens who have very little right of redress. Ordinary citizens will not even know that the service has been lost until it has gone.

I cite another instance which will be far more serious in its implications because it affects people who have no capacity at all to speak for themselves. I refer to the new disabilities services legislation that was introduced recently by the Federal Government and is now being implemented throughout Australia. A number of people in this State—including a number of honourable members such as the honourable member for Brisbane Central; a number of Federal Labor representatives, such as Elaine Darling, Bill Hayden and Senator Margaret Reynolds; a number of members of the Liberal Party; and certainly a number of honourable members from the National Party, such as my friend the honourable member for Gympie, Len Stephan, and Clarrie Miller from Wide Bay, all of whom have worked for many years for organisations such as the Endeavour Foundation—have now found to their shock, horror and outrage that the Federal Government views that organisation in a very dim light. The Federal Government wants to close down a number of the organisation's facilities and intends to deny funding unless the organisation toes the line.

Mr Davis: That is not true.

Mrs NELSON: Yes it is. The Federal Government refers to a number of developments such as the Spring Valley farm, situated outside Gympie, with which the honourable member for Gympie is well acquainted.

Mr Stephan: A very good farm.

Mrs NELSON: Yes, it is. The honourable member for Gympie and I, together with the Governor and others, inspected the facilities recently. The point I make is that the Federal Government bureaucrats refer to Spring Valley as a ghetto.

Do honourable members know why it is a ghetto? It is a ghetto because more than six people live and work there. The bureaucrats cannot cope with a concept that provides for more than six disabled people to live together. In fact, the Federal Government has made it very clear that this farm, which is a Brahman stud and cash crop farm and is one of the great success stories of caring for the disabled in this State, will be denied any sort of resources from any Federal bureaucrat because it is regarded as an undesirable practice. Because 32 people live in three different lodges on this farm—and in spite of the fact that each lodge is a kilometre from the other on this beautiful farm—it is referred to as a ghetto. It is the case also that, because the farm is considered to be too far from town, it is referred to as a ghetto. I was not aware that it was possible to run a Brahman stud in the middle of the City Square in Brisbane. I really thought that one would have to go to the country to do that.

Mr Gately interjected.

Mrs NELSON: The honourable member for Currumbin could well be right. In fact, I think that he is spot on.

Spring Valley is not the only ghetto to which the Federal Government refers. Other sheltered workshops and activity therapy centres are all to be denied funding because they do not comply with Federal Government regulations and they do not comply with

the wishes of people who are all-powerful in the process of distribution of funds. I say to honourable members that this issue crosses party lines.

Mr Jennings: The Endeavour Foundation does a terrific job.

Mrs NELSON: It does a marvellous job, but it is not the only one. The Queensland Spastic Welfare League, the Multiple Sclerosis Society of Queensland and any number of other State organisations do a magnificent job in servicing the needs of people who, in many cases, are unable to speak for themselves or to live by themselves. To think that a 23-year-old ham-fisted, Left Wing trendy in sandals and a batik-print skirt can come along to these organisations and tell them that they do not know what they are doing simply defies belief. Members of this Parliament from all political parties should make approaches to the Federal Government to have the administration of that legislation reviewed immediately. I believe that the guide-lines should be changed dramatically. I believe also that most of the Federal Cabinet, most members of the Federal Opposition and certainly honourable members of this State House would endorse my remarks.

Mr Gately: He also put the fringe benefits tax on them, too.

Mrs NELSON: No. They were going to have the fringe benefits tax applied to them, but they managed to convince the Treasurer—is it Mr "Paul Bearer"?—otherwise. Is that not what he is called on FM104 on the program which I think is called *Cactus Island*? I think that is a perfectly appropriate name for the Treasurer—Mr "Paul Bearer"—as he is carrying us all to our economic graves.

Nearly $100,000 a year in revenue, which would have been able to be spent on disabled persons, was almost lost.

In conclusion, I believe that a very large body of Australian people feel disfranchised and disaffected by the major political parties. They are panic-stricken about their personal security and worried that their children will not find employment. They are concerned about their own long-term survival. A feeling of political volatility is alive in Australia today, and I believe that we, as members of a State Parliament, have to be most concerned about the direction in which our nation is heading. It would be unwise to put labels on the situation, but it is fair to say that unless quite radical changes are made in the way Australia is going and unless a radical reduction in expenditure occurs—and that involves not merely the abandoning of policy but the abandoning of whole Government departments—Australia could face a very long period of political instability, the consequences of which could be most serious.

I believe that three things need to be addressed. One is that Governments cannot continue overtaxing, overcharging and removing the rights from those citizens in our society who do most of the work. Not all of them are in small business, many of them are public servants or people in other paid employment, who are paying far too much in tax— far too much in taxes and charges at all levels of government. The Queensland Government should not be excluded from that statement. State Governments have to review their charges and, in particular, local authorities have to rapidly examine their budgets. If some power is not put back into the purses of ordinary Australians, Australia could well face a social as well as a political revolution.

Hon. Sir WILLIAM KNOX (Nundah—Leader of the Liberal Party) (4.13 p.m.): I have pleasure in joining this debate to speak to the motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply and express my loyalty to Her Majesty and Her Majesty's representative in Queensland, in the form of the Governor of this State, and his lady, who have worked strenuously in the interests of this State and have certainly endeared themselves to the people of the State wherever they have gone.

Today I wish to speak for a while on the origins and the functions of the Queensland Government Development Authority. In 1982 the legislation setting up that authority was introduced in the House and was supported unanimously. Indeed, it was supported in a rather unusual way. Prior to the Bill's being presented to the House, both the

Government and the Opposition had discussions and it was agreed that the legislation would be passed with a minimum of difficulty, although a number of amendments were proposed by the Government. There was no argument about introducing the legislation. I should quote from the speech by the Treasurer of the day, Dr Edwards, where, on 24 August 1982, in volume 288 of the Parliamentary Debates, he outlined the guide-lines established by the Government of the day under his authority. They were in this form—

"This Bill therefore provides for the establishment of a Queensland Government Development Authority. In summary, the Queensland Government Development Authority has as its statutory function to negotiate, enter into and perform financial and other arrangements that are in the interests of the development of Queensland.

It has broad powers to enter into a wide range of financial arrangements and will be administered by Treasury. The QGDA can, inter alia—

borrow and lend money;

act as an agent for other statutory bodies;

negotiate, enter into and perform the wide range of financial arrangements essential in today's sophisticated capital market;

enter into, inter alia, foreign currency obligations and trade in foreign currencies as is necessary to control the State's foreign exchange exposure; and

act as a guarantor for statutory bodies and issue securities.

Its primary function will be to borrow funds on the domestic market by way of public bond issues. Funds so raised will be distributed to statutory bodies already on the semi-governmental program. These authorities will be expected, however, to raise at least the equivalent of the smaller bodies limit (currently $1.5m) themselves. Limits will be set individually for each authority that will take account of the total funds the authority has to raise for its capital program for the year."

That established quite clearly in the minds of the members of the Parliament the duties of the authority and the guide-lines under which it was to operate. I do not think there was any argument from or any disquiet amongst members on either side of the House about its purpose. It was unanimously supported.

A few months ago an event occurred relating to a problem facing a land-developer in this State. Most honourable members are familiar with the difficulties of that particular development. The Sanctuary Cove project, which also was supported by this House by way of legislation, is a worthy project and one hopes that it will be successful. As quite often happens in these sorts of developments, because of cash-flow problems, financial difficulties do arise. When that financial difficulty arose for Sanctuary Cove, one would have expected that it would have been possible for that organisation to go to the normal commercial sources in the community in Australia or outside this nation—afterall, it was receiving finance from outside Australia—to be able to get over its financial hurdle.

Mr Jennings: They have paid back the loan, though.

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: Exactly! It was expected that it would be paid back. Treasury would not have lent the money if it was not to be paid back. Not only that, the interest was paid in advance. Therefore, that particular transaction was not a fragile one. That is my point and I share the view of the honourable member for Southport on that.

It was a difficult problem that had to be resolved, but it was not fragile and any other body in this State with a similar problem can, and does, go to the normal commercial sources to receive assistance for a limited period, even though the terms are fairly tough and sometimes the interest rates are quite high. It is rumoured—I am not sure that it has been confirmed—that the interest rate on this particular transaction was 18½ per cent. Perhaps the honourable member for Southport could enlighten me on that.

For this type of borrowing the terms are usually quite severe. Sanctuary Cove is not the only development in the State that from time to time has this problem, particularly

when a lot of money has been spent on development and the company is waiting for money to come in when sales take place and the money flows. That is not unusual.

As the honourable member who interjected pointed out, the money has been paid back on time and the interest was paid in advance. I wish the company good luck. I am sure that the Ariadne group, which now has Sanctuary Cove as a subsidiary, will complete the task, do it very well and it will be a great success. Let us hope that it is.

My discussion today is about why the Queensland Government Development Authority should be the instrument of this type of operation when other bodies in the community are quite capable of handling the transaction. I have made my own inquiries on this point, and I find that quite a number of private enterprise operations would have been more than happy to have participated in this particular bridging finance operation.

Mr Innes: The security was right.

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: Yes, the security was right for the Government and it would have been right for private entrepreneurs, be they banks, merchant banks or whatever.

Mr Gately: Are you saying we shouldn't get the interest from them.

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: The honourable member is a reborn socialist, a New Righter or something—I am just not too sure what he is. I know that he has jumped across the border and that he has jumped parties. Today he is not too sure what he is, so I ask him to remain quiet.

In regard to the Sanctuary Cove interests approaching the Government—I have no argument about the legality of the arrangements that were made. There is no doubt in my mind that the arrangements are quite legal. I have complete confidence in the Treasury officials. It must be remembered that, as the Act says, the Queensland Government Development Authority is in fact the Under Treasurer of Queensland. I have complete confidence that the Under Treasurer would not have entered into such an arrangement without first ensuring its legality and ensuring that everything was in order.

I repeat that there has never been any doubt in my mind about the legality of this transaction. However, in view of all the circumstances surrounding the particular operation, there is a considerable doubt and concern in the community at large, and particularly in the commercial world, as to why the Queensland Government Development Authority should have been involved in this transaction at all.

Since the Queensland Government Development Authority was launched—and its funds now run into hundreds of millions of dollars—from time to time prospectuses have been prepared to raise money. Bearing in mind that this authority raises funds in Australia as well as overseas, it is important to see how they are raised. Principally, they are raised by selling what are known as Queensland notes—commercial paper that is negotiable and for which there is a market. As one would expect, these Queensland notes are supported by the Queensland Government. In addition, the notes have the imprimatur of the Loan Council of Australia. This particular body cannot raise money without the permission of the Loan Council. It must be borne in mind that the authority is the agent for the port authorities, the harbour boards, the various departments, the local authorities and electricity undertakings in this State.

The reason for establishing this authority under Government legislation was to give it status—to enable it to command the very best terms and conditions for raising money anywhere in the world. It is an excellent concept and one that has been very successful. With the ratings of this State and the nation and the backing of the Loan Council, an authority such as this does command great respect in the financial houses in the world and in Australia. As a result, it can virtually raise money overnight without any great difficulty.

However, when the authority gets involved in a transaction which is not one of those usually supported by the Loan Council—usually for a body recognised as a statutory

body guaranteed by the Government—one starts to discount the value of the operation. I have a prospectus that is a couple of years old, but there have been others since in the same language. A letter to stock-holders in the prospectus contains the following—

> "Your continued support of the Authority will enable statutory bodies throughout Queensland to continue the work needed to provide the facilities so important to our State's future."

An advertisement bearing the Premier's photograph had this to say—

> "It's a high return totally secure investment—one that works for Queensland at the same time as it's working for you. An investment that supplies services, facilities and equipment, that builds hospitals and roads, that keeps a big enterprise like Queensland growing all the time."

The prospectus itself sets out the purpose for the raising of these funds. It states—

> "Proceeds of the issues will be used to meet short term funding requirements of various Queensland statutory bodies."

That all makes good sense and is very sound——

Mr Jennings: Is that the lot?

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: Of what?

Mr Jennings: Of what they invest in; what you just read out.

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: Yes, that is the statement. There are many other conditions. The honourable member can have a look at this prospectus.

The guide-lines that I have quoted from the Treasurer's speech in 1982, plus the terms and conditions outlined in the prospectus for the raising of money both from overseas and in Australia for this authority must cause some concern. In fact, they have. The position has arisen that when private enterprise is in financial difficulties it can go to the Queensland Government Development Authority to obtain funds even though it can obtain those funds through the normal commercial avenues that are available to it and everyone else in the community.

Members of Parliament from both sides of this House would have letters from Ministers stating that such and such a school is approved, that such and such a hospital is approved, or that such and such a road is approved, subject to finance being available, and they regret to say that in that financial year the money is not available. Yet mysteriously $10m suddenly appears to be given to somebody who is not providing a school or a hospital or a public facility of that nature. These are very high-priced and worthwhile facilities. It is a worthwhile project which should be supported, but it can be supported in other ways.

The interesting thing is that Mr Gore, who is one of the great champions of free enterprise, is a man who puts his name to documents and states that he does not want Government interference or assistance, that there should be less government, small government and that Government interference in private enterprise should be got rid of. Yet, when some difficulty arises, he rushes off, cap in hand, to the Government for assistance.

When one looks at the Auditor-General's report, further support can be seen for the thesis that I am putting before the House. The Auditor-General's report for the year ended June 1986 was placed on the table of this House. Page 19 of that report refers to the Queensland Government Development Authority and states—

> "As the Authority has no independent source of funds, all costs of loan raising, loan management and debt servicing are recoverable from the borrowing authorities."

This is the agent that raises money on behalf of all the other authorities in the State, and all the costs are put back on to those authorities. Yet the money that has been raised suddenly becomes available for somebody who did not contribute towards the raising of the funds and the costs of raising those funds.

No doubt it will be argued by the Minister Assisting the Treasurer that the interest rate charged covered some of those costs; nevertheless, they are not identifiable as costs, as would be the case with other statutory bodies on whose behalf the authority operates.

The Auditor-General states—

> "The Queensland Government Development Authority is a corporation sole comprised of the Under Treasurer and is constituted in pursuance of the provisions of the Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Act 1982-1984. It was established in September, 1982 with the statutory function to negotiate, enter into and perform financial and other arrangements that have as their objective the development of or the provision of services in Queensland."

It has been established quite clearly that this authority was never intended to be a substitute for the QIDC, which is one of the bodies that private enterprise with financial problems can go to in order to obtain assistance. It is not a substitute for Suncorp, which is another body that finances private enterprise. It is certainly not a body which is to act as a substitute for normal commercial transactions that are available otherwise within the community.

Honourable members interjected.

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: The next questions that must be asked—they will probably be asked at the Loan Council when it meets in May or June of this year—will relate to how this authority operates. The next time money is raised for the authority, questions will be asked by stock-holders as to the purposes for which the moneys are raised and if they will go to enterprises such as Sanctuary Cove. There is a problem, as one of the honourable members who is interjecting has pointed out.

Mr Elliott: You used to be the champion of private enterprise.

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: I am still.

Mr Elliott: You are saying that more things should get going to increase employment.

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: Yes.

Mr Elliott: Surely Sanctuary Cove is doing all of those things?

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: It is doing all of those things. Why does it need to go to the Queensland Government Development Authority for its finance when it can obtain the money from other sources?

Mr Elliott: It wanted a bridging loan.

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: It was a bridging loan; exactly. That is contrary to what the honourable member just said. The developer was loaned $10m for a money shuffle. That is all it was. The money was not loaned to provide any jobs. The jobs are already provided by the money flowing through the system, quite successfully. Sooner or later, all developmental projects have a critical period in their development. It occurs from the time they are established, when an enormous amount of money has to be outlayed, until they get money coming in.

Mr Lee: It is called a cash flow.

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: Exactly.

Every development has that problem. Sometimes it is a big problem; sometimes it is a small problem. It is not unusual; in fact, it is quite a usual problem.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Alison): Order! I ask the honourable member to address his remarks through the Chair.

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: I beg your pardon, Mr Deputy Speaker. I was provoked.

Every development has that problem. Will honourable members now see a queue of developers going to the Queensland Government Development Authority asking for

the same consideration as that received by the Sanctuary Cove developer? I suggest that they will see such a queue. The Government will then face the problem of having to decide who is going to be helped and who is not going to be helped.

Mr Innes: You would have to admit that they have been badly caught by this experience.

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: The Minister has obviously been embarrassed. Although he did not mislead the House, he was careful not to tell the House exactly from which fund the money came.

Mr Lee: He didn't tell the truth.

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: He was not sure which fund it came from. He was obviously beginning to worry that it was not coming from one of the recognised sources. Honourable members should debate that matter. I have made my contribution. I am sure that the Government will not do that again. If it does, it will run into real trouble.

I do not question the legality of the matter. There is no question about its legality. It was perfectly legal. I think that the Opposition was quite foolish in pursuing whether the operation was legal or not. The question is one of judgment and propriety, bearing in mind the other funds that are available for that type of operation.

Mr Jennings: That is what investment is all about.

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: Exactly.

On paper, the investment was sound. Legislation was put through the House on the basis that the development would be a sound investment. On a couple of occasions I have been to look at it. I was very impressed with the work that has been carried out and with what has been achieved. It came as a shock to the commercial world that such a transaction with the Government of Queensland was possible, when so many other avenues are available.

An issue that concerns the nation is the Prime Minister's proposal to reintroduce the Australia Card, with the possibility of having a double dissolution. Let me make it quite clear what the Australia Card is all about. The socialists' policy in this country is to get everybody's particulars recorded on a computer as rapidly as they can. The particulars would include all the information on a person's background. Originally, it was proposed to include everyone down to children of 12 years of age.

Mr Davis: You are getting childish in your old age.

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: I lived in this country when it had identity cards, namely, between 1942 and 1945. They were a curse and an abomination. I will tell the honourable member how identity cards worked and how members of his party, the socialists, want the Australia Card to work. Once the Government has the names of people on a computer, the card has to be attended to and looked after. If the card is lost, a person has to report its loss. If he does not do that, he is fined. If he gives the card to someone else and that person uses it, or if someone steals it and its loss is not reported, an offence is committed and the person is fined. If the central office is not advised of a change of address, or if a woman who changes her name by marriage does not advise her change of name, an offence is committed and the person is fined.

All honourable members know perfectly well how many transactions are necessary to maintain electoral rolls and keep them up to date. Imagine the number of transactions that would be involved with the introduction of the Australia Card. A total of 1 200 additional public servants will be required to administer the Australia Card. Establishment costs will amount to $600m and administrative costs will total $400m. However, the Federal Government claims that Australia will recover $750m in lost taxes.

If the Federal Government wants to introduce the Australia Card because taxes are not being paid, why does it not use the taxation file numbers that have already been

issued to enterprises and individuals? That is all that is needed to identify who people are when they are doing business or where tax concessions are involved.

In the days when Australia had an identity card, thousands of prisoners of war were living in camps, many of them in open camps. They were allowed to walk the streets freely in their crimson uniforms. Many hundreds of those prisoners jumped camp and were never seen again. They had no trouble at all in obtaining forged identity cards in this country. The price paid for those cards at that time was approximately £200. With the advent of computers, identity cards can be forged much easier, although the price is a little higher. That has been proved in America and other countries. Forgeries are possible, and the whole exercise will be an enormous operation to police. That is exactly what the socialists love. They love to have everybody jumping around, changing their address, getting things up to date and demanding that people meet their obligations to serve the system.

Mr R. J. Gibbs: I think it is time you retired.

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: I have 15 years ahead of me. The honourable member has a long time to wait until I retire.

Between 1942 and 1945, identity cards were a curse and an abomination in this nation. The police used to intercept people in the street and demand to see their identity cards. If a person did not have an identity card on him, the police would ask him to report to a police station within 24 hours to produce the card. Two blocks down the road they would stop that person again and ask him for his identity card, knowing that he did not have it.

Mr R. J. Gibbs: Who are "they"?

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: I am referring to the police.

They would then ask that person for his identity card and when he could not produce it, he would be given the name of another police station to which to report within 24 hours.

At that time, people required identity cards to enter picture-theatres, to purchase goods and to do a host of things. However, Dr Blewett claims that the use of the Australia Card will not be extended.

Once an Australia Card is established, Governments will be tempted and they will extend the use of the identity card to many avenues that have not yet been considered.

Australia does not need an identity card. It is unnecessary for the purpose for which it is claimed to be introduced. The costs involved are enormous and the administrative requirements are tremendous.

Mr Elliott: A total waste of money.

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: Indeed, a total waste of money.

Within three weeks of the signing of the peace treaty in Tokyo Bay, the identity card legislation was repealed in this nation. People were glad to see the end of it.

People tend to forget how big bureaucracy can grow around these gimmicks that the socialists have in mind. The ultimate use of the identity card will be manpower control. That is the objective of the socialists. Once the identity card is established, they will have the opportunity to fulfil their objectives. That is one of the most dangerous things that could occur.

If the Prime Minister of Australia wishes to introduce the legislation again and make it an issue for a double dissolution, he will get an awful shock, because more and more people will be educated and will understand what it is all about.

On another matter—Sir Robert Sparkes has made it clear to his party that he expects its members to toe the line today, which apparently they will not do. In 1971, when he was dealing with *Enterprise Queensland,* Sir Robert Sparkes said—

> "If the persons concerned so acted wittingly, then they deserve the utmost censure. Most of us spend a lot of time, effort and money building up this Party. We cannot and will not tolerate a situation where all the good work done by the many tends to be undone by the irresponsible conduct of the few.
>
> Setting up another political faction or organisation as a vehicle to attack our Party not only indicts these people as being disloyal, but of course under Rule 3(c) it automatically expels them from the National Party. Clearly their action is designed to divide and fragment our Party and that we will not tolerate."

I wonder where he stands today in regard to demanding that members of Parliament be disloyal to their Federal leader.

Mr JENNINGS (Southport) (4.42 p.m.): In speaking to the amendment to the motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply, I express the loyalty of the constituents of my electorate to the Queen. By supporting the monarchy, the people of my electorate support the Constitution of this country. I have no doubt that the Constitution of Australia is one of the great documents that have been produced in the free world. Honourable members can thank their forebears in the late 1800s, who prepared that great document, for the fact that Australia has statutory States.

I join with previous speakers in congratulating the Speaker and also the Chairman of Committees on their election to those positions. Over a long period, the member for Fassifern has performed very well, as has the Chairman of Committees. The Leader of the House is doing a fine job, as are the three Whips. Of course, the Opposition Whip is the joker of the House, and it is good to see him back in the Chamber. All honourable members enjoy him.

The Leader of the Liberal Party has raised some valid points about development projects. It is fascinating that entrepreneurs will not go anywhere other than to Queensland. They are prepared to risk great financial resources and invest in huge projects that have a risk factor.

I turn to the Iwasaki project at Yeppoon. Where else in the world would someone invest huge amounts of money, with more going in every year? The project will not be opened until it is ready. It is marvellous that the Japanese have done that.

Mr Innes: Where are the Jumbo-loads of Japanese that we were promised?

Mr JENNINGS: The other day, a Jumbo-load of Japanese arrived on the Gold Coast. Tomorrow, a golf course is being opened. On Friday and Saturday, the Daikyo Kenko hotel will be opened. That is the honourable member's answer.

Another answer comes from Mr Shohei Yamada, who is reported in the *Australian* as follows—

> "QUEENSLAND was the prime investment State in Australia, the chief executive of Japan's Mitsui Trust and Bank Co Ltd, Mr Shohei Yamada, said yesterday.
>
> 'The other States also have many good investment opportunities but Queensland has the edge,' Mr Yamada said.
>
> One of Queensland's top advantages was its 'stable conservative Government', led by the Premier, Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen."

Someone impartial with worldwide experience made that comment.

Mr Innes: Is it true that you are called "Jennings san" on the Gold Coast?

Mr JENNINGS: I have not had the experience that the honourable member for Sherwood has had in Japanese geisha houses. The honourable member has been in those places, but I have not.

I compliment all new members on their election and on their maiden speeches that focused on their electorates.

Parliaments are unusual places. As most people would know, I was previously a member of the Victorian Parliament. I can say without hesitation that the Queensland Parliament is far more democratic, far more open and far more free and easy than other Parliaments. The point I make is that the Opposition is never muzzled, nor is the Liberal Party in this Chamber—unlike what occurred when I was a member of the Victorian Legislative Assembly. Honourable members will recollect that I was kicked out of the Liberal Party merely because I exposed what the Premier was involved in at that time and now, as the present jojoba inquiry has disclosed. I do not wish to say much more about the inquiry, because I do not wish to prejudice its proceedings in any way.

Mr Gygar: Tell us about the Victorian Public Accounts Committee.

Mr JENNINGS: That is fascinating. Sure, Victoria has a Public Accounts Committee. Look at the graft, corruption and illegal deals that went on in the Government there.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Alison): Order! Would the honourable member address his remarks to the Chair?

Mr JENNINGS: Yes, Mr Deputy Speaker.

Honourable members ought to look at what happened in Victoria and at the illegal deals that occurred in New South Wales under another Liberal Premier, Mr Askin. The New South Wales example was one of the worst cases of graft and corruption the nation has ever seen, involving drugs, rackets, illegal casinos, SP betting—you name it; it was all there. Yet the New South Wales Parliament had a public accounts committee in operation.

Public accounts committees are nothing more than soft sponges—that is all they are. The honourable member for Stafford has raised this rotten matter of a public accounts committee. I point out that Queensland has an Auditor-General who has a bit of gumption. The Auditor-General tables his reports for honourable members and everyone else to read. The conduct of each honourable member in Queensland is examined by the Auditor-General, so the honourable member for Stafford should not talk to me about a public accounts committee.

If one were to table in this Parliament the collective experience of Governments throughout this nation concerning graft and corruption and illegal drug-trafficking that has continued in spite of the fact that a public accounts committee is in operation, it would amount to a gross indictment on Australia's political system. It is the case that in Victoria that kind of activity was engaged in. The current investigation into the growing of jojoba is the forerunner to the Land Bank inquiry that has not even commenced yet. The establishment of a public accounts committee in Queensland should be examined in the light of the experience of other Governments in Australia. However, I had better not involve myself too much in that topic.

I turn now to the remarks made by the Opposition shadow Minister for Community Services, the honourable member for Rockhampton. The honourable member is a shadow, too. The honourable member referred to the Labor Party's call for free and open debate. What did the Labor Party do approximately three weeks ago? The Labor Party told Peter Beattie to shut up—"We don't want any more of you. We have had enough of you."

Mr Littleproud: Didn't the ABC bloke get squashed by one of the ALP fellows in Canberra, too?

Mr JENNINGS: That is part of it. The point that I make is that Peter Beattie is the only lucid speaker in the Australian Labor Party, but the Labor Party tells him to keep quiet.

I point out that some of the things that the honourable member for Rockhampton said in relation to Aboriginal affairs were quite wrong and, indeed, ridiculous. Before mentioning some of the points he made, I want to say this to honourable members: politics revolves around four simple concepts as far as Australia is concerned. The first is the security of the nation. Anyone who does not want the nation to be secure is nuts. The second is that Australia's international alliances, such as Australia's alliance with the United States, are so important that if Australia does not retain them, its security is at risk. Anyone who is against alliances is nuts, too. Thirdly, Australia needs a strong, private-enterprise economy. Fourthly, if people are not working in a private-enterprise economy, social security payments cannot be provided. That is the simple equation that applies to the whole political spectrum.

Mr R. J. Gibbs: What about a few nuclear weapons?

Mr JENNINGS: I will tell the honourable member about nuclear weapons. Recently, a young person came to see me who said, "Look at all the problems that people have in the world." I said to that person, "Do you know what? You are living in the best time in history. We have not had a major war for over 40 years."

Mr Lee: Don't say he didn't believe you?

Mr JENNINGS: Members of the Liberal Party know about this as well as I do.

I was at school during the war. I was a bit young to go. Fellows older than I was who went away to the war never came back. All I say is thank God for Harry Truman, because he decided to drop "that" bomb.

Mr Prest: What war were you too young for?

Mr JENNINGS: Not the Crimean War, that is for sure.

Harry Truman decided to drop "that" bomb on Nagasaki and Hiroshima. That had the greatest impact on civilisation in history. Because of "that" bomb, a major war has not occurred since. So any young people who say that this is a bad time can believe me when I say that they do not know what a bad time is all about. They do not know what the Depression was all about. I just say that in reply to the interjection.

These days, one can sit down and watch on television in one's own living room sporting events from right around the world. Isn't that marvellous? Isn't it marvellous to be competing in sport instead of competing in wars? I think it is great. International competitions for people of all ages occur right around the world. Just as a free plug, I point out the international world masters swimming championships will be held in Brisbane next year. It is estimated that 4 000 people from all over the world will come along here to compete in them. They will be open to people up to the age of 80 years. I think that is great. Because Brisbane has the Chandler sporting complex the championships will be held here.

I now want to deal with some of the points made by the honourable member for Rockhampton. He spoke about Aboriginal affairs, which I find rather fascinating. I remember the night that the legislation concerning deeds of grant in trust was debated all night in this Chamber. Aboriginal and Islanders were in the gallery. Because I have not looked it up in *Hansard*, I do not know how many divisions occurred during the debate. However, I do know that there was division after division after division. And what has happened? The Queensland Government has been complimented right round Australia for what it has done—what we on this side of the House did—in introducing that legislation. The member for Rockhampton, who is now the shadow Minister, said, "Where is the Government going in regard to Aboriginal affairs?"

Mr Palaszczuk: Where are they going?

Mr JENNINGS: A few years ago, when the Government introduced this legislation, it stated where it was going. Now the honourable member wants a Green Paper. He should read what is already available. The honourable member said that Aboriginals are

looking for guidance. The point that I want to make loud and clear is that members of this House are very fortunate indeed to have the Minister for Northern Development and Community Services that they do. He is a typical northerner. He shoots from the shoulder and draws from the hip. He instigated the legislation. It has been a great success story that has not occurred anywhere else in the world.

What does the Federal Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Mr Holding, say about it? In February 1987 he said—

> "The decision of the Queensland Government to give deed of grants in trust I believe ought to be welcomed by all members of this House."

He was referring to the Federal Parliament. He is the Federal Minister. I ask honourable members to remember the criticism that the Government received from the other side of the House when the legislation was introduced. Mr Holding stated further—

> "The Commonwealth, through me, had considerable discussions with Mr Katter in the whole of that process."

At the time that the legislation was introduced he did not say that. Now he is on the bandwagon. He is on the Government's coat-tails. He wants to join it. He knows that the Queensland Government is leading the way on Aboriginal affairs, just as it has led the way on so many other things, and will go on leading the way, too.

Mr Holding also stated—

> "The only time when some difficulties arose was in respect of pastoral properties at Woorabinda . . ."

The member for Roma has already spoken about that. As he has assured us, those difficulties have been rectified. The member for Roma is doing a fantastic job.

On another occasion when Mr Holding was speaking in the Federal House, there was the following interjection about education—

> "Which State Government has the best Aboriginal education track record?"

Mr Holding replied—

> "Queensland—no question about it."

No question about it!

If that is not doing the job, I do not know what is. I feel sorry for the member for Rockhampton. As he is the shadow Minister, he has to try to do something to justify his position, but the only position he can take is to say to the Minister, "Good on you, fella. Keep going. I'll pat you on the back." He tried to make out many things, wanted to know what the Government intended to do and went on with a lot of other claptrap.

Mr Randell: Could you repeat that? Mr Braddy could not understand it.

Mr JENNINGS: No doubt he will read it. He said that the Minister must tell the Parliament what he intends to do.

I want to tell the House how important the north is. I remember that when I was in the north everyone from down south used to say that everyone should go up to the north to invest and live. That was back in the 1960s when it used to be called the empty north. Australia has two people per square kilometre; the United States, not including Alaska, has 29.5 people per square kilometre; the United Kingdom, 242.7 people per square kilometre; and Japan, 320.5 people per square kilometre. Australia's very small number of people per square kilometre is one of the reasons for the economic problems of this country.

Mr Innes: When you owned a cattle station in the gulf country, they thought it was overcrowded.

Mr JENNINGS: I am interested that the honourable member for Sherwood should say that. In those days the Etheridge Shire Council was bigger than Belgium and bigger than Holland. Its 15 000 square miles held 845 men, women and children, with 446 on

the electoral roll. I can tell honourable members that a council election was a very intensive deal.

Queensland is leading the way in land tenure for Aborigines. The Government is looking at different methods of such land tenure. Recently an individual whom I will not name had discussions with the Government and said that Aborigines did not want freehold tenure yet and that they wanted to proceed slowly. He said that they did not want freehold tenure in the normal sense. That is in writing, but I will not use that person's name. These things were discussed with the ministerial committee.

The north is great country and there is no better cattle country in the world than that above the 20-inch rainfall line.

Mr Littleproud: You could buy an argument on that.

Mr JENNINGS: No, no. I will not buy an argument on that because it is proven by facts. With the right sort of management techniques and the right branding procedures, and if the cattle can be kept alive, their numbers can be doubled in three years and quadrupled in five. There is no argument about that. That cannot be done anywhere else.

Mr Milliner: You went broke.

Mr Elliott interjected.

Mr JENNINGS: That is management. Good management techniques are needed to run cattle stations in the north. One of the problems is cattle-thieving.

Mr Milliner interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Alison): Order! If the honourable member for Everton wishes to interject, he should do so from his correct seat.

Mr JENNINGS: I now turn to the most important subject of transport, which, in my electorate, means taxis, private hire cars, of which there are now well over 100, shuttle buses, the usual types of buses, monorails, water taxis, cycling and walking. Discussion is now under way about the construction of a tunnel. I want to make the point that Queensland is the only State in Australia where the railways make money. Last year Queensland Railways made a profit of $107m. In Victoria the railways are losing $1,000 per minute, every day, 365 days a year.

Mr Borbidge: The estimated profit this year is $118m.

Mr JENNINGS: My colleague is better informed on the statistics than I am.

I wish to touch on the responsibilities of the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General. Many aspects of company law concern me. The National Companies and Securities Commission was set up in December 1978. As I have already mentioned, an inquiry is presently under way into the selling of jojoba plants. All members on both sides of the House are concerned when a company goes bust and people lose their money. I sincerely hope that eventually a proper inquiry will be held into Land Bank Estate Pty Ltd. Basically, that company was selling air, not land. I will not comment any further on that, because those who are involved are also involved in the current inquiry. I do not want to be seen to be trying to influence that inquiry in any way.

Of course, the big scandals occurred back in the sixties. The National Companies and Securities Commission was set up as a result of some of the big crashes in the late sixties. Korman went through for $50m-odd. Many others also went through for large amounts of money. When Reid Murray was involved in the house-building game it was building substandard homes. I once visited a place called Sunbury. Advertisements talked about fully developed land. Roads were bulldozed and there was water on the estate. The houses had the stand-pipes hammered in, but they could be pulled out. That is how bad it was. What went on in those days was shocking.

In this day and age big companies sometimes become bureaucracies in themselves. Some of the original entrepreneurs have now gone. They have passed on. That is why I always say that there are opportunities for smaller companies to become entrepreneurs. If BHP and the ACTU get together, and what they decide is not in the interests of the country, that is bad news——

Mr Davis: What about A V Jennings?

Mr JENNINGS: As the honourable member knows, I am no longer connected with that company.

In the sixties there was the $300m ASL crash. Of course, Ansett then bought half of that company. ATI was valued at over $130m, which is chicken-feed compared with what it is worth today. In addition, there were the H. G. Palmer losses and so on.

I turn to Federal Government expenditure. That Government makes many gifts and gives many hand-outs to many different people. The Amalgamated Metal Workers Union received a grant of $15,000 for a regional music co-ordinator. The Australian Insurance Employees Union of Victoria received $16,000 for a print-maker in residence and an artist in residence. The Builders Labourers Federation—which has been deregistered following action by the Government, which was supported by the Opposition—received in excess of $50,000 for similar activities.

I will cite some other examples of the types of activities for which money was received. $13,000 was received for artists' fees; $12,000 for a mural project; and $18,000 for a similar project the following year. It goes on and on. The combined Unions Arts Committee of Williamstown dock yard received $5,500. Those are some examples of the waste in Canberra.

Years ago it used to be illegal under the Companies Act to borrow money from a company in order to buy it. Of course, the current system is that one does not borrow money from a company to buy it. Years ago one would invest in a share on the stock exchange if the directors were conservative and the assets were undervalued. Recent take-overs in Queensland have involved old, traditional companies whose assets have been conservatively valued. The take-over experts then move in. The system is simple. Whether it is for a $100,000 company or a $100m company, the system is the same and the formula is the same. The most important thing, of course, is that it encourages competition and better management.

The more control that is exercised by the National Companies and Securities Commission and the more regulations it issues, the more people seem to set out to avoid complying with those regulations.

That takes me to taxation policy. I fully support the Premier's taxation proposal. Basically, what the Premier is saying is this: "We have got high interest rates that are killing the country at the moment. There is only one way that something can be done about interest rates. We need more productivity and more investment. We need people to work harder and longer. The only way to do that is to have the right sort of tax policies."

Many people criticise the 25 per cent flat rate tax policy——

Mr Palaszczuk: You are arguing against yourself.

Mr JENNINGS: It would encourage many people who are now seeking tax shelters. The honourable member for Archerfield would have heard fellows say, "I don't pay any tax." The point is that it would not pay them to go for tax shelters to avoid paying tax.

Mr R. J. Gibbs: What about people on low incomes who are paying less than 25c in the dollar?

Mr JENNINGS: There is a threshold for those people.

Mr R. J. Gibbs: Explain it to us in great detail.

Mr JENNINGS: As they say in the classics, "No problem there."

I turn now to the Water Resources and Maritime Services portfolio. The Gold Coast has had some rain, so the area will be all right for a while. As far as maritime services are concerned, I compliment the Minister for Water Resources and Maritime Services on his approval of the Gold Coast Seaway control tower. Last Sunday hundreds and hundreds of boats went in and out of that seaway. The new tower will be manned by the air/sea rescue organisation in conjunction with the volunteer coastguard organisation. The water police, the Department of Harbours and Marine and the Gold Coast Waterways Authority are all involved. During the last few months, this project has been worked out in committee meetings, and the organisation of the facility will be excellent. The people will receive a very good and safe service. The Federal Bureau of Meteorology wants to make it a major meteorological station for the Moreton Bay area and the Australian Customs Service wants it to be a surveillance station for its organisation. It will be a very important port of call.

Over the week-end HMAS Townsville was in port for the first time. The navy now has the option of either coming to Brisbane or going to the Gold Coast. I know which option it will take.

The fire services levy has been an unenviable problem for many people. I hope that it can be sorted out. A levy has been imposed. Unfortunately, its collection is controlled by councils, which receive a commission for that service. When people receive a bill they ring up and say that it is the Government's fault. Even being kind about it, it is a bit of a muck-up.

Mr Comben: It is just a tax.

Mr JENNINGS: No, it is not a tax. It is paying for a fire service.

Mr Comben: That is what every tax does.

Mr JENNINGS: It is not a tax. The honourable member knows the cost of fire services. He has probably said that he wants more firemen out his way.

The drug problem is bad and the position has worsened since the outbreak of AIDS. In 1973 and 1974 there was the Moffit inquiry into drugs, in 1977 to 1979 there was the Williams inquiry, in 1977 to 1979 there was the Woodward inquiry, in 1981 to 1983 there was the Stewart inquiry and in 1980 to 1984 there was the Costigan inquiry. Mr Justice Woodward stated that, with the attitude of Neville Wran, the New South Wales Premier at the time, there was no chance of success in the campaign against drugs. Drugs are a major scourge on the community. Escalating crime figures are closely related to drug use, and in the southern States organised crime is extemely bad.

Earlier the honourable member for Thuringowa spoke about AIDS. This is a major problem and I am totally in favour of AIDS education in schools. Last week I was briefed on the matter and was shown a graph illustating that at the moment the United States and some of the European countries are at the top of that graph. Sydney is in the middle and Queensland is down at the bottom. That is the way it should be. The only way that Queensland can stay in that position is through education in the schools. Sir Edward Williams estimated that the loss to the community caused by drugs is $1 billion annually, tax free.

During the election campaign some mention was made about cronyism and the Sanctuary Cove development was cited as an example. This development is unique because legislation was passed in this House. The developers were able to excavate tidal flats to permit the water to enter the development. That area became part of the development and the developers were able to sell freehold title to houses built over water. That is great. The honourable member for Surfers Paradise, Mr Rob Borbidge, and I were involved with the legislation for HSP Nominees a couple of years ago. That organisation obtained a special title deal for the Paradise Centre. That sort of deal encourages development. Queensland is innovative.

Mr R. J. Gibbs: That is your mate, "Fast Eddie".

Mr JENNINGS: I thought he was a mate of the honourable member for Wolston.

Last, but not least, I will quote what Bob Hawke stated in November 1974 when he was the president of the ACTU and there were 189 000 unemployed. On 9 November 1974 the *Australian* in an article headlined "shock for Government" stated—

> "Mr Hawke said yesterday in Melbourne the urgency of the situation required some action in a few days.
>
> Rising unemployment and inflation were a serious threat to the future of the Government.
>
> He said: 'The Government is in jeopardy if things are not done. Once it gets into that position, more and more unions will say they cannot give it support.' "

The article continued—

> "If unemployment continued, it would be difficult for the Government to marshall support, he said.
>
> 'The figures will get worse before they get better,' he said.
>
> . . .
>
> Mr Hawke said he had been leading a series of trade union delegations to Federal ministers asking for action.
>
> . . .
>
> When the Budget came down in September Mr Hawke said: 'If it (unemployment) started to get to three per cent, we as the trade union and Labor movement will tell the Government you have to have another Budget.' "

That was Hawke's attitude at that time. He said—

> "The Government has been too slow in making decisions. It has too many advisers who read from textbooks and do not go out in the real world. If only they would cut throught the gaggle of advisers . . . some in Treasury and some outside Treasury."

Members of the Liberal Party referred to Sanctuary Cove. Their election campaign policy stated that they would cut red tape, speed up development approvals by establishing special tourism zones and support flexible trading hours in restricted tourist areas. If that is part of their attitude, I agree with it. However, that was not their attitude to Sanctuary Cove. Certain sections of the Gold Coast need to have complete freedom of trading hours. All the other areas of the Gold Coast have got together and have said that they want only one four-hour period in addition to their normal hours. That is a practical response to the one-month deregulation period, which was a very good experiment.

Mr WHITE (Redcliffe) (5.12 p.m.): It is with pleasure that I participate in the debate on the amendment to the motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply. I take this opportunity to convey my loyalty and that of my constituents to Her Majesty the Queen and her representative in this State, Sir Walter Campbell. Sir Walter Campbell has become a very popular figure. Recently, Redcliffe has had the pleasure of his company when he visited the Bush Children's Home and when he opened the Redcliffe Show.

I congratulate our new Speaker and the Chairman of Committees on their election to those positions. Many members have commented on their election. We look forward to a Parliament that will be run in a better fashion, perhaps, than it has been in the past.

I also take this opportunity to convey my appreciation to the people of Redcliffe for their sanity in returning me once again as their elected representative. It is a sign of excellent judgment and good common sense. The National Party must have spent about half a million dollars on television and newspaper advertisements that featured me. I thank the Government for the free advertising. I do not want to discourage the Government; it can do it next time. Frankly, the Government overdid it. The people

of Redcliffe reacted against that, and that was clearly indicated by the result at the ballot-box at the last election.

Mr Comben: How well did you go?

Mr WHITE: I outpolled the National Party by about 2 to 1. I won every booth for the first time, including the booths in the Housing Commission areas. I am proud of that. No other member for Redcliffe, including the late Jim Houghton, has ever done that.

Mr Randell: How did the Labor Party go?

Mr WHITE: It was not a very good election result in Redcliffe for the Labor Party, either. Apart from the 1974 result, it was the worst performance for the Labor Party in Redcliffe.

As I said earlier, the result was achieved because of the good sense that the people of Redcliffe have gained over recent years.

I take this opportunity to express publicly my appreciation to my wife, Rhonda, and our family. Everyone in public life realises the tremendous pressures that are put on wives and families. Over the years, Rhonda has had her share of pressure, not the least of which was our experience in 1983. I thank her for her support.

Similarly, I convey my deep appreciation to my electorate secretary, Pam Kinlyside, who has had the misfortune to be my electorate secretary for the last 12 years. She has had to put up with a great deal——

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row): Order! There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber, particularly on my right. I ask the Chamber to come to order. The honourable member's speech is barely audible.

Mr WHITE: As I was saying, I appreciate the job that my electorate secretary, Mrs Pam Kinlyside, has done. I also thank the people on my campaign committee, particularly Roger Maguire and Malcolm Parsons, who worked unstintingly during a tough election.

I hope that, at some time, all members have visited the Redcliffe peninsula. That area has grown enormously since my first visit there in 1955. The population of the Redcliffe Peninsula is approximately 50 000. For many people it is an ideal place to live. It is a home for so many people who work in Brisbane and, despite the considerable distances involved, are prepared to travel to Brisbane and other areas.

The population of Redcliffe is divided principally into two categories, namely, the over 65s and the under 30s. Because of the excellent representations of the local member, a considerable number of pensioner home units have been acquired, for which I thank the former Minister for Works and Housing. I extend my appreciation also to the Blue Nursing Service, the St Vincent de Paul Society and the private nursing homes for the job that they do in assisting the elderly people of the electorate.

I mention particularly the retirement villages. Davbill constructions already have a comprehensive development program under way, and will shortly be moving into stage 2 on the old drive-in theatre site.

Over the last three years, considerable Housing Commission development has taken place in my electorate. The quality of that development has improved. I am not sure whether there has been political motivation, but all of a sudden Housing Commission developments have taken place one after the other. I hope that the Government will continue that development, because my constituents are voting for me in ever-increasing numbers. I compliment the former Minister for Works and Housing, who seems to be in the news these days, for his assistance in the design, landscaping and general quality of those Housing Commission homes.

I was concerned to read recent press reports about a proposal to mine Moreton Bay. As honourable members would be aware, I have no objection to sand-mining on

Moreton Island. However, I am concerned at the possibility of mining in Moreton Bay, particularly if that mining will interfere with the fish and crab habitats of the island. I hope that the Government will give careful consideration to those aspects before taking any precipitate action.

Mr Randell: Do you support the preservation of the mud crab population?

Mr WHITE: Yes.

Last week during the Matters of Public Interest debate, Mr Randell spoke about the great danger to the mud crab, which is a Queensland delicacy. It is regrettable that the mud crab population is declining.

I can remember, as a young lad, going crabbing around the creeks of Sandgate and Redcliffe. Unfortunately, crabs are no longer there, and I support what Mr Randell had to say.

I turn now to the management of Moreton Island itself. Much debate has taken place on the sand-mining issue. However, not a great deal has been said about the actual management of the island itself. Indeed, most of the damage that has been caused to the island has been caused by four-wheel-drive vehicles. I support the concept that has been developed on Fraser Island. For some years the Minister for Education has been advocating the introduction of a visiting fee and the establishment of some form of committee management. These controls are badly needed on Moreton Island. Last year, approximately 200 000 people visisted Moreton Island. That was a large number of visitors for an island with no management plans. I hope that the Government will move further on that.

I am pleased about the gradual enlargement of the national parks area on Moreton Island. A substantial ranger base has been established and things are on the improve, but something needs to be done about the control of four-wheel-drive vehicles.

In the short time I have left, I will comment about deregulation, and particularly about what is happening in small business today. Over recent years, a particularly alarming trend has been the increasing development of legislation. Its functions, in many respects, invade the market-place. As examples of that, I refer to the Queensland Milk Board, the Peanut Marketing Board and so on. The function of those bodies has basically socialised those industries. No producer can sell to any other organisation and no-one can purchase from any other source. As a person involved in free enterprise looking at the National Party Government, which advocates free enterprise, I am surprised that those boards are not relegated to the role of industry associations. Some regulation, of course, is needed to prevent oversupply. However, the relevant statutory authorities often have powers that make them competitors with industry.

Regulatory bodies should be eliminated, if possible, and replaced by stronger industry associations. Facets in which those boards are operating as businesses would be better sold off to private enterprise, with the result that costly failures of new products would not be funded by the public purse. Honourable members are aware of the costly failures that have occurred in recent years. Over the last 20 years boards have proliferated and become a costly drain on the public purse. It is also noted that control of industry boards allows the Government departments more information than would normally be available to them in arm's-length dealings.

The other area of proliferation of which much has been heard is quangos. It would seem that many such bodies have outlived their usefulness and could be completely disbanded. Most quangos are run by quango bureaucrats. Sir Robert Menzies said that a businessman should never be put in charge of a quango because it would grow like a cancer. That has occurred many times at both State and Federal level.

Many quangos exist without adequate justification of their function, but provide extremely handsome payments to members of their boards. An examination should be made of each quango, and the following criteria should be considered—

(1) Is the work necessary for good government?

(2) Could the work be handled by the relevant State departments?

(3) Does it take a committee or would a single officer be able to undertake the work?

(4) How long should it take to solve the problem and then disband the quango?

One could talk all night about that. The Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation is doing an excellent job of promoting tourism, but I see no role at all for it to be in the business of selling travel packages. Why should a Government quango be in direct competition with free-enterprise travel agencies? Words fail me. However, that situation exists and has been occurring for some time. Governments must ensure that, while collecting data or administering business legislation, its quangos do not impose excessively on small business.

The lack of public service insight into commercial rates for land has resulted in excessively low land-tax ceilings that are pushing small land-holders into paying land tax. It is thought that ceilings should be CPI-linked to prevent mere inflationary trends from causing such problems in future. I make that suggestion.

Another facet that badly affects small business relates to commercial leases, particularly retail leases. Small businesses cannot understand why the normal commercial option clause, when exercised, requires the initial lease to be restamped at a considerable cost not only for stamp duty but also for legal expenses. I have nothing against lawyers, but I do not see any reason why lawyers should have two bites of the cherry. Similarly, I do not see why the Government should have two bites of the cherry by ripping off small-businessmen by way of stamp duty.

Another form of overregulation occurs because of the substantial duplication of Federal, State and local government services. Health care is an example. Both state and local councils conduct immunisation programs. Why could not the immunisation of young children be done by general practitioners? Why do local authorities—and in some cases, Commonwealth agencies—have to be involved?

Another example of overregulation is in the issuing of permits. To open a snack-bar, it is necessary for a person to obtain a State business name registration, a State factories and shops licence, a licence to sell milk and a permit from the council to serve food. Such a large number of permits amounts to excessive regulation. Issuance of licences and permits must be streamlined and categorised according to the various types of business. For example, all snack-bars serve food and milk. Why should not a combined licence be issued at the time when the shop licence is issued? If that were to happen, new proprietors would not run the risk of overlooking or being unaware of the need to obtain a licence.

There are other examples of requirements on small business. If someone was to establish a retail business, it would first be necessary to register it with the Office of the Commissioner for Corporate Affairs, which costs $53. In the case of chemist shops—with which I am familiar, of course—the Pharmacy Board of Queensland requires a fee, and a State factories and shops licence costs $86. Then the proprietor has to pay $1,000 to the South East Queensland Electricity Board. On top of that, the Commonwealth departments get at the proprietor, and stamp duty is payable also when ownership is transferred. When all that is done, the proprietor is hit with stamp duty and transfer fees associated with motor vehicles. The list includes the fire services levies referred to earlier by the honourable member for Southport. If the proprietor is fortunate enough to be successful and expands the business, he is then hit with pay-roll tax.

Business in general, and the small-business community in particular, is being affected badly in the market-place nowadays. I suppose that the most significant problem faced by businessmen is the rise in interest rates, which is primarily a Federal Government responsibility. At the moment, high interest rates are really crucifying business in Australia.

In conclusion, I wish to refer briefly to a few issues that have been hobby-horses of mine. The first one is flea markets which, as de facto retailers in this State, continue

to expand. Although most honourable members are probably sick of hearing from me on this topic, I nevertheless raise the issue because I cannot see why flea markets should not be controlled. As it is now, flea markets are taking something of the order of 4 per cent of retail sales and are thumbing their noses at most regulations that legitimate businessmen are obliged to abide by.

I notice that the Minister for Education is listening intently—at least I noticed that he was before. The point I make is that the Government ought to enforce a requirement that will prevent p. and c. associations from becoming involved in wide-scale retailing aside from their conventional activities. Currently, retailers are being adversely affected by a loss in sales of school clothing, schoolbooks and stationery items. That is another area of concern that has been expressed by small-business communities.

At 5.30 p.m., under Standing Order No. 17—

Question—That the words proposed to be added to the Address be so added—put; and the House divided—

AYES, 25	NOES, 54	
Ardill	Ahern	Katter
Braddy	Alison	Knox
Campbell	Austin	Lane
Casey	Beanland	Lee
D'Arcy	Beard	Lester
De Lacy	Berghofer	Lickiss
Eaton	Bjelke-Petersen	McCauley
Gibbs, R. J.	Borbidge	McKechnie
Hamill	Burreket	Menzel
Hayward	Chapman	Muntz
McElligott	Clauson	Neal
McLean	Cooper	Nelson
Milliner	Elliott	Newton
Palaszczuk	Fraser	Powell
Prest	Gately	Randell
Scott	Gibbs, I. J.	Schuntner
Shaw	Gilmore	Sherlock
Smyth	Glasson	Sherrin
Vaughan	Gunn	Simpson
Warburton	Gygar	Slack
Warner	Harper	Stephan
Wells	Harvey	Stoneman
Yewdale	Henderson	Tenni
	Hinton	White
	Hobbs	
Tellers:	Hynd	*Tellers:*
Davis	Innes	Littleproud
Comben	Jennings	FitzGerald

Resolved in the negative.

Motion—That the Address in Reply be adopted—agreed to.

SUPPLY

Constitution of Committee

Hon. L. W. POWELL (Isis—Leader of the House) (5.38 p.m.): I move—

"That the House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty."

Motion agreed to.

WAYS AND MEANS

Constitution of Committee

Hon. L. W. POWELL (Isis—Leader of the House) (5.39 p.m.): I move—

"That the House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of Ways and Means for raising the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty."

Motion agreed to.

ADDRESS IN REPLY

Presentation

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row): I have to inform the House that Mr Speaker proposes to present to His Excellency the Governor, at Government House, on Wednesday, 1 April, at 10 o'clock, the Address in Reply to His Excellency's Opening Speech agreed to on 17 March, and Mr Speaker shall be glad to be accompanied by the mover and the seconder and such other honourable members as care to be present.

RAILWAY PROPOSAL

North Coast Line Deviation

Hon. D. F. LANE (Merthyr—Minister for Transport) (5.41 p.m.): I lay on the table of the House the working plans, sections and book of reference for the construction of a railway deviation between 953.300 kilometres to 969.800 kilometres North Coast line, together with the report of the Commissioner for Railways thereon, and I move that the report be printed.

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

MEDICAL ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Hon. M. J. AHERN (Landsborough—Minister for Health and Environment) (5.42 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

"That leave be granted to bring in a Bill to amend the Medical Act 1939-1984 in certain particulars."

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

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

Second Reading

Hon. M. J. AHERN (Landsborough—Minister for Health and Environment) (5.43 p.m.): I move—

"That the Bill be now read a second time."

The Bill before the House will amend the Medical Act 1939-1984 in certain particulars. It follows a lengthy and extensive review by the medical board and by my department of the existing legislation.

Among the major objectives of the Bill, as intended by the amendments to the principal Act, controls by the board over advertising by medical practitioners will be extended further and the board will be given wider powers in its investigations of complaints involving medical practitioners.

In particular, the board's jurisdiction will be extended to provide a control mechanism in cases where medical practitioners deregister themselves so as to avoid disciplinary action.

A new Part IXA will enable the board to apply to the Supreme Court for an order suspending the registration of a medical practitioner who has been charged with an indictable offence.

Finally, the Bill makes provision for increased penalties in line with current-day values and proposes a number of other amendments of a consequential machinery and technical nature.

May I now refer the House to the contents of this Bill, where necessary, in the order that they affect the relevant sections of the existing legislation.

Section 11 is amended to enable the board, when meeting without its president, to elect one of its members to preside over the meeting without that member having to be a Government representative, as presently provided for in existing legislation. The amendment is considered necessary in view of occasions when there are Government vacancies on the board, or they may be appointees lacking experience or, for other reasons, may prefer to decline to preside in favour of a long-standing non-governmental representative.

In repealing section 13 of the Medical Act and replacing it with new sections 13, 13A, 13B and 13C, the Bill has the objective of clarifying and updating this area of the Act relating to powers of inquiry vested in the board.

New section 13 deems the Medical Board to be a commission of inquiry within the meaning of the Commissions of Inquiry Acts, 1950 to 1954, for the purpose of making any investigation and conducting any inquiry.

In terms of new section 13A, the board, in some instances, may find it more appropriate for a stipendiary magistrate to take evidence from a person. Therefore the necessary power has been included to enable a stipendiary magistrate to be deemed a commission of inquiry within the Commissions of Inquiry Acts in exercising this function.

Offence provisions are created by new section 13B. These offences are in respect to failure of a witness to attend before the board after being summonsed to do so or to produce books, documents or writings in accordance with a summons. In addition, it will also be an offence if a witness refuses to be sworn or to make an affirmation or declaration, or otherwise fails to answer relevant questions put by the board or the stipendiary magistrate.

The new section 13C provides for the payment, and in certain cases the non-payment, of witness expenses.

In amending section 16 of the Act, the Bill extends the meaning of the term "advertising" to ensure that the board can exert adequate control over practitioners seeking to advertise, directly or indirectly, their professional services.

Section 19 is amended to give effect to a resolution of the Australian Health Ministers' Conference that, as from 1 January 1986, medical schools are to be accredited by the Australian Medical Council.

The amendment to section 26 will ensure that only additional qualifications in the discipline of medicine will be included in the register of practitioners. It has never been the intent of the legislation, at any time, to register qualifications outside this discipline. Therefore, the amendment will clarify an existing ambiguity.

With regard to the removal of a medical practitioner's name from the register under section 28 of the Medical Act, the amendment to this section enables the board, in its discretion, to publish the names of practitioners which have been erased. This amendment brings the Act into line with a corresponding provision incorporated in existing section 42 and relating to decisions of the Medical Assessment Tribunal.

Amendment of section 35 reflects the objective of advertising remaining a matter essentially for the by-laws and, in addition, complements the amendment to section 16 in this regard.

By omitting reference to the General Council of Medical Education and Registration of the United Kingdom from the existing legislation, the amendment of section 37 affirms that the general council, firstly, never had any power to grant or confer any primary or additional registrable medical qualifications and, secondly did not possess the power to withdraw or cancel such a qualification. This amendment therefore corrects a misconception of the British legislation upon which the Medical Act legislation, as originally drafted, was based. Secondly the amendment enables the board under new section 37 (3) (c) to establish a complaints investigations committee consisting of two or

more members of the board. Insertion of this provision will enable complaints against medical practitioners to be investigated and dealt with more expeditiously. Provision is also made for the powers and functions of this committee upon referral of a complaint by the board. In addition, the board is authorised to give directions to the committee, from time to time, as it thinks fit.

As to situations in which the board may impose disciplinary punishment—section 37A of the Medical Act is amended to provide a further alternative course of action, namely, to give such counselling to the practitioner as the board may consider appropriate when the practitioner has been found guilty of professional misconduct. The amendment also makes it clear that the notice of intention to deal with a medical practitioner, which is served by the board, notifies the practitioner of his right to appear before the board at a time stipulated by the board in the notice. That appearance cannot be earlier than 14 days after the date of the notice.

A new section 37B provides for the commission of offences or contempts by medical practitioners arising out of the conduct of an investigation to constitute misconduct in a professional respect also, thus giving the Medical Board the option of dealing with those matters as breaches of discipline.

The section 37C empowers the board, by requisition, to compel a medical practitioner to provide a written explanation with respect to matters of complaint made against him by a complainant. The provision clarifies that the requirement to provide the board with written information does not abrogate the privilege against making self-incriminating statements but, rather, seeks to place requisitions, and the subsequent hearing, if any, on a similar footing.

In repealing section 40, a new section 40 permits the Medical Assessment Tribunal to admit as evidence the transcripts of the proceedings of any court in its civil or criminal jurisdiction where those proceedings are relevant to the charge of misconduct made against a medical practitioner.

The board's jurisdiction over medical practitioners is extended by new section 41A in respect of disciplinary matters involving persons who, at the time of the alleged misconduct, were registered but who have subsequently deregistered themselves to avoid disciplinary action. At present, a practitioner may go off the register simply by deciding not to pay his registration fees. There have been instances in the past when the board has been powerless to deal with such practitioners, most notably Dr Michaux, because of this limitation on the board's jurisdiction.

Amendment of section 47 enables the board to allow suitably trained persons, as prescribed in the by-laws, to use certain instruments or equipment associated with the practice of medicine. Under existing legislation, this use was effectively restricted unless such health professionals, or workers, were acting under supervision and instruction or upon the request of a medical practitioner.

As a means of curtailing unauthorised advertising, new section 47A has been inserted in the Medical Act to give the board the power to control persons other than registered practitioners who advertise the availability of a medical service from medical practitioners. Newspapers, other organisations or persons publishing such advertisements will henceforth have to ensure that an advertisement is made in accordance with an authorisation in the prescribed form from the person to whom it relates. In the past, it has often been difficult to establish whether a medical practitioner caused the advertisement to be published or whether it was totally unsolicited. Futhermore, the board has advised me of a significant increase in complaints of unsolicited advertising concerning medical practices and services. This advertising has been organised without the authority or knowledge of the practitioner. It is particularly prevalent in advertising matter circulated by shopping centres and commercial directories. The Australian Medical Association has recommended legislation to control this activity.

A new Part IXA of the Act covers new sections 60 to 66 inclusive. These sections relate to the suspension of a medical practitioner's right to practise following his being

charged with an indictable offence. Under the proposed amendment, the Medical Board will be able to make an application to a judge of the Supreme Court, by way of an originating summons, for an order to have a medical practitioners' registration suspended. The medical practitioner will have to be served with a copy of the originating summons and will be entitled to appear with counsel to contest the granting of the order. A very wide discretion is vested in the Supreme Court judge with respect to the granting and revoking of any order made.

An order obtained from a Supreme Court judge will continue until the expiration of 28 days after the completion of the criminal proceedings, in which case the suspension will be removed, unless, within that time, the practitioner has been charged before the Medical Assessment Tribunal pursuant to section 37 of the Act. When the practitioner is not charged, his suspension is to continue until the tribunal, which is comprised of a Supreme Court judge, orders the suspension be removed or makes an order pursuant to section 41 (1) of the Act to impose disciplinary punishment of either erasure of the practitioner's name from the register or suspension of registration for such period as is specified by the tribunal. Protection is afforded to the practitioner in that the proposed new section 64 provides for the making of an order by the court prohibiting publication of the proceedings other than the making of the order itself.

New Part IXB, which includes new sections 67 to 71A inclusive, will be inserted into the Medical Act to deal with the problem of abandoned medical records and the consequent threat of disclosure of patient information. Proposed new section 67 enables the Medical Board to take appropriate action to arrange for abondoned medical records to be taken into its possession for safe keeping. Alternatively, under new sections 68 and 69 respectively, the board can direct a person who has actual possession to retain custody, subject to conditions, or arrange for the transfer of these sensitive and confidential records to a medical practitioner, or other person, to keep them in his custody, subject to conditions.

Provision is made for the board to accept medical records from personal representatives or beneficiaries of a deceased medical practitioner and to deal with them in the same manner as abandoned records. The board is also to be empowered to destroy medical records that are no longer required to be preserved.

A power to enter premises and to seize records, which are the subject of an order, is also included. Significantly, the rights of the owner of the medical records are preserved by new section 71. However, the finder of abandoned medical records who has no legitimate interest in acquiring ownership of the records will not be able to claim ownership of them following the making of an order.

The House should note that new Part IXB is not concerned with the storage and safeguarding of mere financial records of a medical practice but only with records that relate to a patient's medical affairs and the need to safeguard the confidentiality of them.

Amendment of section 76 extends the time within which a summary prosecution may commence for an offence against the Act. Under existing legislation, a complaint and summons has to be issued within 12 months after the commission of the offence or, alternatively, within four months after the discovery of the commission of the offence. The four-month period referred to will be extended to 12 months.

Finally, new section 76A provides that a person is not to be twice punished for conduct that constitutes contempt of the Medical Board as defined by section 9 of the Commissions of Inquiry Acts, an offence under section 13B of the Medical Act or misconduct in a professional respect as defined by section 37B of the Medical Act. This provision is necessary because of the availability of different courses of action open to the board in dealing with persons who fail to co-operate with the conduct of an iquiry; for example, refusing to attend the inquiry or to produce records when summonsed to do so.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr McElligott, adjourned.

SUGAR MILLING RATIONALIZATION (FAR NORTHERN REGION) BILL

Hon. N. J. HARPER (Auburn—Minister for Primary Industries) (5.55 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

"That leave be granted to bring in a Bill to provide for certain rationalization of sugar milling operations in the Far Northern Sugar region of Queensland and for other purposes."

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

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

Second Reading

Hon. N. J. HARPER (Auburn—Minister for Primary Industries) (5.56 p.m.): I move—

"That the Bill be now read a second time."

Sitting suspended from 5.57 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr HARPER: The sugar industry has experienced a severe economic downturn and only now is an improvement in international sugar prices giving some small hope of optimism in this industry. International sugar prices are favourable for the present season and will probably continue to be so for the next season, but could well fall again in the third year as overseas producers respond to demand.

When the industry was at its lowest ebb some two or three years ago, forward-looking people considered changes necessary for this important industry to survive, both in the short and in the long term. Much of that thought was reflected in the report of the Sugar Industry Working Party, the 100-day committee, under the chairmanship of Mr Russell Savage. Ultimately, after considerable negotiation between the Queensland and Commonwealth Governments, a sugar industry financial assistance package was concluded with the intention of providing price support as well as adjustment assistance for growers and millers.

As all honourable members know, the Commonwealth Government insisted on a low level of price support which would involve very little Commonwealth funding, even last year. No Commonwealth price-support funds will be forthcoming this year and, on present indications, none will be forthcoming next year.

As part of the package, grower assistance is now available through the Rural Adjustment Scheme. It is regrettable that protracted negotiation of this part of the package delayed opportunity for growers to take advantage of its provisions until quite recently.

However, it is in the area of mill rationalisation adjustment that the greatest lack of performance has been recorded. This, through no fault of Government, Federal or State! I view this lack of performance with considerable concern as the availability of concessional finance to enable rationalisation of milling operations to take place will be available only for another two and a half years. Although there has been lack of performance, there has not been a lack of effort. The intention of this Bill is to enable that considerable effort to bear fruit and to make it possible for reasoned rationalisation of sugar-milling operations in the far-northern region to take place without further delay.

The opportunity for rationalisation in the region occurred when the owner of the Goondi Mill, CSR Limited, exercised its commercial right to place the mill on the market. Negotiations were held with various parties, including the South Johnstone, Mourilyan and Babinda mills. Ultimately, a commercial agreement was reached between CSR Limited and the owners of the Babinda and Mourilyan mills. A key element in

this commercial transaction was the availability of adjustment finance as part of the Commonwealth/Queensland sugar industry adjustment assistance package.

By agreement between the two Governments, applications for financial assistance are first reviewed by the Sugar Milling Adjustment Committee. The Committee is chaired by Mr Graham Tucker, who is also chairman of the Queensland Industry Development Corporation. Cane-growers are represented by Mr Fred Soper, who is president of the Queensland Cane Growers Council, while millers are represented by Mr Roy Diecke, who is chairman of the Proprietary Sugar Millers Association. The Honourable the Treasurer of Queensland is represented also on the committee by a senior officer, as is the Commonwealth Minister for Primary Industry, the Honourable John Kerin. This committee is a broadly based professional body whose collective expertise is widely recognised.

Based on applications received concerning the rationalisation of sugar-milling operations in the far-northern region on the closure of the Goondi mill, the Sugar Milling Adjustment Committee made certain recommendations to both the Commonwealth and Queensland Governments. After careful consideration of all relevant factors by the Queensland Government and, I feel certain, by the Federal Government, both Governments agreed to the committee's recommendations.

As a result, a total of $12.84m in Commonwealth and State loans and grants is available to finance the rationalisation program provided certain necessary pre-conditions are met. The sum of $12.84m is made up of $5.94m to be provided by the State by way of loans, a further $2.30m to be provided as grants by the State and the remaining $4.60m to be made available as grants by the Commonwealth. Most of the funds would be available to the Babinda Co-operative Mill to place it on a sound financial footing, particularly after the devastating cyclone damage that it experienced in February last year. It was intended that upgrading of the Babinda and Mourilyan mills and tram lines would receive particular attention. An essential pre-condition of this financial assistance is that both the Babinda and Mourilyan mills achieve an increase in throughput of cane in order to reduce their costs through economies of scale and improved economic efficiency.

It is the Government's view, supported by the Sugar Milling Adjustment Committee, that this increased throughput is now possible because of the planned shut-down of the Goondi mill. If that commercial decision had not been taken by CSR Limited, the quantity of cane available for rezoning—600 000 tonnes—would not have been available, and restructuring may have been a much more difficult process.

A key element in considering the restructuring has been that the Goondi growers should not be adversely affected. I cannot overstress that point, Mr Speaker: the key element in considering the restructuring has been that the Goondi growers should not be adversely affected. On the closure of the Goondi mill, those growers could reasonably expect to be rezoned to another mill.

Mr CASEY: I rise to a point of order. I seek the Chair's ruling. The Minister is now referring, I believe, to a case that is currently before the Supreme Court of Queensland and is, therefore, sub judice. In actual fact, the Queensland Government was involved in this particular matter. A hearing was being undertaken by the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board. The board's hearing was suspended because the matter was placed before the Supreme Court. I therefore seek your ruling, Mr Speaker, that this matter is now sub judice before the Supreme Court and should not proceed in this place.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I ask the Minister to take on board the member's comments.

Mr HARPER: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

For the benefit of the honourable member, I repeat that a key element in considering the restructuring has been that the Goondi growers should not be adversely affected. On the closure of the Goondi mill, those growers could reasonably expect to be rezoned to another mill.

In order that the rationalization process might take place with concessional finance, 280 000 tonnes of cane needs to be rezoned to Babinda and the remaining 320 000 tonnes to Mourilyan.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! My advice is that the Supreme Court matter does not affect legislation.

Mr HARPER: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr Casey interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr HARPER: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I am surprised that the honourable member for Mackay, who has an interest in a sugar-growing area, was not aware of that fact.

Mr CASEY: I rise to a further point of order, Mr Speaker. I am fully aware of the fact on which you have now ruled. I sought your ruling in relation to it because the seriousness of the position lies in the fact that this Government is prepared to step in now and override not only the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board but also the Supreme Court of Queensland.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the Minister.

Mr HARPER: The honourable member's comments really are not worthy of——

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Minister will continue.

Mr HARPER: As the honourable member was so interested in debate with other members of the House, I would repeat what I said earlier for the benefit of some.

Because of the noise that was taking place at that time, I again bring it to the attention of the House that, in order that the rationalisation process might take place with concessional finance, 280 000 tonnes of cane needs to be rezoned to Babinda and the remaining 320 000 tonnes to Mourilyan. This would bring Babinda's tonnage up to one million tonnes and Mourilyan to 930 000 tonnes approximately.

On that basis the Sugar Milling Adjustment Committee believed that growers rezoned to either Babinda or Mourilyan would have a secure future. Jointly, the State and Federal Governments were considering the future viability of two mills and the township of Babinda rather than certain sectional interests. Goondi growers, on rezoning to Babinda, would join a co-operative mill and would enjoy the advantages which this provides, including profit-sharing as part-owners of a mill.

Government financial support of milling rationalisation, improved management and an expanded board of directors would provide the basis for future viability. Goondi growers going to Babinda would not take on any personal liability or debt because of the rezoning. That is an important aspect that honourable members should appreciate. Goondi growers rezoned to Mourilyan would join a viable mill, albeit a proprietary mill—but of course the mill they leave is also a proprietary mill—and also would be able to look towards the future with confidence.

The township of Babinda would again be on a firm foundation, with the assurance of continuing viability of the mill, which is so important to the town. It has been estimated that, if the mill were to close and Babinda became a proverbial ghost township, the loss in capital value of the investment in the mill, town business and private property would be approximately $63m. A further $4m would be lost in non-repayment of personal borrowings, while some $3m would be incurred in additional unemployment payments and relocation expenses. That represents an estimated economic cost to the community of some $70m. In that light, surely the $12.84m offered by the Government for mill rationalisation assistance is a very viable alternative, even if one did not consider the level of personal disruption which would otherwise occur.

The position of the Mourilyan bulk sugar terminal has been addressed by me. As Babinda sugar is traditionally shipped through the Cairns terminal, sugar from Goondi cane rezoned to Babinda could be expected to follow that course. However, it is intended that about six weeks crushing from the Babinda mill in the form of Brand 1 sugar will be shipped through the Mourilyan terminal to compensate for any loss in throughput which would otherwise have occurred. Mind you, Mr Speaker, I do not suggest that that is essential to retain the viability of the Mourilyan terminal; but it seems to me that such a measure would allay local concern. Tully mill's potential for expansion may eventually require a review of any such arrangement. However, there will not be any additional cost, either to the mill or the pool, if production from Goondi cane is diverted to Mourilyan.

As a further aid to the adjustment process, I am prepared to enter into discussions with industry-leaders about the possible transfer of the Babinda Mill Suppliers Committee, enlarged by the Goondi growers, from the Cairns district executive to the Innisfail executive. Those wider aspects of regional industry rationalisation have placed the treatment of the applications to close the Goondi mill and rezone its assignments on a somewhat different footing to those usually contemplated under the Regulation of Sugar Cane Prices Act. These broader issues cannot be handled effectively by the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board under the Act, nor is the process of conducting hearings before the board an effective way of resolving such commercial issues.

That point is evidenced by the fact that the present hearings—and I draw the attention of the honourable member for Mackay to this—have been before the central board since April last year and a resolution is not yet in sight. In fact, there seems little chance of an acceptable resolution being reached before the central board. Unless alternative arrangements are put in place immediately, yet another season will be wasted before a rationalisation can take place. That is a completely unacceptable way in which to conduct a commercial operation or for a regulated industry to operate.

I am aware that there has developed in some sectors of the industry—particularly within some personalities in the industry—a belief, for whatever reason, that there is an aura surrounding the central board. I am not at all sure that the reasons are healthy; but, be that as it may, the fact is that the Chairman of the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board, intentionally a Justice of the Supreme Court of Queensland, during the hearings of the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board in Innisfail on 17 February 1987, recognised the limitations of that board in its ability to accommodate broader issues, such as the preservation of a town. His Honour Mr Justice Matthews indicated that, if the Babinda township were to be preserved, and with it the mill, then that was a political decision. I will quote from the chairman's words when he acknowledged that maintenance of the township of Babinda was a very laudible object. The Honourable Mr Justice Matthews said—

> "I think everybody in this room wants to see the township of Babinda preserved and if, as a means of doing that, the sugar mill is preserved, well and good, but ultimately if that is to guide us, it is a political decision. It is a decision which would be better taken and enforced by legislation if the Government wants it."

That is exactly what the Government is doing. In fact, on the passage of this Bill, responsibility for rezoning assignments of individual growers from Goondi to Babinda and Mourilyan will continue to rest with the central board. In other respects, however, the functions and responsibilities of the central board and of local boards appear to be adequately accommodated by the Regulation of Sugar Cane Prices Act.

I also invite the attention of the House to the editorial in this week's *Queensland Country Life*. The opening paragraph in that editorial reads—

> "Proprietary Sugar Millers Association Chairman Roy Diecke is right when he tells the sugar industry it risks missing rationalisation opportunities provided by Government money."

The concluding paragraph reads—

"The regulated structure that was sugar's strength is stopping it deregulating. Catch 22."

The Government has accepted my advice to introduce legislation which will provide for reasoned rationalisation of sugar-milling operations in the far-northern region. It will provide for the rezoning of Goondi assigned lands to both the Babinda and Mourilyan mills on the closure of the Goondi mill and will also authorise the Goondi mill to close. It will vary the Primary Producers' Co-operative Associations Act as it applies to the Babinda Co-operative Sugar Milling Association Limited to enable the co-operative to comply with the pre-conditions laid down by the Sugar Milling Adjustment Committee.

In particular, the Bill provides the co-operative with the power to issue a special class of share and to restructure its board of directors. The new board of directors will be made up of seven members, two of whom will be appointed by the Government during the period that the co-operative holds Government loans. These two special directors will be expert in financial, commercial or industrial matters. One of those directors will be chairman of the co-operative. Three directors will be elected by Babinda suppliers, while two directors will be elected by rezoned Goondi growers who would then be supplying Babinda.

This Bill is designed to rationalise current milling operations in the far-northern region and to enable extensive concessional finance available for that purpose to be taken up immediately. The ultimate beneficiaries will be the cane-growers of the region and the great sugar industry of Queensland generally.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Mr De LACY (Cairns) (7.49 p.m.): I move—

"That the debate be now adjourned under Standing Order 241."

Motion agreed to.

Resumption of Debate at Later Hour of Sitting

Hon. N. J. HARPER (Auburn—Minister for Primary Industries) (7.50 p.m.): I move—

"That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as would allow the resumption of the debate to be made an order of the day for a later hour of the sitting."

Question put; and the House divided—

AYES, 45	
Ahern	Katter
Alison	Lane
Austin	Lester
Berghofer	McCauley
Bjelke-Petersen	McKechnie
Borbidge	McPhie
Burreket	Menzel
Chapman	Neal
Clauson	Nelson
Cooper	Newton
Elliott	Powell
Fraser	Randell
Gately	Row
Gibbs, I. J.	Sherrin
Gilmore	Simpson
Glasson	Slack
Gunn	Stephan
Harper	Stoneman
Harvey	Tenni
Henderson	
Hinton	
Hobbs	*Tellers:*
Hynd	Littleproud
Jennings	FitzGerald

NOES, 34	
Ardill	Smyth
Beanland	Underwood
Beard	Vaughan
Braddy	Warburton
Campbell	Warner
Casey	Wells
Comben	White
D'Arcy	Yewdale
De Lacy	
Eaton	
Gibbs, R. J.	
Hamill	
Hayward	
Innes	
Knox	
Lee	
Lickiss	
McElligott	
Milliner	
Palaszczuk	
Prest	
Schunter	*Tellers:*
Scott	Davis
Sherlock	Gygar

Resolved in the affirmative.

SUGAR ACQUISITION ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Hon. N. J. HARPER (Auburn—Minister for Primary Industries) (7.56 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

"That leave be granted to bring in a Bill to amend the Sugar Acquisition Act 1915-1985 in a certain particular."

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

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

Second Reading

Hon. N. J. HARPER (Auburn—Minister for Primary Industries) (7.58 p.m.): I move—

"That the Bill be now read a second time."

The Sugar Acquisition Act is the legislation under which the Queensland sugar crop has been acquired and marketed since 1915. Sections 4 and 4B of the Act empower the Sugar Board to conduct research into the quality of raw sugar, to pay mills transport allowances for special shipping arrangements, to make interim payments to mills and bonus payments to growers and to enter into agreement that will facilitate the disposal of sugar. These specific provisions are in addition to the Sugar Board's general powers to market Queensland's sugar production.

However, when these specific additional powers were introduced in the September 1982 amendment, they were to lapse in 1984. This sunset provision was extended to 30 June 1987 by a 1984 amendment. The principal reason behind the extended sunset provision relating to the additional powers of the Sugar Board has been to provide time for the industry to adapt to changing industry circumstances.

Of recent years, the sugar industry has suffered a severe economic downturn and has had to face up to considerable restructuring in order to survive as a viable internationally competitive industry.

Last year the Regulation of Sugar Cane Prices Act was amended to provide for a significant level of deregulation in the industry, and further amendments have been proposed by various sectors for consideration later this year. Throughout the industry generally there is a feeling that further review of sugar industry legislation is necessary.

I am encouraging growers and their representatives to consider the various options for change fairly in the interests of maintaining industry viability in the long term. Until that consideration is completed I believe that the specific additional powers of the Sugar Board as provided under sections 4 and 4B should be subject to a further sunset clause to conclude on 30 June 1990.

I commend this Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr De Lacy, adjourned.

HEALTH ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Hon. M. J. AHERN (Landsborough—Minister for Health and Environment) (8 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

"That leave be granted to bring in a Bill to amend the Health Act 1937-1984 in certain particulars."

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

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

Second Reading

Hon. M. J. AHERN (Landsborough—Minister for Health and Environment) (8.01 p.m.): I move—

"That the Bill be now read a second time."

Amendments to the Health Act 1937-1984, contained in the Bill before the House, follow an extensive review of existing legislation by officers of my department and have been found necessary to bring the Act into line with current-day requirements. It is, of course, important in the interests of the community that the provisions of the Act are maintained to such a degree that they will enable the Department of Health, and other departments concerned, including local authorities, to provide adequate surveillance over all matters concerning public health.

The most significant changes to the Act that I will first refer to relate to the provision of two new heads of power—divisions IVD and IVE of part IV of the Act. They are concerned respectively with combating dangers caused to the environment and the community's health by the distribution of agricultural chemicals and hazardous substances. New division IVD will have the objective of controlling human health aspects in the distribution of agricultural chemicals by aerial spraying or by whatever other means.

May I, at this stage, acquaint the House with the background from which this amendment originated. A departmental committee that was established to examine the problems associated with the methods of applying pesticides and herbicides by aerial application gave consideration to the following matters. Firstly, the committee considered advice provided by the Solicitor-General that regulation 010 of the Poisons Regulations of 1973 applied to the drift of aerial-applied chemicals beyond the target area. The committee was aware of the limitations of this regulation, in that it could be invoked only after the offence was committed. Secondly, the committee considered the problems encountered in the application of certain pesticides—for example, chlordimiform to cotton. This particular pesticide was considered essential to the cotton industry and its use was restricted to operators who were authorised by the Director-General of Health and Medical Services under regulation C4 of the Poisons Regulations. Finally, the committee considered the various provisions of the Agricultural Chemicals Distribution Control Act 1966-1983, administered by the Department of Primary Industries. It should be noted that, under that Act, pilots were licensed to apply herbicides and pesticides, but the Act's provisions were directed only to the payment of compensation for damage to commercial stock and crops.

As a result of the committee's considerations, the four new sections of new division IVD, namely sections 131AA to 131AD inclusive, are intended to provide the necessary controls over agricultural chemicals in line with those sought by the departmental committee. New section 131AA covers the interpretations of various terms associated with application of these chemicals by whatever means. "Aerial application", for example, clearly indicates its meaning shall cover the various means of spraying, spreading or dispersing, whether intended or not, of any agricultural chemical or any preparation containing any agricultural chemical from an aircraft in flight. Similarly, this new section spells out in detail the meanings of the related terms "agricultural chemical", "dessicant" and "herbicide", as well as properly identifying other terminology.

The new section 131AB provides inspectors authorised by the Director-General with the necessary powers to enter and inspect any place, including any relevant equipment, where there are reasonable grounds for believing that such equipment and/or any agricultural chemical located there may be used for aerial or ground application. Further powers are vested in inspectors pursuant to regulations made under this new division of the Act. However, as set out in subsection (2), it should be noted that subsection (1) of section 131AB does not authorise an inspector to enter and search any premises, or part of premises, used for residential purposes without the permission of the occupier of such premises.

The new section 131AC prohibits any person under 18 years of age from taking part in any activites associated with aerial or ground application or in the mixing, marking or loading of agricultural chemicals intended for use in aerial or ground application.

Under the new section 131AD, the Director-General is provided with the power to make regulations in respect to the proper administration of this new division of the Act concerning such matters as the circumstances governing restrictions on aerial or ground application of agricultural chemicals, the safety measures taken by persons handling or storing the chemicals and their disposal. These regulations will also set out measures to be taken to prevent, or at least minimise, contamination of the environment. They will include procedures to be followed in the event of contamination, damage or personal injury occurring from chemical application, storage or other means. As well as setting out circumstances in which persons involved in the application of agricultural chemicals are required to submit blood and urine samples for analysis, the regulations will require appropriate records of aerial or ground application to be kept by all parties involved. Such regulations will allow a penalty to be imposed for any breach thereof up to a maximum of $1,000 and now prescribed as 20 penalty units.

Because the Department of Primary Industries controls exposure of stock and crops to agricultural chemicals, implementation of this new division of the Health Act will be developed in collaboration with that department.

Arising from the problems associated with the application of agricultural chemicals, the new division IVE has the objective of dealing adequately with the broader aspects of contamination of the environment and the exposure of persons, as well as workers, to hazardous substances used in industry. As covered in the foregoing new Division IVD, the Director-General, similarly, will be provided with the necessary heads of power to make regulations concerning these substances and the control thereof in the interests of protecting the health of the community from any possible contamination.

My departmental committee was aware of problems caused by activities such as sand blasting, cleaning of fibro roofs, spray painting and removal of lead paint where hazards were also present to persons other than workers. In response to these hazards, appropriate amendments are contained in this Bill to allow the Director-General to make regulations to improve safety measures in their purchase, transport, storage, use and disposal, as well as effecting a proper control of effluvia emanating from those activities.

I now direct the House's attention to other major objectives of the Bill. The amendment to section 33 is a retrospective one and provides a head of power, which previously did not exist, in regard to local authorities undetaking the function of licensing of barbers' shops as presently covered by regulation 4A of the Barbers' Shops Regulations of 1952. This regulation provides that a person shall not use premises as a barber-shop unless such person is the holder of a current licence granted by the local authority in respect of such premises.

Section 33 (IV) of the Health Act already provides for the making of regulations for the cleaning, disinfection and sterilisation of implements, tools and utensils of barbers generally for regulating and controlling the sanitary conduct of the business of a barber. However, following the receipt of an application to issue a licence for a mobile hair-dressing service, and a subsequent review of the Barbers' Shops Regulations, it became apparent that no head of power existed in the Act to provde for the licensing of barbers' shops by local authorities. This retrospective amendment will obviate any suggestion of the relevant existing regulation being determined as invalid.

The amendment to section 98A will allay concerns that have been expressed that contractors for the removal of refuse, particularly those with heavy investments in equipment, may have their approvals for such removals terminated or not renewed by the relevant local authorities.

Such concerns have been expressed by the Queensland Road Transport Association, which has made representations to both my department and the Local Government

Department on existing provisons of the Act. Accordingly, the amendment will permit an appeal to be made to the Director-General of Health and Medical Services where a local authority revokes an approval. However, I must emphasise that this provision would be used only as a last resort. In addition, amendments to this section of the Act include a provision for an application for removal of refuse, as designated under the Act, to be deemed as approved if a local authority has not advised the applicant of the success or failure of his application within 60 days from the date of submission of application.

Amendments to sections 123, 124 and 127 will now permit minimum values of lead and allied metal substances in paint and toys as well as in utensils and appliances. The reason for this change is because modern technology can now detect minute concentrations that previously went undetected. In fact, it is now not possible, using these modern detection methods, to produce a paint that does not contain any of the metals specified in existing legislation under section 127 (2) of the Health Act—albeit the concentrations are extremely small.

As an extension of this matter of lead content, the present provisions of sections 123 and 124 relating to toxic metals were developed when analytical techniques were accurate only to the extent of measuring lead content to approximately 1 000 milligrams per kilogram. It is now possible routinely to detect, and quantify, lead and other heavy metals at levels approximating 0.1 milligram per kilogram or one ten-thousandth of the previous measurable contents. These levels, I might add, will almost certainly go lower as modern technology continues to improve at the current rapid pace.

Relative to the amendments to sections 123, 124 and 127, appropriate amendments to sections 129A and 129B and the addition of a new section 129D will permit the minimal level of lead and other toxic metals that can now be detected in water and in structural materials such as guttering and downpipes.

Amendment to section 131 of the Health Act in this Bill will more clearly qualify the definition of chemical compounds rather than use non-precise words such as "poisonous" or such a confusing term as "poisonous compounds of cyanogen". Whether a substance is poisonous or not depends upon its dosage. For example, even common salt is poisonous if taken in sufficient quantity.

Other sections of the Bill are machinery changes or are regarded as being of a minor nature but necessary to the overall review of the existing legislation. I now refer briefly to them as they occur.

The requirement in section 24 that every State analyst make an annual report to the Director-General has been deleted, as this requirement is currently provided for by administrative action, under which the Director of the Government Chemical Laboratory provides the Director-General with his annual report.

Section 31 is amended by omitting references to illegitimacy. This brings the Health Act into line with the Status of Children Act 1978. Similarly, in section 49, usage of the word "maternity" now replaces the archaic term "lying-in" in reference to a maternity hospital.

Section 76B is amended to permit the Director-General to also exercise regulatory authority over hostels used for the care of ill persons as designated, particularly the aged and infirm.

Section 170 is amended by the deletion of the second paragraph, which makes reference to section 156 of the Health Act. As section 156 was repealed by the Limitation of Actions Act 1974, this reference is no longer necessary.

Finally, penalties for offences against the Act, which have not been varied for a number of years, have been increased in line with current-day values and expressed as penalty units.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr McElligott, adjourned.

FORESTRY ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Hon. W. H. GLASSON (Gregory—Minister for Lands, Forestry, Mapping and Surveying) (8.16 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

"That leave be granted to bring in a Bill to amend the Forestry Act 1959-1984 in certain particulars."

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

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

Second Reading

Hon. W. H. GLASSON (Gregory—Minister for Lands, Forestry, Mapping and Surveying) (8.17 p.m.): I move—

"That the Bill be now read a second time."

This Bill has as its purpose the amalgamation of the Timber Research and Development Advisory Councils of south and central Queensland and of north Queensland and their consolidation into one unit to be known as the Timber Research and Development Advisory Council of Queensland.

Honourable members would be aware that these councils initially came into existence in early 1970 by way of an administrative arrangement approved by Cabinet in December 1969. The purpose of these bodies was to advise the Minister charged with the administration of the Forestry Act on matters related to timber promotion and merchandising and the timber-marketing industry generally.

Experience soon disclosed that the ability of the councils to fulfil their role effectively was being seriously hampered by their lack of legal identity. Accordingly, in 1974 action was taken by way of an amendment to the Forestry Act to constitute each council as an independent statutory body.

Functions of the councils were specified legislatively as—

(A) to advise the Minister with respect to—

(i) the promotion, merchandising and market development of sawn timber and timber products and the conduct of research into those aspects of the timber industry;

(ii) the education, training, safety and working conditions of employees, and the control of the quality of timber in the timber-manufacturing industry; and

(iii) the conduct of research and other investigations into product development and manufacturing costs in the timber-manufacturing industry;

(B) with the consent of the Minister, to undertake operations with respect to those matters and for those purposes to do such things as are necessary or desirable.

Funding of councils is by way of additional stumpage collected by the Crown on certain forest products sold under the provisions of the Forestry Act and made available to councils to expand in undertaking their functions. Allocation of funds to the individual councils is directly related to collections obtained from the geographic area of their representation.

The cut of Crown timber in the northern region of the State has markedly declined over recent years to a stage where current allocations to mills represent only about 30 per cent of that available in 1978.

Funds available to the north Queensland council have thus declined significantly, placing that council in a situation where its ability to function viably has been significantly eroded. This situation does not apply in the southern and central region of the State where the decline in removals from native forests is being more than offset by increasing supplies becoming available from softwood plantations.

The south and central council has an established infrastructure based in Brisbane with the capability, at minimal additional cost, to broaden its scope to service the timber industry throughout the State. In fact, in recent times the executive director of the south and central council has, by agreement, undertaken much of the administrative duties of the north Queensland council.

It has become apparent to members of both councils that the most efficient and cost-effective method of operation is to amalgamate the two councils into one consolidated unit with some reduction in membership but maintaining equitable Statewide representation and making use of the existing administrative infrastructure. Upon being approached by representatives of the councils, I concurred with their proposal, which this Bill now seeks to implement.

To this end major provisions of the Bill provide for—

(A) The disbandment of the existing councils and their existing membership.

(B) The constitution of the Timber Research and Development Advisory Council of Queensland, its composition, the process for the appointing of the chairman and members, the prescribing by notification in the *Queensland Government Gazette* of the area of representation of members where relevant, and the associations, boards or bodies having the right to submit nominations.

(C) Saving and transitional provisions required to ensure to council continuity of administration and management and to preserve legal rights and responsibilities.

(D) The clarification of the scope of the functions of the council by amending terminology to remove some existing ambiguity.

(E) Council to have the legal capability to accept grants, donations or gifts which may be made from time to time by persons or bodies prepared to voluntarily support the work of the council and the manner of accounting for the disbursement of any such funds.

Other provisions contained within the Bill comprise machinery amendments to delete or amend existing sections of the Act to bring them into relativity with the disbandment of the two councils and their replacement with the one unit.

The amendments proposed and outlined in this Bill make no significant impact on the purpose or intent of the existing legislation but serve only to consolidate two existing bodies into one unit to facilitate administration and to enhance viability.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Eaton, adjourned.

TIMBER UTILIZATION AND MARKETING BILL

Hon. W. H. GLASSON (Gregory—Minister for Lands, Forestry, Mapping and Surveying) (8.23 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

"That leave be granted to bring in a Bill to control the sale and use of certain timbers, to repeal the Timber Users' Protection Act 1949-1972 and for other purposes."

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

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

Second Reading

Hon. W. H. GLASSON (Gregory—Minister for Lands, Forestry, Mapping and Surveying) (8.24 p.m.): I move—

"That the the Bill be now read a second time."

The object of this proposed legislation, to be known as the Timber Utilization and Marketing Act, is to control the use and sale of certain timbers by setting standards which will have to be met prior to such timber being held out or offered for sale or used in a building or article and to prohibit the sale of lyctid-susceptible timber.

The Timber Users' Protection Act, which this legislation seeks to replace, came into force in 1949 to meet a situation which came about as the result of the building boom and the consequent escalation in the sawmilling and timber-marketing industries which followed the cessation of World War II.

The boom conditions encouraged some opportunists to market and use timber which was inadequately seasoned or had not been immunised against attack by lyctus borers. At the same time, demand led to the utilisation of a wide range of timbers which had not appeared on the market previously and which required immunisation against lyctus borers.

The Act served to protect the timber-user and the reputable industry from irresponsible marketing practices by imposing a measure of control over the sale and use of seasoned timber and timber susceptible to attack by lyctus borers. At a later stage regulations made under the Act were strengthened to provide some control over the sale of timber treated to preserve it against attack by decay, termites, marine borers, weathering and/or fire.

This piecemeal approach led to poorly presented and at times confusing legislation which does not meet present-day requirements, failing in particular in respect of the use of preservative treated timber imported into the State.

At the present time timber utilisation in Queensland is again rapidly changing. The proportion of production from plantation-grown softwoods has now reached 40 per cent and is still rising. Efficient utilisation of these softwoods relies heavily on adequate preservation and seasoning. Marketing of inadequately treated timber will seriously harm market acceptance of this product and jeopardise the sale of the huge volumes of plantation-grown timbers now reaching maturity. This would have far-reaching adverse effects on the value of the Crown resource and the viability of the State's timber industry. The relative availability of the more durable species within our native timber supplies has declined and effective utilisation of the less durable species relies heavily on adequate seasoning or preservative treatment.

The existing legislation is not adequate to control the sale of timber imported into the State and claimed to be preservative treated. The proposed legislation seeks also to address this situation.

The concepts and principles embodied in the new legislation originated in Queensland and have been widely researched and carefully considered over some years. Consultation has taken place with timber preservation authorities in other States of Australia and some overseas countries. The proposed legislation has been well accepted. Similar legislation has already been introduced in New South Wales and New Zealand and is presently being prepared for introduction in Fiji, Malaysia and Papua New Guinea.

The material provisions of the Bill can be appropriately grouped into four parts. To facilitate explanation I will deal with each section separately.

Lyctid-susceptible Timber

The present provision for sale of susceptible timber under notice has evolved into a legal device for protecting the vendor without providing bona fide information to the purchaser. Very few Queensland producers now market non-immunised timber of lyctid-susceptible species, but many merchants routinely stamp or print a warning notice on all timber invoices.

The sale of lyctid-susceptible timber is expressly prohibited under the proposed Act, except where the prospective purchaser requests supply in writing. The use of lyctid-susceptible timber in a building or article is permitted only where such timber will not

be detrimental to the service of the building or article or where the building or article is for the builder's own use.

A building or article containing lyctid-susceptible timber can be sold only where written notice that it contains such material is first given or two years has elapsed since its construction or manufacture. These provisions then, although banning the general sale and use of susceptible material, are wide enough to permit a sawmiller who does not have a treatment plant to sell susceptible material to a treatment plant. They also permit untreated lyctid-susceptible timber to be used where such use will not detract from the serviceability of the building or article or where a person chooses to use such material in a building or article he is constructing or manufacturing for his personal use.

Approved Preservative Treatment

This part enables the conservator, on his own initiative or upon application, to approve preservative treatments in terms of prescribed preservative chemicals to be used and preservative penetration and retention to be achieved in timber treated for sale in Queensland.

It also provides for the conservator to assign to specific approved treatments an H level classification defining the suitability of the treated timber for use under particular service hazard conditions.

Details of approved preservative treatments and their respective H level classifications are required to be published for the information of industry and the public generally by notification in the *Government Gazette.*

Preservative Treated Timber

In conjuction with the preceding part this part contains the provisions necessary to ensure that all preservative treated timber marketed in Queensland, whether treatment occurred in Queensland, interstate or overseas, complies with preservative treatment result standards which can be relied upon to confer satisfactory service performance on such timber when exposed to biological or other service hazards under Queensland conditions.

It also requires that all timber offered for sale as preservative treated carry a registered or recognised brand identifying the approved treatment to which it has been subjected, where and by whom the treatment was given and an H level marking indicating the end use conditions for which the timber is suitable. It also provides for the conservator to issue, register and recognise brands.

In conjunction with similar mandatory or voluntary standards existing or pending in other Australian States and in other countries trading in the South Pacific region, these provisions will facilitate timber trade by providing Queensland with a standardised branding and end use identification system which will apply to preservative treated timber marketed throughout this region.

The Bill as presented provides two avenues by which timber treated outside the State may be branded—

(1) Where the timber is treated in a place where preservative treatment is under the control of an authority which requires treatment to be undertaken to a standard equivalent to that required under the provisions of this Bill, registration of brands and the affixing to timber treated of H level markings the conservator may recognise the brand issued and registered by that authority.

(2) Where the timber is treated in a place where no appropriate controlling authority exists or for some sound reason the conservator declines to recognise a brand the importer, upon producing evidence of treatment satisfactory to the conservator, including, if required, samples of the treated timber for analysis, may be issued with a registered brand and advice of the H level with which the timber must be marked prior to its sale in Queensland.

This part of the Bill contains also offence provisions pertaining to branding and misuse of registered brands.

Moisture Content of Timber

The present legislation requires timber which is sold as seasoned or dried to be true to this description when sold, but contains some anomalies and ambiguities which have been corrected in this Bill. Provision has been made for a purchaser, when ordering seasoned timber, to specify particular moisture content limits outside the defined standard when he considers such non-standard moisture content is acceptable or most appropriate for the conditions of use of the timber.

Most timber sold dressed is purchased for use in applications where appreciable shrinkage or distortion after fixing is unacceptable to the end user. In the absence of specific advice to the contrary, purchasers commonly assume that timber held out for sale as dressed timber is at time of sale in an adequately seasoned condition. This is not always the case.

This part of the Bill requires that dressed timber, with prescribed exceptions, shall meet specified requirements as to its moisture content at time of sale.

Provision exists for dressed timber to be sold unseasoned or at a moisture content other than that specified with the written agreement of the purchaser. The Bill also requires that dressed timber, other than framing timber, used in a building or in the manufacture of articles such as furniture be at a specified moisture content at time of use.

Other sections of the Bill comprise the machinery provisions necessary for effective implementation and administration.

I point out that the proposed legislation does not seek to impose restrictions on the number or location of timber preservation or timber seasoning plants established, nor on the volume of timber which any plant may process, nor in any way to fetter the proprietor of the plant in the running of his business venture.

It serves to ensure that all preservative treated timber marketed in Queensland, whether from local, interstate or overseas sources, has been satisfactorily treated with a preservative acceptable for use in Queensland and complies with requirements for branding to identify the source of the timber and its suitability for use in Queensland under defined service hazard conditions.

It also aims to remove untreated lyctid-susceptible timber from the general market place and to clarify the moisture content standards for sale and use of timber in Queensland.

Timber, one of the State's major renewable resources, has a vast number of uses and applications. It is important that its reputation for reliable performance be safeguarded. I believe that the implementation of the provisions of this Bill will do much to ensure this and in doing so provide also a good measure of protection to the public as timber-users.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Eaton, adjourned.

CONSUMER AFFAIRS ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Hon. V. P. LESTER (Peak Downs—Minister for Employment, Small Business and Industrial Affairs) (8.37 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

"That leave be granted to bring in a Bill to amend the Consumer Affairs Act 1970-1985 in certain particulars."

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

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

Second Reading

Hon. V. P. LESTER (Peak Downs—Minister for Employment, Small Business and Industrial Affairs) (8.38 p.m.): I move—

"That the Bill be now read a second time."

In line with this Government's philosophy of keeping itself closely attuned to the problems and concerns of small business, I undertook a series of seminars throughout the State to provide a ready forum for small businesses, including primary producers, to make personal representations on such matters. One of the constant themes raised by those attending these seminars was that while their customers were able to call upon the Consumer Affairs Bureau to mediate in disputes with them, they in turn were not able to avail themselves of such assistance when it came to purchases of goods and services for use in their own businesses. The representations related to goods and services provided to business in its capacity as a consumer, for example the purchase of furniture, fittings and equipment for an office or of a utility for use on a farm, etc., but not to goods for resale or letting on hire.

As a consequence of the many representations, it was announced in the Government's policy speech prior to the recent State election that the coverage presently available to consumers under the Consumer Affairs Act 1970-1985 would be extended to businesses and primary producers, subject to a limit of $40,000 per separate transaction. This limit serves to ensure that the primary focus is on 'small' business. I am sure honourable members will agree that, given the disparity in bargaining power between small businesses, including primary producers, and many of the corporations from which they purchase equipment, etc., the extension of this cover represents a valuable initiative by the Government on behalf of small businesses and primary producers.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Prest, adjourned.

ADOPTION OF CHILDREN (AMENDMENT) BILL

Hon. Y. A. CHAPMAN (Pine Rivers—Minister for Family Services, Youth and Ethnic Affairs) (8.40 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

"That leave be granted to bring in a Bill to amend the Adoption of Children Act Amendment Act 1983-1986 in certain particulars."

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

Bill presented and, on motion of Mrs Chapman, read a first time.

Second Reading

Hon. Y. A. CHAPMAN (Pine Rivers—Minister for Family Services, Youth and Ethnic Affairs) (8.41 p.m.): I move—

"That the Bill be now read a second time."

It will be recalled that, during the last Parliament, the House passed some important amendments to the Adoption of Children Act. At that time, negotiations were proceeding in relation to placement principles for children of indigenous, ethnic or cultural backgrounds. Unfortunately, the negotiations could not be completed before the last amending Bill came before the House, and these matters are now being dealt with in this relatively small new Bill. It contains a new provision which will ensure that, in making arrangements for the adoption of a child who has an indigenous, ethnic or cultural background, unless prescribed circumstances exist, the child shall be placed with approved applicants, at

least one of whom shares the child's background. The provision will apply to all children in respect of whom a general adoption consent has been given or dispensed with.

The purpose of these arrangements is to ensure that children have an opportunity to understand their cultural backgrounds, to help children maintain their cultural identities, and to allow children to be adopted by members of their "extended families" who would not be regarded as "relatives" within the definition of that term.

The Government does not accept the proposition that is advocated by a minority within the community that racial background should be the sole placement criteria. Adoption applicants with whom the children I have mentioned are placed will still have to satisfy the normal eligibility and assessment criteria that apply in respect of all other applicants.

It will also be possible to depart from the general arrangements when approved applicants of the particular background are not available. In addition, they will not apply in circumstances when the arrangements are considered not to be in the welfare and best interests of the child. An example of this would be a child who has been living for a considerable time with prospective adoptive parents of another background and who has bonded with them.

The provision reflects the general policy that is being accepted throughout Australia in respect of the adoption and fostering of children. It reflects the policies of my department that have been formulated after consultation with a number of interested groups throughout the State.

Queensland does not accept the arrangements introduced in some States and the recommendations of the Australian Law Reform Commission that discriminate against ethnic groups. The fostering of such children is, of course, outside the ambit of the Bill and should be dealt with in another Bill, which I expect to introduce later.

The other purpose of this Bill is to make some minor amendments to the provisions relating to the proposed Special Needs Register. These amendments have been suggested in the light of experience.

The Bill will clarify that the persons who must be notified that relevant children have not been adopted within three months are those people who consented to the child's adoption. The Bill also ensures that such persons will not receive the notification if they indicate that they do not wish to receive such advice.

The Bill also allows a child to be declared a special needs child whenever the director forms the opinion that there is little prospect of the child's being adopted without considering the widest range of possible applicants. Experience has shown that this could be less than the current provision of four months after the consent is received.

The remaining provisions of the Bill are machinery in nature and do not alter the status quo.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Prest, adjourned.

VALUATION OF LAND ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Hon. D. McC. NEAL (Balonne—Minister for Corrective Services, Administrative Services and Valuation) (8.45 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

"That leave be granted to bring in a Bill to amend the Valuation of Land Act 1944-1985 in certain particulars."

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

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

Second Reading

Hon. D. McC. NEAL (Balonne—Minister for Corrective Services, Administrative Services and Valuation) (8.46 p.m.): I move—

"That the Bill be now read a second time."

The purpose of the Valuation of Land Act of 1944 was to provide for the determination by the Valuer-General of the unimproved values of all land in Queensland for local authority rating purposes and, where applicable, for land tax. The Act has been amended on several recent occasions, and the present Bill provides for three extensions to provisions adopted in earlier amendments to the principal Act. These amendments relate to—

- appeals against annual valuations;
- the valuation of occupation licences, permits to occupy and railway leases; and
- the valuation of petroleum leases.

Honourable members will recall that, in 1985, the Valuation of Land Act was amended to provide for a system of annual valuations to be introduced on a progressive basis for all local authorities in Queensland. Previously, the Act required the Valuer-General to make general valuations at five to eight-year intervals. As with general valuations, the Act provides for all land-owners to have the right of objection and appeal against annual valuations.

Experience has shown that annual valuations have generally been well received in those local authorities where the system is operating. Annual valuations reflect the fluctuations in the market more closely than was possible previously, and the level of public acceptance for annual valuations has resulted in far fewer objections and appeals.

As the Act stands at present, the registrar of the Land Court has no power to issue notices and requisitions either in relation to defective appeals to the Land Court against annual valuations, or in cases of late lodgement of those appeals.

In 1985, the Land Court was given wide discretionary powers, in the case of annual valuations, to grant an appellant leave to amend a defective appeal or to lodge a late appeal. However, the registrar of the Land Court has the power to issue notices and requisitions in respect of appeals against general valuations.

The President of the Land Court would prefer that, instead of the court's having discretionary powers to deal with defective and late appeals against annual valuations, the registrar of that court be given the same powers to issue notices and requisitions in the case of such appeals against annual valuations as he has with appeals against general valuations.

This amendment will provide that power to the registrar, thereby putting both the registrar and the Land Court on the same footing with regard to appeals against both general and annual valuations.

It is proposed to amend the law governing the valuation of occupation licences, permits to occupy and railway leases so that their unimproved values will be determined having regard to, and making proper allowance for, any restrictions or limitations to which they are subject. Some licences, permits and leases are held over land which would have a higher level of value if the land was valued on an unrestricted fee-simple basis. However, the restrictions or limitations imposed by the conditions of the licence, permit or lease prevent many of them from being used to their fullest extent. It is only fair and appropriate that any restrictions and limitations are taken into account when the unimproved values of those lands are determined. The principal Act already contains similar provisions which relate to special leases and stock-grazing permits, and the same approach should be adopted for the valuation of lands subject to occupation licences, permits to occupy and leases granted under the Railways Act.

The Valuer-General has recently received legal advice that petroleum leases are rateable and should be valued as part of a local authority valuation. However, petroleum

leases are not mining tenements and so cannot be valued in accordance with the upper limits introduced in 1985 for the valuation of mining tenements.

There are presently 32 petroleum leases in south-west Queensland which are spread over the shires of Balonne, Bendemere, Bulloo, Bungil, Quilpie, Tara, Waggamba, Warroo and the town of Roma. These petroleum leases vary in area up to a maximum of 26 000 hectares. If the unimproved values of the various leases were assessed on a fee-simple basis they would be quite substantial in closer-settled areas.

A more equitable valuation procedure would be to fix a statutory ceiling for the valuations of those leases at either the unimproved fee-simple value of the land or six times the yearly rent, whichever is the lower. A similar method of determining the maximum has been provided previously in the case of underground-mining tenements.

The yearly rent currently payable for petroleum leases is variable, according to whether the lease was granted or renewed before or after 1 January 1982. While rents paid under leases granted before that date vary from lease to lease, the yearly rent in the case of leases granted or renewed after that date is fixed by the Petroleum Act at $20 per square kilometre, or 20c per hectare. That standard rent will be adopted for the valuation of all petroleum leases, where it is less than the unimproved value of the land. The statutory ceiling of six times the yearly rent would represent $1.20 per hectare. In the more remote parts of the State, the statutory maximum valuation would not apply, because the unimproved value on a fee-simple basis would be less than the value based on the rental calculation.

These amendments will ensure that the provisions of the Act are consistent in their application to valuations of minor tenures, or short-term rights to use land, which have been established for different purposes.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Prest, adjourned.

SUPREME COURT LIBRARY ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Hon. P. J. CLAUSON (Redlands—Minister for Justice and Attorney-General) (8.53 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

"That leave be granted to bring in a Bill to amend the Supreme Court Library Act 1968-1976 in a certain particular."

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

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

Second Reading

Hon. P. J. CLAUSON (Redlands—Minister for Justice and Attorney-General) (8.54 p.m.): I move—

"That the Bill be now read a second time."

The Supreme Court Library Act 1968-1976 provides for the creation of a statutory body named the Supreme Court Library Committee, on which all sectors of the legal profession in Queensland are represented. This committee has the task of controlling and operating the libraries in the various courts of Queensland, and in particular at the Supreme Courts situated at Brisbane, Rockhampton, Townsville and Southport. In placing the management and control of the Supreme Court libraries on a statutory basis, the Act facilitates the proper expansion and improvement of those libraries to the benefit of all persons directly concerned in the administration of justice.

Under the Act, the Supreme Court Library Committee has perpetual succession and a common seal, may sue and be sued in all courts and generally may do and suffer all such acts and things as a body corporate may, in law, do or suffer.

The committee holds a variety of property and receives income from a number of sources, including admission and examination fees from the Barristers Board and Solicitors Board. The committee also receives substantial grants annually from the Crown and, in addition, employs a number of persons.

The Supreme Court Library Committee has entered into superannuation schemes in relation to various employees, such schemes being conducted with private insurance companies. Whilst acknowledging that certain statutory authorities are required to operate on a commercial basis, the Government takes the view that as the authorities' existence is dependent upon Government statute, it is entirely consistent that the superannuation policies adopted for the employees of such authorities on matters of major import be not at variance with the superannuation policies defined by the Government for its employees generally.

The Government has taken the view that its statutory authorities are Government-instituted bodies and thus should be accountable to the Government for their actions. Consequently, it is proposed to amend the Supreme Court Library Act to comply with this policy.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Prest, adjourned.

SECURITIES INDUSTRY (APPLICATION OF LAWS) ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Hon. P. J. CLAUSON (Redlands—Minister for Justice and Attorney-General) (8.57 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

"That leave be granted to bring in a Bill to amend the Securities Industry (Application of Laws) Act 1981 in certain particulars."

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

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

Second Reading

Hon. P. J. CLAUSON (Redlands—Minister for Justice and Attorney-General) (8.58 p.m.): I move—

"That the Bill be now read a second time."

The Securities Industry (Application of Laws) Act operates to apply the Commonwealth Securities Industry Act 1980 as Queensland law, through a Federal/State co-operative scheme.

Queensland has adopted the Commonwealth legislation and from time to time publishes the Securities Industry (Queensland) Code, which states the law regarding the operation of the securities industry. Initially, to adopt the original legislation, it was necessary for Queensland to pass an Application of Laws Act. This was known as the Securities Industry (Application of Laws) Act 1981.

In 1985, through the Companies and Securities Legislation (Miscellaneous Amendments) Act, the Federal Parliament amended the definition of "prescribed interest" in the Securities Industry Act 1980. This had the effect of automatically amending the Securities Industry (Queensland) Code.

Briefly, the term "prescribed interest" means that a person who seeks to raise funds through the issue of prescribed interest securities has an obligation to meet specified requirements.

As a result of the Commonwealth amendment, it has been necessary to delete from the Queensland Securities Industry (Application of Laws) Act 1981 a reference to

paragraph (g), in section 15A, which no longer appears in the Code. This deletion relates to the activities of the ministerial council in connection with the exemption of certain classes from the requirements under the Securities Industry (Queensland) Code. This is not a major change in the legislation but it is a change which has been seen necessary by the ministerial council.

The major consequence of this Bill will be to make it clear that the Governor in Council has power to make regulations declaring a right or interest to be exempt from the prescribed interest provision.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Prest, adjourned.

SUGAR MILLING RATIONALIZATION (FAR NORTHERN REGION) BILL

Remaining Stages; Allocation of Time-limit Order

Hon. L. W. POWELL (Isis—Leader of the House) (9 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

"(a) That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as would otherwise prevent the Sugar Milling Rationalization (Far Northern Region) Bill from passing through all its stages at this day's sitting, all of its remaining stages to be passed by 11 p.m.

(b) That, at the time so specified, all remaining questions, if any, shall be put forthwith by the Chairman or the Speaker, as the case may be, without any further amendment or debate and, if applicable, remaining questions on the clauses of the Bill shall be put en bloc."

Question put; and the House divided—

AYES, 44	
Ahern	Katter
Alison	Lane
Austin	Lester
Berghofer	McCauley
Bjelke-Petersen	McKechnie
Borbidge	McPhie
Burreket	Menzel
Chapman	Muntz
Clauson	Neal
Cooper	Nelson
Elliott	Newton
Fraser	Powell
Gately	Randell
Gibbs, I. J.	Sherrin
Gilmore	Simpson
Glasson	Slack
Gunn	Stephan
Harper	Stoneman
Harvey	Tenni
Henderson	
Hinton	*Tellers:*
Hobbs	Littleproud
Hynd	FitzGerald

NOES, 36	
Ardill	Schuntner
Beanland	Scott
Beard	Sherlock
Braddy	Smyth
Campbell	Underwood
Casey	Vaughan
Comben	Warburton
D'Arcy	Warner
De Lacy	Wells
Eaton	White
Gibbs, R. J.	Yewdale
Hamill	
Hayward	
Innes	
Knox	
Lee	
Lickiss	
McElligott	
Mackenroth	
McLean	
Milliner	*Tellers:*
Palaszczuk	Davis
Prest	Gygar

Resolved in the affirmative.

Second Reading

Debate resumed (see p. 764).

Mr De LACY (Cairns) (9.07 p.m.): The Opposition is outraged at the way in which the Government is conducting this debate. The Government's decision to railroad this piece of legislation through the House and to gag the debate after only two hours is probably the most outrageous thing that has ever occurred in this Parliament. It is fast

becoming the hallmark of this Government that it is frightened of free, open and unrestricted debate. As the member for Bundaberg said a while ago, in the last three years the House has not fully debated the sugar industry. On every occasion the Government has found some reason to push legislation through or guillotine the debate.

Mr Hamill: Last time we wanted a special debate, they even voted against it.

Mr De LACY: That is right. The Government is frightened of debate on the sugar industry.

Many members of this House, both on this side and on the other side, represent sugar seats. How can we do justice to the sugar farmers, mill-workers, farm-workers and business people in sugar areas if we cannot have a full debate? How can we do justice to our constituents if we cannot be given notice of what legislation is to come through the House?

Last September the Regulation of Sugar Cane Prices Act Amendment Bill was pushed through the House when debate was guillotined after two hours. Only two or three members on this side of the House had the opportunity to make their point of view known. The sugar industry is the biggest and one of the most important industries in Australia. It is certainly one of the nation's most troubled industries.

This piece of legislation is extremely important. It breaks new ground in that for the first time it overrides the powers of the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board, which has been in place for the last 70 years. The reason for the establishment of the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board was to take away from the political domain the decision-making process in the sugar industry. That principle has been obeyed by Labor Governments and National/Liberal Party Governments alike. Now the House is presented with legislation that, for the first time, challenges that fundamental principle in the sugar industry. That is bad enough; it is an arguable point. However, to do it in this way—to bring it in unannounced, rush it through in a single day and gag debate—is a disgrace. I do not know how any Government member who represents a sugar seat will be able to raise his head in his electorate. The Government's actions are a disgrace to the sugar industry and a disgrace to those members who represent sugar electorates. It does them no credit at all and it is an insult to the sugar industry.

Mr Innes: It is also undemocratic.

Mr De LACY: It is also undemocratic.

The Labor Party intends to oppose the legislation on a number of grounds, not least of which, of course, is the overriding of the powers of the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board. The Labor Party also questions the propriety—especially the legal propriety—of introducing it at this time.

As the member for Mackay said by way of a point of order during the Minister's second-reading speech, the whole issue is currently before the Supreme Court. Consequent upon an appeal by the CSR Goondi Mill during a Central Sugar Cane Prices Board hearing in Innisfail, an injunction was taken out. That injunction is now before the Supreme Court. So, as the member for Mackay said, the Government is not proposing merely to override the powers of the central board; it seems that it is proposing to override the powers of the Supreme Court.

A while ago democracy was mentioned. The undemocratic way in which the Government introduced this legislation and proposes to rush it through is bad enough; but what about the democratic rights of the growers in Innisfail? What about the fact that those growers may not wish to transfer to the Babinda mill? Those growers have been supplying the Goondi mill for many, many years indeed. I am advised that this year the Goondi mill will make a handsome profit. What about the people who have been supplying that mill and who do not want to enter into another arrangement which they may see as being not in their best interests? I regret to say that that is the way in which they do see it. What about the people of Innisfail itself, who depend upon the activity created by that mill?

Only tonight the Johnstone Shire Council passed a resolution unanimously opposing what this Government is trying to do. That council opposed unanimously this piece of legislation, which is being pushed through the House. I might say that quite a number of the members of that council are members of the National Party. In fact, one of the members of that council was the National Party candidate for Leichhardt in the last Federal election. I repeat that the Johnstone Shire Council is unanimously opposed to the legislation——

Mr Campbell: A cane-farmer's wife.

Mr De LACY: Mrs Celledoni is a cane-farmer's wife and a member of the Johnstone Shire Council. She is opposed to the legislation.

Mr Scott: I had her summed up when I saw a photo of her at a barbecue with an Australian flag tied round her waist as an apron. I thought that that was what she thought of Australia as a whole. It was disgusting.

Mr De LACY: That is right. Some members of the National Party seem to support Queensland but at the same time they are opposed to Australia——

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row): Order! As well as requiring some relevance in the debate, I require some relevance in the interjections. If that does not happen, someone will be dealt with.

Mr De LACY: I will move on, because this debate is being guillotined.

The Opposition does have some sympathy with the objectives of this legislation. Some members of the Labor Party have agonised over the future of the rationalisation proposal in the far-northern region. However, the Labor Party is forced to conclude that it must oppose the legislation for the very basic reason that it does override the powers of the central board.

The ALP has consistently supported the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board. The Labor Party introduced the board 70 years ago. The idea of its introduction was to take politics out of the decision-making process of the sugar industry. At that time it was model leglislation for other primary industries in Queensland and, I might add, for other primary industries throughout Australia.

The Central Sugar Cane Prices Board is a semijudicial, non-political mechanism for resolving disputes within the industry, particularly disputes between growers and mills. By virtue of its composition—its semijudicial function—it is the one body which has the respect of growers in particular and, I am sure, millers and other people involved in the industry.

I understand that some difficult decisions need to be made if the industry is to be rationalised in order to make it more competitive in the future. However, I still cannot understand why the central board cannot oversee the rationalisation of the industry. If necessary, the Labor Party would consider legislation that broadened the terms of reference to the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board. I repeat that, if difficult decisions need to be made, they need to be made by a body that has the respect of the industry. That is not the case now. Under the Bill, the hard decisions have been taken away from the board and have been put back into the political arena, that is, back with the National Party Cabinet here in Queensland.

Mr Elliott: At least they are not frightened of making decisions.

Mr De LACY: It is a novel experience for this Government to be making decisions. I will grant that. In the last three or four difficult years, what the sugar industry has not had is leadership and decision-making by the Government.

The ALP supports the board and believes in it. I can remember the honourable member for Mackay, Mr Casey, stating during the previous debate that was gagged by the Government that three things are sacrosanct in regard to the sugar industry: the

assignment system; the peak system; and the judicial function of the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board. The Labor Party supports those three fundamental principles around which the industry is structured, and it is not proposing to retreat from that position tonight.

Last September the Government proposed making some substantial changes to the Regulation of Sugar Cane Prices Act. It was proposed at that stage that section 33 would be modified by taking away the power of the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board to rezone sugar lands. That led to a predictable outcry within the industry. The honourable member for Cunningham is talking about decision-making. At that stage the Government and the Minister's predecessor did not have the intestinal fortitude to go through with it and backed off in the face of the outcry from the industry. The Government was floundering then and, if the way in which this legislation is being forced through the House is any indication, the Government is floundering now.

The honourable member for Cunningham says that at least the Government makes decisions. Good, let it make its decisions, but let it do it in a democratic way. Let it lay the legislation on the table and give the Opposition an opportunity to peruse it. Let the Queensland Cane Growers Council have a look at the legislation, because even the council has not been told about it.

The Minister should have no illusions about the explosive consequences of this legislation. The Labor Party holds the board to be sacrosanct; so do the growers in the sugar industry in Queensland. Although the Minister insists that this legislation applies to the rationalisation of the far-northern region, it is a fact—and he knows this—that this is the first time that the powers of the board have been overridden. Even though this piece of legislation may not apply to other cases, the fact is that, because it has been overridden once, it will be overridden again. It is the beginning of the end of the very important, vital and pivotal role of the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board. A precedent has been established. The powers of the board have been eroded irreversibly.

I point out that the cane-growers of Queensland are opposed—and implacably opposed—to the direction, or thrust, of this piece of legislation. I go so far as to say that, if the Queensland Cane Growers Council was to vote on this matter, it would come out against it by a margin of 28 to one. I will read some comments made by the newly selected manager of the Queensland Cane Growers Council, Mr Bolton. This statement was made by Mr Bolton on Thursday, 5 March, subsequent to the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board hearing in Innisfail—

> "... cane-growers would resist any attempt to undercut or sidestep the authority of the CSCPB in disputes between canegrowers and sugar millers."

I point out to the House that this is in effect a dispute between the cane-growers and millers, because the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board hearing was called as a consequence of an application by CSR Limited to close its Goondi mill.

Mr Bolton further said—

> "Some commercial groups had a vested interested in the elimination or emasculation of the board.
>
> The Queensland Cane Growers Council policy was the board should retain its traditional role as an objective arbiter in resolving conflicts of opinion within the industry."

Mr Bolton further stated—

> "Regardless of the motives, it is intolerable that decisions by an impartial and independent judiciary authority should be overturned by government."

I am sure that those comments speak for themselves. The cane-growers of Queensland, through their elected representatives on the QCGC, the only statutory organisation that represents cane-growers in Queensland, have stated their implacable opposition to any legislation that proposes to erode or overturn the powers of the board.

This attempt to railroad legislation through the House is another episode in the National Party Government's sorry record in its administration of the sugar industry in

Queensland. For many years the sugar industry thrived on legislation introduced by a Labor Government but supported in a bipartisan way by all parties in Queensland. However, in the last four or five years, the industry has gone through a very difficult period. Comparatively, sugar prices have been at an all-time low. But when the heat comes on, the Government goes to water.

There is no doubt that the sugar industry is in and has been in crisis for some time. The National Party Government has provided no leadership and very little direction to the industry. It initially delayed the price support scheme until the bitter end. It placed as many impediments in the way of a negotiated sugar package as it possibly could. When the Prime Minister, Mr Hawke, and the Federal Minister for Primary Industry, Mr Kerin, were in Townsville, they announced a $150m Federal Government package to assist the ailing sugar industry. The Premier of Queensland, as is his usual way, would not agree or co-operate. He kept arguing, fighting and negotiating until the Federal Government finally agreed to a $100m package. All of the Premier's negotiating knocked $50m off the offer that John Kerin first got through Cabinet.

Mr Elliott: What you are saying is that your people were so churlish they took money away from the industry?

Mr De LACY: No. I am saying that once the negotiation got under way, the Queensland Government's team argued and fought so much that the Federal Government knocked the package back to $100m. It is as simple as that. It is a bit like the Irishman who broke into the TAB and went broke, gambling. That is a good argument on St Partrick's Day.

Mr Harper: Your Federal colleagues refused to accept responsibility for price support.

Mr De LACY: That is not true. My Federal colleagues accepted responsibility for price support and they have honoured their obligations every step of the way. Not one Queensland Minister was in a position to negotiate with the Federal Government. Every time that the Minister's predecessor went to Canberra and arrived at an agreed position, he came back and, as John Kerin said so eloquently in the Federal Parliament, had his legs chopped off at the knees by the Premier because of the Premier's determination not to co-operate in the interests of the industry.

The National Party has turned policy somersaults on a variety of issues, particularly those relating to deregulation. Only last year, on the vital issue of sugar-mill rationalisation, the State Government mischievously misrepresented the Commonwealth's position by saying that the Commonwealth adjustment assistance and price support assistance were contingent upon changes being made to the Regulation of Sugar Cane Prices Act. Because the Federal Government made that money available before any changes were made, the State Government was left with egg on its face. In fact, no changes were ever made.

In respect of issues relating to the sugar industry, the National Party Government carries on in a way that does it no credit whatsoever. It has left the sugar industry and the cane-growers of Queensland confused, irritated and, at times, very angry. The hastily contrived method of pushing this legislation through the House without notice will add to their anger.

Last Friday, I attended the opening of the Burdekin Falls Dam. There was a lot of breast-beating about the fact that $500m will be spent on that dam and the subsequent irrigation scheme.

Many people within the sugar industry are nervous and apprehensive about what will happen to the water that comes from the dam. There is no doubt that the most recent feasibility studies on the need to build that dam were based on a scheme that would irrigate sugar-cane and rice. Both of those industries are now in considerable trouble. Their international and domestic markets have shrunk, and it is difficult to envisage how the rice or sugar industries can be expanded within the Burdekin area to justify the expenditure on that dam.

It is no secret within the sugar industry that the Burdekin is probably the most efficient sugar-producing area in Queensland in terms of total production levels and the sugar content of the sugar-cane that is grown there.

The concern is that, if sugar-cane is to be grown in the Burdekin area, which area will lose its sugar-cane? There is definitely no scope for expanding production. Therefore, if sugar-cane is to be grown in the Burdekin delta, and if production is to be expanded, some other area in Queensland will have to lose its sugar-cane. Which area will it be? Two places come to mind: the small mills in the south of the State, which are less efficient because, to a certain extent, they are land-locked; and the superwet belt in northern Queensland, to which this legislation refers.

The sugar industry is apprehensive about the role that CSR has played and is continuing to play in the sugar industry. This legislation and the Sugar Milling Adjustment Committee's proposal to rationalise the industry within the Innisfail area came about because CSR wished to sell its mill at Goondi.

Why is CSR selling its far-northern mills? Why is it getting out of the superwet belt? Why has it, in recent years, been expanding its holding in Pioneer sugar-mills in the Burdekin area? A lot more will come out of this move before it is finished.

Many growers in the far-northern areas are concerned that, eventually, an attempt will be made to relocate the far-northern sugar industry in the Burdekin delta. CSR will be in a prime position to benefit from that relocation. All honourable members could be forgiven for believing that CSR is presently manoeuvring in that direction.

I turn now to the Commonwealth Government's position in respect of this legislation, which was introduced secretly—clandestinely, almost. As far as I am aware, the Commonwealth Government was not consulted in respect of the proposed legislation.

The Federal Government, through its Minister for Primary Industry, John Kerin, supports rationalisation. The only proposal on the table at the moment is the SMAC proposal, which meets the objectives of the Commonwealth Government, namely, that it will rationalise the industry and increase sugar-milling efficiency. It is not fair for the Minister to say that the Federal Government has necessarily agreed to the legislation; at this stage it has no objection because it does fit the terms of reference for which the Federal Government has agreed to give money.

On a number of occasions, Mr Kerin has indicated to me that he is concerned about certain groups such as the workers in the sugar-mills. Are the interests of the workers at the Goondi mill being taken into consideration? Perhaps the honourable member for Mourilyan will take up that question.

A number of other people in the Johnstone Shire are justifiably concerned about business being taken out of the town. That was borne out by the fact that earlier tonight the Johnstone Shire Council passed that unanimous resolution.

Some farmers will be disadvantaged by the alteration. There could even be some specific farmers who previously supplied the Goondi mill and who now, as a result of this legislation, may be required to supply two mills. No doubt the problems of those people will be taken into consideration. I ask the Minister to ensure that they are, because the Labor Party is concerned about all the workers who are involved in the sugar industry.

In conclusion, I point out that the Labor Party is not opposed in principle to anything that would assist the town of Babinda to continue to exist. As the people of Babinda are fond of saying, "Babinda is the mill. Take away the mill and you have taken away Babinda." That is largely true.

In the last couple of years the Babinda mill has demonstrated that it has got its act together. If the throughput of the mill can be increased to about 1 million tonnes, there seems to be no doubt at all that the mill can be a viable enterprise.

The co-operation between the board, the management and the workers at the mill is very good indeed. It has got over its difficult period, which occurred particularly at the beginning of the 1980s when it failed to benefit from the high sugar prices. Without belabouring the point, I suggest it would be fair to say that the mill has recovered from the bad management that took place during that period.

Mr Innes: Who was the chairman then?

Mr De LACY: I did not think the honourable member would ask. The chairman at that stage was the member for Mulgrave, Mr Menzel. I am sorry that I had to say that, but the honourable member asked me.

After reading the Minister's second-reading speech, I am pleased to see that he has taken on board some of the concerns of the people, particularly in the Innisfail area, about the debts of the Babinda mill. The Johnstone Shire Council is concerned that the sugar that used to be shipped through the Mourilyan bulk sugar terminal will now be shipped through Cairns. The Minister made a fair and reasonable offer in his speech. I hope that he pursues that proposal. On short notice, I cannot object to the proposals that the Minister put forward for the composition of the board of directors of the mill suppliers committee.

In conclusion, I say that the Opposition is bitterly disappointed that this very important ground-breaking legislation had to be introduced in such a way. I believe that the Minister has done the wrong thing by the sugar industry and the people of Queensland.

The Opposition is opposed to the legislation because it cannot in all fairness support legislation that does away with, overrides or in any way erodes the powers of the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board.

Mr MENZEL (Mulgrave) (9.35 p.m.): Tonight, I rise to support the Bill to help implement the recommendation of the Sugar Milling Adjustment Committee on the rationalisation of the sugar industry in the Innisfail/Babinda district.

The introduction of this legislation tonight is making history. The legislation will place the milling section of the industry on a footing of long-term viability. I am sure that the honourable member for Sherwood would not know a great deal about sugar. He might eat sugar, and I think that is about all he knows of it. He ought to listen, and he might learn something.

Mr Casey: The historical point is that the Government is taking over the sugar industry. That is the historical point.

Mr MENZEL: I point out to the honourable member for Mackay that Governments must govern; therefore, the Government must give direction for sane and sensible rationalisation.

I personally commend the Minister for Primary Industries, Mr Harper, who is acting as a statesman. I commend him for bringing forward this legislation and passing it through all stages in an effort to stop the squabbling and the power-broking in the sugar industry by those who have been egged on by irresponsible people. I am sure that the Minister knows to whom I refer. They are seated on the Opposition side of the Chamber.

Evidently, the chairman of the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board agrees with me. The Minister referred to the chairman in his second-reading speech. I now wish to quote from a transcript of the hearing which took place at Innisfail. On 17 February 1987, the chairman, Mr Justice Matthews, stated as follows—

> "I see that, Mr Cooper, as a very laudible object. I think everybody in this room wants to see the township of Babinda preserved and if, as a means of doing that, the sugar mill is preserved, well and good, but ultimately if that is to guide us, it is a political decision. It is a decision which would be better taken and enforced by legislation if the government wants it. Let the government legislate to send the Goondi growers to Babinda and Mourilyan rather than us inquire into what is just and proper for the purposes of the regulation of the Sugar Cane Prices Act. I do not know whether the Crown has considered that?"

Mr Deputy Speaker, I table the document from which I have quoted.

Whereupon the honourable member laid the document on the table.

Mr MENZEL: I believe it is very important that Parliament be given a clear and unbiased report of the events that have led up to this very important legislation.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr MENZEL: For the purpose of having it recorded in *Hansard*, I point out that members of the Opposition have laughed. They do not take this matter seriously.

Originally, the board of directors at Babinda mill had heard suggestions that CSR Limited was interested in selling out or closing down the Goondi mill. Everyone knows that a mill must have approximately a million tonnes of cane to remain viable in the long term. As Babinda could not expect to harvest more than about 750 000 tonnes on average, and probably less than 700 000 in most years, the directors approached CSR. CSR Limited indicated that it would be interested in selling Goondi mill and that Mourilyan mill may also be interested. The directors of Banbinda mill acted quickly and approached both the Tully and South Johnstone mills, which are both co-operative mills, to ascertain whether or not those mills could participate in a study on the short and long-term rationalisation of sugar production in the area. Both mills agreed.

The study was carried out and adopted by all three mills involved, namely, Tully, South Johnstone and Babinda. The study was also paid for by those three sugar-mills. That is a strange phenomenon, and one that is not heard of frequently. At one stage, South Johnstone mill was very happy about the study. Later on I will inform honourable members of the reasons why the directors changed their minds.

Briefly, the proposed plan was in two stages. The first stage was that South Johnstone mill should take over the southern half of the Goondi area—all that area that lies to the south of the North Johnstone River. The area that lies to the north of the river would be milled by the Babinda mill. The second stage was to take over Mourilyan mill because that mill, through a lack of capacity, would be forced to shut down. The southern part of South Johnstone, from Silkwood, would be rationalised down as far as Tully, with South Johnstone taking over Mourilyan and Babinda, thereby taking a greater share of the Goondi area.

With regard to South Johnstone—the directors originally went along with Plan 1, went with the directors of Babinda mill to CSR and offered it $6m. However, Howard Smith made a counter-offer and outbid them. The chairman of directors of South Johnstone mill was happy to go along with the plan until somebody pointed out to him that his cane farm was in the Silkwood area, which would eventually be handed over to Tully. Under those circumstances he would no longer be able to be chairman of directors of South Johnstone sugar mill or on the ASPA executive representing the Innisfail district. Likewise, the chairman of the South Johnstone Mill Suppliers Committee whose farm is in Silkwood, would lose his political position by being transferred to the Tully area.

Overnight, South Johnstone changed direction, demanding all of Goondi cane and not allowing any South Johnstone cane to go to Tully, because, if any were eventually to go to Tully, it would mean that two leaders in the South Johnstone area would be axed.

On the other side of the North Johnstone River, Joe McAvoy, Jnr, about whom everyone has heard, had only just taken over from his father the position as chairman of the Goondi Mill Suppliers Committee, chairman of the Innisfail District Cane Growers Executive and a member of the Queensland Cane Growers Council. Joe McAvoy's farm is not far from the boundary of Babinda and Goondi. If Babinda was to receive any Goondi cane, McAvoy's farm would certainly be placed in Babinda. His political position would therefore be ruined overnight.

Three very important political figures in the Innisfail sugar industry would be destroyed if the co-operative mills' plan was adopted. Naturally they had to fight for their political survival and opposed Babinda's getting any cane.

Mr Casey: You mean sugar politics, not party politics?

Mr MENZEL: Yes, sugar politics.

For the overall good of the community and the State, Governments must not just consider local political positions in the Innisfail sugar industry.

Mr Innes: They should look at the operations of the Babinda mill.

Mr MENZEL: The honourable member for Sherwood does not know what he is talking about.

Unfortunately, the Goondi Mill Suppliers Committee used lies and stand-over tactics to make sure that Goondi growers did not hear the real truth in relation to what any change would mean to Babinda. Goondi growers were told by their committee that, if they went to Babinda, they would receive lower c.c.s. That is completely untrue.

Furthermore, when a meeting was called by Babinda mill, which at every stage did the right thing, the Goondi growers were telephoned by members of the Goondi committee and ordered not to attend. Needless to say, only a few turned up. That is the type of democracy that went on in trying to keep Goondi growers in the dark. I believe that, by and large, if they know the truth, they are not a bad crowd. They are some of the things that have happened in the long, drawn-out argument to solve the problem. I believe they should be put on public record.

I wish to mention another matter. I understand that the debt of South Johnstone mill is larger than Babinda's debt and that last year the chairman of directors of South Johnstone mill issued a press release to the effect that, if it could not get Goondi cane, it would not remain viable. It is a rather strange set of circumstances when one considers the way in which they sort of toss and turn with a different argument every week. One does not know whether to believe them or not. I have no doubt in my mind that South Johnstone mill could not purchase Goondi mill without massive Government assistance, and probably more than has been promised to Babinda.

I now intend to make some brief comments about a few of the things that have been said by the previous speaker.

Mr Prest: Are you going to tell us about your shares in Babinda?

Mr MENZEL: The honourable member should tell me about the shares that he probably has.

Earlier Mr De Lacy mentioned that the Government has taken the powers from the central board and that that has never happened before. What happened last year when the Labor Party did not even divide on the changes to the Regulation of Sugar Cane Prices Act, under which powers were taken from the central board? As a matter of fact, last year many powers were taken from the central board. There is no doubt that about 70 years ago the ALP introduced central board legislation, yet it says that politics should be taken out of the sugar industry.

There would be no other industry with more politics mixed up in it—internal politics and divisions—than the sugar industry. There would be no other industry whatsoever. I have been mixed up in the sugar industry. Undoubtedly a lot of politics is in it. Unanimous agreement in the industry is impossible. Over the years when different Governments have tried to achieve that, they have failed.

Mr Casey: Mr Menzel——

Mr MENZEL: The honourable member for Mackay knows that.

Mr Casey: We know you are flat out getting 75 per cent support—much less unanimous support.

Mr MENZEL: That is true.

Difficult decisions must be taken by the Government. Tonight the Minister must be commended for having the guts to stand up and be counted. I have no doubt that

he will cop a lot of flak because political positions within the industry will crash—and that will be to the good of the industry. I think we as members of Parliament have to be men enough and big enough to be able to look at that and say, "Yes, people will be hurt, but the overall good of the people has to be taken into consideration."

It has been stated that the Queensland Cane Growers Council has not been consulted. I do not know about that, but this afternoon I had telephone calls from people in the Queensland Cane Growers Council. If the Minister did not ring them up, somebody else did. It is marvellous how word got around. How was the Johnstone Shire Council able to pass unanimously a special resolution this evening? It must have known of the legislation. It could not have been much of a secret.

Mr Casey: Telecom is making a fortune out of the Minister's actions.

Mr MENZEL: I suppose the money will go around.

Lawyers were making millions out of all the court appearances, but the problems were not being resolved. I understand that the barristers and other lawyers made a half a million dollars from appearances before the central board.

Mr Casey: Don't you like them?

Mr MENZEL: I do not mind some lawyers, but there are Labor lawyers and Liberal lawyers. I do not necessarily go for those types.

Mr Casey: Not too many Nationals would qualify.

Mr MENZEL: We are all honest men.

Mr Casey: Only "Clawless" Clauson.

Mr MENZEL: He is a pretty distinguished one, too.

Mr Casey: You support him for the Ministry, too, don't you?

Mr MENZEL: Of course I do.

Tomorrow the Queensland Cane Growers Council might issue statements about how bad all this is. However, last year it was prepared to go along with the recommendations contained in the Savage report for deregulation and a package that would have abolished the central board. Because of pressure that was applied, the Cane Growers Council back-tracked. However, at one stage it was prepared to hand these matters over to a civil court or to local boards, or to do many other things. At one stage it was prepared to do that, but then it changed its position. Nobody knows the position of the Queensland Cane Growers Council from one day to the next. I hope that the new general secretary might provide a bit of leadership. I do not know how he will go, but he could not do any worse than was done in the past. I am sure he will do much better.

Mr Prest: Stick to the brief that they gave you.

Mr MENZEL: I write my own briefs. I do not follow the Labor Party policy of getting Peter Beattie or some of the others to write scripts. They make a terrible mess of them.

I also wish to speak about the effect on the Goondi growers. The implication is that they will be affected. Whatever happens, that will be the case. If the central board was to be allowed to take its course and decide, possibly, that the cane should go to the South Johnstone mill, they would still be affected. The fact is that the Goondi mill will shut down. The employees of that mill will be affected whether the cane goes to Babinda and Mourilyan or to South Johnstone.

I certainly feel sorry for the employees. I hope that their wishes have been accommodated. Regardless of what happens, when anyone is made redundant at a certain stage in life it is very difficult for him to find another job. The employees of Goondi mill will probably be the greatest losers. The passing of this legislation will not affect them one way or the other; they will be the losers, no matter what happens.

When the Johnstone Shire Council passed its resolutions, I think it had its tongue in its cheek and did so for political reasons. I do not think it was fair dinkum. What is that shire council doing to accommodate the Goondi mill-workers who will be affected. They would still be affected if the cane was to go to the South Johnstone mill. The member for Mourilyan, Mr Eaton, knows full well that the South Johnstone mill will not employ them.

Mr Eaton: They are concerned about the welfare of the workers and the cane-farmers. They are the ones who have received very little consideration.

Mr MENZEL: The Goondi Mill Suppliers Committee must have known that it was not true to state that they would get a lower c.c.s. at the Babinda mill.

All those untruths were told. The fact is that the cane-farmer is paid on relative percentages. Most people are aware of that. Many growers will probably be much better off. They were not prepared to give Babinda a go, but I would say that Babinda will not be as tough on them as CSR would have been.

Knowing some of the constraints that CSR puts on growers I certainly would not like to send my cane to CSR. Any grower with any common sense would know that he would be better off going to a co-operative mill than to a CSR mill. Ultimately there must be a plus and a bonus for the grower. There is no truth in the argument that the grower would be worse off. They are political decisions. I said earlier that the power base of certain people would crash overnight and that that would be for the good of north Queensland.

I have not really entered this debate over the last year or so. I felt that to do so would not be right. I have been asked to speak on many occasions, but I have kept right out of it. However, I think that everyone has a fair idea of how I feel about things——

Mr Casey: You could have fooled me.

Mr MENZEL: It would not be hard for anyone to fool the member for Mackay.

It has been said that the business houses in Innisfail will be adversely affected by the northern half of the Goondi mill area going to Babinda. How can anyone say in all seriousness that the business houses of Innisfail would be adversely affected?

The cane-farmers in the Goondi area will still shop in Innisfail. They will still buy tractors, parts for their machinery and groceries where they have always bought them. The cane-farmers are not going to go over to Babinda or up to Cairns any more than they are doing now. It is a ludicrous argument, yet it is being put forward in Innisfail, mainly by people associated with the Labor Party through the council. I do not think that I have heard the member for Mourilyan put forward that argument. I am sure that he would have more common sense that that. People involved with the Labor Party are saying that that will happen. It is just hysteria. It is ridiculous. However, I want to——

Mr Prest interjected.

Mr MENZEL: The member for Port Curtis should listen.

Every year the cane-farmers and residents of Babinda spend millions and millions of dollars in Innisfail. Innisfail benefits greatly from the people of Babinda, and keeping Babinda mill and the town viable will ensure that the prosperity from Babinda will continue to rub off on Innisfail. Innisfail will continue to benefit financially. If it were to go to South Johnstone, with Babinda becoming a ghost town, millions of dollars would be lost because of cane going out of production in Babinda. Therefore, naturally, the money from Babinda could not flow on to Innisfail as it does now.

I own a cane farm in Babinda. I can speak from my own experience. I have been criticised. When I go over to Innisfail, some people say to me, "You must be game to

drive into Innisfail, the way you feel about things." I say, "It is still a free country. The Labor Party has not taken over the State Government."

By the same token, I am not going to cut off my nose to spite my face and go up to Cairns and buy machinery parts or anything like that. I am not going to waste time going to Cairns, which is an hour's drive from Babinda, when I can slip over to Innisfail in 20 minutes. That would be ludicrous. Not one person in Babinda would be silly enough to think about going up to Cairns if the parts, machinery or whatever is needed are available in Innisfail. Naturally, everyone will buy them in Innisfail.

It is a load of nonsense to suggest that Innisfail will be adversely affected financially. It is not true, and anyone who really believes it would have to be a complete mug. No doubt there are a few mugs around.

Once again, I say that the legislation is great legislation. At times the Government must act to ensure that the money made available under the sugar industry package of the State and Federal Governments—which I believe is a good package—is put to good use, and it cannot be put to good use by the petty squabbling that is going on and on and on. That squabbling occurs right throughout the sugar industry because over the years certain people have been allowed to have too much say. Those people cannot handle the power that they have. Governments are elected to govern the country and make the right decisions on issues which affect all of the people all of the time.

Mr EATON (Mourilyan) (9.56 p.m.): This debate could become an emotional one. This has been a very contentious issue, particularly in north Queensland. Many questions remain unanswered. I do not wish to deliberately knock individuals, but some individuals in the sugar industry have to take part of the blame.

The decision that is being taken tonight in this House is an historic one. This legislation will do away with something that began in 1915 and which has carried the industry up to the present time through world wars, depressions, droughts and all the other problems that the man on the land has to fight. This legislation will take away the one thing that has kept the industry going—the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board. In addition, the Minister introduced to this House tonight the Sugar Acquisition Act Amendment Bill, which contains an extension of the sunset clause.

It is an historic night. The industry has survived throughout that period and this National Party Government, the so-called farmers' friend, has set up the 100-day committee on which it has had the numbers. It had the numbers on the SMAC committee, which will not make public the reasons for its recommendations. If those recommendations are so good and so necessary, as claimed by the members of the SMAC committee in its report, why can they not be made public?

I will quote from an article in the *Innisfail Advocate*, which is headed "Cane clash goes to Supreme Court", and which states—

> "Mr Justice Harry Matthews, had earlier ruled the SMAC report recommendations were irrelevant to the hearing."

When people tried to establish why it made these recommendations, the committee did not want to put the recommendations forward or make them public.

The Labor Party's argument is that it is a political decision. If that committee is true and honest in its submissions and it is looking at the future of the sugar industry, it should be able to publish those recommendations and make the reasons for them public. The committee should not be a secret society. This House has heard tonight that nobody knew what the recommendations were. The previous speaker wanted to know how the Johnstone Shire Council knew what the recommendations were. I can tell the honourable member that at around 4 o'clock or 4.30 I rang Innisfail to try to find out whether the people in the sugar industry there knew anything, because the Labor Party here knew nothing. Even the Cane Growers Council in Brisbane did not know. Nobody knew. Consequently a chain reaction started and everybody was ringing around trying to find out something because the Labor Party had heard that a Bill dealing with the

sugar industry was to be presented. The Opposition did not know whether the Bill was going to do away with the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board or whether it was going to extend the Sugar Acquisition Act. The Opposition did not have a clue, because the Government did not see fit to make any information available. The Opposition discovered subsequently that its shadow Minister was informed by the Minister for Primary Industries at a late stage, but right up until this afternoon the legislation was kept a secret.

No wonder people are doubtful and do not trust the Government when it does things like this. It has reduced the time for debate by guillotining the Bill, which has to be passed through all stages by 11 o'clock. Many members of the Labor Opposition want to speak on this Bill tonight, but, because of the time factor and the fact that the gag has been applied to the Bill, they cannot do so.

To return to the article in the *Innisfail Advocate*, it states further—

> "However, Crown counsellor, Mr Richard Cooper, said on the opening day of the hearing the board should not regard itself as 'a roving royal commission' into long-term restructuring of the sugar industry.
>
> Mr Cooper said the Federal and State Governments had already decided what assistance would be offered to the industry."

I emphasise the words "offered to the industry". The article continues—

> ". . . this was not up for review or further discussion by the board.
>
> Mr Cooper said the offer of aid to the industry would be withdrawn if the board did not accept CSR Ltd's application for closure of the mill.
>
> The governments had offered a $13 million assistance package primarily aimed at resurrection of the ailing Babinda mill.
>
> The package was based on SMAC recommendations with a proviso Goondi cane assignments were rezoned to Babinda and Mourilyan mills.
>
> Justice Matthews said this effectively meant the governments were 'holding a gun at the board's head'. The governments were saying 'there'll be no money for the industry unless you do as we say', Justice Matthews said.
>
> Mr Cooper said government aid would not be available to other mills if the current offer was rejected. The board should take this factor into consideration, he said.
>
> Justice Matthews said, 'This was a great pity and would preclude the board from considering better alternatives for Goondi growers.' "

The board was trying to bring in the decision that the Government wanted. The Bill is before the House because the Government did not feel that the board would bring in the decision that it wanted. The board, which is headed by Mr Justice Matthews, is above back-door politics and political influence. The Government has come out into the open. The Minister's second-reading speech was very carefully worded. The Government was not going to interfere with the board, because it could not. If it did, it would suffer a big backlash.

Over the years, Howard Smith and CSR have made a great contribution to the sugar industry, to the State and to the nation. CSR is a private-enterprise company. The Queensland Government espouses that private enterprise is the greatest thing since sliced bread. Government members are always referring to private enterprise. If one looks at the track record of CSR, one sees that over the years it has made millions and millions of dollars out of the sugar industry, the farmers and everyone else involved in the sugar industry. During times of plenty, the only cost to that company was the price of a telephone call, a telegram or a telex to direct where the sugar should go. It has received orders from New York, Luxembourg and other places. A person from CSR will telephone an agent and say, "There is a ship coming into Sydney. Consign the sugar to such and such a place." Although that is the only cost incurred by that company, each year, it has reaped millions of dollars by way of commission. It has had a franchise that has

meant that no other company or person could have anything to do with the marketing of Australian sugar. CSR has the inside running.

What happened to CSR when the going got tough in Fiji? It got out. What happened to the farmers in northern New South Wales?

Mr Randell interjected.

Mr EATON: I am talking about the CSR company. I know that it has made a great contribution and done a great deal of good. By the same token, that company has feathered its own nest.

Mr Stoneman: You should be pleased that CSR is getting out of your area.

Mr EATON: We are. The company will not stay in the area to keep the farmers going. That is evident now and it has been evident in the past.

Many people knew that the day of reckoning was coming. The farmers were going crook that CSR should not have that franchise. Because of their penalty clauses, the farmers who were supplying mills were copping it both ways. Although another alternative has been put into action, it has been implemented because of political motives, not for the long-term benefit of the industry.

No-one knows better than I do the problems encountered in the sugar industry. If anyone should, it is those farmers who will lose their farms. All members representing sugar-growing electorates would have experienced similar problems. Although I know that I am not the only person who has encountered those problems, I have worn a track to the Rural Reconstruction Board and the Agricultural Bank. Three years ago, every week that I came to Brisbane I made representations to the Rural Reconstruction Board or the Agricultural Bank to obtain an extension of time for payment or to make a plea on behalf of a farmer. I know the problems that exist in the sugar industry today.

Mr Harper: You were not trying to direct them to do something?

Mr EATON: No, I was not doing that. The Minister can count on one hand those farmers who were given any assistance following representations by me. The Minister can check that with his department. He will have no trouble checking that out. The Government adopted a fairly hard line. Only Government members were successful in obtaining large amounts of money.

Mr Harper: You were only doing your job as a responsible member.

Mr EATON: I was certainly trying.

I know that the mills want throughput. At present, it appears that Innisfail will finish up with two mills. Further down the track, one mill will buy out another mill and exactly the same problem will be faced, because history repeats itself. The Government should be looking further down the track. The area from Mossman to Ingham should be taken into consideration. Specialised farming takes place in the superwet belt, as it is known. If the research that has been carried out by Governments over the years was taken out of the political area, a solution could be found to the problem. If the Government rationalised the industry, the mills that must get out now or are trying to get out could perhaps stay in the industry a bit longer. The money made available by the Government could be used now.

No matter where I travel round Queensland, I am accused of being worried only about the cane-farmer. I have toured western areas inspecting water resources projects and irrigation areas in which cotton and grain are grown. I have visited the sheep country. When someone finds out that I come from the coast, he says, "You fellows worry only about the cane-farmers. What about the beef-producers, the wool-growers, the grain-growers and the irrigators?" Those people know the amount of money that has been contributed and promised to the sugar industry by the Federal and State Governments. You can bet your bottom dollar that the farmers will have to use wisely

the money that has been offered to them. If that offer is not taken up, it will not be offered for too long. One year has already been lost.

I level criticism at both the State and Federal Governments. The three-year time limit should be extended. If a time factor is to be imposed, farmers could lose their properties, and the benefits of the Federal Government's aid will be lost.

Mr Harper: There are lots of other industries that would like to make use of that money.

Mr EATON: That is correct. That is why I am concerned that this situation has been allowed to continue for so long.

I believe that the State Government must take some of the blame. In the early negotiations, both the State and Federal Governments were trying to score political points for the then forthcoming election. Notice of this proposal should have been announced prior to the State election.

Mr Harper: That is why we are acting now. There has been too much time lost already, and you are agreeing with us, aren't you?

Mr EATON: I am.

There is now a forthcoming Federal election, and the State Government is trying to score political points by putting pressure on the Federal Government. The State election has been held. Not all honourable members are dills; we can read between the lines.

I believe that the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board would have handled the situation. However, the State Government realised that the board was not going to come to the decision that it wanted. Therefore, the State Government used its initiative to override and cut out the decision that may have been made by the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board.

It is no good criticising the Government unless one can offer an alternative. CSR wants to sell the Goondi mill for $10.5m. Some of the people involved with CSR are good businessmen. Some of them are on the verge of being con men. Of course, I can instance cases where they have done many good things. In the past they have helped people, but they are Indian givers. It is like the story of Robin Hood. People say, "Why didn't he rob the poor?" The poor had no money, and he had to rob the rich. CSR is acting in exactly the same manner.

CSR has operations in my electorate, but I am not frightened to say in this House—and it will go into *Hansard*—that we must face the facts.

Mr Menzel: They are sitting in the gallery; you had better watch out.

Mr EATON: I do not care.

During a telephone interview tonight, I stated that I was prepared to debate this issue publicly with anyone in any town. The facts are that, when one considers the future interests of the industry as a whole—including farmers, mills, and the workers—there is another way out of the problem.

Further north, the Hambledon mill is facing similar problems. Development in the area is cutting into cane-growing land. Part of the Gordonvale assignment could be included in the Babinda assignment. Let CSR get out. The farmers wanted to buy it out and form their own co-operative. If CSR wants to get out, let the Mourilyan and South Johnstone mills buy it out.

It does not matter whether a farmer is in Babinda, Goondi or Mourilyan, if he is to go down the drain—if the bank tells him that there will not be any more money after his next pay day; that his debt must be paid off by a certain date, otherwise his property will be put up for public auction—his feelings and hardships are exactly the same.

That is what the Government must consider. It is disappointing that the Government has interfered. If the matter had been left in the hands of the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board, which was given a mandate by the Government to find the ways and means of utilising the money that was offered, I believe that, in conjunction with the people involved in the sugar industry, that board would have reached a satisfactory and acceptable solution to all concerned.

Farmers will say that, at times, they have not been happy with the decisions of the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board. However, they always knew that those decisions were open, honest and fair. People do not always like decisions that are made, but they always know when they are fair and honest decisions.

The State Government has given very little consideration to those farmers who are looking down the barrel of the banker's gun. Because of personal hardships, many farmers are in that situation. However, that is not being made public. The banks are working on this. The bank that will benefit most from it is the National Australia Bank. It will get paid off.

If honourable members look at the economics of the whole shemozzle, they will find that about $14m is involved. According to the Sugar Milling Adjustment Committee report, the debt is $6.5m or $7m. The Babinda mill would be better off if its debt was wiped off and a new start was made. No-one said how much the mill made last year. The member for Mulgrave is not in the Chamber. I wanted to ask him whether the mill made a profit last year, when it had all the adverse conditions that one could ask for.

Mr Randell: The member for Mulgrave has been called away for a telephone call.

Mr EATON: On 1 February, a cyclone knocked the sugar industry about. Babinda was just as badly hit as parts of Innisfail.

I wish that the member for Mulgrave was in the Chamber, because I believe that part of the problem is man-made. The Government is trying to blame the problem on an act of God, when the biggest part of the problem was man-made. Some of that money should be utilised to keep the mill in business. The most disappointing fact is that the Sugar Milling Adjustment Committee would not give reasons for its recommendations. I feel that it should have.

Earlier tonight, when members were speaking about the Bill, they said that the Bill was brought forward because it was what the Federal Government wanted. I have spoken to Mr Kerin in Canberra, and the only two conditions——

Mr Harper: Who said that?

Mr EATON: A Government member, whilst I was having tea tonight. He said that is what the Federal Government wanted. Mr Kerin said that the industry has to approve and it has to be a proposal that is workable. He said that the State Government has told him that it was bringing in a Bill——

Mr HARPER: I rise to a point of order. The honourable member is taking hearsay that he heard outside this Chamber and implying that it was a matter of fact spoken in the Chamber. I ask the honourable member to withdraw the comment.

Mr EATON: I did not say that it was spoken in this Chamber. I said that it was outside the Chamber tonight, when I was having a meal. The member is sitting in the House. He can volunteer to clear up the matter, if he wishes, but I will not name him. However, that is the situation tonight.

Mr Menzel: What is that?

Mr EATON: Government members were saying outside the Chamber that the Bill was brought in tonight because it is part of what the Federal Government wanted; that it wanted deregulation. I know that, after the 100-day committee report, it did want certain things; but the State Labor Party has been knocking the Federal Government as much as the Queensland Government has been.

Mr Randell: You know that it was a dispute between the Federal Government and the Queensland Cane Growers Council, which did not agree with the deregulation that was demanded.

Mr EATON: What was demanded?

Mr Randell: The Federal Government demanded deregulation, but the industry was not prepared to accept it.

Mr EATON: Yes, but the Federal Government backed off. That came from the 100-day committee report. The Sugar Milling Adjustment Committee would not give reasons for its recommendations.

As I said earlier, the experts say that, even if half of the sugar cane is given to Babinda and half to Mourilyan, further down the track Babinda will be in exactly the same position. What will the mill do then? Will the private-enterprise mill buy out the co-operative mill and close it? Then we would see how private enterprise works. That is why the cane-growers have always been in favour of the co-operative arrangement, in which the farmers control their own destiny. In New South Wales, CSR has got out. The private-enterprise mills will be there while the returns are good, but they will not stay in business to keep the farmers going when they have to keep approaching the banks to obtain overdrafts. Private enterprise does not stay in business to keep anybody going. It works on an economic footing with the bank and, when the banker tells it that it is getting close to the borderline, because of the economics of it, it starts to get rid of some of the workers and to find another avenue. One does not have to be a Rhodes scholar to know that you cannot stay in business if you are not making money. That is why the Opposition has been concerned all along and has adopted the attitude that it has. The farmers, the mills and the workers are concerned for the future of the sugar industry in Queensland, and particularly in north Queensland, and that is why it is so disappointing tonight to see this historic occasion.

I wish to cite the past record of some of the officials of the various organisations within the sugar industry. There are the sugar producers' organisation, the cane growers' organisation, the proprietary millers and the co-operative sugar-millers. The Opposition did not know about the Bill until about an hour or two before it was introduced in the House. It has been stated that four organisations had negotiations with the Minister over eight or nine months, but not one of those officials told the farmers at the grassroots level. The information was kept in club. The secretary of the Queensland Cane Growers Council has now retired. Many of the officials to whom I have referred have been pleased to be up-front and have enjoyed during the good years a little bit of the glory that goes with the positions. Now, however, the pressure is starting to tell and it is starting to spread throughout the industry. I point out that it is not only the sugar industry that has been affected in that way but also all other primary industries. At the moment, the House is dealing with the sugar industry, and I take this opportunity to inform all honourable members that the sugar industry is on the verge of crisis. No-one knows what will happen in the future.

In the Minister's second-reading speech, mention was made of an improvement in the world market price of sugar. The one redeeming feature is that little or no price-support funding will be necessary this year. Hopefully no price support funding at all will be required. If, however, the funds allocated for that purpose are not used for price support, they cannot be applied to any other purpose. The funds will be lost to the industry.

Mr Harper: That is the Federal Government for you.

Mr EATON: Fair enough, but I point out that the basis on which the funds were made available was agreed. I hope that price-support funding will not be necessary, because it will mean that those involved in the sugar industry are better off than it was thought they would be.

Mr Stoneman: Do you think that that money should go into some other area of the industry?

Mr EATON: The opportunity of funding on the basis of $2 from the Federal Government for every $1 contributed by the State Government was offered to those involved in the sugar industry. The Federal Government told the State Government that the Federal Government would put in twice the amount contributed by the State Government, and that the State Government was to set the ultimate figure by the amount that it would contribute. The amount contributed by the State Government was $26m, and the Federal Government allocated $52m. As I remember, the State Government tried to tickle the peter and, to induce the Federal Government to contribute extra funding, tried to say that the agreement was on a different basis.

Mr Stoneman: It would not have mattered if it had been $152m. The Federal Government would have still backed away.

Mr EATON: If the State Government had contributed $50m, the Federal Government would have put in $100m. It was written in black and white for everyone to see. The State Government tried to work round the agreement and tried to score political points. The Queensland National Party Government had in mind the forthcoming State election and wanted to get Federal Government assistance out of the way.

At this stage, the State Government is a bit lucky because the Federal Government has an election coming up, and the boot is on the other foot. In the meantime, however, many farmers could go down the drain.

Mr Harper: That is because of the Federal Government's economic policies.

Mr EATON: Because of the nature of the debate about the crisis confronting the sugar industry, the facts have not been circulated widely.

Mr Soper and the former Minister for Primary Industries, Mr Turner, attended meetings with the Federal Government in Canberra. When they returned, the Premier was informed about the nature of the agreement. Subsequently, they changed their minds and informed the Federal Government that the Queensland Government was unable to honour the agreement because the farmers would not accept the proposal. Any man in his right mind would know that at that stage the farmers—the grassroots people involved in the industry; the producers—were under great pressure; more so then than they are today, because now the price of sugar has increased a little.

Many farmers are in trouble today, not through their own fault but because they became victims of circumstances. I could quote several cases in which people worked and slaved because their parents had told them that they would be better off paying a little extra to obtain good land than buying bad land at an inexpensive price. It so happens that they purchased land in 1980, when prices were at their peak. Subsequently the price dropped. It is unfortunately true that, although they had saved, sweated and toiled for a long time, they had bought the land at the wrong time. Most of the contracts for sale stated, unless otherwise agreed, that the crop that was growing on the land belonged to the vendor for a period of 12 months. That contractual condition meant that, for a period of 12 months, the purchaser received no income in spite of the fact that he was required to do all the work. Moreover, he had to face up to the expense of replanting. That is a typical circumstance of the people who are now in trouble.

Conversely, I also know of people in the sugar industry who are in trouble because of their own fault. I am sure that in every industry, across the board, there are people who will take a bit of a gamble. The people to whom I refer want to farm in a bigger way rather quickly, and they make decisions that they would be better off not having made.

The whole process of rationalisation has been an exercise in collusion between the big companies and the Government. I say that because the rationalisation has by-passed the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board. I am sure that the Government knows there will

be a kerfuffle over this matter. That is why the legislation has been brought in at a late stage and is being rushed straight through. The Government is aware of the feeling among the people who are at the grassroots level of the sugar industry, but it has yielded to enormous pressure. Everyone knows where that pressure is coming from. This legislation is an indication that the Government has yielded to the sugar-millers—the proprietary millers. The time has been picked when the cane-farmers are up in the mill areas and when the millers can be in Brisbane. Some of the millers are in the gallery this evening.

An alternative to the legislation that has been presented ought to be examined. If the Government wants to restructure the industry by closing some of the mills, it should examine the whole industry and decide which mills ought to be closed down. I believe that the Federal Government ought to subsidise a mill so that the change-over can be effected properly while the mill is open for business. Instead, what will happen is that the Government will rush in and try to effect the change; it will upgrade the mills to process large tonnages quickly, which cannot be done in the time that is available.

Mr Harper: It has been going on since last April.

Mr EATON: That is because the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board should say, "We will subsidise Goondi; we will subsidise Howard Smith, but keep the Goondi mill open for another year so that you can plan and make your change-over gradually."

As I said before, the Babinda mill is $6½ million in debt. The Govemnent will spend $14m, which could mean that three or four other mills could be ruined. I emphasise that point. If the Government looked at the problem on an economic basis, it could pay out Babinda's debt. It could give Babinda the $6½ million, and it would then have no debt. The member for Mulgrave could probably tell us what its profit was last year. I will ask him through you, Mr Speaker: after cyclone Winifred and all the resultant hardships, did the Babinda mill make a profit last year?

Mr Menzel: I do not know; you ask them.

Mr EATON: The honourable member is a member of the mill committee, yet he does not know whether it made a profit. That is why I say that Babinda's problems are man-made. That is what concerns me.

Mr Menzel: The balance sheet for the Babinda mill comes out in April.

Mr EATON: I should imagine that the mill would have a rough idea whether it would be in the red or the black.

Mr Menzel: Go and ask them.

Mr EATON: They probably would not tell me. As a matter of fact, several times in the past I rung Babinda mill and the people to whom I wanted to speak were always out, so I gave up trying. I wanted to find out how many workers were employed by Babinda mill. I did my own survey on how many farmers supplied each mill and how many workers worked at each mill. The only mill that I could not get any information from was the Babinda mill, because the boss was always away or, even if he was there, he was away down the back talking to somebody at a meeting. After about seven or eight phone calls like that I just lost interest. My survey showed that in the crushing season the ratio was roughly one worker to one farmer. That is not an exact ratio, but within reason.

Mr De Lacy: It is good to see the present chairman works hard, anyway.

Mr EATON: Yes, that is right. That problem has to be looked at and a solution found. I tried. Because the areas have been so parochial, a solution has been that much harder to achieve. Changes have to be made in the industry. Millions of dollars is available to help the industry. The money has been offered. Unless the Government can come up with something with a bit of commonsense policy for the future, in a few

years' time it will be found that the problem that is being presently overcome could have been overcome in the short term, not in the long term.

Many Third World countries are developing their economies. Some of them are running into a bit of trouble because of crop disease and other problems. However, that always happens in the initial stages. Australia could find out that it is too small a nation; that nobody will worry about 15 or 16 million Australians when there are 240 million Americans, 110 million Indonesians, and 80 million Filipinos. Who will worry about 15 million Australians? It will be no-one from any of those countries. The only neighbouring countries which have a lower population that Australia are Papua New Guinea and New Zealand. If Australia is not careful, both of those countries will probably end up as Australian States. For Australia to get its money back, it would probably have to end up taking New Zealand in as a State. New Zealand is in as much trouble, economically and financially, as Australia.

The Government has to look further down the track than it has in the past. The overall situation of the sugar-growing communities has to be looked at. People have been too keen to race out and make statements to the press in order to get their names in the paper. They have put a lot of the communities offside. Nobody has looked down the track. As I said earlier, it does not matter where a family man works if he has to go home from work and tell his wife he is out of a job.

It does not matter whether he works for the Mourilyan Mill the Goondi Mill or the Babinda Mill, the hardship that he and his family will have to face will be just as sad that night as any other person's.

The industry badly needs help and a lot of common sense. In this particular instance there are probably more dollars than common sense in the solution that has been put forward. In the world today a lot of academically qualified people who are brilliant with pencil and paper lack the common sense to put into the community——

Mr Elliott: I would have to agree with that. That is the only thing I would agree with you on tonight.

Mr EATON: Yes. That will be seen in a lot of cases. In the sugar industry that is what has happened in the present case. The Government has let the problem get away and has left it too late to try to do something. It has not come in early and recognised and faced up to the problems. Instead, a Bill is being rushed through this House to try to do something about them. The Government has gagged debate. Those problems have been known about for years. I have been a member of this House for six years and I can say that those serious problems facing the sugar industry first came to the fore about four years ago.

With the introduction of automation in the mills, the reduction in the number of workers has caused problems. The farms also have had many problems. I know that the mills have had problems. I do not want to have to say that I want to see a mill wiped out, a town wiped out or anything like that. I feel just as strongly for the workers at Babinda as I do for the ones at Goondi and other such places.

Mr Menzel: Why don't you vote for this Bill?

Mr EATON: I am not voting for it because I think it is undermining the industry. I have said that before. The Government may as well wipe out all the regulations covering the sugar industry. It might as well wipe out all the statutory bodies in the industry, because it has taken away the authority of the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board. The Government has returned the industry to where it was prior to 1915.

Mr Menzel: The judge told us to do it; let's be honest.

Mr EATON: He does not say that. He says that the Government is holding a gun to his head.

Time expired.

Mr STONEMAN (Burdekin) (10.26 p.m.): I rise in support of the Bill. Although I am sure that there will be some concern about it within the sugar industry areas right throughout the State, I am also equally sure that this Bill will be accepted as being quite positively in the best interests of the industry as a whole.

I wish to take up very briefly the point raised by the honourable member for Mourilyan that the industry consists of growers, millers and workers. I remind him that there is a fourth component that he does not seem to recognise. The Government, through this Bill, certainly recognises the support communities that are based around the industry. It is not simply a matter of miller, grower and worker; it is a matter of miller, grower, worker and the support communities such as Babinda, Ayr, Home Hill, Giru and Gordonvale.

The Bill very clearly recognises that the industry is broadly based and needs to be supported. I regret the need for the making of hard decisions such as this one from time to time, but in the existing circumstances I am positively convinced that there is not an alternative. It is a fact of life that difficult decisions have to be made. When the future of an industry is at risk and its support structure is similarly at risk, particularly when public moneys are involved, Governments have to act and have to do so with firmness and decisiveness.

I believe that the members of this House form the supreme law-making body in the State. If we are not about making laws and hard decisions from time to time, we should not be here. Members opposite should be mindful of that. Therefore, at times we have to act against what might seem to be superficial opposition. Let me say that I believe that the opposition to this Bill is superficial. I am very sure that at least half of the grassroots growers throughout this State will not even quibble about anything that is done here tonight. Another quarter will take it or leave it. There will certainly be some paranoia amongst the remainder. However, I believe that that is superficial and short-term paranoia. When the true importance of the Bill becomes known and when the true effects begin to be felt, I say with a great deal of sincerity that I am sure there will be a gratitude that will spread throughout the industry.

I am intrigued that earlier last year the Queensland Cane Growers Council was very happy when powers were passed from the central board to the growers, but it was implacably opposed to any powers of the central board passing to the State's supreme body—this House. That very important point must be remembered. As I pointed out to the honourable member for Mourilyan, who has now left the Chamber, Governments must be mindful of the fact that they have to look after the total industry and the total community interest. I emphasise that that is particularly so when the Government has to look after public moneys, as is the case here. I agree that the Government has to put in money but, on the other hand, the amount that the Government and the community will save in money and agony cannot be counted in the mere few dollars that the Government ultimately will have to put into the industry.

Mr Randell: It is a matter of regret that only four Labor members are in the House.

Mr STONEMAN: It is a matter of regret but, because they are caught in a cleft stick, it is not surprising. Their Canberra colleagues totally support the actions of this Government tonight. They have been saying that this needs to be done. For once, the two Governments are in accord. Now Opposition members have gone off and are hiding in shame.

Someone has to lead in cases such as this. There has to be leadership, and I am very proud to be part of the Government that is showing that leadership. I am also very proud to be part of a Government the Ministers of which are prepared to act and to move forward with resolution when there is no other alternative.

As has been pointed out by Government members a number of times, the crisis in the sugar industry has gone on for too long. It cannot be left to continue to wither and dribble along for ever and ever. Time passes by. It is all very well to say, "Leave it for

another year and it will be fixed up." That has been said for three or four years and the industry is no further ahead.

The sugar industry has to be supported by resolute action of the Government. I am proud that this Government has certainly shown a preparedness to act on this occasion.

Honourable members should be aware of what would happen if a mill closed in any area. When considering any legislation, I have to place myself in the position affected by it and say, "What would that do to me? What would that do to my constituents?" I think of my own little town based on the Invicta mill, the town of Giru. In many ways it is smaller than, but similar to, Babinda.

If the Invicta mill closed down, it would decimate that little district. It would die. It would mean that the people who are based there and who have built up their assets, their homes, the shops, the hotels, the school, the people who have bus runs, mail runs, the people working on the railways—you name it—the whole lot would all be thrown into chaos. And Giru is, as I have said, a small town. If it happened to a larger town such as Babinda, which is located right on a highway, of course the effects would be much greater.

In closing down any mill, those factors have to be recognised and taken into consideration. The support towns and the communities who make up those support towns cannot be allowed to die. Similarly, of course, the growers or the basic industry facets cannot be put at risk. I am more than happy that those factors are being taken into account.

The price will be the same for the cane wherever it is crushed. In fact, I have heard the proposition put forward that Goondi growers could even benefit from this move. I am not in a position to say positively that that is the case. However, those growers could benefit by having their cane crushed at Babinda.

As has been mentioned, there will be three viable mills in the Innisfail area, instead of one viable mill and three sketchy mills. I think that that is a very, very important consideration to be borne in mind. There will be no cost penalty in any worthwhile or technical sense from a grower point of view.

During the last 12 months, as a member of last year's primary industries committee, I have been involved in a series of negotiations and discussions with the growers and mill suppliers and representatives of the Innisfail area. At a meeting with the Innisfail executive that was held in the Burdekin, which is middle ground, it was brought to my attention that a number of concerns existed. I think it is worth while stating those concerns.

The first concern was that Goondi growers would be inheriting the Babinda mill debt. Plainly that is not on. The legislation takes very careful account of that. So that is no longer a concern. The Goondi growers are secure in the knowledge that they are not taking a part of that debt.

A second concern was the viability of the Mourilyan sugar terminal. I noted that in his second-reading speech the Minister was very careful to emphasise that there will be a relative transfer of sugar so that the Mourilyan operation remains exactly the same. Again, there is no change. In fact one could argue that ultimately there will be an enhancement.

The third concern was in relation to the distance involved in the transportation of the Goondi cane up to Babinda. That is something about which I can speak with some degree of knowledge. I can say without equivocation that that is a lot of rot. That takes me back to the Invicta mill, the little mill only three or four miles from my home. The cane comes into that mill from upper Dalbeg. I am sure that that does not mean a thing to most honourable members, but the distance from Dalbeg to Invicta is exactly the same as the distance between the Tully mill and the Hambledon mill. In the total area of all those northern mills there are six or seven mills. In the case of the Invicta mill, the cane travels 50 miles or 80 kilometres every day and no-one blinks an eye. It is the

cost of transporting the cane that extra distance that no-one likes to have to pay, but for those people to suggest that that is the distance that the Goondi cane would have to travel because of the Babinda crushing is quite patently ridiculous.

Another concern that needs to be put to rest is the suggestion that was floating around the Goondi area at the meetings I attended, that Goondi cane would be the last to be crushed and would be crushed at the tail-end of any Babinda crushing. Again, what a lot of rot. People in the Innisfail area seem to be more than prepared to write off the township and the people of Babinda. That is totally and absolutely unacceptable.

In conclusion, I would like *Hansard* to record again the final words of the Minister—

> "This Bill is designed to rationalise current milling operations in the far northern region and to enable extensive concessional finance available for that purpose to be taken up immediately. The ultimate beneficiaries will be the cane-growers of the region and the great sugar industry of Queensland generally."

It is on that basis that I support this Bill tonight and I say without fear that in a year or two the growers throughout this State will wonder what the heck all the fuss was about.

Hon. N. E. LEE (Yeronga) (10.37 p.m.): The Liberal Party objects to a Bill of this kind being rushed through the House within the space of two hours. The Liberal Party strongly objects to this procedure. So far tonight no reason has been given for the urgency. The main reason for the urgency is the fact that the Government does not want this legislation to lie in the House for seven days, which would enable the industry to discuss it and report back on it.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Salisbury walked in front of the member whilst he was speaking.

Mr LEE: The honourable member for Salisbury ought to be ashamed of himself for disrupting my speech.

There seems to be no reason at all for this urgency, other than the fact that the Government does not want the industry to be able to discuss this Bill and have some input into it. A Government member stated that it was great to see that the Minister had the guts to bring in this Bill. Why does the Government not have the guts to leave it lying on the table for seven days? That is what should be discussed, not the passing of this legislation through this House. This question has been on the boil for two years, yet this House is expected to pass this legislation within the space of two hours. It is unfair, unjust and undemocratic. All members should be paid more respect, regardless of where they sit in this House. As far as I am concerned, the National Party just does not want to discuss the sugar industry. The Liberal Party tried to raise this matter twice before in this House, and both times it was gagged.

Mr McPhie interjected.

Mr LEE: Both times the Liberal Party was gagged and Government members voted against it. I have more of a rural background than you have ever had in your life, and furthermore, I would have more capital invested in the rural sector than you will ever have.

Government members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The House will come to order. The honourable member for Yeronga will speak through the Chair.

Mr LEE: I apologise, Mr Speaker. Government members are provoking me. It is unlike me to disregard the Chair. I have been in this House for 24 years and I have never done it before. It just shows how one can be provoked by Government members when one is upset about such an important Bill.

The introduction of this Bill gives me and the Liberal Party a chance to ask a few questions. We have not had this opportunity before. I would like to have some of these questions answered.

Why was this Bill necessary? Was it because the Government wanted to save Mulgrave, or somebody else wanted to save Mulgrave, or was it because the Government wanted to save the Babinda mill? An honourable member said it on the other side of the House—"Yes, we accept that." Was this mill overcapitalised by Rolls Royce machinery while other mills were repairing their machinery and doing the right thing by the industry? Who was the chairman when this Rolls Royce machinery was being installed? Who put that mill in debt? Who was there when all this was happening?

Those are the questions that the Liberal Party would have liked to ask on many occasions. I am sure that the Minister will answer them tonight. Is it true that $1m worth of machinery is still unpacked and not being used?

Mr De Lacy: It is still sitting there.

Mr LEE: It is shameful if it is.

Why does the Government need to introduce the Bill? The Central Sugar Cane Prices Board is a statutory board. It, not the Government, should be making the decision.

An article in the *Courier-Mail* on 30 July 1986, under the heading "Sugar board will collapse if Govt steps in—grower", states—

> "The Central Sugar Cane Prices Board would collapse if the State Government persisted with plans to over-ride its authority on rezoning cane-land, a leading north Queensland farmer, Mr Joe McAvoy, said yesterday.
>
> 'It will be the end of the board if the Minister (for Primary Industries) is given power to dictate decisions,' he said.
>
> 'No Supreme Court judge is going to become a rubber stamp for politicians,' said Mr McAvoy, the chairman of the Innisfail district canegrowers' executive.
>
> The central board is headed by Mr Justice Matthews who has been critical of government support for rezoning cane in the north from Goondi mill at Innisfail to the ailing Babinda mill."

However, today the Government is stepping in and taking over the authority that was given to the industry when it was established. It sounds very political. The Minister in his second-reading speech said that grants were given. He said that Queensland had given $2.3m in a grant—a gift. I wish I could receive one like that. The Commonwealth Government is giving $4.6m. That is a total of $6.9m—almost $7m—in grants or gifts.

What is the Government doing for small business in this country? Last year, 31 per cent of small-businessmen went broke. Will the Government give them a grant? Why can the Government not give small-businessmen a grant? What about other rural industries? Is the Government one-eyed, and can it see only sugar? Is that its attitude?

Mr Elliott interjected.

Mr LEE: The honourable member for Cunningham should not be talking about this matter, because last year grain-growers were receiving $160 a tonne for their sorghum. Today, equivalent or better-quality grain can be bought for $80 a tonne.

Mr Simpson: That is you lousy feed-lotters.

Mr LEE: It is not; it is the prices received by grain-growers today. The honourable member will sit in his place with a smile on his face, saying that it should be $80 a tonne. If the Government does not want to give a grant to small-businessmen, why should not grain-growers receive a grant? The Government will give all the money to the sugar industry. Why should it assist only the sugar industry? I believe that small business, other industries——

Mr Elliott interjected.

Mr LEE: Why should I be interested? Just because I buy grain, the honourable member has a one-track mind. The total cost to the State and Commonwealth Governments was $12.84m.

Admittedly, almost $7m of that was made available in grants. However, at what interest rate is the remainder of the money being repaid? Is it being repaid at prime bank interest rate?

Mr Harper: Commercial.

Mr LEE: Commercial? Could the Minister tell me what the commercial rate is?

Mr Harper: At the present time, about 18 per cent.

Mr LEE: No, it is 18.75 per cent. Any loan over $100,000 is offered at 18.75 per cent, so the three-quarters of 1 per cent has gone down the drain straight away.

For the past two years, the State and Commonwealth Governments have been making a political football out of this matter. They have been kicking it backwards and forwards in a successful endeavour to save one electorate. That is wrong.

Mr Menzel interjected.

Mr LEE: The honourable member was a little shaky and worried for a while.

Why was the Bill not passed before the last State election? The member for Mulgrave, Max Menzel, has the answers. I intend to refer to some of his answers that appeared in the press.

Mr McPhie: You have only 21 minutes in which to tell us.

Mr LEE: I will not take that long. If there are fewer interjections from the honourable member, I will take less time.

The newspaper cutting that I have states—

> "Max has a sweetener for the mill. North Queensland NP backbencher Max Menzel had a short spell in hospital late last year suffering from stress."

That is fair enough. At times, all honourable members suffer from stress. The article continues—

> "Late last week Mr Menzel came up with a couple of bright political ideas. The first is for State Government to meet the mill's interest payments so that it can open and crush the remaining crop."

Mr Innes: That is an artificial sweetener.

Mr LEE: It could be, but it is not artificial if one can obtain interest-free money. That is very real.

The article further stated—

> "The second was for a country Cabinet meeting to be held in the town. He was supported by Hinchinbrook MP Ted Rowe. Premier Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen responded quickly to the Cabinet decision. The meeting is in Babinda on March 3."

Mr MENZEL: I rise to a point of order. I feel that the honourable member is misleading the House. At no stage did I make those comments. They may be media comments from journalists. I made no such statements, and I ask that they be withdrawn.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row): Order! The member for Mulgrave denies that he made such statements and asks that they be withdrawn.

Mr LEE: I will withdraw them. However, those comments appear in the *Sunday Sun* of 16 February 1986. If the honourable member claims that he did not say those things, I accept that.

Because the Government has removed the right of a statutory board, namely, the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board, the Liberal Party opposes the Bill. That statutory right has existed since the beginnings of the sugar industry. However, history is being made tonight.

The previous speaker from the Opposition side asked, "Where will it end?" It will go up or down the line. It is the thin end of the wedge. The Liberal Party is very concerned that it will grow like a cancer.

Mr RANDELL (Mirani) (10.50 p.m.): I am constantly amazed by the hypocritical attitude of Opposition members. They speak with their tongue in their cheek. There is a great sense of relief within the Opposition that this legislation is being introduced. I have no doubt that this Bill has the total support of the Federal Minister for Primary Industry, Mr Kerin. If not publicly, he supports it behind the scenes.

The Opposition spokesman on primary industries, Mr De Lacy, said that he had some sympathy for the objects of this Bill. Why does he not come out into the open and say that he has complete sympathy for the Bill? He knows that the Government is doing the right thing.

The member for Cairns said that he had agonised over the Goondi mill situation; yet, when the Government put up something concrete, he certainly did not support it. He used the Bill as a political opportunity.

I wish to comment on some of the statements that have been made by the Labor Party. The member for Cairns said that in 1983 Hawke and Kerin had offered assistance but that the Government did not accept it. Prior to the election in 1983, the Federal Government reached a situation in which it stalled, side-stepped and demanded a measure of deregulation that was totally unacceptable to the sugar-growers of Queensland. The honourable member for Mourilyan should take note of what I am saying. That is why the aid was such a long time coming through, because the Federal Government was putting a measure of deregulation on the sugar industry that the Queensland Government and the Queensland Cane Growers Council were not prepared to accept. The Queensland Government assured the Queensland Cane Growers Council that it would do nothing without its total approval. All honourable members know that, so why do not the members of the Opposition have the intestinal fortitude to stand up and say it, instead of being political opportunists in the House.

Mr Eaton: The Queensland Cane Growers Council does not think this for a minute. It does not approve of this legislation.

Mr RANDELL: It would not approve of that deregulation. The honourable member was talking about $150m. He was throwing figures around like confetti. The Government has never received anything like that. In 1986, the Government tried to get $240 a tonne, but it was given $230 a tonne. When the chips were down and the prices on the world scene went up, the cane-growers got from the Federal Government 50c a tonne. Does the honourable member know how much they will receive in 1987? They will not receive one cent from the Federal Government in price support. Does the honourable member know what the cane-growers will receive in 1988? They will receive nothing at all. All the Federal Government has ever given is 50c a tonne in the 1986 season.

The Opposition should be honest about the price support. I ask honourable members not to mislead the House about the amount of money given to the industry by the Federal Government. The Queensland Government had to give its share as well, but it gave the money about three months before the Federal Government did.

I turn now to the interest subsidy scheme. In July 1986, agreement was reached between the State and Federal Governments. The terms and conditions of that agreement were signed in October 1986. The member for Cairns should know that. The details were worked out between the officers of the Commonwealth department and the State department. However, the Federal Government would not agree on the upper level of

assistance to be given to cane-growers. It argued to hold the money back. It was only last week that the money came through and the guide-lines were set out.

In my electorate, growers have been going to the wall and workers have been put off. Yet the members opposite have the audacity and the effrontery to say that the Federal Government is doing something for the sugar industry. It is not doing one damned thing. When members talk about the Federal Government helping the industry, I ask them at least to be truthful about it. The honourable member for Mourilyan is not a bad bloke, but I believe that he has been misled by other people.

I commend the Minister for showing his courage and leadership by taking on a task that is unpalatable. It is certainly unpalatable but it is something that he recognises must be done. He is trying to rectify a situation that has to be resolved.

Mr Innes: What is the urgency?

Mr RANDELL: I will get to the honourable member about the urgency. He should listen to what I am saying. He would not have a clue between a stick of cane and a stalk of guinea grass.

I will take the speech of the honourable member for Yeronga into my electorate. If he is talking for the interests of the Liberal Party in this State, a lot of growers will be happy to have a look at his speech.

The Minister has resolved to act in the best interests of the cane-growers in that region. It is a matter for regret to me that the Minister has to take that step, and it is a matter for regret to the Minister that he has to introduce legislation to exercise the powers that are normally the province of the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board. The Minister has emphasised, and I will emphasise, that it is a one-off exercise. The Minister will inform honourable members in his reply that the Bill is a one-off exercise. As soon as this legislation is passed, all other action will be taken over by the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board and the local boards as would usually have been done.

It must be remembered that some of the powers exercised by the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board were taken from it last year and were passed to the local boards, if not at the request of the Queensland Cane Growers Council, then with the approval of that council. Although there is so much more I would like to say, I see that the time allotted to me has run out. I would really like to speak further on this topic, but I cannot.

In conclusion, I commend the Minister for Primary Industries for the step that he has taken.

Hon. N. J. HARPER (Auburn—Minister for Primary Industries) (10.56 p.m.), in reply: I certainly endorse the remarks made by the honourable member for Mirani. He said that this Bill will have application only to the Babinda, Goondi and Mourilyan rationalisation project. It will not and cannot be used for any other mill area, and it was never intended that it should be.

I point out to the honourable member for Mourilyan and make it unequivocally clear that I have never claimed that the Bill was brought into the House because it was what the Federal Government wanted. I accept full responsibility for introducing the legislation. However, the legislation does give effect to the recommendations made by the Sugar Milling Adjustment Committee. The SMAC recommendations are supported by the Federal Government, which is a fact that should be borne in mind. As the honourable member for Mackay is unfortunate in his attempts to mislead the House, by claiming that the Government is overriding the Supreme Court, so also is the Opposition spokesman unfortunate in carrying out his portfolio. It is rather noticeable that the honourable member for Logan is keeping a very low profile at the present time. It is unfortunate that his knowledge of the law is obviously not available to the front bench of the Labor Opposition in the House. It is understandable, I suppose, that the honourable member for Mackay and the Opposition spokesman on primary industries

would make the kinds of misleading statements that they made to the House tonight. It is obvious that the honourable member for Mackay has not been following the deliberations of the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board in this matter. If he had been, he would not have made the claims that honourable members heard this evening.

The Queensland Government agreed to changes in the Regulation of Sugar Cane Prices Act prior to agreement by the Commonwealth to the financial package. Subsequently, the Queensland Government amended that Act to provide for substantial deregulation, although to a far less extent than was required by the Federal Government.

Mr De Lacy interjected.

Mr HARPER: Sure and all, Mr De Lacy, it is Paddy's Day. I suppose that the remarks made by the honourable member for Cairns could be taken in that context. Really, they were quite baffling to anyone who tried to follow them.

To the honourable member for Mulgrave and to the honourable member for Mourilyan I say that of course the Government is concerned about redundancy in the work-force in the Goondi mill. Although some redundancy will be necessary, I understand that it will be minimal. Discussions have been held and alternative employment is, in the main, being offered.

The honourable member for Yeronga made a contribution to the debate. What I would say about that contribution—and what I must say about it, Mr Deputy Speaker—is that it seemed to come from a totally different person from the person I spoke to approximately five hours earlier. The honourable member's views were very different.

Question—That the Bill be now read a second time—put; and the House divided—

In division—

Mr Innes: I take a point of order under Standing Order 157, under which I am obliged to remain seated during a point of order taken during a division. My point of order is that, under Standing Order 158, a member is not entitled to vote in the House upon any question in which he has a direct pecuniary interest, and the vote of any member so interested shall be disallowed. Clause 4 mentions CSR Limited, Howard Smith Industries Pty Ltd and Babinda Co-operative Sugar Milling Associated Ltd as parties to an agreement. Any person having shares in those companies or that co-operative is not entitled to vote in this Chamber. Mr Deputy Speaker, I ask you to rule.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row): Order! The honourable member for Sherwood would have to indicate to the Chair which member or members are affected by his point of order.

Mr Innes: The member for Mulgrave has indicated in the course of his address in this debate that he is still a cane-farmer in the Babinda Co-operative Sugar Milling Association Ltd area and that he was the former chairman of that mill. The prima facie evidence is that he is still a person with shares in that co-operative and, as such, has a direct pecuniary interest. Therefore, his vote should not be allowed. Mr Deputy Speaker, I suggest you ask the member on his own honour.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I consider that there have been many occasions in this Chamber in similar circumstances when a division of the House has been taken and when it could have been claimed that many members have a pecuniary interest in the subject-matter under discussion. I am not prepared to accept this as a precedent, and I therefore overrule the point of order.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I will eject someone from the Chamber very shortly.

AYES, 45	
Ahern	Katter
Alison	Lane
Austin	Lester
Berghofer	McCauley
Bjelke-Petersen	McKechnie
Borbidge	McPhie
Burreket	Menzel
Chapman	Muntz
Clauson	Neal
Cooper	Nelson
Elliott	Newton
Fraser	Powell
Gately	Randell
Gibbs, I. J.	Sherrin
Gilmore	Simpson
Glasson	Slack
Gunn	Stephan
Harper	Stoneman
Harvey	Tenni
Henderson	
Hinton	
Hobbs	*Tellers:*
Hynd	Littleproud
Jennings	FitzGerald

NOES, 36	
Ardill	Scott
Beanland	Sherlock
Beard	Smyth
Braddy	Underwood
Campbell	Vaughan
Casey	Warburton
Comben	Warner
D'Arcy	Wells
De Lacy	White
Eaton	Yewdale
Gibbs, R. J.	
Hamill	
Hayward	
Innes	
Knox	
Lee	
Lickiss	
McElligott	
Mackenroth	
McLean	
Milliner	
Palaszczuk	*Tellers:*
Prest	Davis
Schuntner	Gygar

Resolved in the affirmative.

Committee

Clauses 1 to 27 and schedule, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

Third Reading

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

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. L. W. POWELL (Isis—Leader of the House) (11.13 p.m.): I move—

"That the House do now adjourn."

Cost of Electricity Supply on Horn Island

Mr SCOTT (Cook) (11.13 p.m.): I am very concerned about the direction being taken by the electricity supply industry at present in the Far North Queensland Electricity Board's region of supply. I became aware of the fact that it was setting onerous conditions for the supply of electricity in that region and recently in this Chamber I asked a question about it. The Minister was good enough, if I could put it that way, to tell me that certain conditions were going to apply to the supply of electricity for consumers on Horn Island, to wit an unconditional cash contribution of $2,200 would be required of people who sought supply when the electricity board established reticulated supply on Horn Island.

That is an extremely onerous provision on people living on Horn Island, because most of those people are pensioners. As a gratuitous part of the answer, the Minister told me that large consumers would be accepted. I hope that if that is the case, the large consumer—and I have in mind a prospective gold-miner—would be required to pay much more. It is a practice of electricity supply authorities to charge mining companies the cost of providing that supply. It would be rather interesting to determine the cost to a mining company on Horn Island. Certainly the cost of supplying pensioners on Horn Island is not such that they should be charged $2,200 each. It is quite wrong that that should be the case.

The present Minister for Mines and Energy tried to score points from me by stating that I knew little about the supply industry in far-north Queensland, because this

condition on consumers has been set at Russell Heads, Karumba Point and Laura. I was very much aware of that fact and one strives to keep the amount of information supplied in a question to a minimum. What the knowledgeable Minister did not admit was that those towns were the only three towns in that area in recent times—in fact, at all, to my knowledge—where such charges were levied.

When the FNQEB took over the supply to Karumba itself, no conditions were laid down. It took over an established electricity supply there and also at Lakeland Downs. The Far North Queensland Electricity Board took over an existing supply to a township in that area. It took over the system as it was and continued to supply those consumers at no extra charge. What the consumers have been given as part of that deal is a more reliable electricity supply because, in the instance of Lakeland Downs, it is part of a system connected to the main-line system in Queensland. Even over at Karumba the consumers are part of a much larger system.

It perturbs me that the prospective consumers on Coconut Island will only receive supply from a solar system about which this House knows very little detail. I understand that a contract has been let to an American company by the name of Westinghouse to provide supply from its system of solar electricity to the island. I do not think this system will be satisfactory, because the people on Coconut Island will only be able to use the electricity for lighting and refrigeration. They will not be able to run stoves or other cooking or heating devices. This matter is dealt with by a different Minister and one who also does not possess very much knowledge of his area.

The honourable member for Rockhampton made the point this morning that, certainly since the election, the Minister for Northern Development and Community Services has not made one statement to this House about the direction that Aboriginal affairs is taking in far-north Queensland. This is quite worrying. A sum of $600,000 is being spent on what can only be called—and I am not coining the phrase—a Mickey Mouse electricity supply system on Coconut Island, where the people will not have a proper electricity service and will not be able to use the facility to gain the full benefit from it that is enjoyed by people living in the rest of Queensland.

When I asked about electricity supplies to the remaining outer islands, part of the reply from the Minister for Mines and Energy was that those islands are not public townships and therefore are to be denied a supply of electricity by the FNQEB. Certainly, if the matter had been left to the FNQEB, I believe that the people on Coconut Island and on the other islands of the Torres Strait would have had a far better deal. The people on Coconut Island will not get the benefit of an acceptable standard of electricity supply.

National Health and Occupational Safety Commission Discussion Paper

Mr ELLIOTT (Cunningham) (11.19 p.m.): I raise a matter tonight which will be of tremendous significance, not only as far as the farmers and business people of this State are concerned, but also as far as the nation as a whole is concerned. Quite frankly, the proposals under the guise of safe working practices which have been brought forward under the heading of a discussion paper by the National Health and Occupational Safety Commission are quite ludicrous when one looks at the recommendations that have been made.

I wish to canvass a couple of these recommendations. When one looks at them, one can see that really and truly any suggestion along these lines will be a catastrophe for the economy of this country. If one looks at the summing-up of this document, one sees that the commission is suggesting that no person in the work-force should lift more than 16 kilograms.

I do not know how fit the ladies and gentlemen in this Chamber really are, but I would suggest that the ladies on the Government side of the Chamber are quite capable of lifting more than 16 kilograms. We need to realise what the document is all about. It is about the famous equal opportunities program and attempts to combat sexism, or

whatever. Whether women wish to admit it or not, in many instances they are physically less strong than men.

Ms Warner: And sometimes stronger.

Mr ELLIOTT: And sometimes stronger.

It is total rubbish to suggest, therefore, that the Federal Government should be legislating that no-one should lift more than the weight that should be lifted by the average woman in our community. That is basically what the Federal Government is setting out to do.

Mr Scott: What is the current limit?

Mr ELLIOTT: There is no limit in Queensland. Queensland has a safety provision that says, basically, "Use your own common sense and use the position"——

Ms Warner: No. It is not that at all. There are restrictions.

Mr ELLIOTT: There are no restrictions. At the moment there are restrictions on what women under a certain age can lift. The International Labour Organisation has said categorically that the upper limit should be 55 kilograms. Everyone works to that standard now. When I lift fertiliser on my farm, I throw around 55 kilogram bags with no problem. That is easy. I can pick one up under each arm, and I am not really very fit.

Mr Scott: You are saying a bit there.

Mr ELLIOTT: I will take you on if you want to. That will be no problem. I will lift one and we will see how we go.

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

Mr ELLIOTT: I am trying to make the point that I am not talking about some tremendous standard. I am not talking about the Dean Lukins of the world who can lift a car above their head; I am talking about practicalities. The Opposition, through the Labor Party in the Federal arena, will stymie and undermine the whole of the economic work-force——

Ms Warner: Which is based on sexism, which is a product of your kind of ideology.

Mr ELLIOTT: As the honourable member says, it will be based in such a way that the Federal Government will ensure that everyone is dragged down to the lowest common denominator.

Mr Scott: Sweated labour.

Mr ELLIOTT: That has nothing to do with it. Is the honourable member suggesting that he cannot work all day lifting, in ideal circumstances——

Mr Scott: You throw a fertiliser bag around like the Premier does with his peanut-harvesting.

Mr ELLIOTT: That is absolutely ludicrous.

Recommendation No. 5.9 states—

> "In reaching its decision on the weights to be applied in the action levels, the Working Party considered the ranges recommended by the NIOSH document which stated that if the load was less than 18 kg it would be within the capabilities of most people. If it is over 44 kg, however, the lift becomes hazardous and should be modified."

Basically, the recommendation states that the United Kingdom is happy to accept 34 kilograms as the upper limit. However, under the regulations, any supposed Norms of

this land who want to go to the cricket and sit on the hill with an Esky full of grog and bits of ice will not be able to do so. That is why the regulations are totally ridiculous.

Flooding, Norman Creek; Coorparoo Rail Fly-over

Ms WARNER (South Brisbane) (11.24 p.m.): I would love to carry on a discussion with the honourable member for Cunningham about the discriminatory points to which he just referred. However, I do not have the time.

I wish to draw the attention of the House to the environmental problems that are currently causing considerable difficulty in the East Brisbane and Coorparoo areas. Presently, two major matters cause concern. They are the problems caused by the flooding of Norman Creek and the disruption that is envisaged from the building of the Coorparoo rail fly-over. Those two problems are somewhat interrelated and need to be considered jointly.

The problems with Norman Creek and the resultant flooding have bedevilled the area for many years. Norman Creek has been transformed from a broad stream with a sandy bottom, deep waterholes and plentiful marine life—which it was 40 to 60 years ago—to its present state of degradation, namely, a shallow, smelly eyesore that floods all surrounding low-lying properties.

In the 1930s, the removal of mangroves led to massive erosion, silting and destabilisation of the creek banks. The continued urbanisation and industrialisation of the area have meant that the creek is now hopelessly silted up and that the natural low-lying flood plain has, in many areas, been filled and built upon. In fact, the land on which the Coorparoo High School is built was once part of the flood plain.

During storms, an enormous increase in the volume of water in the creek is caused by run-off from paved roads, roofs of residential, commercial and industrial properties, car parks and the South East Freeway with its huge storm-water drains.

Now, as a result of those changes, it takes less rain to cause flooding. That is probably because the creek is unable to form its own ponding in the vacant land. Consequently, the creek floods people's houses and causes a large amount of damage to property. Inevitably, as the sewerage systems are flooded, a health hazard is created.

Other problems that are experienced with the creek are a direct result of increasing and, in some cases, irresponsible industrial activity. The creek has become polluted by chemicals. Many industries dump fill, tin cans and other debris into the creek.

The Harbours and Marine Department has not properly policed the industries that cause the pollution. In fact, in many cases it has sided with the offending commercial interests against those local residents who have noticed the pollution and complained about it.

This problem has existed for a long time. However, it is now getting out of control. In order to prevent the quality of life in the area from deteriorating even further, stricter Government intervention is required.

I wonder whether when the Coorparoo fly-over was proposed, the Main Roads Department was fully cognisant of the difficulties associated with the creek. Considerable controversy has surrounded the siting of that fly-over, which is designed to eliminate the level crossing at Cavendish Road. For some time, local residents have been seeking information about the fly-over, but that information has been denied to them.

Recently, maps of the proposed fly-over have been on display at the Main Roads Department. However, local people have difficulty in travelling there to see the maps. Perhaps they could be placed on public display at the driver-testing centre at Coorparoo.

I understand that the proposed fly-over will consist of a huge earth embankment, with entrance tunnels underneath to allow Norman Creek to pass under the road. Unfortunately, the creek has so far resisted most attempts to curtail its preferred course. If Norman Creek is to be contained, consideration must be given to the level of the creek waters during floods.

I have before me a request from the Norman Creek Flood Action Group that the bridge be an open-span structure that would permit the free passage of floodwater. An earth embankment would act as a partial dam. The volume of fill in that earth embankment would displace a corresponding volume of floodwater, which must necessarily raise flood levels elsewhere. Unless and until such banks are faced and/or grassed, run-off will partly remove the fine fraction, depositing it in the creek, which is already badly silted. Future flood-mitigation works will be much easier and cheaper to constuct below an open-span stucture than through one or both banks of an earth-embankment construction. An open structure will allow free passage of pedestrian and cycle traffic, enhancing the recreational use of the large tract of existing open green area with easy public access.

All of those factors must be considered. If it were conducted properly, the flood-mitigation program for Norman Creek could be a useful community asset.

Time expired.

AIDS

Mr BURREKET (Townsville) (11.30 p.m.): This evening I would like to talk briefly about the AIDS virus and some of the side-effects on our society. AIDS is an insidious disease that knows no boundaries, no sex difference, no age, no colour, creed or race. Already in Australia at least 240 people have died from the disease and the number of those becoming infected is growing rapidly. The AIDS virus is a time bomb about to explode on Australian society and its effects will devastate our way of life. There is no cure, no prescription available to sufferers; in fact, there is no hope at all for any person who, knowingly or unknowingly, has the disease.

Queensland is fortunate in that it appears to have the least number of recorded cases in Australia. Perhaps it is because the Queensland law does not recognise that detestable, ungodly, unnatural act of homosexuality. Therein lies the cause of the spread of the disease, yet there are States in Australia that have virtually legalised the disgusting practice, that have an enormous number of AIDS-carriers and have taken no action to outlaw homosexuality. If there is to be a fair dinkum approach to the problem, the Federal Government must put whatever pressure it can on the States that have virtually legalised homosexuality, such as South Australia, New South Wales, Victoria and the Australian Capital Territory. Is it not significant that the Labor States have passed these homosexual protection laws? While it is legal, there is not only the sickly practice of corrupting the young people of those States but, further, there is a greater risk of spreading AIDS to the innocent young men of our society who can be legally buggered by men with sick and distorted minds. For who else would inflict such a practice on the innocent youth of our country?

The days are long past when one could ask why the garden had AIDS and receive the reply that all the pansies had died, or cite the joke about the homosexual magician who went off with a poof. Our society, and especially the Government of Queensland, will have to very quickly take any action available to limit the spread of this devastating disease. The first step should be to ban all male escort agencies in this State. It is incongruous that those agencies should be operating at all, let alone in these frightening AIDS times. Further, I draw the attention of this Parliament to the practice in many Queensland newspapers and periodicals of the illegal advertising of female escort agencies. Quite often those ads promoting prostitution are to be found close to the church notices.

I turn to the suggestion by some that Queensland should legalise prostitution. Although desperate measures are needed to combat the AIDS virus, I caution against the legalisation of prostitution as a means to this end. It is already fact that approaches have been made to have prostitutes insist on the use of condoms, but the response has been that the customers prefer not to use them; so that negates efforts in that direction. Tough action is needed by the Government.

I draw a parallel to the House of the suggested legalising of prostitution with gambling, particularly in casinos. I will use Townsville as an example. Before Townsville

had the casino, a certain proportion of the people of Townsville did go to the races, the dogs and the trots and gambled at other legalised gambling venues; but very few people actually indulged in gambling with cards and such. However, since the casino has opened, the people of Townsville have been encouraged to go there and gamble. That gambling is legal and approved, and people are attending the casino. Thousands of people who have never gambled before are visiting the casino. What I am saying is that, if the Government legalises prostitution, it is saying to the people who do not at this stage go to prostitutes that the Government says it is okay, that it is legal and they can go. What happens if, in the act of copulation between the two people concerned, there is a slip of the condom?

Time expired.

Government Assistance to Non-Government Schools; Permanent Part-time Teaching

Mr SCHUNTNER (Mount Coot-tha) (11.35 p.m.): In this debate, I raise two matters. One of the most keenly debated issues over the last 20 years has been the funding of non-Government schools. I have views on this topic that I now put forward. These views are entirely my personal views and are ones I have consistently held for at least 10 years.

The major elements of my position are—

(a) support for the existence of both the Government and non-Government schools to provide diversity;

(b) recognition of the fact that after nearly a century of virtually no State aid, non-Government schools have been receiving State aid in a limited way since the early 1960s and in a substantial way since the early 1970s;

(c) support for the continuation of some funding, with the allocation of a fair share of available education funds;

(d) opposition to the needs basis of funding;

(e) support for a system of funding based on incentives for private effort; and

(f) opposition to some aspects of the funding of new schools, particularly those that may be generally regarded as fringe-type schools.

As honourable members are well aware, I was President of the Queensland Teachers Union for many years. The union's public position varied from time to time according to the policy in force at the time. As President, I had the responsibility to convey the view of the organisation—the corporate view—in exactly the same way as a Minister of the Crown presents the Government's view. This statement has been made so that in future honourable members have access to an accurate expression of my views.

I turn now to the second matter. I refer to an aspect of unemployment in Queensland. Earlier today, reference was made to the appalling level of unemployment in this State. Anything that can be done to improve the situation should be examined closely. In the field of education, approximately 600 young, recently graduated teachers are presently unemployed. That reflects a waste of millions of dollars that has been spent in training those young teachers. At the present time, many of them would be in receipt of the dole.

I urge the Government to introduce permanent part-time teaching. Hundreds—possibly thousands—of teachers currently working on a full-time basis would like to be working on a part-time basis. If 1 200 of those teachers worked, on average, on a half-time basis, 600 jobs would be created. The 600 unemployed graduates to whom I referred could be employed, and dole payments would no longer be necessary for them.

Virtually no extra cost is associated with this exercise because salaries, superannuation and other costs would be on a pro rata basis. I earnestly request the Government to implement permanent part-time teaching along the lines of what is already occurring in other States.

Teenage Drinking

Mr LITTLEPROUD (Condamine) (11.38 p.m.): Honourable members will remember that a few weeks ago in this House the Honourable Mike Ahern, Minister for Health, raised the matter of the worsening problem of teenage drinking. I thought it only appropriate that that debate should continue, both in public and in this House.

Since that matter was first raised by the Honourable Mike Ahern, I have become aware of an article that reports on the survey commissioned by Drug-Arm. I quote from an article that appeared in the *Daily Sun* on Friday, 13 March—

> "A survey commissioned by Drug-Arm has amazed officials of the organisation by disclosing that two-thirds of people interviewed supported raising the legal drinking age to 21.
>
> The poll, by Market Facts (Qld) Pty Ltd, was taken in Brisbane and on the Gold Coast over the Australia Day weekend.
>
> Director of Drug-Arm, Mr Geoff Maskelyne, said: 'We were amazed to find that 41.2 percent were strongly in favour of the change, and a further 25.6 percent were in favor to some extent.
>
> That's a total of two-thirds, and seems to reflect the level of public concern about teenage drinking'."

The point I wish to make is that to legislate for a change in the legal drinking age would be rather unpopular and probably impossible.

I wish to make some comments about what I see are changing habits. Many honourable members enjoy a social drink. When we were younger, sure, we had some drink. In my own case, I took to drinking beer. It was an unwritten law in the group that I mixed with that beer was the drink for young people and spirits should never be touched. I am alarmed to find that these days that habit has disappeared. Today I find that young people are drinking at an even younger age; worse still, they are drinking spirits. Just as alarming is the greater number of girls who are now drinking spirits. So a huge problem exists, and it extends right across all political boundaries.

I will cite some examples of things that I have noticed recently. In my electorate it seems to be in vogue at a social function that when young people go up to a bar they order a jug of rum and coke, whereas previously the normal drink for most people would have been a jug of beer.

A week or so ago the *Four Corners* program showed young people in Victoria passing around bottles of Scotch that had been watered down a little bit with Coca Cola. Both of them are pretty tough sorts of drinks, yet the young people were swigging from the bottle of Scotch.

Only just last week-end in my electorate a function took place at which I was talking to the people who helped serve liquor. They said that men were in fact lacing their stubbies of beer with bottles of ginger wine. That bears out what I am talking about, that young people are going for increasingly stronger alcoholic drinks. Of course, that has a devasting effect on their social behaviour and their health.

I was interested also to read in the paper that Mr Dick Maguire, who is the president of the Queensland Hotels Association, has also expressed his concern about that problem. I quite believe him when he says that his association is doing its best to make sure that there is no under-age drinking in hotels. He said that hoteliers were not able to police that 100 per cent but they were certainly doing their best. Mr Maguire also pointed out that young people can get access to drink, especially spirits, at other places such as liquor booths at sporting fixtures, at social functions and at licensed balls, which seem to be in vogue these days. In my area I have even seen instances where under-17 footballers are rewarded after a game by being given a couple of cartons of stubbies.

That demonstrates that a real problem exists, and rather than legislating to overcome it, there is a need for various organisations throughout the community, be it service clubs, churches or community groups, to try to get together to achieve a change of

attitude. I do not see that it is possible to legislate for a drinking age of 21. Certainly a problem does exist that must be addressed. Perhaps schools could introduce education programs in that regard. Out in the community where young people have access to drink, there should be enough people who are serving those sorts of drinks to make sure that young people change their drinking habits to the extent that, if they are not going to give up alcohol altogether, they will drink something like beer, which does not have the same devastating effect as spirits.

A young lass from Chinchilla attending Armidale university said that just recently during orientation week the in drink was "rocket fuel". She described that drink as being all the hard alcohols mixed in together and dished out. She spoke about girls whom she was with passing out absolutely. She said that one minute the girls were standing up talking to one another, and the next minute one was on the ground.

It also horrified me to hear that on one particular occasion during orientation week "rocket fuel" was served at breakfast. The other thing that appalled me was that an historical tour of places in Armidale was arranged and it turned out to be a tour of 12 hotels.

Time expired.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 11.45 p.m.