

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 13 OCTOBER 1987

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

OVERTIME PAID IN GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS**Return to Order**

The following paper was laid on the table—

Return to an Order made by the House, showing the amount of overtime paid in each Government department (all funds) in 1986-87.

PAPERS

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

Reports—

On the Operations of the Sub-Departments of the Department of Health—
“Eventide” Sandgate, “Eventide” Rockhampton and “Eventide” Charters
Towers for the year ended 30 June 1987

Director-General of Health and Medical Services for the year ended 30 June
1987

Queensland Film Corporation for the year ended 30 June 1987.

The following papers were laid on the table—

Orders in Council under—

Explosives Act 1952-1981

Harbours Act 1955-1982

Building Societies Act 1985-1986

Credit Societies Act 1986

Regulation under the Main Roads Act 1920-1985

By-laws under the Harbours Act 1955-1982 and the Gold Coast Waterways
Authority Act 1979-1982

Reports—

State Stores Board for the year ended 30 June 1987

Union-Fidelity Trustee Company of Australia Limited for the years ended 28
February 1986 and 1987, incorporating the Balance Sheet and Profit and
Loss Account

Disaster Appeals Trust Fund Committee for the year ended 30 June 1987.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**Holiday-leave Loading**

Hon. V. P. LESTER (Peak Downs—Minister for Employment, Small Business and Industrial Affairs) (10.04 a.m.), by leave: In view of the media coverage today concerning the question of annual-leave loading for Queensland Government employees, I wish to inform the House of the action which the Government proposes to take in this regard.

In the Budget Speech on 8 September 1987, the Honourable the Premier and Treasurer announced that the Government would be taking action to abolish the holiday-leave loading for Government employees on all leave accruing after 1 January 1988.

The Government has been exploring avenues to best implement the Government policy as non-abolition could well result in staff reductions, having regard to the Budget position as indicated in the policy speech and Budget statement made by the Premier. This Government has a policy of maintaining or improving employment opportunities and not reducing the number of jobs.

The Queensland Confederation of Industry recently announced, following the Government's statement on holiday-pay loading, that it will be seeking to abolish the loading through an application which it currently has in the State Industrial Commission. As the leave loading was inserted by the State Industrial Commission, it seems a reasonable course of action to adopt to seek to have the loading abolished now that the economic situation has changed since the loading was introduced. The Government has therefore taken the decision that it will also lodge an application to the Industrial Commission seeking to abolish the loading, so that the matter, in respect of both private industry and Government employment, can be arbitrated fully by an independent tribunal, namely, the one that granted the loading in the first place.

The Government will be putting to the commission a range of information that it believes will convince the commission that the payment of holiday-pay loading should not be continued. Whatever the outcome—and I want to make this very clear—the Government will abide by the umpire's decision. The unions are right in the hot seat now. I put out the notice now that the Government will abide by the umpire's decision, it expects the unions to do the same and it expects the Labor Party to support them.

QUESTIONS UPON NOTICE

1. Langdon Report on Dairy Industry

Mr BOOTH asked the Minister for Primary Industries—

“With reference to the dairy report known as the Langdon Report—

- (1) How much did this report cost the taxpayers of Queensland?
- (2) To whom was the money paid and when will payment be completed?”

Mr HARPER: (1 and 2) No payment has yet been made for the services of Mr Langdon, who was retained by me as a consultant to report on a dairy industry proposal for the establishment of a single dairying industry co-operative in Queensland. Costs associated with the committee of six set up by the chairman of Queensland's then 13 dairy co-operatives are being met by the co-operatives themselves on the basis of a formula agreed to by them at the time they decided to have Mr Langdon convene the committee.

2. Brucellosis and Tuberculosis Eradication Campaign

Mr BOOTH asked the Minister for Primary Industries—

“With reference to the impending possibility of southern States, including New South Wales, declaring their States free from brucellosis and TB—

- (1) If this occurs, have we adequate plans to overcome the problems that will occur at our border?
- (2) How close are we in Queensland to be able to adopt a similar course?
- (3) Have we other plans to meet the situation?”

Mr HARPER: (1) The southern States of New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia have indicated their intention to seek the approval of the Standing Committee on Agriculture to declare their entire States impending free of bovine tuberculosis and free of bovine brucellosis from 1 January 1988. The Northern Territory has indicated its intention that a similar declaration be made for the southern part of the Territory.

All applications have been examined by the animal health committee of the Standing Committee, and I understand that there are no technical grounds for disallowing the

applications. Other aspects of the applications are due to be considered by the brucellosis and tuberculosis eradication campaign committee of the Standing Committee on 29 October. If the applications are found acceptable to that committee, they will then go forward to the Standing Committee on Agriculture for its consideration.

At the special meeting of the Australian Agricultural Council held in Canberra on 2 October, I again raised the matter of the southern States changing their disease status for brucellosis and tuberculosis and I have recently corresponded with each of the Ministers involved indicating why the moves should be deferred.

For the information of honourable members, I point out that I think it is important to realise that there is a set of standard definitions and rules which have been approved by the Standing Committee on Agriculture and endorsed by the Australian Agricultural Council for the national bovine brucellosis and tuberculosis eradication campaign.

Mr Speaker, the answer to the question is quite lengthy, and it would appear that honourable members are not particularly interested in hearing the words of it. May I table the balance of the answer to the question for incorporation in *Hansard*?

Leave granted.

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

These rules are quite specific about the declaration of Freedom from Brucellosis and Impending Freedom from Tuberculosis status: The disease status of all herds in the areas involved must be known and no infected or recently infected herds or groups are to exist.

The same rules are also quite specific about movements into "free" areas: only cattle from Confirmed Free, Tested Negative or Monitored Negative herds in areas declared Provisionally Free of Brucellosis and Tuberculosis may enter areas declared "free" of these two diseases.

Currently, the whole of Queensland is Provisionally Free of Brucellosis and the southern two-thirds of the State is Provisionally Free of Tuberculosis.

I have no doubt that the southern States will impose restrictions in keeping with the Standard Definitions and Rules on the movement of cattle from Queensland if Impending Freedom from Tuberculosis and Freedom from Brucellosis is approved for them from 1st January 1988.

The movement restrictions are likely to involve both slaughter cattle and store cattle.

Slaughter stock would be able to move into New South Wales without test, but only if they come from Confirmed Free, Tested Negative or Monitored Negative Herds in the Provisionally Free areas.

Store stock would be able to move if they come from similar status herds, but only after they have been tested negative for Tuberculosis within thirty (30) days of their proposed movement and in the case of breeding stock, tested negative for Brucellosis.

In addition no stock from Tuberculosis Eradication Areas would be allowed to move into New South Wales during their lifetime after 1st January 1988.

Thus the move to create a difference in disease status for Brucellosis and Tuberculosis between Queensland and the southern States will be very disruptive to the Queensland cattle industry.

All store animals moving out of the Eradication Areas of Queensland after 1st January will have to be permanently marked, and there will be herd certification and testing conditions on store animals moving into New South Wales from the same date.

Traditionally, many of the cattle marketed at southern Queensland saleyards have been sold to New South Wales buyers. About 330,000 animals move across the border each year and about 200,000 of these are stores.

This orderly traditional and smooth flow of stock across the border is now going to be subjected to delays caused by the testing certification and requirements of the southern States if their applications for "free" status are approved. As the tests take a minimum of three (3) days to be completed, there could be quite considerable disruption to the trade in cattle across the border.

There have been some discussions at officer level regarding arrangements that may apply at border saleyards, such as those at Boggabilla, to meet the proposed movement conditions and the Queensland Livestock Property and Produce Brokers Association organised a meeting

of stock agents recently to discuss how the border trade will operate if the change in status is approved.

I understand that no firm plans for handling the situation have been agreed to so far because the applications may not yet be approved and the actual conditions to apply have not been defined by the southern States.

I consider that the requirement to test Queensland cattle able to move throughout Queensland without test and, up until now, into New South Wales without test, is unreasonable and I am doing everything in my power to have the approval of the applications deferred.

I am hopeful that the declarations will not be made until Queensland can make a similar declaration and that the interstate trade will not be hindered.

However, I can assure Members that, if the southern States are declared Impending Free on 1st January 1988, plans to overcome any problems in crossing the border will be developed and implemented to minimise the disruption to the flow of cattle southwards.

The cost of movement testing will be funded by the Campaign and officers of my Department will ensure minimum delays in cattle movements occur due to the testing requirements.

(2) Queensland has been progressing well in its campaign to eradicate both Brucellosis and Tuberculosis from its herds.

The target date for Freedom from Brucellosis is 1st January 1989 and it appears that the conditions for this status will be satisfied by that date.

The target date of 1st January 1990 for Impending Freedom from Tuberculosis appeared achievable until the recent restriction by the Commonwealth Government on the amount of funding to be made available for the campaign in 1987-88.

I have made adjustments to the system of compensation to offset this shortfall in funding and I am hopeful that the target date will still be achieved.

If it is, the result will be due in no small way to not only the changes I have introduced, but also the manner in which producers have maintained their property eradication programs at their own expense under the provisions of Section 36AAA of the Income Tax Assessment Act.

Currently strong attention is being focussed on the southern two thirds of the State, but removal of all infected animals from that area will take time.

Due to the isolated pockets of known areas of Tuberculosis in this portion of the State, it would not be possible to obtain Impending Freedom from Tuberculosis status for southern areas of Queensland until at least 1989.

Unfortunately, the declaration of part of the State Impending Free would affect the movement of cattle within the State and I am determined that Queensland producers generally should not be disadvantaged in their internal trading if the southern States persist with their applications for "free" status.

(3) I have acknowledged the achievements of the southern States in ridding their cattle herds of Brucellosis and Tuberculosis. However, I have asked them not to increase the difficulties for northern Australia in eliminating these diseases by unnecessarily changing their status to Impending Free. The imposition of extra conditions on the movement of cattle from Queensland into the southern States creates a further cost both to Queensland producers and southern buyers and comes at a time when it is important that the eradication campaign continue without delay and that the limited funds available be applied to the best advantage to achieve that end.

3. Proposed World Heritage Listing of North Queensland Rainforest Areas

Mr HYND asked the Minister for Mines and Energy and Minister for the Arts—

"Does he have any idea of the loss of mineral wealth to the State of Queensland if the Federal Government locks up the tropical wet lands in North Queensland with its World Heritage listing?"

Mr AUSTIN: Mineral deposits, chiefly of tin, tungsten and gold, are widespread throughout the area proposed for listing. Mineral reserves in these deposits are generally poorly defined, and therefore it is not possible to place a firm monetary value on the minerals involved. Nevertheless, they have provided a livelihood to numbers of tin-miners in the past, and now offer similar prospects for the mining of gold.

The future of these operations is a matter of concern, but of even greater concern is the possible loss of access to much larger tonnage deposits which could be discovered in the area in the future. Several significant deposits of tin at Collingwood, at Rossville, and the Kangaroo Hills field, tungsten at Mount Carbine and Watershed, base metals at Baal Gammon, near Herberton, and uranium at Ben Lomond have been located just outside of the proposed area in similar geological environments. These suggest that further work within the area, which has been poorly prospected to date because of its rugged terrain, could also reveal significant deposits.

Up to 50 current authorities to prospect and applications for authorities to prospect confirm that the area proposed for listing warrants further investigation.

Although the Commonwealth Minister for the Environment and the Arts, Senator Richardson, has stated that some mining and exploration will be allowed within the proposed area, there will remain doubts that this policy will be continued under pressure from the conservation movement. The Australian Conservation Foundation has already made statements opposing mineral development in the area.

No matter what policy on mining the Commonwealth Government might adopt initially, listing would still introduce an overwhelming sense of uncertainty. There will be little incentive for investment of the considerable sums required for modern exploration, if it is later possible for the Commonwealth to harden its attitude against development of a resulting discovery because of disturbance of an arbitrarily determined area of rainforest. Such uncertainty would undoubtedly lead to a downturn in exploration, and lost opportunities for discovery of new deposits potentially worth hundreds of millions of dollars to the national economy.

4. Traffic Accident, Glenlyon Street, Gladstone

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

“(1) Has an investigation been made in relation to a traffic accident on Glenlyon Street, Gladstone about 19 August where a woman passenger died?”

(2) Has a cause for this accident been established?

(3) Has any action or penalty been taken against either driver?”

Mr GUNN: (1) Yes.

(2) The matter is the subject of a coronial inquest, which was partly heard at the Gladstone Magistrates Court on 6 October 1987 and is presently adjourned to 22 October 1987. As the matter is sub judice, I am unable to comment further.

(3) See (2).

5. Supervision Works Performed by Clerks and Engineers of Local Authorities

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

“(1) What was the total amount of money paid to clerks and engineers of local authorities for supervision work performed in 1986-87 in (a) city councils, (b) town councils and (c) shire councils?”

(2) What was the largest amount paid to a clerk and engineer and for what local authority did he work?”

Mr HINZE: (1 and 2) In reply to the honourable member, I wish to advise that to obtain the information sought will involve a considerable amount of research work. When this work has been completed, I undertake to advise the honourable member by letter of those particulars.

6. Nurse-training in Tertiary Institutions

Mr McPHIE asked the Minister for Education—

“(1) Which tertiary institutions in Queensland are currently conducting nursing training courses and how many students are enrolled in these courses at each institution?”

(2) Does he expect an early resolution of the impasse with Federal Authorities in relation to their continued refusal to accept their responsibilities in funding nursing training in tertiary institutions and, if so, when?”

Mr POWELL: (1 and 2) There are two types of courses for nurse education in Queensland colleges of advanced education. The first is a pre-registration course which is carried out at the Queensland Institute of Technology. It is similar to the courses that are undertaken in hospitals throughout Queensland. This was a pilot course that was commenced by the Federal Government and is fully funded by the Federal Government. There are 153 full-time students and 10 part-time students in that course. The second type of course is a post-registration course, which is being conducted at the Capricornia Institute of Advanced Education and the Queensland Institute of Technology. The Capricornia Institute has 62 external students undertaking that course and the Queensland Institute of Technology has 109 full-time and 70 part-time students, making 179 students at the QIT in the post-registration course.

The Commonwealth Government has offered to contribute \$1,500 a student towards the cost of transferring the training of nurses from hospitals to colleges of advanced education in Queensland. Under the Commonwealth proposal, the rest of the total cost in excess of \$6,000 a year for each student is to be borne by the State, along with capital costs.

The logic of the Commonwealth proposal is that, as a result of the transfer, savings would accrue to the State Budget for Health. Such savings have, however, not so far been identified either by successive Ministers for Health or by Treasury officials. It should be noted—I repeat it once again—that the QIT pre-registration course continues to be fully federally funded, even though it was styled as a pilot course.

The State Government has considered the matter on several occasions in recent times, most recently on 10 November last. In keeping with Cabinet’s decision, I have advised the Commonwealth of Queensland’s readiness to effect the transfer when the Commonwealth agrees to fully fund basic nurse education and training in colleges of advanced education, as it does for every other professional group. The fundamental question remains: why does the Commonwealth insist on treating the nursing profession differently from any other?

7. TAFE Facilities, Toowoomba

Mr McPHIE asked the Minister for Education—

“Will the changes announced in the recent Federal Budget in relation to TAFE college funding have any effect on the program for construction of new TAFE facilities in Toowoomba which have been scheduled to commence in this financial year?”

Mr POWELL: The rhetoric of the changes announced in the recent Commonwealth Budget has not yet been matched by the establishment of appropriate operating structures to determine allocation of capital funding. The reorganisation of the Commonwealth department has made communication difficult. It is hoped that in the near future initial guide-lines may be put forward to allow discussion with the States on the formation of acceptable mechanisms compatible with the State organisation of the TAFE system.

All that is known at this stage is that officers of the new Commonwealth Department of Employment, Education and Training intend to visit Queensland in the near future, at a date to be announced, for preliminary discussions. Following those discussions, I hope to be able to give the honourable member a timetable.

8. Employment Contracts for Heads of Departments

Mr INNES asked the Premier and Treasurer—

“With reference to the suggestion that the heads of departments of the Queensland Public Service, who have been described as now being employed on a contractual basis have not, in fact, entered into any final or binding contract but have only signed undertakings to enter into a final form of contract—

(1) Are the heads of departments who are no longer employed on a conventional Public Service basis employed under final and binding contracts or are they currently employed on an undertaking, or other interim basis?

(2) Will he, in any event, table the form of contract which is used, or which it is proposed will be used?”

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: (1) Permanent heads have entered into interim agreements which are to be formalised into contracts of employment.

(2) No.

9. Video Machines

Mr GYGAR asked the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General—

“With reference to the Government’s practices regarding the regulation of video machines—

(1) Does the Justice Department enforce a consistent, objective set of criteria regarding the regulation of video entertainment machines, particularly those near schools?

(2) If so, what are the full details of those criteria?

(3) If not, (a) why are some machine owners/operators given preferential treatment and (b) what avenues of redress are open to those who receive less than equitable treatment when compared with other operators?”

Mr CLAUSON: (1) Yes.

(2) Under the provisions of the Art Unions and Amusements Act 1976-1984 and in accordance with the policies pursued thereunder, an entertainment machine can only be located in premises approved by the Department of Justice. Where more than two entertainment machines are proposed to be conducted, separate male and female toilets, additional to any other toilets provided for use by tenants, are also required. Before a site is approved, an inspection of the premises is carried out by an inspector, who may also interview adjoining proprietors and residents, local police and principals of nearby schools. Where more than two machines are proposed, the views of the local authority are also sought to determine whether the introduction of the machines at the site would breach any council by-laws.

Site approval is granted where the information obtained reveals that it is a suitable location for the conduct of a number of machines applied for. In some instances, approval may be granted for a trial period only, to enable the proprietor to establish that the conduct of the machines can be properly supervised. Additionally, an approval may be subject to the machines being disconnected between, for instance, 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. on school days.

If complaints are received by my department to indicate that the operation of entertainment machines at any site is not satisfactory, the approval granted to that location would be reviewed. The Government’s policy has in fact resulted in machines being removed from sites adjacent to schools and other undesirable areas unless some special circumstances exist.

(3) See (1) and (2).

10. Yakuza Infiltration into Australia

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

“With reference to persistent and growing reports of the infiltration of Japanese criminal elements known as Yakuza into Australia, and particularly, their channelling of crime profits into Australian investments—

- (1) Is he aware of, or concerned about, these reports?
- (2) Has he or the Queensland Police been briefed on these reports?
- (3) What mechanisms, if any, have been established in Queensland and between State and Federal authorities to keep a close watch on Yakuza infiltration of Australia?”

Mr GUNN: (1) Publicity given to a criminal element known as Yakuza has been noted. Reports of criminal infiltration or the channelling of crime profits into Australia by this or any other organisation are received with concern.

(2) I have been advised on this matter by the Acting Commissioner of Police that Queensland police has intelligence relating to suspected Yakuza influence in Australia.

(3) Adequate confidential arrangements exist at Federal and State levels to monitor activities for indications of any criminal infiltration by this organisation in Australia.

11. Pesticide Residue Testing of Cattle

Mr COOPER asked the Minister for Primary Industries—

“With reference to the current pesticide residue emergency in Australian meat—

(1) Has the Queensland Government cornered the market for pesticide residue testing in slaughtered cattle, so that the non-Government laboratory testing capacity is not fully utilised?

(2) Is the Queensland Government using profits from this testing to meet the costs of traceback, quarantine and on-farm investigations?

(3) Does the Queensland Government require that positive results from private laboratory tests be cross checked by a Government laboratory before action is taken and, if so, why is this the case?

(4) Is the Queensland Government contributing towards the cost for pesticide residue testing in meat and, if so, in what way?

(5) Will he give an assurance that the State Government will continue to contribute substantially towards the cost of traceback operations?

(6) As the New South Wales Government has undertaken a \$2m domestic testing program prior to the May developments, did the Queensland Government have any program to detect residues in meat and did it take any action on such residues prior to May?

(7) Are producers still permitted to run cattle in association with sugar cane production and, if so, why has this not been prevented?

(8) What are the major causes of chemical residue contamination of livestock in this State, with particular reference to (a) grain feeding, (b) contaminated dust inhalation and (c) contaminated pastures?”

Mr HARPER: (1) At the outset of the emergency there was no non-Government laboratory testing capacity, and this necessitated a unilateral response by the Queensland Government to an unforeseen and unbudgeted demand for pesticide testing of export slaughter livestock. It has been stated by industry leaders that our performance in raising our laboratory throughput from 80 samples per week to 600 per day, at short notice, may have saved the nation's export market for beef. Nevertheless, the Queensland Government has not attempted to corner the market for testing.

I am advised that export meatworks, which are staffed by Australian Quarantine Inspection Service—AQIS—officers, are in general permitted to use the laboratory of their own choice. I believe that this testing is currently being undertaken at private laboratories in Cairns and Sydney, and that also some Queensland samples are being tested by New South Wales Government laboratories in New South Wales. The volume of this testing and the surplus capacity of those laboratories is not known to me. Also, the results of the tests from these laboratories are not available to me. In order to streamline regulatory procedures relating to livestock control and the notification of quarantines, all tests from domestic meatworks are at present channelled through the Government laboratory at the Animal Research Institute. In this way, we are certain to know the results of the tests and can act on them in a timely fashion.

(2) All receipts from testing have been ploughed back into necessary acquisition of equipment to enable additional testing to be done, and commitments continue to exceed revenue. State consolidated revenue is meeting the full costs of field operations, including the property visits and sampling and testing necessary to declare and implement the quarantines, to identify the source of the contamination and to monitor the course of the decline in tissue levels so that the quarantines can eventually be lifted. The cost of handling each of those quarantines which have been imposed and finalised ranges from \$1,500 to sums in excess of \$6,000.

(3) The Queensland Government has good reason for requiring that all positive results from private laboratories be confirmed by Government laboratories. The technology of the gas chromatography testing system employed is advanced. If positive results are to be identified with certainty, it is necessary that the testing laboratory be well equipped with standards for a wide range of compounds, and it is also essential that the chemists undertaking fat-testing for organochlorines have considerable experience in this testing. It is also necessary that the operations of such laboratories be subject to periodic checks through anonymous samples of known content generated by a referee laboratory. At this stage, there may be deficiencies in the private sector in each of these areas. As the imposition of quarantine has serious and expensive repercussions both for the producer and for this Government, I am not prepared to take action on results from laboratories whose standards and methods of operation are unknown to me or my officers.

(4) The Queensland Government is making a substantial contribution towards the cost of the pesticide program through meeting the full cost of all field activities associated with quarantined properties, including property investigations and sampling, trace-backs of stock from quarantines properties to other destinations. My department recently costed these services and, as already stated, it was found that the minimum actual cost of the field activities and release testing associated with quarantines was \$1,500, with some examples exceeding \$6,000. At the present level of imposition of new quarantines these unbudgeted activities are costing this State well in excess of \$20,000 per week. This is a year when my department, because of reduced Commonwealth funding to the State, has to absorb a substantial reduction in total funding.

(5) Some States already share with the producer the cost of investigation and testing for quarantine release. If the level of activity in this State is maintained or increased a similar approach may be necessitated here. In my view, it would be helpful to divert some of the resources presently focused on meatworks-testing into preventative field activities, and also to gain some support for the heavy burden of other unbudgeted and field costs presently being met by the States. I shall therefore be pressing to have these needs addressed during the development of national policies for property status assessments and for the disbursement of industry levies.

(6) Since January 1978, the Queensland Government has undertaken a substantial residue survey program for meat. In the last three years of this program almost 14 000 samples were collected and tested for a range of 23 agricultural chemicals. Violations were detected at a rate of four per thousand—0.4 per cent—the rate at which violations have subsequently been detected in the increased national survey and also the rate that they are detected in US beef tested in the USA. Special attention was given in the

Queensland survey to slaughter cattle which may have been subjected to recent treatments for cattle tick. The detection of dip residues in Queensland slaughter cattle is now rare, and I believe that the survey and the associated extension activities were highly effective in improving the general standard of dip management in Queensland.

Movement restrictions were placed on all properties yielding violative levels in the Queensland survey and all results at 1/2 MRL or greater resulted in a property visit aimed at identifying and resolving the cause.

The existence of an association between organochlorine residues in livestock and the cotton-growing, vegetable-growing and cane-growing industries quickly became clear, although the cotton-related problems disappeared as DDT was withdrawn from use within that industry. Accordingly, a departmental staff-training program was initiated under the leadership of a specialist veterinary officer, with the aim of achieving effective extension on a one-to-one basis across the full range of Queensland agricultural and pastoral industries.

It was considered that a general media approach to extension was not desirable, although some specific aspects, particularly cattle dip management, were promoted through the media. Also as a result of the survey, negotiations were conducted with the sugar industry regarding its use of organochlorines and the adoption of the safe replacement chemical chlorpyrifos (Suscon Blue) for use by cane-growers was a direct outcome.

(7) No legislative restrictions have yet been placed on the grazing of cattle in high-risk situations such as the vegetable and sugar-growing industries might create. The decisions on whether or not to graze, and whether to market as stores or slaughter cattle, are regarded as commercial decisions for the grower concerned to make in the light of his local knowledge and circumstances. Steps have, however, been taken in amendments to the Stock Act, which are currently before this Parliament, to provide the necessary powers to prevent stock from being grazed on or given feed grown on ground known to be heavily contaminated.

With the withdrawal of the organochlorines from general agricultural use earlier this year, the problem of contaminated soils is expected to disappear—although this could take several years in the worst instances. Arrangements have been made to ensure that the interests of grazing stock will be adequately protected in future instances in which dieldrin and heptachlor are allowed to be used by cane-growers who meet the stringent requirements for a permit.

An Opposition member interjected.

Mr HARPER: This matter is of particular interest to the rural community. The Government knows that the Opposition is not really interested in the rural community.

Mr Vaughan: Speak up a little. We can't quite hear.

Mr HARPER: I said that the Opposition is not particularly interested in the rural community. That is borne out by the attitude of the Federal Government in denying funding for rural industries. It is about time that the Opposition in this House brought to the notice of the Federal Government the desperate plight of the rural industry at present.

(8) The major causes of residue contaminations identified so far in Queensland stock have revolved around non-approved uses of the organochlorines for insect control. Such uses include soil treatments and sprays against insect pests in horticulture, treatments of farm sheds and grain and fodder storages for weevils and other insects and the prophylactic treatment against white ants of structures used by livestock. There have also been instances of direct treatment of livestock with organochlorine sprays or dips.

Violations arising from approved uses have been uncommon. However, they have occurred in association with sugar-cane production, in cattle-grazing in or close to cane paddocks or being fed hay produced from sugar-cane country.

External parasite treatments of livestock have also led to violations in cases where the wash was overstrength and inadequate withholding time allowed after treatment. Stock held in yards heavily contaminated with organochlorine dip and spray fluids legitimately used and pumped out up to 20 years ago, have also become contaminated, as have cattle treated for external parasites with approved chemicals put through contaminated spray equipment.

12. Effect of Capital Gains Tax on Extension of Pastoral Leases

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

“(1) Will he investigate the Australian Taxation Office’s interpretation of the Federal Government’s capital gains taxation law relating to the 20-year extension of leases in Queensland?”

(2) If, in fact, the automatic 20 year extension, or rather continuation, of leases triggers the Capital Gains Tax provisions, will he bring this preposterous, though devastating, proposition to the attention of the Prime Minister as a matter of urgency, with a view to exempting lessees from such a grossly unjust predicament not of their making?”

Mr GUNN: (1 and 2) The Government has been investigating the capital gains tax legislation in respect of the extension of leases, and discussions have been held with relevant officers of the Australian Taxation Office.

The facts are—

- The renewal or extension of leases is interpreted by the Australian Taxation Office as the acquisition of a new asset.
- Such leases in existence prior to 19 September 1985, renewed after this date and then subsequently sold, would be assessed for capital gains tax on a capital base as at the renewal/extension of the lease. In most cases, this capital base will be limited as it is taken to comprise the costs of renewing/extending the lease. The cost of acquiring the lease prior to 19 September 1985 is not taken into account in assessing the capital gains tax.
- Such leases acquired after 19 September 1985, renewed and subsequently sold, would be assessed for capital gains tax on the same capital base—that is, the capital base assessed as the cost of renewing/extending the lease. However, the vendor is able to offset the capital loss of the original acquisition cost of the lease against the capital gain.

Clearly, lease-holders with leases acquired prior to 19 September 1985 will be unfairly disadvantaged in relation to taxation of capital gains. The Taxation Office has been made aware of this inequity and the Government will continue to seek an acceptable resolution of this problem.

The matters raised by the honourable member highlight the inequities which abound in capital gains tax and clearly demonstrate the lack of sensitivity of the Hawke Labor Government to the problems facing rural producers today.

13. Cash Credit System

Mr MACKENROTH asked the Minister for Tourism, National Parks and Sport—

“With reference to the cash credit system—

(1) On how many occasions has he as Minister availed himself of public funds from the cash credit system in his office from 1 January to date?

(2) How many times has the amount taken from his cash credit system exceeded (a) \$100, (b) \$200 and (c) \$300?

(3) On how many occasions have there been no receipts or documentation forwarded to identify the expenditure from the cash credit system?

(4) On how many occasions has the only documentation to verify this ministerial expenditure from the cash credit system been his signature and nothing else alongside the amount expended?

(5) On how many occasions has money from the cash credit system, with only his signature and no receipts or documentation, been approved by the Auditor-General's Department?

(6) Is he aware that details of his cash credit system have been brought to the attention of the Auditor-General, Mr Doyle, and has he been advised of Mr Doyle's attitude?

(7) On how many occasions has such expenditure been channelled into departmental, rather than ministerial, expenses?"

Mr MUNTZ: (1 to 7) I strongly resent the implications contained in the honourable member's question. I do not operate a ministerial cash credit account and therefore I do not have a cash credit account cheque book. The Department of the Arts, National Parks and Sport operates a cash credit account, which is subject to audit by the Auditor-General.

Advice was received from the Auditor-General on 5 October 1987 that he has received his auditor's report on the audit of the accounts of the department for the 1986-87 financial year. In the words of the Auditor-General, "The report disclosed that the results were satisfactory." The department's cash credit account was included in the scope of the audit. The Auditor-General has certainly not raised with me or with the accountable officer of the department any matters relating to the operation of the department's cash credit account. The implications of the honourable member are completely without foundation, and I will treat them with the contempt that they deserve.

14. Turkey Beach Rail Crossing

Mrs McCAULEY asked the Minister for Transport—

"With reference to the Railway Department's intention to install flashing lights at rail-crossings at Miriam Vale, Bororen and Lowmead, in conjunction with the main line electrification program—

What are his intentions for the Turkey Beach rail crossing, which has a substantial amount of road traffic and has impaired vision along the rail line to the south?"

Mr LANE: The Turkey Beach Road crossing is not listed on the current priority listing for the installation of level crossing protection.

The provision of flashing lights at level crossings is determined on the basis of a rating system, which takes into account all relevant factors existing at level crossings, including the extent of vehicular traffic and visibility. This is essential because of the large number of level crossings throughout the State and the need to allocate limited funds strictly on a priority basis.

The location at Turkey Beach Road rail crossing will continue to be monitored and, should conditions change which increase the overall priority of this crossing, appropriate action will be considered.

The signalling alterations undertaken within the railway station yards at Lowmead, Bororen and Miriam Vale will affect train operations over these level crossings. In view of this changing situation, it has been determined that conditions at these crossings will not be allowed to deteriorate as a result of the work being carried out. This has resulted in the decision to provide the level crossing protection devices in these locations.

15. Water Resources in Callide Valley

Mrs McCAULEY asked the Minister for Water Resources and Maritime Services—

"What measures are being taken by his department to investigate means of replenishing the diminishing water resources in the Callide Valley so that continued prosperity from irrigated crops can continue?"

Mr TENNI: I thank the member for Callide for her question as I know that she is vitally concerned about the effect of the ground-water supply problems of property-owners in the Callide Valley.

I can assure the honourable member that the Queensland Water Resources Commission has undertaken a considerable amount of work investigating possible ways of overcoming the serious problem of the overuse of ground-water supplies in the Callide Valley.

The State Government has already spent well in excess of \$13m on works to boost the natural water supplies. This work has included the installation of gates on the Callide Dam, to more than double the storage capacity to 127 000 megalitres, and the construction of several recharge weirs.

Late last year, the commission finalised a comprehensive report which reviewed the available water resources in the valley. The report clearly indicated the extent of the present overuse situation and the limited extent to which further works could be developed. Following this report, the commission is currently investigating two possible new dam sites on Kroombit Creek. While the studies will not be completed until early next year, it is clear that neither site will be able to make up the entire shortfall to meet the full irrigation demands in the valley. However, both storages could play an important part in improving local water supplies.

The commission is also presently investigating ways to improve ground-water recharge and has allocated \$100,000 this financial year for this purpose. Some streambed-cleaning will be undertaken, and it is also hoped to identify areas in which recharge potential can be improved by minor works.

The commission has also worked in close co-operation in recent months with local irrigators to develop an allocation policy which will allow maximum use to be made of the available water resources. The adoption of this very sensible policy is to be commended.

I thank the member for Callide for the very considerable effort she is making on behalf of her constituents. I can assure her that the State Government will continue to give a high priority to reducing the problems associated with limited water resources in the Callide Valley.

16. Elective Surgery in Public Hospitals

Mr YEWDAL asked the Minister for Health and Environment—

“With reference to the provision by the Federal Government of an additional \$25m per year over the next two years to assist the States in reducing waiting time for elective surgery in State public hospitals—

Does he agree that one of the ways this can be achieved is by the employment of more nurses and, as the Premier and Treasurer has indicated that there shall be no additional nurses, how is this very generous Commonwealth initiative to be pursued in Queensland?”

Mr AHERN: The \$25m alluded to by the honourable member is for the whole of the Commonwealth, the amount available to this State being given as an indicative figure in the order of \$3,250,000, which must be matched by the State. The issue is by far a wider one than employing additional staff, but it is conceded that there might be a need for more nurses and other categories to be employed to give effect to the Commonwealth's initiative if matching State funds can be found from within an already overstretched financial allocation.

17. High-rise Construction in South-east Queensland

Mr YEWDALÉ asked the Minister for Mines and Energy and Minister for the Arts—

“With reference to the proposed construction of the world’s tallest building in Ann Street, Brisbane, and to the considerable increase in high rise construction in the Brisbane, Ipswich, North Coast and Gold Coast regions—

(1) Does adequate geological mapping exist for the aforementioned regions of South-East Queensland?

(2) When was the last geographical mapping of Brisbane carried out?”

Mr AUSTIN: (1) Adequate geological mapping does exist for the Brisbane, Ipswich, north coast and Gold Coast regions of south-east Queensland. Geological maps have been published by the Department of Mines for south-east Queensland at various scales, ranging from the Moreton region map at 1:500 000 (published 1980) to the Brisbane map series at 1:31 680 (published 1967) and include—

1:250 000 series—Tweed Heads, published 1969;
Ipswich, published 1973;
Brisbane, published 1974; and
Gympie, published 1975.

1:100 000 series—Beenleigh, published 1978;
Murwillumbah, published 1978;
Caboolture, published 1979;
Ipswich, published 1981; and
Brisbane, published 1986.

In addition, geological maps form the basis for the department’s 1:100 000 map series on *Industrial Rock and Mineral Resources*, which is available for the five map sheets mentioned plus Caloundra and Nambour (published) and Laguna Bay (unpublished). The Department of Mines has also released a number of special purpose maps on slope stability, urban suitability, etc., at various scales, for parts of south-east Queensland.

(2) The Department of Mines has not carried out recent geographical mapping in Brisbane. The last geological mapping of Brisbane was carried out during the period 1970 to 1985, leading to the publication of geological maps at 1:250 000 and 1:100 000 scale. Larger-scale geological compilation sheets of the Ipswich 1:100 000 sheet areas and part of the Caboolture 1:100 000 sheet area are available.

All the geological maps referred to in (1) provide an indication of the rock types, and are thus useful for town-planning purposes and general engineering feasibility studies for buildings and other structures. However, they do not dispense with the need for foundation investigations, including site-specific, engineering-geological mapping.

18. Tariff on Agricultural Chemicals

Mr GILMORE asked the Minister for Primary Industries—

“As the Federal Government intends to introduce a 15 per cent tariff on all imported agricultural chemicals from 1 January 1988, what effect will this tariff have on Queensland primary producers?”

Mr HARPER: I am aware that, as a result of the Commonwealth Government’s adoption of the major recommendation from the Industries Assistance Commission inquiry into the chemicals and plastics industries, there have been variations in the existing schedule of tariffs on imported agricultural chemicals. These variations are being phased in from 1 February 1987 and will become fully operative on 1 January 1992.

Increases of tariff to the 15 per cent level on imports of fully formulated fungicides will apply from 1 January 1988. This will mean that farmers using these particular chemicals will have to pay considerably more next year. Honourable members opposite

might again take note of action by the Federal Government to impose further costs on the rural community.

Although there is a provision for an exemption from the increase in tariff to be granted if there is no equivalent local product, the tariff changes are another example of the Commonwealth Government's application of a general formula without any clear understanding of the implications of its decisions for particular industries. It is one further example of this Federal Government's disregard for the financial difficulties being experienced by primary producers.

19. Australia's Deficit

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

“(1) Is he in a position to explain to the House why, given the vast potential of Northern Australia, the Federal Government seems unable to contain the current account deficit, whilst countries like Spain, Italy and Brazil possess current account surpluses or trade surpluses?”

(2) Why, like the chocolate ration in George Orwell's '1984', have the monthly deficit announcements improved whilst the annual figures have become worse?”

Mr KATTER: (1 and 2) In answer to the honourable member's question, I table a list of figures for the current account deficit over the last two years, on a monthly basis.

Whereupon the honourable member laid the document on the table.

Mr KATTER: The figures are really quite intriguing because Australians went into the last Federal election with the claim that the current account deficit in June showed \$1.121m. It went down to \$886m in June this year. One would think that that was a very creditable achievement. The fascinating part is that the June figures quoted in the election—

Mr Scott: Mike, would you buy a new car from that bloke?

Mr KATTER: Well, he would not be buying it from the Federal Treasurer on the basis of the figures that I am disclosing now. He went into the election claiming that for that month, the current account deficit was \$860m. Now it has risen to \$923m. The figure for June has changed from \$880m to \$920m in the space of two months.

On that basis, the current account deficit for June, which was quoted as being so good during the election campaign, will in fact rise by about 50 per cent on the current account deficit figure for last year. It is quite a fascinating phenomenon. The figures quoted are at one particular level and then, three months later, the debt increases by \$40m in a very short period of time.

All I can say is that there is a shifting-figure phenomenon. If the Federal Treasurer were honest and gave the actual figures for those months, the current account deficit would be disclosed for what it really is—and that is probably the worst in Australia's history.

Northern Australia is suffering the most by far, compared to all of the other parts of Australia, because of the policies of the Federal Government and simply because it is export oriented.

A great song and dance was made about floating the Australian dollar. No sooner was it floated than the Reserve Bank went in and started buying it to keep the value up. The value of the Australian dollar has been at an artificially high level for some considerable time, but not as a result of any kind of economic performance by the Australian economy. It is simply that the artificial endeavours of the Reserve Bank, in buying the Australian dollar, have kept the value high.

Petrol tax has almost doubled. Interest rates are almost double those of anywhere else in the world and are a crushing burden on the export industries. That is the reason that Australia has the worst current account deficit figure in its history.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Holiday-leave Loading Entitlement

Mr WARBURTON: In directing a question to the Premier and Treasurer, I refer to what the Premier said on radio this morning—that he will accept the umpire's decision when it comes to the Government's proposed application before the State arbitration commission to remove the annual-leave loading. That position was affirmed by Mr Lester this morning. Bearing in mind that the state of the Queensland economy will be taken into consideration by the commission—which is a requirement of the Act—in bringing down its decision, I ask: will he today give an absolute assurance that, if the arbitration commission refuses to remove the annual-leave loading from State Government employees, no employee will be sacked or made redundant?

Mr Gunn interjected.

Mr WARBURTON: What's wrong with that?

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: The Leader of the Opposition says, "What's wrong with that?" when everybody laughs. He cannot have his cake and eat it. He can have it either this way or that.

Mr Warburton: Well, tell us the truth.

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: Give me time.

As my colleague said, the whole thing stems from the treatment given to Queensland by the Prime Minister compared with the treatment given to the other States. It also stems from the way in which the Prime Minister has mishandled the economy, as my colleague said a moment ago. That demonstrates quite clearly the chaos and turmoil that exists in Australia's financial world, and how unreal it is. But be that as it may, the point is, as I said quite clearly, that it can be either one way or the other. Because of certain aspects that have come forward, and that were unknown at the time, in relation to the variations in the different holiday-pay loadings, namely from 17½ per cent up to 42 per cent—it varies right up to 42 per cent——

Mr Warburton: If you don't win the case, you're going to sack people; is that what you are saying?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I ask the Premier to continue.

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: If the honourable member waits, I will tell him; my word I will. He should not worry about that point; I will tell him if he gives me time.

As I said, there is a great variation in the loading, from 17½ per cent up to 42 per cent, that is being paid in different sections. That is something which Government members and I were not aware of, so the Government has decided that it will let the court make the decision on the basis, as I said before, that the employees cannot have it both ways. If the Government does not have the money, it cannot pay the public servants, and about 2 000 of them would have to be dismissed.

Premier's Conflict with National Party Organisation

Mr WARBURTON: In directing a question to the Premier and Treasurer, I refer him to recent statements made by the National Party's Queensland President, Sir Robert Sparkes, that the Premier had acted unilaterally in conflict with National Party policy and against public opinion in relation to certain recent decisions of the State Government. I ask the Premier: in the interests of Government credibility, will he advise whether

decisions such as those on the chlorine plant siting proposal at Lytton, contract labour legislation, abolition of holiday-leave loading and the shopping hours controversy were taken by him acting on his own, or were they in fact considered and determined by Cabinet acting on behalf of the Government? Were they his decisions, or were they his Cabinet's?

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: The honourable Leader of the Opposition is no doubt trying to draw attention away from his own real problems. There is no doubt about that. That is why he asks a question of this nature. Let me say to the honourable member that, as far as I am concerned, I have no problem and no difficulty.

Indeed, as far as the other part of his question is concerned, which asks who makes the decision, I inform him that I, as Premier, have to initiate many things. When a person initiates many things, he has to take the lead. An example of that is in relation to the proposed space station. Yesterday Mr Conrad was in Brisbane and he said how fantastic it is and that McDonnell Douglas is prepared to back it and wants to be involved in it. I have to take decisions such as those in all sorts of matters. Such decisions cannot be related back to perhaps even individual members of the party at one time; they have to be done step by step.

The honourable member and others say that the Premier should consult and do all sorts of things. I want to say to the honourable member that all the decisions ultimately are the decisions of Cabinet. That was the case with the ICI plant and the whole lot of them. Even though those decisions were not initiated by me, they were decisions made by all the Cabinet Ministers, and ultimately they are taken to the party. That is the procedure that has to be followed: through the Minister, through his committee, through Cabinet and through the party as a whole. The honourable member can be assured of that. While that policy, of which I have been able to be a part for a long time, is continued, then Queensland will continue to grow and expand. Once the policy that I have been partly responsible for in a special way is departed from, then the opposite result will occur.

Medicare Agreement's Effect on Staffing Levels in Queensland Hospitals

Mr FITZGERALD: I direct a question to the Minister for Health and Environment. I refer to his reported statements that his department is adopting a policy of higher vacancy levels in various sections of the public health system, and I ask: to what extent, if any, is the continuing discrimination of the Federal Government's Medicare agreement affecting staffing in Queensland hospitals?

Mr AHERN: The vacancy levels that have had to be maintained are being maintained because of the present need for financial restraint. But, as the honourable member makes clear, in recent times the Commonwealth Government has done little to assist Queensland in relation to those matters.

I again refer to the issue of the Medicare agreement, which must be brought to the attention of Queenslanders as they contemplate the impact of the current budgetary proposals. Under Medicare, Queensland receives some \$82.86 per capita, whilst the average of the other States of Australia is \$198.80. The South Australian Government receives \$257.46, which is more than three times the amount per capita that is received here in Queensland. If the Queensland Government was to receive the average of the amounts received by the other States of Australia, it would have an extra \$309m in its annual Budget.

Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen: They need it in Labor States because they get three times sicker.

Mr AHERN: There may be some truth in that.

If the issue of identified health grants is added to that, things are much worse. In New South Wales, if Medicare is added to the identified health grant system, the total

amount received from the Commonwealth is \$1,039m. The Queensland figure is \$205m. It is a national disgrace.

Prime Ministerial Travel Expenses

Mr FITZGERALD: I ask the Deputy Premier, Minister Assisting the Treasurer and Minister for Police: in view of the Labor Party's consistent interest in the cost of operating the Queensland State aircraft, can he advise the House how a Labor Government performs, with particular reference to prime ministerial travel costs? Perhaps the Minister can tell the House so that members of the Opposition can be better informed and will hang their heads in shame when these facts are revealed to them?

Mr GUNN: Labor members opposite belong to a party that is blatantly hypocritical in matters such as this. What they try to preach in Queensland is not what their colleagues in Canberra do when they have the opportunity.

I was staggered to read a report in the *Sydney Morning Herald* of 10 October that stated that the estimated cost of Mr Hawke's current trip to North America is \$600,000. That is a conservative estimate. That does not include the costs of the grandiose entertainment for which he has become famous, particularly when he is spending taxpayers' money.

By way of comparison, the article points out that in present-day dollar terms the cost of John Gorton's trip as Prime Minister to the United States 19 years ago would not have exceeded \$40,000. Just consider what Mr Hawke, the so called battlers' friend, needs when he goes overseas these days. When he left Australia on his sixteenth trip overseas he was accompanied by his wife, Hazel, which is fair enough, 11 personal staff, 8 departmental advisers, 3 security guards, his Melbourne doctor, an official photographer, 17 journalists and 4 TV crew. They all travelled on a 707 VIP aircraft manned in relays by 19 RAAF flight crew, maintenance staff and cabin stewards.

Also by way of comparison, I will tell the House the number of people John Gorton took with him. He took his wife, three personal staff and two departmental advisers. They travelled with Qantas, and two journalists went along for the trip. Admittedly the world security climate may have changed since the Gorton era, but even the most fair-minded and reasonable person would question an entourage that includes 11 personal staff and 8 departmental advisers. The Americans could be forgiven for thinking that the whole Hawke caravan resembles an entourage more befitting an Arab oil sheik.

The point that must be stressed is the hypocrisy of the Labor Party on such issues. Hawke can fly in a VIP jet to Barrier Reef islands for a holiday and host massive overseas entourages—and the so-called battlers' party simply turns a blind eye; not a murmur does one hear from members opposite. If Mr Warburton and his cohorts are fair dinkum—they never, ever have been—they should hang their heads in shame at this latest example of prime ministerial indulgence.

Another point is that, because there was no room for him on the VIP plane, 48 hours later Senator Button left with his entourage of another six. He arrived in San Francisco at about the same time as Mr Hawke finished his first round of golf with Mr Shultz.

Fitzgerald Inquiry, Tabling of Report

Mr BURNS: I direct a very simple question to the Premier and Treasurer, which I think requires only a "Yes" or "No" answer and not a big performance as honourable members have just witnessed. I ask: does the Premier intend to release publicly or table in this Parliament the report of the Fitzgerald inquiry when it becomes available? I ask the Premier to answer "Yes" or "No".

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: First of all, that is a matter that will be dealt with by Cabinet. A decision will be made at the appropriate time.

Mr BURNS: What have you got to hide? Come clean. What have you got to hide? You've got a lot to hide there.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Deputy Leader of the Opposition!

Importation of Cheap Cement from Asia

Mr BURNS: I direct a question to the Minister for Industry and Technology. I ask: has Atlas Cement announced plans to import cheap cement from Asia and that it intends to use Crown land at Tingira Street, Pinkenba as a storage, handling and bagging facility—as advertised in the *Courier-Mail*—for this cheap cement from Indonesia, Korea and so on?

As this operation will seriously undermine the financial viability of QCL and of Sunstate Cement—which, before it was allowed to sell cement in this State, was required to enter into an agreement to build a cement plant at Fisherman Islands—and will result in further job losses, I ask also: did the Minister consider the disastrous impact that Atlas operations will have on employment and investment before approval was given? If the Minister was not aware of these plans, what does he intend to do about the matter?

Mr McKECHNIE: Because he mentioned Sunstate in the course of his question, I thank the honourable member for it.

Some time ago this Government allowed Sunstate Cement to do certain things in Queensland provided it spent X millions of dollars. However, when Queensland Cement and Lime wanted to compete with Sunstate in South Australia, completely impossible conditions were imposed on Queensland Cement and Lime that made it unable to compete. That company is very worried about the proposed operation.

Mr Burns interjected.

Mr McKECHNIE: I will answer the honourable member's question; he should be patient. I am simply saying that when members of the Opposition start sticking up for Queensland companies that are producing cement, it is about time they also made some representations to their colleagues in South Australia, who are being completely unfair and, I think, immoral when one takes into consideration the State preference agreement. In this instance that agreement does not actually come into force, although morally it should. Something should be done about that.

In regard to Atlas Cement—I am aware that a company has applied for approval to do certain things. It is my understanding that it is not intended that Crown land be used, or certainly not land developed by my department, unless somebody has given me the wrong information. However, I will follow that up.

I can assure the honourable member that I have a very close working relationship with Queensland Cement and Lime. It has expressed its concern to me about the importation of cement. I will follow the matter up again with that company in the near future.

Standard-gauge Line between Central Queensland Hinterland and Port Petersen

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: I direct a question to the Premier and Treasurer. Is it envisaged that the proposed standard-gauge line between the central Queensland hinterland and Port Petersen will also carry cattle, grain and other products? In other words, will it be a common carrier?

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: A lot of discussion has taken place between myself, officers of my department, Mr Hancock's people and those associated with the whole project or those wishing to be associated with the whole project. This aspect has been discussed. It is indeed intended that that be so. There will be three lines to accommodate our type of carriages and equipment—our rolling-stock—and also the wider 4 ft 8½ ins gauge line.

For a long period I have wanted to break away from our narrow-gauge system. Nothing in this world will ever convince me that that is other than a desirable move. There has to be a starting point some time, somewhere. With low coal prices around the world, in order for Australia to get into the European markets every dollar must be saved in relation to transport. It can be done with a 4 ft 8½ ins gauge line. However, as I said, the third line will be put in. That is part and parcel of the proposition that will ultimately go before Cabinet.

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

MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Unsafe Tourist and Cargo Vessels, North Queensland

Mr De LACY (Cairns) (11 a.m.): Today I wish to draw to the attention of the House the perilous situation which is developing out of the port of Cairns with "floating time bombs" in the north.

The State Government, particularly the Department of Harbours and Marine and its Minister, Mr Tenni, are guilty of the grossest negligence. The reason for this untenable situation is the pathological anti-unionism of members of the Queensland Government. In their desire to get the unions, they are prepared to compromise everything, including safety standards. This anti-union obsession, together with their myopic commitment to development at all costs, their complacency and their cronyism, is putting at risk passengers, the tourist industry and north Queensland's environment.

The maritime unions, the Merchant Service Guild of Australia, the North Queensland Marine Safety Council and I have been warning of the dangers for years now. In its arrogant way the Queensland Government has brushed off our warnings as scaremongering or rabble-rousing. However, our dire predictions are coming to pass. In the last year or so there have been three major accidents in vessels plying out of north Queensland ports. In 1986, on its maiden voyage, the Sundancer burnt out an engine room and was towed into Weipa. It had no engineer on board. On Sunday, 5 July this year, the Reef Link II, a 30 metre \$2.7m tourist catamaran, was burnt out off Townsville. Had it been fully laden with 300 passengers, it could have been Australia's biggest sea disaster. It had no engineer on board because new regulations had been gazetted under the Queensland Marine Act and no longer required these vessels to carry an engineer. On Saturday, 1 August this year, there was another near disaster when the Noel Buxton caught fire with 47 passengers on board north of Cooktown. The Noel Buxton is an old hulk which has been pensioned off from the New Guinea coast. It has no automatic carbon dioxide shut-down system for fires and no registered Australian engineer.

I will tell this House more about the Noel Buxton. It is, in effect, 27 metres long. Under the Queensland Marine Act, a vessel in excess of 25 metres is required to carry a pilot. The Noel Buxton had a hole drilled in the hull so that the waterline length would be less than 25 metres. This means that the vessel is now floating on the collision bulkhead, not on the hull. Can honourable members believe that a vessel in Queensland can be surveyed and registered to carry passengers under these circumstances? Under the Marine Act, all vessels must have engine room smothering gear to extinguish fires. If the Noel Buxton had had this facility there would have been no fire. However, it seems that with old vessels it is not mandatory, yet they can still be registered to carry passengers.

Old tugs, ships and fuel lighters which can no longer pass strict safety, survey, and anti-pollution laws down south are being brought to Cairns, given a patch-up and paint job and allowed to operate to Thursday Island and gulf ports. Many of them are engaged in carrying petroleum products, as much as a million litres at a time. They do not have international and Commonwealth approved fire-fighting gear or oil-spill control. If there is a spill, there is no skimmer clean-up vessel in the north of any size and the closest is situated in Brisbane. They are badly manned because State law requires only one ticket-holder on board. These vessels on the Great Barrier Reef are floating pollution

bombs. The North Queensland Marine Safety Council has been predicting a big accident at sea at any time.

One vessel, the Kalyara, loads and transports avgas and petrol directly over the engine room and directly under the accommodation section. It goes to Thursday Island and Bamaga carrying huge quantities of this lethal cargo. One would never get away with this under Commonwealth legislation, that is, the Commonwealth Navigation Act, which lays down all sorts of conditions, specifications, separations, etc., for carrying hazardous cargo.

Now there is the spectacle on the Cairns wharf of people who are not members of the Waterside Workers Federation of Australia loading flammable material by using an ignition spark petrol-engined fork-lift. There are no warning signs in evidence and no regulations. When it goes, it will really go. The old wharf is saturated with oil, and the loading is taking place right next door to the new \$3m tourist complex at Trinity wharf. We have already had one major explosion in Cairns this year. When that wharf goes, it will make the gas explosion look like a firecracker.

The Queensland Marine Act is sadly deficient, but not only that, its provisions are not enforced or policed satisfactorily.

On 4 August this year, a Marine Service Guild spokesman, Mr Bruce Morgan, made a number of public allegations about safety regulations and enforcement in north Queensland. He said—

“. . . the Marine Board of Queensland has given so many dispensations and turned so many blind eyes to deficiencies in vessels that a lot of these ships are now death traps. The requirements of the Queensland Act are lax enough to allow quite large vessels—ships like the ‘Noel Buxton’—to operate under conditions that are far inferior to the normal regulations for vessels to operate.”

In response to these allegations, in the same article, the Minister for Maritime Services, Mr Tenni, denied them and said—

“If the Marine Board is lax people have never, to the best of my knowledge, written to me complaining where the so-called lax is.”

Because of that statement, I charge the Minister not only with gross dereliction of duty, but also with misleading the public.

I seek leave to table a letter and to have it incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

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

Anarejic Arcade

Cairns, Q. 4870.

55 Lake Street

13 October 1986.

Phone 070 512868

The Hon. M. J. Tenni, M.L.A.
Minister for Water Resources
and Maritime Services,
G.P.O. Box 2195,
Brisbane. Q. 4001.

Dear Mr Tenni,

Inadequate Surveying arrangements.

It has come to my notice that a number of inadequate surveying arrangements apply in the port of Cairns, particularly with tourist vessels operating therefrom. Problems, as they have been explained to me, are as follows:—

- (1) Some vessels are simply unseaworthy and should not be surveyed yet they are receiving tickets. I am advised that the problem does not lie at the local level but in Brisbane. I have not checked this information with the local surveyors as I did not wish to implicate them.

- (2) Inadequate procedures. After an initial inspection the surveyor prepares a deficiency listing on the boat. However, the surveyor does not re-inspect the craft after the work has been carried out—they accept a statutory declaration to that effect. This, I have been advised, is a different procedure than that which applies elsewhere and is open to abuse.
- (3) Two surveyors operating out of Cairns are overworked in that they have over 1000 vessels to survey (including Karumba).

My advice is that a number of vessels are really disasters waiting to happen. I don't have to advise you of the consequences to the tourist industry of a tragedy at sea on a tourist boat.

I would be grateful if you could investigate these claims with a view to ensuring that safety at sea remains paramount.

Yours faithfully,
Keith De Lacy, M.L.A.
Member for Cairns.

Mr De LACY: The letter was written by myself to the Minister, Mr Tenni, on 13 October 1986, almost 12 months prior to his incredible claim that no-one had written to him. In that letter I detailed, in quite specific terms, allegations about inadequate surveying arrangements which apply in the port of Cairns, particularly with tourist vessels operating therefrom. As honourable members can see from the letter, I predicted the disasters that have subsequently occurred.

The Minister was told all right. He conveniently chose to forget, which leaves him condemned out of his own mouth. He was told in a variety of other ways, too—most notably through the editorial columns of the local newspaper.

In the *Cairns Post* of 10 July this year a major article was written by *Cairns Post* reporter Mark Tuite. He quoted Bob O'Neill, North Queensland Marine Safety Council Secretary, in the following terms—

“About half the tourist operations out of Cairns did not meet Marine Safety requirements. . .”

In that article a number of other people were quoted as complaining about the inadequacy of the Queensland laws and enforcement of them. The article concluded—

“Maritime Services Minister, Mr Tenni, declined to comment on these claims.”

A month later, the Minister had never heard of them.

In the *Cairns Post* on 8 March 1985—two years ago—under a headline “Waterfront Unions Combine to Fight Shoddy Operators”, Merchant Services Guild member Mike McAuley cited the example of a passenger ship operating out of survey—that is, not up to standard—as a tourist vessel taking passengers from Cairns to Thursday Island. The article did not state as much, but he was obviously referring to the Noel Buxton. In that same article, Mr Morgan, to whom I referred earlier, said—

“Queensland Marine Board treats its own legislation as a joke.”

If Mr Tenni has not got the message, he obviously is not doing his job and should resign.

Not all companies should be lumped into the same category. Hayles has a 70-year-long accident and fire free safety record. It operates with fully certificated marine crews who attend regular fire and first-aid schools. Its record speaks for itself.

For the past two or three years Mason Shipping has had great difficulty competing with cut-price operators in the Cairns to Thursday Island shipping business. Mason operates with fully manned crews, Commonwealth regulated safety, fire, and life-saving equipment, has had no fires at sea, no oil spills and no sinkings—in the past 40 or so years. Its competitors, many of whom would not be allowed to operate out of any other port in Australia, are the old tugs and barges that I described earlier. I know of tucker-trippers and backpackers who want to hitch a ride, and desperadoes working for their keep and a few bob. All these crews are picked up off the wharf where there is always

a crowd of unemployed. They have no experience in working cargo ships or sea safety fire drills, navigation watches, etc.

How can Mason, which pays arbitration award wages and abides by the rules and regulations, compete with operators such as those who pay any wages they like and get away with anything they like—all aided and abetted by the State Government because of its obsessive anti-union attitudes? I am not picking on departmental employees. They are undermanned; and when they have tried to do something, they have been told by their superiors to lay off.

I call on the Queensland Government to make some effort to enforce marine laws and upgrade some of the laws regarding passenger, cargo and fuel-carrying on coastal traders. Unless something is done, I predict a major human or environmental disaster off our north Queensland coastline. Government members cannot say that they have not been warned.

Aspartame

Mr RANDELL (Mirani) (11.10 a.m.): I rise on a matter of interest not only to the people of my electorate of Mirani but also to all of the people of Queensland, if not Australia. In February, I raised by way of a question to the Minister for Northern Development, the Honourable R. Katter, the issue of the CSIRO/aspartame controversy. In his response the Minister, Mr Katter, said that "some very large questions" still remain as to the safety of aspartame. Only 11 weeks later, those questions were the subject of an international forum held in Washington, DC, and it is my belief that, in the light of the outcome of that forum, aspartame must be banned. I do not set myself up as a scientific expert, but I believe that there has been sufficient doubt cast on the safety of this product to ban its use until further investigations are completed.

Aspartame is an artificial sweetener, 180 to 200 times sweeter than sugar. It consists of three different chemicals. The first, methyl alcohol, or wood alcohol, is a poison which, in the quantities we are dealing with here, is probably harmless. The second is aspartic acid, an amino acid. The third, also an amino acid, is phenylalanine. It is phenylalanine that is central to this debate.

Phenylalanine is, in fact, essential for life but—and this, too, is central to the debate—phenylalanine is not found in any great amount in the brain. Phenylalanine competes with other amino acids for entry across the blood brain barrier. One of those acids is tyrosine, an acid essential to correct brain function. Too much phenylalanine means too little tyrosine, and too little tyrosine means decreased alertness, altered sleep, changes in mood, decreased learning and memory skills, decreased concentration skills, and so on.

How much, Mr Speaker, is too much? Do we know enough about this to speak with authority? I believe—and more importantly, there are many experts who agree—that we do not know enough. According to Doctors Wurtman and Maher of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, as little as 15 milligrams per kilogram per day could cause the imbalance I have described. Even the manufacturers of aspartame consider a figure of 34 to be normal. But if we compare with the people of the United States, we may end up consuming 50, and our children over 75 milligrams per kilogram per day. The United States Government has set the acceptable daily intake safety standard for aspartame at 100 times the level at which laboratory animals show ill effects. But according to Dr Fritz Hommes of the Medical College of Georgia, we do not know what levels of PHE are dangerous to pregnant mothers since there is no literature on this. According to Dr Donald Johns of the Department of Neurology at Massachusetts General Hospital, even acceptable daily intake levels can provoke adverse reactions, notably headaches in a susceptible subset of the population.

Then there are those who are at special risk. As many as one in 50—perhaps one or two of the honourable members present—are carriers of a disorder commonly called PKU—phenylketonuria. This is a genetic disorder in which the ability to process the amino acid is impaired. Without careful dietary restriction of protein, babies with PKU

may suffer severe irreversible mental retardation, and some specialists and researchers believe that there may be many people who carry the gene for PKU but show no major symptoms. For such people the risks I have already mentioned are greater; the symptoms are more likely to be worse.

Dr Paul Spiers, a clinical neuropsychologist of the Behavioural Neurology Unit and the Harvard Medical School's Comprehensive Epilepsy Centre at Beth Israel Hospital in Boston, has presented evidence that aspartame used over time might affect intellectual functioning. Dr Spiers had planned to study the effects of aspartame on individuals who reported that they had suffered seizures after ingesting the sweetener. However, to confirm the safety of the tests, he first performed them on normal control subjects.

Dr Spiers went out and selected people specifically who had a history of using NutraSweet products and were not aware of it having any adverse effects on them. He picked people who had normal neurological histories, no history of psychiatric illness and no physical problem. The group was given aspartame capsules up to the Food and Drug Administration's limit three times a day for 12 days. Unexpectedly, the researchers began to find cognitive deficits in some of the neuropsychological tests done on the group.

After undergoing a series of repetitive tests, which subjects normally improve on as they go along, the subjects using aspartame failed to improve and "some of them frankly showed a reverse pattern where their performance got worse", said Dr Spiers.

In the United States, Senator Metzenbaum announced on 16 July that he would hold a Senate hearing on NutraSweet in September. In 1985, the senator, who requested the GAO study, introduced a Bill to provide new independent safety tests for aspartame and to require label warnings.

In a news release, Metzenbaum sharply questioned the safety of aspartame.

Mr White: Do you know what you're talking about?

Mr RANDELL: I would like the honourable member for Redcliffe to listen to this. He is a chemist.

Senator Metzenbaum also reiterated that there was dissent within the FDA about the clearance of aspartame at the time of the reapproval after the board of inquiry. Metzenbaum released the results of the two-year investigation of aspartame, better known by the brand name NutraSweet, by the Government Accounting Office. The GAO is the investigative arm of Congress. As part of its report, the GAO surveyed scientific researchers for their views on the safety of NutraSweet.

Fifty-five per cent of the researchers said that they had some concerns over safety. They cited possible neurological dysfunctions, brain tumors, seizures, headaches and adverse effects on children and pregnant women. Fifteen per cent of the scientists urged a total ban on aspartame, 32 per cent called for new warnings and product-labelling, and 40 per cent called for further research.

Metzenbaum said—

"This survey of scientists only reinforces the need to investigate thoroughly the health and safety concerns surrounding this artificial sweetener."

Also in the United States the General Accounting Office sent out a questionnaire to 69 scientists. The report said that 28 replied and "indicated areas where they believed more research is needed on aspartame to resolve their concerns". It said the "areas most frequently mentioned were neurological dysfunctions, brain tumors, seizures, headaches, and adverse affects on children and pregnant women".

There may be as many as 800 pregnant PKU-carriers in Queensland—one in 50 expectant mothers. For those the risks associated with high aspartame intake are very real. Not only do those women carry higher than normal amounts of phenylalanine in their blood, and not only does that pose a danger to the child, but, if the child suffers

from PKU, without careful dietary restrictions, the researchers are saying that the risk of irreversible mental retardation is real and present.

Aspartame is intended to displace sugar in the diet, the supposed benefit being weight loss. Even that came under scrutiny in Washington, and the suggestion that aspartame acts to increase appetite was clearly made in a paper presented by Doctors Blundell, Hill and Rogers of the University of Leeds, England. Other studies of this nature were reported in Australian consumer affairs magazine *Choice*. Last December's *Choice* reported that, in fact, some authorities suggest that many people who use artificial sweeteners tend to increase their total consumption of food, leaving their total calorie intake largely unchanged, or even increased.

A recent study monitored weight changes over a one-year period in a group of 50 to 69-year-old women from every US State. The huge group of 78 694 women was highly homogeneous with the subjects being alike on 10 important variables. Within the group it was noted that the use of artificial sweeteners increased with weight and decreased with age. The study found that artificial sweetener users were significantly more likely than non-users to gain weight, regardless of initial weight, and concluded that the data do not support the hypothesis that long-term artificial sweetener use either helps weight loss or prevents weight gain. It appears that, quite apart from being potentially dangerous to health, aspartame does not even work.

For the benefit of honourable members and the press, I lay upon the table of the House *Proceedings of the First International Meeting on Dietary Phenylalanine and Brain Function, Washington, DC May 8-10 1987*.

Whereupon the honourable member laid the document on the table.

Mr RANDELL: I also lay upon the table of the House a list of products available in Queensland that contain aspartame, and seek leave to have the list incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

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

Products Available in Queensland
Containing Aspartyl-L-Phenylalanine Methyl Esther (Aspartame or APM)
Marketed Under the Brand Names 'NutraSweet' and 'Equal'.

CURRENTLY AVAILABLE

Product	Manufacturer
'Diet Pepsi'	Pepsi Cola Company Pty. Ltd.
'Equal'	NutraSweet Company Pty. Ltd.
'Just One Low Joule Soft Drink'	Specialty Waters International Pty. Ltd.
'Wrigley's Extra-Strength Chewing Gum'	The Wrigley Company Pty. Ltd.

PROPOSED

Product	Manufacturer
a low joule jelly	Arnott Harper Pty. Ltd.
a low joule jelly	Ultra-Ten Pty. Ltd. trading as 'Weight Watchers Australia'
a milk drink	unknown
an orange fruit juice	unknown

Mr RANDELL: All Government decisions must recognise a balance of argument; but I put it to honourable members that on this issue the scales are clearly tipped away from the questionable benefits attributable to reduced sugar in the diet, away from a drug allegedly increasingly implicated with brain dysfunction and towards an industry

which puts food on the table of over 200 000 Queenslanders, and towards the only sweetener which has survived the stringent testing of the US Food and Drug Administration without so much as a rumour of ill effect—that is sugar.

There is no question at all about the safety of sugar. It has been researched and found to be a natural health food; it is not like some of the artificial substitutes that have not been tested thoroughly. Sugar has been tested thoroughly. It has been found that sugar does not cause an increase in weight. Sugar is always blamed for increases in weight. However, it is not the sugar, it is what people eat or drink with it. People can eat as much sugar as they like and they will not put on weight. The consumption of sugar does not create a health problem. It is a natural food.

Mr Comben: Sweet, white and deadly.

Mr RANDELL: The honourable member for Windsor would agree with me when I say that the natural product is the best product. He would agree with me that sugar is the best product.

An honourable member: Sugar is the best stuff.

Mr RANDELL: It is.

In short—there is a growing cloud of discontent over the safety of aspartame, and even the experts cannot agree about its safety or otherwise. Until further studies are undertaken and it is proved conclusively that there is no health risk for any person, in the consumption of aspartame, the product, aspartame, should be immediately banned from sale. I have written to Federal and Queensland Ministers for Health asking that that action be taken. If Opposition members had any concern for the safety of the citizens of this State and this nation, they would back me up completely.

Family Planning Association of Queensland

Mr McELLIGOTT (Thuringowa) (11.21 a.m.): I agree with everything said by the honourable member for Mirani and understood it all very clearly. I am glad that sugar has been given his blessing as a health food.

I wish to take the time of the House this morning to make a plea to the Government to recognise the valuable work being done by the Family Planning Association of Queensland in its clinics round the State and to substantially increase its financial support of that association.

The association's activities have come into focus because of the ever-increasing concern about the spread of the various forms of sexually transmitted diseases and against a background of increases in the incidence of genital warts and herpes. In all of the debate that has surrounded the AIDS crisis, other forms of disease have to some extent been pushed into the background and yet the issues are the same.

On the one hand, in our schools there is the clear need for human relationship courses, which the Government refuses to provide. On the other hand, in the year from 1 July 1985 to 30 June 1986, the Family Planning Association provided 360 sessions to Queensland schoolchildren, involving some 14 187 students. These courses were, of course, out of school hours and non-compulsory, and therefore are not reaching anywhere near the total number of young people who would benefit from them.

Let me quote from the 1985-86 annual report in respect of Toowoomba—

“The limited counselling and education service has continued in the Department of Community Medicine premises and has been instrumental in developing a base from which public support for a clinic service has grown.”

And in regard to the Sunshine Coast—

“Community interest in developing family planning services in this area has remained high. In February a part-time educator was appointed and a limited service is now available.”

Again, I ask honourable members to note the use of that word "limited".

The association has 10 clinics operating around the State, so children in many major centres are not being reached by the association's programs. This ought to be of concern to members who represent those centres.

The second area of similarity with the AIDS debate is the use of condoms for safe sex. It will probably not surprise honourable members to know that the association has been refused permission to install condom vending machines in its clinics. Again, while the public debate has been about the use of condoms to prevent the spread of the AIDS virus, the use of condoms is recommended as an agent to prevent all forms of sexually transmitted diseases including genital warts and herpes, which are flourishing in Queensland today.

It is now considered that there is almost certainly a link between genital warts and cancer of the cervix; so not only is the Government's policy on condom vending machines adding to the risk of the spread of AIDS, but it is also increasing the risk of other life-threatening diseases.

I now turn to preventative health services provided by the association. In 1985-86, the association's clinics provided 20 191 cervical smear tests compared to 18 197 in the previous year—an increase of 11 per cent. Again, I make the point that this service is available only in those centres where the association has clinics. Women living in Gympie, Maryborough, Bundaberg and Mackay—not to mention all of the smaller towns around the State—do not have access to this service.

All women are urged to have regular smear tests, but if no clinic exists in a town the tests are performed only by the family doctor. A smear test is not provided as an out-patients service at Queensland's public hospitals.

My reason for raising this matter today is my recent knowledge of two relatively young women who have had cervical cancer detected through smears done at clinics operated by the Family Planning Association. Fortunately, in both cases early detection has meant that their lives will be saved. If the service had not been available, they could each have been terminally ill before the symptoms became obvious.

People who have genital warts are not aware that they have them. In the case of women, they are detected only by a smear test. I think that all will appreciate that for many young women the idea of fronting up to a general practitioner—especially a male doctor—for a test is not on. It may be embarrassment, or cost, or it may just be that an increasing number of women are living itinerant life-styles and regular visits to the family doctor are just not part of the scene.

Overall, just over 38 per cent of women who visit the association's clinics are under 20 years of age at the time of their first visit. Throughout the clinics, some 70 per cent are single, and of these, 18 per cent have reproductive history.

Unfortunately, family-planning is not part of the Queensland Government's health service. The Government provides a miserable \$100,000 a year to the Family Planning Association of Queensland compared to \$1.4m from the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth funds are used primarily to finance the clinical work and the State money is used for education; and so again it is the young people who are missing out on a proper sex education course.

AIDS has grabbed the headlines and it is disgraceful that Queensland will still not have compulsory classes in its State secondary schools. To some extent AIDS has disappeared from the front pages of newspapers because people have lost interest, but the problem has not disappeared.

Very recently I had my first contact with a confirmed AIDS-sufferer and I can indicate that it was quite a harrowing experience. That young gentleman has been told that he has six months to live. He told me that there are 23 others like him in Townsville and that the number is increasing. How many honourable members know the number

of AIDS-sufferers in their electorates? If there are 23 in Townsville, it is certain that there are similar numbers in Cairns, Mackay, Rockhampton and so on.

The tragedy is that these sufferers are, by and large, young people. Although we tend to think of cancer-sufferers as elderly people, a visit to the women's ward of a major hospital will show the number of relatively young women who are suffering severe gynaecological problems, including cervical cancer, which, with proper education, could have been prevented. Put very plainly—the Government, because of its failure to explain to these young people the dangers of having multiple partners without using condoms, is sentencing them to die. It is no wonder that Queensland has consistently returned the highest rate of teenage pregnancies of any Australian State. The failure of the Government to accept its responsibilities in this regard makes it imperative that it reconsider its support for organisations such as the Family Planning Association of Queensland. As I said, it provides a miserable \$100,000 to save the lives of young Queenslanders. I would estimate that amount to be about the same as it will cost to prosecute students' unions for daring to have condom vending machines on campus.

Last year 3 599 clients visited association clinics for advice on the purchase of contraceptive supplies. A total of 12 835 clients visited the clinics solely to make purchases. Yet the association is not allowed to install condom vending machines. I wonder whether the police would raid the clinics if the association dared to install those vending machines.

For the benefit of honourable members, I will read the objectives of the association because I think they say a lot. They are as follows—

- to promote responsible parenthood, a healthy family life and marital happiness, and the birth and upbringing of healthy children;

- to relieve poverty and to prevent ill health in the special field of family life;

- to carry out these objectives on a non-political and non-sectarian basis; and

- to attain these objectives by—

- providing, under qualified medical direction, family-planning centres at which medical services and advice regarding contraception, birth control and subfertility are given;

- assisting in community education concerning human relationships by the provision of courses, educators, publications and films and the use of the media;

- co-operating with other organisations which have similar objects; and

- promoting legislation, social and administration reforms relevant to the objects of the association.

I cannot believe that any member in this place would have objections to an organisation with those objectives.

What does this Queensland National Party Government do? It provides a grant of \$100,000 a year and takes back \$70,000 in pay-roll tax. Yes, the Queensland Government collects \$70,000 tax on the salaries which are funded by the Commonwealth.

Of course, the Labor Party acknowledges the emergence of women's health as a major subcategory in the health care field. I believe that organisations such as the Family Planning Association and the Women's Health Centre, Brisbane, with their mix of social and clinical care, are appropriate organisations to deal with the special problems for women to which I have referred.

The Federal Government is to spend more than \$1m in 1987-88 and \$2m in each of the following two years on evaluating tests for early detection of breast cancer and cervical cancer. The objective of the trials will be to determine whether well co-ordinated, high-quality screening tests can be made available nationally to women at risk of developing these cancers. I sincerely hope that the Queensland Health Department will be ordered to co-operate to the fullest in these trials.

Of particular interest to Queensland are proposals being developed in some States for mobile services which will make them readily available to women in outlying suburbs and in country areas. Recent evidence from overseas indicates that screening for cervical cancer has been shown to be very effective.

I recommend strongly that the Queensland Government should urgently review its level of assistance to the Family Planning Association of Queensland and co-operate with that organisation and the Federal Government in introducing services that will protect all Queensland women wherever they may live.

Most, if not all, of the other States have now established women's health advisers and I believe that if this Government had the benefit of that sort of advice it would appreciate the importance of the matter that I have raised today and would certainly reconsider its level of support for the Family Planning Association. As I have said in my speech, because of a lack of facilities and the services provided by such clinics, many young people are being deprived of early detection of various forms of cancer.

Deterioration of Tennis-courts Built by Leisuretime Constructions

Mrs McCauley (Callide) (11.31 a.m.): My topic today is tennis-courts. In the Callide Valley tennis is a very popular sport. Many church groups and other organisations have their own courts, as do several tennis clubs. Biloela also has many public tennis-courts under the control of the Banana Shire Council.

In 1984 a Brisbane company called Leisuretime Constructions built about 16 courts in the Callide Valley area. I am reliably informed that Leisuretime Constructions has paid-up capital of \$2 and is wholly owned by Nablus Pty Ltd. The face behind Leisuretime is one Barbara Cush, who was profiled a year or so ago by the finance editor of the *Sunday Mail*, Ian Muil, who described Mrs Cush in glowing terms and said that Leisuretime Constructions was "one of Queensland's biggest up-market tennis court construction companies, with an annual turnover of over one million dollars". Mrs Cush is on record in this interview with the *Sunday Mail* as saying—

"My big disappointment in life is people. I have become cynical, I suppose, because I trusted people. I don't much, anymore. It's bad being cynical. I would like to get to the situation where it would not matter if people let me down."

I will return to that quote later in my speech. I can understand those sentiments. No-one likes to be let down.

I will return to the tennis-courts themselves. Leisuretime Constructions built the courts in and around Biloela, Thangool and Goovigen using concrete and a reinforcement product called Polycrete made of polypropylene fibres. The company offered a 5-year guarantee against structural faults and held the distribution rights for the American-made fibre, which came from the Forta Corporation of Pennsylvania.

In the two years or so that Leisuretime held the Queensland distribution rights, it built 25 Forta fibre-reinforced concrete slabs. However, this wonder product was not all that Leisuretime claimed it to be and problems started to appear soon after construction of the various courts. I will take the case of the two courts at Goovigen. When the manager of Leisuretime met with the members of the Goovigen Tennis Club, he assured them that the Forta fibre that was to be mixed with the concrete would create a floating base and thus cracking would be prevented. He also assured the meeting that the old existing bitumen courts were a good enough base on which to build the new ones. However, some three to four months after construction, cracking began. Leisuretime returned and made saw-cuts in the cement along the service lines, down the centre and across the base-line. Instead of preventing further cracking, this merely exacerbated the situation and the cracks became wider, longer and more prevalent.

Leisuretime then decided to put the matter in the too-hard basket and, when contacted again, told the Goovigen Tennis Club that the contract was valid for only 12 months and that the problem was with the foundations and was therefore nothing to do with the company. That this claim is untrue can be borne out by the courts constructed

for the Banana Shire Council. Leisuretime Constructions did the foundation preparation for its courts; they are in a condition similar to that of the others.

I might point out that, as each court costs about \$12,000 to build and Goovigen is only a very small community of a hundred or so people, the task of raising the funds to pay for the two courts was a gigantic one. There are a lot of chook raffles in \$12,000.

All the other courts constructed in the Callide Valley are faced with the same problem. The courts at Thangool, which are owned by the CWA, have cracked so badly that one corner of one of the courts is in danger of falling a metre or so into the street.

Mr Mackenroth: You wouldn't think this Government would allow that to happen, would you? You would think they would do something about contractors like that.

Mrs McCauley: The McEnroe of the Chamber.

The Thangool Tennis Association had an independent engineer's report done to ascertain the cause of the problem. That report cost the association almost \$2,000, and it concluded that the cracking resulted from the following—

- (1) lack of reinforcement;
- (2) limited number of joints in a slab of this size; and
- (3) possible ground movement below the slab.

The report stated—

“The polypropylene fibre content appeared to be minimal, and while the addition of this amount of polypropylene fibres may have some beneficial effect in reducing plastic shrinkage cracking for a few hours after concreting, they do not contribute to the tensile strength and provide neither reinforcement nor crack control.”

The report further went on to say that slabs containing the normally specified amount of polypropylene fibres without conventional steel fabric reinforcement should be considered as unreinforced slabs and designed accordingly. However, this story was different from what Mrs Cush was telling people.

The magazine *Engineers Australia*, in its issue dated 18 September this year, gathered a variety of opinions on polypropylene fibres, but none of them were very positive about the benefits of this wonder product.

The chief engineer of Humes ARC, for example, is convinced that poly-fibres are not a substitute reinforcement, nor a secondary reinforcement. The director of the Master Builders Federation of Australia remarked that there seems to have been inadequate research.

Mrs Cush, however, claimed that Leisuretime had consultants who had conducted tests for it, and that the product had been tested and approved as a viable product in the presence of Leisuretime's representatives. This contrasts with the *Engineers Australia* article, which states—

“Collated fibrillated polypropylene fibres in concrete have met with some strong criticism from within the building industry since they came on the Australian market. As a result they are no longer promoted as a substitute for either reinforcing steel bar or steel mesh.”

Now, when problems are being experienced with all the courts and the Banana Shire Council has taken legal advice, Mrs Cush is quoted as saying—

“Banana Shire Council could take whatever action they like as I have gone into provisional liquidation and I am just not interested anymore.”

I would suggest that this rather cavalier attitude will not be much comfort to the Banana Shire Council, the Goovigen Tennis Club, the Thangool Tennis Association and the Thangool CWA, or any of the other organisations and private individuals who acted in good faith and had Leisuretime Constructions build their courts for them.

Earlier this year, Mrs Cush advised the unhappy tennis-players that her company was currently taking legal action against the United States company which supplied the Polycrete product. Her solicitor said that it was up to a court to decide whether the failure of the Polycrete could be said to be structural damage, thereby making Leisuretime liable for the cracks in the courts.

Now I return to Mrs Cush's remark in her interview with the *Sunday Mail*. "My big disappointment in life is people", she said. I imagine that the tennis-players of the Callide Valley echo those sentiments, particular about people who sell them a product that not only does not work but also costs them dearly.

It is all very well to say, "Caveat emptor", but country people on the whole are trusting folk, and in this matter they have been duded. I believe that Mrs Cush has an obligation to the tennis-players of the Callide Valley, which she has no intention of fulfilling. I have no doubt that her entrepreneurial spirit will surface again in another form, and I have every intention of keeping this House informed on that subject.

I doubt very much whether this matter will have a happy resolution. Going into provisional liquidation was really the easy way out for Mrs Cush. I suggest that she has got out of the matter relatively unscathed, whereas the tennis clubs and other organisations in the Callide Valley have a hard slog ahead of them. Do they try to repair their courts that are such a mess, or do they start from scratch again? Either way it will cost them a great deal of money.

Wynnum Ambulance Centre

Mr MACKENROTH (Chatsworth) (11.40 a.m.): It was pleasing to hear that speech from the Renee Richards of the Queensland Parliament.

Today I wish to bring to the attention of the Minister for Health several matters of grave concern. They relate to the Wynnum ambulance centre.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I refer to the statement made by the honourable member for Chatsworth and I ask him to withdraw that comment.

Mr MACKENROTH: I withdraw it, Mr Speaker, but could you ask the honourable member to withdraw the remark that she made?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Chatsworth will do as he is told.

Mr MACKENROTH: I have withdrawn it.

The Minister should be aware that all Brisbane metropolitan suburban ambulance stations, with the exception of the Wynnum centre, come under the administrative and operational control of one centralised control centre, the Brisbane ambulance centre. On the other hand, Wynnum operates and is administered independently of all other metropolitan stations. In fact, it is officially classified as a country station, the same as Charleville or Julia Creek. Because of this, a ridiculous situation exists where Brisbane residents not even 10 kilometres from the GPO are cut off from the Brisbane ambulance service. The situation would be laughable if it were not for the fact that people are suffering and dying needlessly as a result of the Wynnum centre's autonomy.

Since July 1986, Brisbane residents, with the exception of those residents who live in the Wynnum ambulance district, have been serviced by the QATB coronary care program. This program consists of specially trained and certified ambulance officers equipped with cardiac defibrillators and monitors. Wynnum, being classified as an autonomous country centre, has not been included in the Brisbane program. There is no doubt that the coronary care program saves lives, particularly in areas of high population density where response times are relatively fast. Conversely, the lack of the program in the Wynnum ambulance district must cost lives. Why should residents of the capital city of this State, some residing not even 10 kilometres from the GPO, be forced to tolerate this totally unjustified deprivation of ambulance services simply to

prop up an inefficient autonomous country ambulance centre whose area falls entirely within the metropolitan area of Brisbane?

I have had numerous cases of the relative inadequacy of the Wynnum centre reported to me; the latest only a matter of a few weeks ago, where a 52-year-old woman collapsed with a cardiac arrest. The Wynnum centre was able to send only one junior officer. This officer had to perform resuscitation alone for some 20 minutes until Wynnum control was able to summon an off-duty officer from his residence to assist with the case. This woman survived for several days, no thanks to the poor response of the Wynnum centre. It is unfortunate that the family of that woman believes that the Wynnum ambulance centre did a good job. That is what happens in an area such as this where people believe that their ambulance centre is providing them with a good service. If this case had occurred in another suburb, for example, one that was serviced by the Brisbane ambulance service, a two-officer crew would have been despatched immediately, with a further two-officer unit despatched as a back-up, and almost certainly one of these two responding units would have been a coronary care unit. This would have increased that woman's chances of living from 6 per cent to 25 per cent.

Wynnum has been allowed to remain autonomous because the Wynnum centre committee claims to provide a superior standard of service. I believe that the Wynnum centre committee has demonstrated already that it is unable to provide an acceptable standard of patient care relative to the standard of care enjoyed by other Brisbane residents. Because of the autonomy of the Wynnum centre, it does not integrate its operations with other metropolitan suburban stations. Instead, Wynnum uses a costly and grossly inefficient method of calling in off-duty officers from their residences when staff shortages occur. This situation can occur several times a day. This situation is not allowed to exist in other emergency services servicing the Wynnum district.

I would like to know why the Health Department has allowed this situation to continue. The Health Department recently had a perfect opportunity to amalgamate the Brisbane and Wynnum centres, with both centres at that stage agreeing to the amalgamation. However, at the last minute the Wynnum committee changed its mind and the QATB allowed Wynnum to remain autonomous. At that stage, the chairman, Mr Jim Dean, contacted me and other members of Parliament and asked for our views. We support the amalgamation of the Wynnum centre with Brisbane. For some reason—and I have been unable to discover why—Jim Dean was asked to stand down and a new chairman was appointed. As soon as the new chairman took over, the application for amalgamation with the Brisbane service was withdrawn. Later I will refer to that person. I believe that the acting superintendent at the time, a Mr F. M. Fahey, led the campaign to avert a Brisbane take-over, and, when one considers his incentives, it is not surprising that he did.

On 8 June 1987, Fahey, who was the acting deputy superintendent, took the day off. In order to receive remuneration for that period, he falsely entered in the time-sheet that he had been present at work for eight hours on that day. That day was a public holiday and he was paid at time and a half. At the conclusion of my speech I will table a letter of complaint to the Queensland Ambulance Services Board. The author of the letter asks the QASB to answer certain questions. He asks—

- “1. In claiming monies for time not worked, was an act of fraud carried out by the officers who did so?
2. If the Wynnum Committee was aware of this practice, why did they allow it to go on?
3. If the officers who claimed this money did not lose a day on their annual leave . . . why my money is being wasted?
4. What action does the Q.A.T.B. propose to take on this matter?”

The answer given to the writer of the letter is quite a surprise, because it states—

“The Board, after investigation, is satisfied that no action of fraud was intended”—
not that none was perpetrated; that no action of fraud was intended—
“by any employee of the Wynnum Committee.

The previous Wynnum Committee was aware of the practice and allowed it to continue . . .”

So the committee was aware that people were claiming that they had worked on days when in fact they had not and that those people were paid time and a half or double time. Now, because of the complaint, that day has been debited to the officer's annual leave entitlement. In other words, he has been paid time and a half for the day that he did not work and he has been debited with a day that would have attracted the usual daily rate. I will table those letters at the conclusion of my speech. Both the Wynnum committee and the QASB are aware of this, but apparently they do not mind, as Fahey was promoted to acting superintendent shortly afterwards.

On 25 July 1987, Fahey cost the subscribers of the Wynnum district in excess of \$120 for a half hour's work as a result of his delivering a key to the Wynnum centre on his day off. For an officer of a centre in a delicate financial position, Fahey seems to be pretty free with the centre's funds, at least when it concerns himself.

In relation to financial matters of the Wynnum centre, I ask: could the Minister explain why the Wynnum centre does not make available to subscribers an annual financial report?

Recently I have received some disturbing information that the Wynnum committee is contemplating the setting-up of a bogus trust fund. Apparently this trust fund would be publicly promoted as a building fund for the construction of a modern new centre and, as such, good public support would be anticipated. However, the new centre could never eventuate, as the funds would be continually siphoned off by internal transfers to other funds in order to meet anticipated deficits in the general budget, and I suppose this deficit would include lurks and perks for the administrative staff.

Can the Minister provide me with a guarantee that, if such a building trust fund is set up, its funds are used exclusively for the specified purpose and not used for anticipated deficits in the general budget?

I have referred to the committee chairman, Mr G. R. Porter. He was appointed after Jim Dean relinquished his position. Mr Porter should not be the chairman of the board.

To be eligible for appointment as a member of an ambulance board committee, a person must be a contributor. To be a contributor, a person must live in the district. Mr G. R. Porter lives at 4 Carlton Court, Birkdale, which is in the Redlands ambulance district. Mr Porter has a business at 91 Clara Street, Wynnum. I understand that he gave that address to the Wynnum ambulance service to enable him to be a contributor.

Last week I telephoned the QASB and asked who was eligible to be a contributor to a board. I was told that a person must reside in the area and that, if he does not reside in the area and pays money to a particular board, it is the responsibility of the committee of that board to pass on that money to the area in which the person lives. In fact, Porter's money should have been passed on to the Redlands ambulance committee. That should be Mr Porter's commitment to that area. If that was done, he would be ineligible to be a member of the Wynnum ambulance committee. The description of "contributor" is set out clearly in the Ambulance Services Act. Section 24 of the Act makes it very clear that a person who is not a contributor to a brigade provided and maintained by a committee should be disqualified from office.

Today I call on the Minister for Health, firstly, to sack the chairman of the board; secondly, to investigate the cases of fraud that I have brought to the notice of the House; and, thirdly, to disband the Wynnum committee immediately and to allow the Brisbane committee to take over responsibility for that area.

Many of the people living within my electorate are serviced by the Wynnum ambulance. A creek runs through the middle of the suburb of Carindale. People living on the city side of that creek are serviced by the Brisbane ambulance committee. However, people living on the eastern side of the creek have absolutely no service from

the Brisbane ambulance committee and are subject to the inferior service provided by the Wynnum ambulance committee.

Nursing Examination Results

Mr McPHIE (Toowoomba North) (11.50 a.m.): Earlier this year my attention was drawn to the results of the March Queensland nursing examinations. I became interested in those results for reasons that I will outline.

In that examination, 341 students sat and 94, or 27½ per cent, failed. Of those 94 students, 34 students were repeating the examination. Of those 34 students, 16—or 47 per cent—failed a second time.

On the face of it, those results appear to be worse than the results achieved at the previous examination. In fact, it had been suggested that those results were the worst ever. It was also claimed that approximately 60 or 70 of the 94 students who failed could reasonably have been expected to pass that examination at any other time. If that is so, I want to know what was wrong. I started looking into this matter.

Under the present program in Queensland, nursing training is a three-year course that is carried out at the training schools of our major hospitals. Nurse-educators have been appointed at those hospitals solely to instruct student nurses. During the three-year training period, the hospitals themselves conduct quite a number of examinations, including ward reports and practical reports. At the end of the three-year training period, the students sit for a State final examination, which is normally held three times a year. Students stand or fall on those results. If a student fails in one examination, she is allowed a second attempt, but that is it. The questions on the examination papers are drawn from a question bank. Past papers are not distributed, so that students cannot ascertain the types of questions that will be asked during the examination. No credit is given at any stage whatsoever for a student's hospital training and performance. I will detail that aspect later.

The big problem is that, when a student fails twice, she is completely finished. In relation to the March examination results—of the 34 students who sat for a second time, the 16 who failed for a second time were history; they were finished. Their three years of training was for absolutely nought.

I am speaking about the March examination results. I am not considering the whole system of nurse-training in Queensland. I am not dealing in any way with the possible concept of nurse-training being carried out in tertiary institutions. That is a matter for the future. I am dealing with the current examination system.

I have spoken with parents, students, hospital authorities, nurse-educators and people within the department who, I understand, are either on or connected with the Board of Nursing Studies. I have spoken mainly with parents and students, of whom some of the students were among the 94 who failed the March examination.

Some of those students who failed that examination had had top hospital examination results right throughout their three-year training. They also had top ward reports during that period and had experienced no difficulties whatever with their training at any stage. Significantly, some of them had never failed an examination of any type in their lives. It would be an understatement to say that those students were in a state of shock. Both they and their parents were absolutely mystified about what had gone wrong.

Of course, if students wanted to pay a nominal fee, a re-mark was available to them. A total of 88 of the 94 students who failed the March examination applied for a re-mark. I am satisfied that the re-mark was carried out properly and diligently. However, following that re-mark, no further passes were awarded, although some students were seriously considered for a pass.

If everything else was equal—that is, if the syllabus, the training program and the selection criteria for students when they are first brought in for training at day one have not changed—there would be a strong argument that, if significantly worse results were obtained in that one particular examination, it was not a fair test of students' knowledge.

I sought the Minister's help on the matter. He was tremendously helpful and arranged for members of his department to assist me. The Minister and I analysed the results from the final nursing examinations over a number of years as a whole and for individual training hospitals. I assure honourable members that the results in March are not the worst results that have been achieved in a final examination.

Mr Davis: When were the worst?

Mr McPHIE: I do not have that information available, because it is not relevant to the discussion at this stage.

Minor changes occurred in the curriculum, altering it from 840 hours to 1 200 hours. However, that is not significant in the context of the discussion. The thrust of the training syllabus has not changed significantly in the context of achieving those results. We found that some training schools were simply not performing up to expected requirements. On examining the matter further, we found strong evidence that in the schools that were not performing and producing the expected results, for one reason or another, the training was slanted one way and the State final examinations were slanted in another direction. The students at those training schools were at a disadvantage because they were training, expecting an examination to be slanted one way and, when they took the exams, they were being questioned in other areas, or the emphasis was in other areas. It is pretty hard to pass an examination under those circumstances. I suggest that that is why 27½ per cent of the students failed the examination.

We found that there was also trouble with the tutor sisters in that their knowledge and training were not up to a consistent standard. I believe that that is because of the high turn-over in tutor sisters at the hospitals in which difficulties were being experienced. It was evident that at one hospital, if not at more, some tutor sisters were not conversant with the topics of the lectures that they were asked to give to the students. What hope did the 27½ per cent who failed the examination have?

The Board of Nursing Studies is a body established under the Minister. It has a chairman, a deputy and 10 other members who are profession-oriented and cover a broad sector of the profession. They are responsible for the standards set for training and examining nurses. I give them credit for taking prompt corrective action following the March examination results. They identified problems and moved in and carried out corrective action.

The next examination was held in August. Although that may have been too early for the results of the corrective action that was taken by the board to filter through, the results were significantly better than in March. Of the 270 students who sat for the examination, 50, or 18½ per cent, failed. Of the 64 students who repeated, 23, or 36 per cent, failed. Those figures are down quite a bit on the March results. Better still, 64 of the 78 who failed for a first time in March repeated the examination, and 41, or 64 per cent, passed.

That vindicates my claim that originally some 60 or 70 students could have expected to pass, except that the examination at that time had a few warts in it and a few of the hospital training schools were not performing up to scratch.

The examinations in November will be the real test of whether the corrective action was successful or not. I look forward to speaking again with the Minister and his staff members to ascertain whether the results are back on the rail where they should be.

I am concerned that students who complete three years of work and fail twice in their final examination are out. They are cast aside and are finished, unless they want to go back to day one. I know that one or two students who failed for a second time in August are doing that. They are starting again at day one and they will train for another three years. That is wrong. A tremendous amount of experience and training has been cast aside. They should be allowed to repeat the third year and then sit for another examination.

No other tertiary course prescribes that students should stand or fall on one examination at the end of the time. The candidates could be given another go because only a small number would want to make nursing their career. The standards could be maintained.

In this regard, honourable members have a responsibility to the young. There should also be an annual validation course for nurse-educators with a view to raising standards.

In the final analysis, the issue hinges on the Board of Nursing Studies. It is the responsible body and its members must perform. I am sure that they will in the future, because the Minister has taken strong corrective action. Honourable members will see that members of that board will perform and will bring the nurse-training schools up to a level so that never again will problems arise such as those that presented themselves in the March examinations.

At 12 noon,

In accordance with the provisions of the Sessional Order, the House went into Committee of Supply.

SUPPLY

Estimates—Third and Fourth Allotted Days

Estimates-in-Chief, 1987-88

Employment, Small Business and Industrial Affairs

Department of Employment and Industrial Affairs

Hon. V. P. LESTER (Peak Downs—Minister for Employment, Small Business and Industrial Affairs) (12.01 p.m.): I move—

“That \$29,402,000 be granted for ‘Department of Employment and Industrial Affairs’.”

In presenting my department’s Estimates for 1987-88, I would like to briefly outline the diverse responsibilities—

Mr McPhie: Your microphone is not on.

Mr LESTER: I knew there was something up.

Mr Prest: And it wasn’t your mike.

Mr LESTER: Mr Chairman, I do not think that the member for Port Curtis is in a position to comment on things such as that.

I wish to outline the diverse responsibilities and activities of my portfolio, the important services my department renders to the people of Queensland and the department’s plans for the current financial year.

Basically, my department’s role may be stated as being—

to foster a workplace and market-place environment conducive to the economic and social benefit of the people of Queensland.

The department administers 30 Acts and its responsibilities encompass a wide range of distinct but related activities.

I am happy to report that Queensland’s industrial dispute record is now one of the very, very best in Australia. The State has reduced its rate of industrial disputes per thousand employees in the last 12 months to less than half the rate that occurred in the previous 12 months, and to only one-quarter of the rate for the 12 months to May 1985.

The latest figures available show that, during the 12 months to May 1987, 114 working days were lost per thousand employees in Queensland. This compares most

favourably with the Labor States of New South Wales, which lost 243 days per 1 000 employees; Victoria, 220 days lost; and Western Australia, 241 days lost. Nationally, 196 days were lost per 1 000 employees, and that has been recorded. Only 95 600, or 8.4 per cent of the 1 133 500 working days lost in Australia due to industrial disputes were recorded in Queensland.

In an endeavour to overcome the increasingly unrealistic demands made by some unions, legislation has been introduced to permit the making of voluntary employment agreements to provide a greater measure of flexibility in aspects of award employment conditions in Queensland.

Honourable members will be well aware that a committee of inquiry was recently appointed to inquire into and report upon the operation and efficacy of the provisions of the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act. Furthermore, the Government has continued to intervene in National Wage Case hearings to argue for a wages outcome consistent with the needs of the economy of Queensland.

Demands for trade-based occupational superannuation continued to be placed high on the industrial relations agenda in 1986-87. Industrial pressure in breach of the Industrial (Commercial Practices) Act led the Queensland Government to take action under that legislation.

In late 1986 the Government served a Supreme Court writ on the State-registered Plumbers and Gasfitters Employees Union and its officials, claiming breaches of the Act. A second action under the Act involved unions in the coal-mining industry. Both actions are continuing.

The Industrial Affairs Advisory Unit, which was established in my department in 1984, has continued to be a very important source of independent information and guidance for employers, employees and other interested persons seeking advice on industrial relations issues and on problems arising in the workplace.

Another important area of my department is the Industrial Inspection Branch. This branch performs a vital role in contributing to industrial harmony by providing an independent advisory service, supplying current information on the provisions of various State industrial Acts, regulations, awards and industrial agreements. During 1986-87 a total of 24 089 inspections, which resulted in arrears of wages amounting to in excess of \$926,000 being adjusted on behalf of employees, were undertaken by industrial inspectors.

Mr Davis interjected.

Mr LESTER: Even the member for Brisbane Central would most certainly have to agree that that is a most magnificent effort on the part of my inspectors, and I congratulate them.

Regular appreciation courses for personnel in private industry, employer organisations and employee organisations have continued to be conducted throughout the year.

The industrial relations community continued to be well serviced by the Industrial Court and the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Commission on all matters whether conciliatory, arbitral or judicial in nature. The Industrial Court and Commission are in the forefront of courts and tribunals throughout Australia in responding to and resolving matters within their respective jurisdictions. The ready accessibility of the Industrial Commission has been well demonstrated throughout the year. Conferences, inspections and hearings have been held in most provincial centres, as well as in many remote locations, to meet the needs of employers and employees throughout Queensland.

As announced in the Budget on 8 September 1987 by the Honourable the Premier and Treasurer, the Industrial Relations Division of the former Department of the Public Service Board has been transferred to my department as the Public Sector Industrial Relations Division. The role of the division continues to be one of providing industrial relations advice to the Government in terms of its responsibilities as an employer. In a time of rapid change and an ever-increasing emphasis on issues such as technological

development, the responsibility to ensure that employees' needs are appropriately catered for remains a significant one.

One of the most controversial domestic issues of recent times has been the question of trading hours. In January this year a committee was appointed, under the chairmanship of Mr Don Young, former Director of the Department of Industry Development, to carry out a comprehensive review of trading hours in Queensland. The report of the committee was examined by Cabinet and as a result honourable members will be aware that I introduced a Bill into the House in this regard last Thursday.

Turning now to the question of employment—at September 1987, 1 121 600 persons were employed in Queensland. This represents an increase of 10 600, or 1 per cent, over the last 12 months. Over the last five years Queensland's labour force has increased by 155 300, or 14.4 per cent, to 1 236 300. The Australian labour force has increased by 11.7 per cent in the same period. This high rate of labour force growth in Queensland can be attributed in part to an increase in labour force participation among women and in part to high levels of migration into the State.

Migration is a major contributor to Queensland's very high level of population growth. During 1986, Queensland's population grew at a rate of 1.85 per cent. This is almost 30 per cent faster than the national population growth rate. In this period more than 25 000 migrants came to reside in Queensland. Of these, 13 227 were from other States and 11 774 were from overseas. This State's rapid rate of interstate migration and population growth has been continuing for many years. In the last few days results have been released from the 1986 national census. They show that between the 1981 census and the 1986 census a massive 31 per cent of Queensland's 280 000 population growth has come from interstate migration alone. In view of the very rapid rise in the State's population, we have adopted a number of initiatives aimed at maximising employment opportunities in this State. These are administered by the Division of Employment Planning and Training.

During 1986-87, the State Government Employment Initiatives Program consolidated and enhanced the initiatives available to assist unemployed Queenslanders to obtain work. Funds totalling \$1.72m were made available in 1986-87 for this program. These were utilised to provide training and support services, foster enterprise and create incentive. The program has proved immensely successful, assisting more than 4 100 unemployed people during the last financial year. The 1987-88 Budget allocation of \$1.75m will ensure the continuation of these successful initiatives.

A total of 90 applications were approved during 1986-87 under the Self Employment Venture Scheme, which provides opportunities for unemployed persons to develop their own small-business ventures. Assistance is by way of a combination loan/grant of up to \$4,000 for eligible participants. Businesses funded included a public relations consultancy, a musical instrument repairer and a picture framing service. A Budget allocation of \$700,000 has been made for this scheme in 1987-88.

The Innovative Employment and Training Scheme provides for grants of up to \$30,000 to incorporated community and business groups to enhance the employment readiness of the unemployed. During 1986-87, a total of 42 applications were funded under this scheme, including hospitality training courses, mature unemployed training programs, office and retail skills courses and a job placement and advice service. A sum of \$700,000 has been allocated for this scheme in 1987-88.

The Local Employment Development Scheme provides funding for business groups and community groups that desire to develop employment opportunities in their particular areas. A sum of \$50,000 has been provided in the 1987-88 Budget to finance this scheme. Between 10 and 20 groups will be assisted during the year.

The Local Government Employment and Training Scheme assists local government to initiate and foster local and regional employment and training programs. Grants of up to \$40,000 are available. Further assistance on a sliding scale may be made available over the following two-year period. Four authorities were granted assistance under this

scheme in 1986-87. A Budget allocation of \$200,000 has been made available for the scheme in 1987-88.

Another important area that has had a marked impact on employment prospects for young people in Queensland is traineeships. Traineeships under the Australian Traineeship Scheme, aimed primarily at 16 to 18-year-old persons, involve a combination of on-the-job and off-the-job training. They are designed to improve training levels and skills in non-trade areas of the work-force and are focused on entry-level training for young people. Traineeships operate under the Industry and Commerce Training Act and a key feature is the concept of a trainee wage. A negotiated trainee wage takes into account time spent in training off-the-job, the value of the training to the trainee and the trainee's productivity. The Government provides a rebate of pay-roll tax paid on the wages of trainees and travel and accommodation assistance to trainees when attending the off-the-job component of their traineeships. Traineeships under joint State/Commonwealth administrative arrangements have already been developed for a number of occupations, within the following industries: public sector (Commonwealth, State and local Governments), building and construction, automotive, rural, tourism and hospitality, warehousing, commerce (general office), furniture removal, retail, insurance, banking and textile, clothing and footwear. In the current financial year an allocation of \$200,000 has been directed to the development and implementation of further traineeships in Queensland.

At 30 June 1987 the Queensland Government was financially supporting 16 Group Training Schemes in various centres throughout the State. Equal funding is provided by the Commonwealth Government. Group Training Schemes are designed to create additional training positions by utilising the spare training capacity of employers normally unable to engage apprentices or trainees directly for economic or other reasons. Group Training Schemes offer a high standard of quality training through the systematic rotation of apprentices and trainees amongst participating host trainers.

At the end of the 1986-87 financial year 761 apprentices and 29 trainees were employed under these 16 schemes. Four new schemes are expected to commence in 1987-88 and it is expected that the numbers of apprentices and trainees contracted to the schemes will increase to more than 1 200. This forecast rate of growth is based on the ever-increasing awareness of small-to-medium businesses of the benefits offered by group scheme participation. The expected growth rate is also supported by the continued development and acceptance by industry of traineeships under the Australian Traineeship System.

Owing to the likely rapid expansion of the schemes in the numbers of apprentices and trainees employed, State Government funding for the 1987-88 financial year has been increased to a total of \$700,000. This funding will result in enhanced training and employment opportunities for many young Queenslanders.

Mr Davis: Come on, put a little more feeling in your presentation.

Mr LESTER: It would be better if there was a little less noise from the member for Brisbane Central.

Public expenditure in Australia as an investment in education and training is comparable with countries such as the United States, Japan, and West Germany. Unfortunately, the same cannot be said for the level of investment by the private sector, that is, employers and individuals. Given the relationship between training and productivity, there is a clear need to boost private-sector investment levels. There is no doubt that various factors in the work-force, including work practices, skills and the technology employed, if properly matched, can lead to increased productivity. In other words, it is the appropriate mix of these factors which will determine the level and quality of output.

In view of this, there is a clear need to develop a program focusing on skills and other related factors aimed at improving the productivity of the Queensland work-force. To optimise the benefits of investment in education and training, employers must become aware of the importance of an interdependence of skills, technology and work practices in the production process. To achieve this, it is proposed to develop a seminar package

which will be aimed at equipping employers and unions with the skills necessary to recognise and deal with factors that are hindering the production process at the enterprise level. Such a package would then be used at a proposed series of some 25 seminars to be conducted throughout the State.

The introduction of the Training Audit Assistance Scheme and the Key Personnel Retraining Assistance Scheme in 1986-87 provided a means by which industry can establish training plans and upgrade the skills of critical members of its work-force to cope with changes in technology, markets and work practices. The schemes have provided an effective means of enhancing training levels at the enterprise level.

In 1987-88, \$255,000 will be provided under both these schemes, which will enable a minimum of 50 organisations to be assisted. In addition, assistance will be available on a pilot basis to companies that have reached agreement with their work-force on the promotion of improved work practices and skills formation processes. This would include the introduction of innovative management practices and improved training and retraining of workers, especially to cope with new technology.

The Division of Employment Planning and Training is also involved with the Work Skill Australia program. Queensland was represented by 91 young people from six regional areas at the third national finals of Work Skill Australia, held in Adelaide in June 1987. Those Queenslanders there were very proud to see the young people of this State doing so well. Of course, there were some 540 competitors in 32 official categories and 10 demonstration categories. The young Queenslanders accounted for 21 per cent of the medals awarded, winning seven gold, nine silver and four bronze medals. The seven gold medal winners will be part of the team to represent Australia at the 29th International Skill Olympics to be held in Sydney in February 1988.

Interest in this competition continues to be high in Queensland, and planning has commenced for the conduct of six regional competitions at north Queensland, central Queensland, Wide Bay/Burnett, Brisbane, Toowoomba and on the Gold Coast during 1988. An allocation of \$25,000 has been provided towards this program in 1987-88.

A door knock of employers to encourage employment of additional apprentices and trainees was held in February 1987. This door knock had a positive result, with in excess of 100 new apprenticeships becoming available. Future door knocks are planned and will concentrate on specific industries. Although apprenticeship commencement figures for 1986-87 are marginally down on the average for the past 10 years from 1975-76 to 1985-86 for the manufacturing trade group, it is pleasing to note that there has been a substantial increase in commencements in the services sector, particularly in the hospitality and hair-dressing areas.

In the area of statistics, the Government Statistician's Office has continued to maintain close liaison with the Australian Bureau of Statistics on statistical matters affecting Queensland. The Government Statistician's Office provides operational support to the Queensland State Statistics Co-ordinating Committee, particularly in the area of ensuring that maximum benefit is obtained for the States from statistical work undertaken by the Australian Bureau of Statistics in Queensland. A major initiative of the Government Statistician's Office is the establishment, in conjunction with the State Health Department, of the Queensland Drug and Alcohol Related Statistical Data Centre. It is interesting that the Minister for Health has come into the Chamber to hear me make this announcement. The centre is designed to provide statistical information necessary to assist in—

- determining the extent and nature of alcohol and drug use and alcohol and drug-related problems in the community; and
- the development of programs aimed at improving responses to alcohol and drug-related problems.

The centre will also enable Queensland to participate in the National Drug Related Data Network.

The Workers Compensation Board of Queensland administers the most efficient workers' compensation system in all of Australia, with benefits provided to injured workers being comparable with those paid in other States. A national survey released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics during the last financial year showed that workers' compensation charges per employee were lowest in Queensland. It was estimated that, as a percentage of total wages costs, workers' compensation charges were highest in South Australia at 3.6 per cent, followed by New South Wales at 3.5 per cent and Victoria at 2.8 per cent. As the report which I tabled in Parliament last week shows, the current figure for Queensland is 1.5 per cent of total wages.

The board continues its endeavours to maintain at the highest possible level the merit bonus system of rewarding safety-conscious employers. Provision has been made in the appropriations of the Workers Compensation Board for the current levels of merit bonus to be maintained this year, and \$58m is currently being credited to safety-conscious employers in their assessments to renew policies to 30 June 1988. The board's merit bonus scheme is unique in Australia and is considered one of the best in the world. I believe it to be the best. During 1986-87 there was an 8 per cent decrease in the number of claims for compensation lodged, and this is attributed to greater emphasis being placed on safety in the workplace. I take this opportunity to congratulate employers and employees alike.

The rate of industrial accidents in Queensland's work-force has fallen for the fourth year in succession. Between 1981-82 and 1985-86 the industrial accident rate fell from 80.6 per thousand employees to 57.6 per thousand. This represents a reduction of almost 30 per cent in the injury rate in the State's work-force over the four-year period. That is something everyone can be proud of.

A triennial premium rate review has been completed to adjust premium rates from 1 July 1987, on the basis that those industries with adverse claims experience are subjected to premium rate increases, whilst industries with improving claims experience benefit from premium reductions. In the last review, 170 rates were reduced, 190 were increased and 24 remained the same. Sixty-seven per cent of the rates in Queensland are now lower than the rates which applied in 1976. That is a record that no other State can boast of.

Apart from the merit bonus scheme, the board continues to encourage safety within industry by providing grants to various organisations involved in the treatment of injured workers or the promotion of safety.

The board has broadened its rehabilitation programs for injured workers by extending rehabilitation counselling services in Brisbane and appointing permanent counsellors in Rockhampton and Townsville. This will ensure that the board's 20 district offices throughout the State are provided with adequate rehabilitation review facilities.

The board's rehabilitation unit at South Brisbane has now commenced operations. In order that injured workers may return to the work-force as early as possible, they can now be assisted through occupational therapy, physiotherapy and work conditioning. Rehabilitation work trialling and training programs are being intensified and will involve a growing number of the board's clients.

The Division of Occupational Safety is charged with the most important role of ensuring compliance with prescribed safety measures in industry and of providing adequate safety education in the principles and practices of occupational safety.

As I have stated on many occasions, I believe that occupational safety is an area that needs much attention, particularly in view of the millions of dollars that are still being paid out each year in Queensland by way of workers' compensation to people who are injured at work.

In the current environment, there is an urgent need to create in the community at large a greater awareness of the importance of occupational safety and of the extent to which it depends upon the understanding and alertness of the individual. To this end, the division has prepared a comprehensive occupational safety training package that will

be instructive in providing practical working solutions to an extensive variety of problems encountered in the workplace. It is intended that the package be accessible to the greatest possible number of persons in both Brisbane and country centres.

An integral feature of the educational program is four fully equipped mobile display vans which will be taken to agricultural and other rural shows. In addition, they will be used in such places as Careers Week and Safety Week displays, industrial and factory sites, schools and colleges. These vans have video equipment for the showing of occupational safety films and also feature the DOS robot. He is an interesting character, especially for young children, and has been a very positive move by the department. I congratulate the officers involved on making those decisions. Two of the display vans will be operated from Brisbane and one each from Townsville and Rockhampton.

Safety Week, which is held each year throughout the State, is another way in which the safety message is being conveyed to create a greater public safety awareness.

The Division of Occupational Safety has inspectors of machinery and inspectors of construction safety located at major provincial centres so as to provide a service to all areas of the State. During 1986-87, inspectors continued to service industry, with a wide range of machinery and equipment being checked and tested, including lifts, escalators, cranes, boilers and pressure vessels. A particularly high level of activity was maintained by the lift inspectorate owing mainly to the commercial development in the Brisbane area and the tourist accommodation in the Cairns, Townsville and Gold Coast regions. A total of 313 lifts and 59 escalators were installed or modernised, tested and passed as satisfactory during the period and 2 172 periodical inspections on lifts in use were carried out.

The total value of construction work notified to the division during the year increased by almost \$400m to approximately \$1.8 billion. This construction work involved 3 355 notifications and required 13 770 inspections by inspectors of construction safety. The division conducted safety training in the areas of rigging, scaffolding, the use of explosive-powered tools, trenching, formwork and falsework, and dogmen throughout the State and produced and distributed a variety of informative publications.

A significant decrease in the number of fatal accidents investigated under the provisions of the Rural Machinery Safety Act occurred during 1986-87. Four deaths were reported during this period, compared with 13 in 1985-86.

The horology section of the division plays an important role in servicing some 50 000 clocks and other timepieces owned by the Government.

In the area of consumer affairs, Queensland is still regarded as being in the forefront of consumer education. During the year ended 30 June 1987, the jurisdiction of the Consumer Affairs Bureau was extended to the business community, including primary producers. It was considered that these people should be afforded the same protection as exists for ordinary consumers insofar as goods and services are concerned to a monetary value of \$40,000. The bureau received 5 591 formal complaints and dealt with 50 000 telephone inquiries from consumers seeking advice or assistance during 1986-87. Complaints lodged by small business now account for 11.3 per cent of all formal written complaints.

To complement the willingness of the small-business people seeking information and assistance, the bureau is to embark on a small-business education program later this month. This program is the result of market research conducted in late 1986 to assess the needs of the small-business sector. The program is a public information campaign, which will provide booklets, posters and information sheets explaining the small-business and rural community's rights and responsibilities under legislation administered by the bureau.

The Consumer Affairs Bureau has also been particularly active in schools during the year. A Statewide school consumer-education survey was conducted to assess the present use of bureau resource materials in Queensland schools and to ascertain whether any additional consumer-education materials were needed. As a result of this survey,

326 primary, secondary and special schools requested additional consumer-education resources from the bureau. This level of interest indicates the ongoing input of the bureau into the State's school curriculums.

The Consumer Affairs Bureau has begun the first stage of a Community Consumer Education Program, which will provide community organisations with a seminar resource kit covering all important aspects of consumer education. It is envisaged that the kit will include a series of lecture notes, graphics, case studies and overhead transparencies to be used in conjunction with videos on loan from the State bureau library.

At present the bureau has difficulty meeting all the requests for officers to address community groups. The community seminar resource kit should enable metropolitan and provincial community organisations to conduct seminars locally and independently of the bureau.

The Consumer Affairs Council is undertaking a review of legislation administered by the bureau. This project entails reviewing and comparing the Queensland Consumer Affairs Act and the Door to Door (Sales) Act with equivalent legislation adopted by the Federal Government and other State Governments. The project is Queensland's contribution to a national move for Australiawide uniformity of consumer-protection legislation, including fines and penalties imposed for offences under such legislation, and is expected to greatly benefit the business sector in interpreting these Acts. The regulations under the Consumer Affairs Act are also being reviewed to ensure that they reflect changes within industry to meet community and business needs.

I would like to express my thanks to Mr Greg Power, the Commissioner for Consumer Affairs, who is currently on pre-retirement leave, for his contribution to Queensland and its people over the past 28 years.

The Weights and Measures Branch of the bureau is responsible for ensuring that a fair and just basis of trade exists. The branch's new building, Metrology House in Water Street, Spring Hill, is now operational. Honourable members should have seen the premises in which that branch was previously operating. The new building is a great step forward. That facility is regarded as the best equipped in Australia and provides the first permanent home for metrology in Queensland since the branch commenced operations in 1924. That will be the most modern in Australia and will provide training for young people, which is something that the Governments in other States have not thought of.

The number of weighbridges in the State continues to increase, with over 700 now in operation. In order to provide improved services to industry, a second mobile weighbridge-testing unit has been purchased. This unit is based in Rockhampton and services the northern areas of the State.

The first unit, which is based in Brisbane, has proven to be very successful in terms of both time-savings and increased efficiency. This, of course, has been of considerable benefit to industry by reducing costs of inspections to weighbridge-owners and operators. The commissioning of the second mobile unit extended these benefits to industry in the areas covered by its operations.

On 1 December 1986 the operations and activities of the Small Business Development Corporation were included in my ministerial responsibilities. The Queensland Government is fully aware of the vital contribution made to the State's economy by small business and desires to do everything possible to foster the growth and well-being of this important sector.

The corporation provides a single point of contact for business persons wanting information or advice. Its objective is to stimulate business growth and enhance job prospects by assisting and advising intending and existing small-business operators in such matters as—

- establishing a business;
- undertaking market research;

- preparation of a suitable business plan;
- realising business opportunities; and
- achieving objectives and successful results.

In 1987-88 the Small Business Development Corporation will have a total budget of \$2.02m. This represents an increase of 10.6 per cent on 1986-87.

It was very pleasing to note that last financial year the Anzac Day Trust was able to distribute a total of \$407,929 to organisations for assistance they provided in connection with the welfare of needy ex-servicemen and women and their dependants.

Although I have endeavoured to make some comment on as many aspects of my department's operations as possible, I have deliberately restricted the length of my speech. I have done this in order that the maximum number of honourable members may be afforded an opportunity to participate in the debate. I look forward with great anticipation to hearing each member's contribution.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I inform the Committee that, on the Vote proposed, I will allow a full discussion on all of the Minister's departmental Estimates (Consolidated Revenue, Trust and Special Funds).

For the information of honourable members, I point out that the administrative acts of the department are open to debate, but the necessity for legislation and matters involving legislation cannot be discussed in Committee of Supply.

Mr McLEAN (Bulimba) (12.39 p.m.): The Employment and Industrial Affairs Department is a vital wing of Government. I, along with all other Opposition speakers, will be pointing out our disgust at the manner in which the Minister and this Government are treating this area of Government responsibility.

The Employment and Industrial Affairs Department's responsibilities affect in some way, every day, the lives of just about every Queenslanders. For the Minister of this department to properly and competently administer the responsibilities under this portfolio, he must be fair and just, he must be seen to represent both sides and he must provide an avenue to all parties to be treated fairly.

This department should provide the safety-valve machinery to allow all sections of our community and industry the right to a fair go.

Opposition members are talking about the areas of Government responsibility which affect wages and conditions for workers in Queensland, job safety, workers' health, apprenticeships, workers' compensation, prices, consumer affairs, factories and shops, the Industrial Commission, trading hours and public holidays. The Minister's responsibility covers a wide scope.

Employment, Small Business and Industrial Affairs is an important portfolio. It is one under which all sections of Queensland's community should be given a go, or should be given the right to have a fair go. During the previous 12 months, the real arrogance of this Government has emerged through this portfolio. Of all of the portfolios it is probably the best example that could be given of this Government's arrogance.

In place presently is the most repressive anti-worker legislation that has been brought forward in the history of this country—and there is quite a bit more to come, of course. Over the previous 12 months, the resources of the Employment and Industrial Affairs Department have been used to formulate legislation that is specifically designed to smash the trade union movement, and to erode the wages and conditions of Queensland workers. It is also designed to erode and destroy the independent arbiter—the Industrial Commission—or to weaken it to a point at which it is no longer effective. Legislation has been produced that has loaded the gun very much in favour of employers. Workers in this State are being treated as second-class citizens, to say the least.

In his speech the Minister mentioned the 17½ per cent leave loading proposal. As I see it, the Government has not changed its policy in respect to that proposal at all. It is holding a gun at the head of the Industrial Commission and it is threatening in

advance that mass sackings will occur if the commission does not scrap the loading. In my opinion, that is absolute contempt for the whole principle behind the establishment of the Industrial Commission.

In deciding that matter, the commission is required to take into account the state of the economy. It seems that, even if the commission were to decide that the economy could afford the payment of a leave loading, the Government will retaliate through mass dismissals. That type of arbitration—under Government threat—is what Minister Lester describes as “abiding by the umpire’s decision”.

In relation to this leave loading question, the Government appears to be very confused about just where it stands. In this morning’s *Courier-Mail*, Mr Lester said that the Government has been advised “that unions would be eligible for Federal award coverage if the Government legislated to remove the holiday loading.” I put it to the Minister: would they not still be eligible for Federal award coverage in the event of the loading’s being withdrawn by the commission, particularly in the case in which the commission’s decision has been made upon an application made by the Government—accompanied by declared threats of sackings—if the verdict goes against the Government? I put it to the Committee that the Minister is quite confused about this matter. The only thing that the Minister can do at this stage is come out and admit that he has made one big mess of this whole incident.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I remind the honourable member that previously I stated that I would allow a full discussion of the administrative acts of the department but not matters pertaining to legislation. I advise the honourable member to return to the subject-matter under discussion.

Mr Lee: Stay way off it.

Mr McLEAN: Right.

Over the last 12 months, as I said before, people have seen the real arrogance of this Government. Holiday-leave loading was an example that I probably had to give. I am glad that I got it in.

Mr FitzGerald: That is contempt for the Chair.

Mr McLEAN: What I was talking about is contempt for the role of the commission, so it is probably very similar.

The Minister, in his first speech as a Minister in the Estimates debate in 1984-85, said—

“The department has come alive, it is more personal, and it is closer to the people. It is a department for the people and is working for a better deal for all Queenslanders.”

I am not sure whether the Minister lives in fantasyland or whether he is a victim of his own outlandish propaganda: but if one looks at the annual report of the 1986-87 Department of Employment and Industrial Affairs in relation to some of the problems that are facing Queensland in the matter of unemployment—which I will touch on later in my speech—reference is made to “Events of Significance” on page 1. That part of the report reads as follows—

“During the report period the following noteworthy events occurred:—

- On 1 December 1986 the operations and activities of the Small Business Development Corporation were included in the portfolio of the Honourable the Minister.
- The Industrial (Commercial Practices) Act was amended to have application to primary boycotts . . .”

The Industrial (Commercial Practices) Act was amended, and it is a shame that the Minister did not set up a fair committee to review that Act in the same manner as he set up a committee to review trading hours. I agree with the Minister’s action in regard

to trading hours and I think that the Minister has set the committee up properly. It is a shame that he did not do the same with some of his industrial legislation.

In the annual report, under the heading "Events of Significance" are listed some of the things that, in the Minister's opinion, have happened in the department. They included new trade callings for green-keepers and motor mechanics. They also touched on the release of the Green Paper; the successful staging of the training for industry month; that agreement was reached on the standardisation of all manufacturing designs for Australia; that two new schemes were introduced for training; and that the development of the Australian traineeship system was further enhanced. There were a couple of other major statements, of which the following is a classic—

"Community interest in providing information on products considered dangerous has increased considerably."

I am glad that that is in the report. Further statements under the same heading are—

"A resource booklet for safety management personnel entitled 'Queensland Industrial Accidents Data Base'

. . .

The first monorail system in Australia was approved

. . .

Work commenced on the production of a new Code of Practice for the Sugar Industry . . ."

The annual report lists such things as events of significance in the Minister's department.

Mr Lester: You've got to remember that you've got to do something for everybody.

Mr McLEAN: As I see it, that is about the priority that the Minister puts on that department.

Mr Lester: No, you've got to help everybody. You can't be big and corporate.

Mr McLEAN: It is. As the situation stands now, it will not be long, as I see it, before the Minister and his Government are brought back to earth, because the workers in this State will not accept for too long the treatment that they have been given. I can assure the Minister that at the next election the Minister will feel their wrath.

Mr Lester interjected.

Mr McLEAN: We will see about that, too. But a bigger certainty than that is that the Minister, because of his industrial relations policies, will be defeated at the next election.

I bring to the Minister's attention the number of rallies and meetings that have been held. Just about every day of the week one can walk outside this place and see people queued up. One is aware of the public comment from a wide and varied section of our community, not only from the areas that have been traditionally opposed to the Minister and his politics and to the extremisms of this Government, but also from areas that have been supporters of the National Party—and that particular section is growing. At different centres throughout the State, on probably 70 or 80 occasions, I have spoken to workers and job meetings, etc., and I can assure the Minister that it is a fact that, at the present time, because of his handling of the industrial relations portfolio and the way in which he is treating workers in this State, the feeling is against the Government.

I wish to point out the hypocrisy and the deceit that the Minister is peddling on a daily basis to the people of Queensland about some of the legislation. If one looks at the annual report from which I quoted earlier, one will see a typical example of that hypocrisy and deceit. Queensland has the highest unemployment figures in Australia,

and for far too long that has been the case. Yet the Minister comments in that annual report that—

“Unemployment in Queensland during 1986-87 generally followed the national trend.”

The real situation is that 9.7 per cent of Queenslanders are out of work. The latest figures show that unemployment in Australia took a dramatic dive last month to fall below 8 per cent to 7.7 per cent. Once again, Queensland's unemployment figures of 9.7 per cent showed no change. In fact, Tasmania, which for a long period has had a struggle with its unemployment, has a lower level of unemployment than Queensland. It bears pointing out that Tasmania also has a tory Government. The unemployment figure for Tasmania is 9.4 per cent; New South Wales, 8.7 per cent; Western Australia, 7.4 per cent and Victoria, 5.9 per cent.

The 1985-86 annual report of the Department of Employment and Industrial Affairs states—

“The Queensland Government's policy of providing a suitable environment and necessary infrastructure to maintain strong private sector growth remains a powerful impetus to employment growth in the State.”

The report also said that the number of people entering the Queensland work-force and seeking employment limited the ability of the labour market to substantially reduce the level of unemployment.

The 1986-87 annual report contains more mumbo-jumbo of this nature. It states—

“The 1986/87 year saw an acceleration in the rate of structural change in Queensland and Australian industries. This can be attributed to the unfavourable balance of payments experienced by the nation and the substantial depreciation of the Australian dollar. These factors resulted in significant changes in the industry structure of the national labour force.”

By stating that, does the Government admit that Queensland is the only State that has not adjusted? Are we to believe that Victoria, for instance, which has managed to lower its unemployment figures to 5.9 per cent, was not affected by the factors mentioned, or are we to quite rightly believe that this Government has no answers to the problem of unemployment?

Unemployment is the most pressing problem facing Governments today. It must be given priority and treated with the utmost importance. Unfortunately, nothing in the Estimates presented by the Minister gives hope that the dismal performance of the Queensland Government in this area of job-creation will improve. In fact, if there is to be any sort of movement at all, I can see only a deterioration.

Once again there is a lack of real employment programs being put into place. I must add that the Minister has had time for his plans to work. As Minister, he delivered his first Estimates speech in 1984. I remember clearly that at that time, in regard to job-creation and training schemes, he proposed three reviews, one study, one investigation, one inquiry and two promotions. That was the full extent of the job-creation and training schemes in the 1984 Estimates speech of the Minister. Three years later some results should be evident, but that is not the case. All that has happened is that Queensland, with month after month of high unemployment figures, is dragging the chain to the point that it is holding back any Australiawide recovery. As I said, those three reviews, one study, one investigation, one inquiry and two promotions have provided no results to date. All that the State has is 9.7 per cent of its work-force unemployed, with little chance of improvement in the future.

The Minister and the Government have made it quite clear that the only priority that they have is to introduce further anti-worker legislation. That falls into line with the actions of the mad Right throughout the country. All the economists who belong to that group adopt the simplistic approach that unemployment can be overcome by cutting wages and smashing trade unions. They say that that will solve all the problems. That

is also the attitude that the Queensland Government has taken. That will not work; it has been proved that it will not work. At some stage the Government has to realise that and change its direction.

The Minister has said how proud he is of the Industrial Inspection Branch and its record of inspections.

Mr Lester: They are good people.

Mr McLEAN: I agree. They do a good job. I have nothing to say against the people who work in that branch, but I do have something to say about the Minister's not arguing a strong enough case to increase the number of people on the staff of that branch.

Mr Smith: They are a bit thin on the ground.

Mr McLEAN: They are not a bit thin, they are very thin on the ground.

They perform an important and vital job within industry in this State. Their work must receive priority. Over the years the staffing level of the branch has not improved. If growth over the last few years is taken into account, the staffing level has probably reduced somewhat. That makes things very hard for the inspectors and those who are trying to run the department. I do not believe that, from where the Minister sits, he is arguing a strong enough case for an increase in those staffing levels.

The Minister stated that a total of 24 089 inspections were carried out by the various inspection branches throughout the year. However, it is interesting to note that in almost every area, fewer inspections were carried out this year than last year.

I cite the example of wage complaint inspections. In 1985-86, 2 499 inspections were carried out in the metropolitan area, and in 1986-87 the number dropped to 2 308. In 1985-86, 1 955 factory and shop registration inspections were carried out, and this year the figure dropped to 1 273. Those figures are for the metropolitan area. Last year in country areas, 6 290 inspections were carried out and this year only 5 894 inspections were carried out.

Those figures show that inspectors just cannot get around and carry out the necessary inspections. Surely the same problems exist. This year the total number of inspections carried out in the metropolitan area was 7 374. The total number of inspections carried out in country areas was 16 715. That adds up to the total given by the Minister.

Those figures are not good enough. The Minister is not being fair to his staff. He is treating a very serious area of his responsibility in a very haphazard manner. If the Minister allows that area of his responsibility to get out of hand, he is asking for trouble, because it provides the machinery for safety; it provides the checks and balances within industry that must be maintained. I ask: what has the Minister done in his three years as the responsible Minister to argue for an upgrading in the allocation of funds to this department? What has he done to upgrade health and safety standards, besides tokens such as Safety Week and a few other publicity gimmicks on which a great deal of money is spent, mostly on literature that has the Minister's photograph on it? What stage has the upgrading of the Factories and Shops Act reached?

I remember that a number of years ago the Minister asked for submissions on the Act. It is long overdue for amendment; it is a long way behind the times. To a large degree it covers workers' safety and it is a very important Act. I ask the Minister to tell honourable members in his response when amendments to that Act can be expected. As I said, they are long overdue.

I also ask the Minister: what initiatives have been taken by him, other than falling in line with the Federal Government? It is good to see that at last there is some co-operation in some areas between the Federal Government and the Queensland Government, because the only way in which the Queensland Government will get out of the mire that this State is in is to seek the help of the Federal Government and to work closely with it. It is pleasing to see that, in some areas at least, the Minister has moderated the Government's stance in regard to its lack of co-operation with the Federal Government.

I want to know exactly what sort of job-creation schemes and assistance will be given to industry to set up in this State. What the Minister has done so far is to create

an unstable situation in industry with his industrial relations policies, which do not allow new industry to start in this State. It is obvious that the Minister's plan to lower wages in this State has not worked, because no new industry is starting in Queensland. Victoria, with an unemployment rate of—

Time expired.

Sitting suspended from 1 to 2.30 p.m.

Mr STEPHAN (Gympie) (2.30 p.m.): It gives me much pleasure to join in this debate on the Employment, Small Business and Industrial Affairs Estimates. I compliment the Minister on his efforts and on the way in which he looks after his portfolio. After listening to the speech made before lunch by the Opposition spokesman on Employment and Industrial Affairs, I am beginning to wonder if perhaps he also was complimenting the Minister and realises that the Minister is doing a good job.

Mr Davis: Rest assured when I get up, I won't.

Mr STEPHAN: The Committee is waiting with bated breath to hear what the honourable member has to say.

I tried to get Mr McLean to take an interjection during his speech, but he would not do so. When he was referring to unemployment benefits, I wanted to ask him to highlight what is happening in relation to employment. He failed to do that and did not want to mention what the Queensland Government is achieving in a positive way. In the 12 months ending July 1987, 26 000 new jobs were created in Queensland. This is one fact that the Opposition runs away from. During the last 10 years there has been a 26 per cent growth rate in employment, compared with 17 per cent throughout the whole of Australia. Those figures speak for themselves. I like to think that the Queensland Government looks on the positive side, is progressive and is not denigratory.

I commend the Minister and his departmental officers under Graham Swan, all of whom are tremendously good to work with. Graham Swan is the Under Secretary of the Department of Employment and Industrial Affairs and from time to time comments have been made about that department. I compliment all of the department's officers on the work that they do.

This afternoon I wish to direct my thoughts mainly towards consumer affairs. With that in mind, I take the opportunity to congratulate Jan Taylor as the first female in Australia to be appointed as director of a consumer affairs bureau. This in itself is an honour, and I feel she will carry out the role very well. Since joining the bureau eight years ago Miss Taylor has had a high public profile. She is the youngest person to take on the position of director. I will not make a comment concerning the age of ladies, but I am interested in the comments that she has made. She stated that people are particularly important to an organisation required to cope with the many unhappy customers annoyed by particular grievances and that communications within the bureau are essential; while consumers needed to be well-armed with information because they often tended to place themselves outside the protection of the law. I feel sure that the Consumer Affairs Bureau is in reasonably good hands.

To achieve equitable trading practices in the market-place the Consumer Affairs Bureau is involved in several broad areas of activity, each of which aims to balance competing interests.

Mr Davis: Another prepared speech. Why don't you write your own speeches?

Mr STEPHAN: The honourable member for Brisbane Central should realise that the bureau carries out a number of activities, including the developing of community awareness, knowledge of the issues involved in consumerism, mediating in market-place disputes, identifying and responding to market-place trends, recommending and administering legislation and establishing and maintaining trade measures. In order to develop community awareness and knowledge of consumer issues, the bureau provides an

information service which meets the identified needs of a diverse audience. It provides material by way of posters, booklets, pamphlets, newspaper articles, television and radio broadcasts: all with a view to ensuring that consumers become more responsible purchasers of goods and services.

Particular attention has been given to the education of children. Now, more than ever before, children have control of their own money at a very early age and it is important that they are educated in responsibilities as consumers and made aware of the protection afforded to them as consumers under the law. Perhaps the most important benefit of teaching children early is that the knowledge that they receive while they are young becomes part of their frame of reference as they grow older. That has important implications for them as consumers when they become teenagers, adults, home-managers and business people.

Mr Davis: You know why nobody is here? Because Len Stephan is speaking.

Mr STEPHAN: It is a pity that the member for Brisbane Central did not have such an education and opportunity when he was young. If he had, he would have been able to look after his taxi business and make a success of it when he had the chance.

The bureau has developed courses in consumer education for both primary and secondary school students, recognising that the schools provide the most effective means of reaching the majority of potential consumers. These consumer education courses have been introduced in many schools. The bureau also assists students by providing information on a wide range of consumer topics both through its library—including audio-visual—resources and by way of hand-out material.

The bureau is concerned about the needs of all other groups, including teenagers, the elderly, people on low incomes, ethnic groups, small-business people and rural consumers, as well as the community generally.

Mr Davis: You've got no shame, have you, taking these briefs?

Mr STEPHAN: The honourable member is not learning very much. He is laughing. It is a pity that he is not taking notice of what I am saying.

One of the most effective ways of providing information to consumers has been the bureau's radio programs. If the honourable member for Brisbane Central listens to the radio sometimes, there is still a chance for him.

Broadcasts are made weekly in eight of the provincial areas. They are: Charleville, Mount Isa, Emerald, Roma, Charters Towers, Rockhampton, Longreach, Kingaroy, and also in Brisbane on 4BH.

Mr Davis: So you'll be able to listen to them.

Mr STEPHAN: As they will be heard on 4BH, the member for Brisbane Central will still feel at home.

Through these relatively short radio segments, the bureau has been able to provide informed comment on a wide range of products, services, activities, issues, all of which are important to consumers.

The success of the bureau's education efforts can be seen by the increasing number of consumers who are now seeking pre-purchase information and the tens of thousands of consumers who are contacting the bureau for advice and information about a multiplicity of products.

The information service provided to the public through the bureau's telephone inquiry service received a boost with the introduction of an automatic call-sequencer. The sequencer answers incoming calls with a recorded message and places them on hold until a time is available for them. For example, I believe that in the first six months of operation, incoming calls averaged about 200 a day. Over 50 per cent of those calls were answered within 20 seconds of the delivery of the recorded message, and fewer than 20 per cent of callers needed to wait for a full minute or longer.

Mr Lester: That's the best effort in Australia.

Mr STEPHAN: As the Minister said, that is the best effort in Australia. No other State can point to a service that is as efficient as the one in Queensland. I have not heard many comments from members of the Opposition on that matter. Perhaps they benefit from the service; so much the better if they do. Opposition members must admit that a real service is being provided.

Mr Vaughan interjected.

Mr STEPHAN: I thank the honourable member for his support for the service.

The bureau receives and follows up written complaints lodged by consumers, in addition to providing a telephone advice and referral service. Except in the small number of cases in which there has been a blatant breach of legislation, the role of the bureau is to mediate with a view to resolving the dispute between consumer and trader. The bureau's success rate in handling complaints continues to improve. At present, I believe that three-quarters of complaints that are received are resolved satisfactorily. Of course, a certain number of complaints cannot be resolved at all.

The bureau staff frequently have discussions with industry associations with a view to gaining their co-operation to exert pressure on members engaging in dubious trading practices. The end result aims to serve the interests not only of consumers but also of the industry itself by improving its public image.

The bureau has, as evidenced in the 1986-87 annual report of the Department of Employment and Industrial Affairs, experienced a substantial growth in its workload as measured by the number of complaints received. Nevertheless, it has not only learned to do more with less in relative terms, but it has also improved its service to consumers by way of an improved telephone service—with special facilities for non-metropolitan consumers; a skilled and dedicated staff; personal mediation where considered likely to be of value; a decrease in turn-around times for complaints; and a significant increase in the proportion of positive results on behalf of consumers.

The work that is done on behalf of the bureau by the 22 industrial inspectors in provincial and rural areas is also worthy of note. Those inspectors are also covered by the Consumer Affairs Act. They are part of the community in which they live. They are able to get on top of matters and play a remarkably efficient role. In many cases they are inundated with work for the bureau. Yet, they cope remarkably well and provide a valuable extension of the important functions of the bureau to the consumers who live outside the Brisbane and Rockhampton areas.

Legislation to extend the definition of "consumer" to cover purchases by the business and farming sectors was introduced into this Assembly during the March session of last year.

In the past, many people have expressed concern at the absence of any avenue through which the small-business and primary production sectors can seek the assistance of the bureau in disputes with other traders. Now, transactions up to \$40,000, where the goods or services were for the use or benefit of the business, are covered. That is appreciated by both the small-business sector and the rural community. Many of those people seek assistance and advice. They really appreciate it when there is someone there to lean on.

The enactment of this legislation has extended a valuable service to two key sectors of the economy. It also recognises and seeks to diminish the disparity in bargaining power between small business, including primary producers, and many of the corporations from whom they purchase goods and services.

A large proportion of consumer complaints relate to the purchase of motor vehicles. That is a field in which one comes across problems and very slick salesmanship. I refer particularly to the second-hand motor vehicle trade. All too often a consumer signs a blank contract. On many occasions people believe that they are simply placing a holding

deposit on a vehicle when, in fact, they are undertaking to purchase the vehicle. Many of those unsuspecting consumers start out with the intention of placing a holding deposit on a vehicle while they make overtures to financial institutions about the availability of funds. If a person is unsuccessful in obtaining finance, or if he decides that a particular vehicle is beyond his financial capacity, and he endeavours to obtain a refund of his deposit, he is often told by the dealer that he has actually signed a contract on the vehicle and is under an obligation to complete the deal. Honourable members can imagine how upset that makes people feel.

The Consumer Affairs Bureau issues frequent warnings to consumers of the danger of signing any document at all or paying any deposit before they have made up their minds to purchase a vehicle, irrespective of the pressures that are put on them and the salesmanship that is used to try to influence them and convince them that they should put down a holding deposit before somebody else comes along and makes an offer for the vehicle.

Another potential pitfall relates to vehicle repair warranties. Consumers are advised to consider very carefully the terms of such warranties to ensure that they are, in fact, what they really need. Frequently, such warranties stipulate regular servicing with particular products so as not to void the warranty. The warranties do not always cover all possible defects, with the result that consumers often find themselves miles from home with broken-down vehicles and no help forthcoming.

Before signing anything at all in relation to the purchase of a motor vehicle, consumers are urged to be sure of their grounds and consult the Consumer Affairs Bureau if they are in any doubt whatsoever.

In recent times, because of the efforts of its experienced and dedicated staff, the bureau has been able to increase fieldwork on motor vehicle complaints, increase the number of satisfactorily resolved complaints and increase the amount of monetary redress.

While motor vehicle complaints continue to dominate the bureau's statistics, other problem areas exist, such as inground swimming-pools, which are the subject of many complaints. No longer is the inground swimming-pool only for the wealthy.

Mr Davis: You are always talking about it.

Mr STEPHAN: I am not always talking about it. Does the honourable member have an inground swimming-pool?

Mr Davis: Yes.

Mr STEPHAN: Does the honourable member use that pool?

Mr Davis: Yes.

Mr STEPHAN: The honourable member would realise that his swimming-pool is quite an asset.

It is relaxing to spend time in a swimming-pool with one's family and friends. However, people should ensure that they are getting what they are paying for. Although ordinary families are having pools installed to improve their life-styles, unfortunately, the ever-present con man also recognises that fact.

Mr Yewdale: Your Government's doing nothing about cleaning them up. They won't do anything about them; they just let them keep operating.

Mr STEPHAN: It depends on whether a complaint is made. If those people are not reported, they will disappear and will not be caught.

The Consumer Affairs Bureau has had to play an active part in assisting the customer and the consumer not only in the area of complaints but also in the area of education. People must be educated to be careful of unscrupulous traders who endeavour constantly

to obtain excessive up-front and progressive payments that offer the consumer no protection in the event that the trader goes into liquidation or ceases to work for one reason or another. Many different con tricks are used. People must be wary of them.

The bureau has produced a pamphlet titled *Before You Take the Plunge*.

Mr Yewdale: You shouldn't allow them to register their companies. They keep doing it.

Mr STEPHAN: If the same one keeps doing it, I would think that that person would be reported from time to time so that he is brought to justice and not allowed to continue in the same vein.

That pamphlet was produced to assist consumers in matters of quotation, contract, sewerage, water supply and building approvals, and functional and environmental considerations. The pamphlet has been available for some time and is still highly recommended to all intending purchasers of swimming-pools.

Kitchen-renovators and home improvement companies are another area in which excessive payments are requested. It never ceases to amaze bureau officers how willingly consumers part with their money under many varying circumstances. People are taken in by the talk of the salesmen. When problems arise and the consumer is confronted with a situation of insufficient equity in terms of work done and materials supplied, the bureau is left to try to sort it out. It is very difficult to sort those matters out.

Most people at some stage in their lives have had to move house. In most instances that requires the services of a furniture removalist. Unfortunately, the Consumer Affairs Bureau continues to receive complaints in this area, and although they relate to a variety of matters, the majority concern insurance, loss or damage, non-performance and delays. I would not want to cast any reflection on the vast majority of removalists who carry out their contracts fairly, expeditiously and efficiently, but it is the activities of a small number not doing the right thing which are reflecting on the industry as a whole. Consumers should know that an Australian standard contract for household removals and storage has been published, and the bureau encourages consumers, in their own interest, to deal with removalists using contracts comparable to the Australian standard.

Of particular concern to the bureau are those people who prey on the elderly, and there is none worse than the itinerant roof-painter. People are faced with the problem of a person approaching them and saying that their roof is going rusty and needs immediate care and attention. That person attempts to convince the home-owners that he will perform a first-class job at a cheap rate. It invariably turns out that, when the job is done, the workmanship is poor, the product unsuitable and the price high. Such persons are usually very obliging and only too willing to drive the consumer down to the bank. That is done regularly.

Mr Yewdale: And the Minister and the Government do nothing about it.

Mr STEPHAN: The Government cannot do anything unless the consumers report the matter. If the consumers reported the matter, that would go three-quarters of the way towards overcoming the problem. If the Government does nothing, nothing will be done. Consumers should be careful of itinerant tradesmen. I exhort consumers to have their roofs painted and any other work required performed only by persons in the district known to them. Those persons can then be readily contacted should the work be faulty. Consumers should shop locally and deal with their own handymen and trades people in the district. If that occurred, these types of problems would not develop.

Two other complaint sources that I should mention are the small-business and primary production sectors. Already, some 40 written complaints and hundreds of telephone calls a month are being received and acted upon. Those complaints justify completely the Minister's action earlier this year in amending the Consumer Affairs Act to cover such people. Irrespective of whether the matter has involved a sheep grazer faced with repossession or a business purchasing defective goods, the bureau has been able to intervene positively and take care of the matter.

I mention also the Weights and Measures Branch because, although in the past that branch has been accommodated in very poor buildings, its accommodation has now been upgraded.

Time expired.

Mr DAVIS (Brisbane Central) (2.50 p.m.): Estimates presented for the Department of Employment and Industrial Affairs are very important because the Minister's portfolio is concerned with people. On many occasions, I have seen fit to criticise the department and the Minister.

Mr Stephan: Unfairly, though, you must admit.

Mr DAVIS: The honourable member for Gympie has just resumed his seat. One of the reasons for my criticism of this Minister is that he is one of a number of Ministers in this Chamber who continually give briefs to members such as the member for Gympie.

Mr Powell: You are really just jealous.

Mr DAVIS: What—of getting a brief? If I were to get a brief from the Minister, I would have to see his father-in-law first.

I always feel a bit sorry for the Minister because I honestly believe that he would try to do a good job. Unfortunately——

Mr Stephan: Be fair.

Mr DAVIS: I will be fair. Time and time again, as soon as the Minister gives an answer, he looks at the Premier. Sometimes, before he gives an answer he looks at the Premier. If the Premier gives him a nod, he goes ahead and does whatever the Premier says.

The other day, somebody asked me whether I knew what Vince Lester was called. I said, "No." He said, "Charlie McCarthy, because the Premier is Edgar Bergin." Of course, Mr Lester is the puppet, Charlie McCarthy.

Mr FitzGerald: I do not like your sense of humour.

Mr DAVIS: Well, it is true. I am only relaying a story that I was told.

Mr FitzGerald: Well, don't repeat it.

Mr DAVIS: It might be correct.

The Estimates that have been presented today have verified some figures that the Opposition has seen over the years. Today, the Minister looked at the gallery and round the Chamber because he thought he had a really great figure from the inspectorate. The Minister stated that over \$900,000 had been collected. I think that that is a very miserable total.

Mr McLean: The Minister owed that much to his pastrycooks.

Mr DAVIS: That is about right, too.

I recall that when I was a union official, I had to inspect many of the books kept by employers. In many cases, employers were thousands of dollars in arrears. I would like the Minister to answer this question: how many times would it be the case that employers do not keep proper books?

Under one section of most industrial awards, employers have to have a time and wages book, an attendance book and a Bundy clock. Many employers do not keep an attendance book. When inspectors or union officials come to inspect the books, they discover that an attendance book is not being kept.

In many cases, the time and wages book has been falsely filled in. I notice that a section of the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act states that anybody who falsely fills out a time and wages book would be up for at least \$800. When the Minister replies,

I would like him to tell me how many times prosecutions have been carried out in respect of that offence.

A recent offence received a tremendous amount of publicity. I refer to the case at Roma. I do not know what the kerfuffle was about because the first thing to be considered was whether the employer had a time and wages book. If he did not, straight away, that was an offence. Obviously that occurs on many occasions.

Recently, the Trades and Labor Council had a blitz on the Gold Coast, which is the most notorious area in Queensland for the underpayment of wages. In the case of one tourist operator, it was found that about \$100,000 had been underpaid. That was just one tourist operator.

Mr Smith: Was that Mike Gore?

Mr DAVIS: It could have been Mike. You can bet your life that it would be someone with either the Brylcreem look on the hair or the Kiwi look on the shoes. They are the ones who were in this great rip-off and rort. Obviously, young people who go to the Gold Coast, the Sunshine Coast and other regions are at the mercy of such unscrupulous operators.

Each time Opposition members criticise the inspectorate, it is said that they are having a go at the inspectorate and at every person who works in that division of the Department of Industrial Affairs. That is not correct. We are not complaining about individual inspectors. We believe that there should be a considerable increase in the staff numbers and that those people should be instructed that if a complaint is made to the department, all the books of the firm involved should be checked, because in many cases only the books relating to this particular case that is being investigated are checked. That is one of the big problems. It would be fair to say in many cases that when a complaint is made about a firm and that complaint is proved to be correct, other employees of that firm may not be getting paid correctly.

I know that time and time again the Minister is the first person to try to use the old hackneyed expression that the jobless rate in Queensland is caused by so many young people coming over the border to work in the sunshine. That is an example of just how bad this Government has been going over the years. That is evidenced by the fact that the latest figures show that the jobless rate in Queensland is still at 9.7 per cent, which is the worst rate of any State in the Commonwealth. That figure has not improved. It has been going up and up. The Government, along with the present Minister for Employment, is responsible for letting the figure increase to that extent. It is a fact of life that the Government cannot now blame the people coming over the border, because figures prove that quite a number of our young people are doing the reverse, that is, going to the more industrialised States.

Another section of the Minister's portfolio is Small Business, and the Minister has not been assisting that to a great degree. There is no better example of that than the decision of GMH to close down its plant in this State and go to another State. When I look at the Government's policy, and particularly the policies of those two Ministers who are talking to each other, I wonder how many times they support Australian or Queensland industry by buying locally made motor vehicles; or are they like the Premier, who bought a Mercedes Benz worth \$140,000?

Mr Hinton: The Minister drives a Ford—Australian-made.

Mr DAVIS: The Minister drives a Ford—that is very good—but his partner next to him likes imported cars.

Mr Powell: My ministerial car is a maroon Fairlane.

Mr DAVIS: What is the car in the Minister's electorate?

Mr Powell: That's my own.

Mr DAVIS: The Minister has two cars. All the Ministers have two cars. It is a nice old trick. They have two cars that are paid for by the Government. I do not criticise them for that.

The Government has announced that it will go before the State Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Commission in relation to the 17½ per cent holiday-leave loading.

Mr FitzGerald: You would welcome that, wouldn't you?

Mr DAVIS: As a matter of fact, I am glad that the member for Lockyer mentioned that. I am sure that the member for Lockyer will recall that last year, when the Minister initiated changes to the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act, the member for Nundah, Sir William Knox, stated that his party was in favour of the removal of the 17½ per cent leave loading.

Mr Mackenroth: I reckon the Brisbane City Council will be the next to do it.

Mr DAVIS: I think the council certainly will follow the trend. What is amazing is that when that was mentioned to the Liberal council administration, the council said it was in favour of retaining the 17½ per cent loading, even though it is Liberal Party policy to remove it. However, I will be fair and give full credit to the member for Nundah, Sir William Knox, for openly stating that the Liberal Party is in favour of the removal of the 17½ per cent loading. That was a lot different from the actions of the Minister. At about the same time, my colleague the member for Nudgee and I asked the Minister to come clean. Before the election we asked him if he would be honest and say whether it was the Government's intention to remove the 17½ per cent loading. Because the Minister would not give a direct answer, I think we said that he was spineless and he took offence at that. He would not answer a plain, straight-out question on the removal of the 17½ per cent loading. We had to answer on his behalf. Our opinion was that the Government would remove the loading.

Mr Mackenroth: You are asking a lot when you ask him to be honest.

Mr DAVIS: That is right. In this session the Government has announced that it intends to remove the 17½ per cent loading. The Opposition feels that it is a retrograde step that will be detrimental to workers.

In the last couple of days all honourable members have had placed on their desks a publication that is an example of the waste of public money by the publicity machine of the State Government. The publication, *Better Small Business*, is supposed to be for the benefit of the small-business section of the community. On the second page there appears a photograph of the Minister.

Mr Powell interjected.

Mr DAVIS: As the Minister for Employment, Small Business and Industrial Affairs is not in his seat, perhaps I could ask the question of the Minister for Education. What benefit does the State get from having either his photo on an education publication or the photo of the Minister whose Estimates are under discussion in one of his publications?

Mr Powell: It adds prestige to the publication.

Mr DAVIS: Really!

The next page of the publication also mentions Mr Lester. On the fourth page, thank heaven, there is not another photograph of him; but there is a two or three-line quotation from Mr Lester. That sort of thing occurs right throughout the publication.

Mr FitzGerald: You boys can't get in the newspapers. You are having a witch-hunt.

Mr DAVIS: At least I can say one thing about members of the Opposition: we do not use public money in the production of these sorts of publications.

Mr McLean: Is there any chance of a little column in there?

Mr DAVIS: That comment is not too bad.

Mr Lester: That publication was funded by helping to get people to advertise.

Mr DAVIS: Can I give the Minister a tip? I was a small business operator before I entered this place. Because this publication is cluttered up too much by the Minister, I would not advertise in it.

One of the problems with small business is that time and time again the Government says how much it is doing to support small business.

Mr Lester: We do.

Mr DAVIS: Perhaps one day the Minister will be able to tell the Chamber what the Government does for small business. The Government certainly has not done anything to help service stations. They are a classic example. Because the shopping hours legislation is to be debated shortly, I will not discuss this matter in these Estimates.

Mr Lester: That will help the little people.

Mr DAVIS: What—the service stations?

Mr Lester: The shopping hours. What is wrong?

Mr DAVIS: I said that I do not want to discuss it. However, I will certainly debate with the Minister how much help he is going to give service stations. About the only time I agreed with Harris—the person in charge of service stations—was when he stated what will happen with service stations. They will not be able to sell one extra gallon of juice; all they will get out of it is about another four or five hours with no additional revenue.

The Minister has really done a good job. I regard the Minister, Mr Lester, as the mirror person. He is always going to look into something. He is always taking a backward step on everything he tries to do. On so many occasions the Minister announces something; the next day he backs down from it; on the third day he comes back and says that he is looking into the first day; and finally, on the last day, he does not do anything.

Mr Lester: Now, now, don't be naughty.

Mr DAVIS: It is a fact of life. This Minister is a great one for putting out his own press releases and on the same afternoon or the same evening denying his original press release.

I was interested to hear the member for Gympie talking about con men. My friend and colleague the member for Rockhampton North has over the years been a very, very keen advocate for consumers. If my memory serves me correctly, he was the person who originally raised the roof-painting scheme——

Mr Yewdale: Yes.

Mr DAVIS: If not, he should claim credit for it because——

Mr Lester: It wasn't Mr Wright, was it?

Mr DAVIS: No, it was Mr Yewdale. Mr Wright was the president of the Queensland Consumers Association. He was another person who fought very hard for consumers in this State.

I agree with what was said by Ms Molly Robson, the secretary of the Queensland Consumers Association. She stated that Queensland is still a con man's paradise. It is true. Some honourable members will recall when the Consumer Affairs Act was introduced by Mr Herbert, the then Minister. The situation has remained the same.

Every year the Minister talks about the roof-painters, the door-to-door salesmen and others who are exploiting the community, but his department never seems to

prosecute them. These people never seem to get charged. Honourable members are always hearing the same old story about the painter who sprays a roof for a little old lady and then takes her down to the bank. What is the Minister doing about it? All the Minister does is publicly denounce these people in this Parliament. I can assure the Minister that any person who rips off pensioners and that sort of thing certainly will not be concerned about getting a slap over the wrist from the Minister responsible for consumer affairs.

Mr Prest: Those tennis-courts Mrs McCauley spoke about—she spoke about them on a current affairs program months ago, yet the Minister has done nothing about it. That is appalling.

Mr DAVIS: That is another example. Why has the Minister not started chasing up those people? The same applies to the arbitration inspector. The Minister implements rules and regulations and legislates, but he does not enforce. The same thing happens with the arbitration inspectors. I guarantee that if there was an arbitration inspectorate with magistrates to back it up, the Minister would not be talking \$900 000; he would be talking in millions. I would say that half the people driving vehicles for a living in the country would not be receiving the correct wages, let alone those in the tourist industry. Three-quarters to half of the workers in country areas would not be receiving the correct wages, and those involved in the tourist industry would not be receiving the correct wages.

Mr Lester: Voluntary employment contracts will overcome that.

Mr DAVIS: I was not going to mention voluntary employment contracts, because they will be dealt with in the Bill. I will save my comments until then. However, they are a classic example. If the Minister cannot enforce these conditions under the Arbitration Act, how is he going to enforce them under the voluntary employment contract system? The contract system is a straight-out roort. It has been perceived by the Minister, and the actions of the Minister and his colleagues in the Chamber regarding workers has been pitiful. The workers are not protected under this system.

Mr Lester: When I employed my people in the bakery, we always paid above the award.

Mr DAVIS: When the Minister had his bakery the only employee he had was an apprentice; nobody else.

Time expired.

Mr HENDERSON (Mount Gravatt) (3.10 p.m.): It gives me great pleasure to rise in this Chamber in support of the Honourable the Minister's Estimates. The Minister is doing an excellent job, and of all the Ministers in this Government, he is one of the most approachable, most aware and most understanding. Above all else, he is a man of action. If one wishes to see how much a man of action he is, one only has to look at the fact the during the period of two weeks when he was acting Minister for Industry and Technology, he moved the ICI chemical plant from Brisbane to Gladstone. That is not a bad achievement.

Mr Prest interjected.

Mr HENDERSON: It is interesting to hear the Opposition interject. The honourable member for Brisbane Central referred to consumer affairs. I am convinced that he thinks that consumer affairs is two people making love after buying ice creams. That appears to be the extent of his understanding.

I wish to record my appreciation for the efforts of the Minister's staff, in particular his private secretary, Mrs Joan Pyne. Mrs Pyne is a very efficient individual, and every time I approach the department, I am met with courtesy and understanding. She does an excellent job, and I wish to place on record my appreciation for her work.

Mr Wells: This place is corrupting you.

Mr HENDERSON: Is it really? What is it going to do to the honourable member for Murrumba?

I appreciate the work done by the Minister's public service department and the work done by Graham Swan, who is the head of the department, and Peter, Barry, Ted and company—all of whom, every time I go to see them with a problem, address the problem very quickly and with great courtesy. I sincerely appreciate this.

A further matter I wish to place on record is the excellent work carried out by the Minister's committee, in particular the work performed by the honourable member for Maryborough, Mr Gil Alison. He has been the chairman of that committee for a very long time and has presided over some of the most difficult decisions that have been made by this Government. In looking at the honourable member for Maryborough, I notice that one of the products of four years' chairmanship of that committee is that he has lost more hair. When he came to this Parliament I thought he had more hair than I, but now he seems to have less. This is probably due to the fact that he takes his job very seriously. I appreciate the work done by Mr Alison, and it is time that this Parliament recognised it also. I have been a member of the Minister's committee for four years during extremely exciting times. Once one is a member of the Minister's committee, one can be absolutely certain that something will happen. This committee has presided over such things as voluntary employment agreements, the SEQEB dispute, shopping hours, holiday-leave loadings and even roll bars on tractors. All those decisions have been very interesting.

Mr Braddy: You keep changing them back again.

Mr HENDERSON: That is not true. In any case, if one keeps changing them back again, it shows that one has an open mind. Most of the members of the Opposition would know all about open minds. They all leak like sieves because they have so many holes in them.

One of the matters that I am very proud of is that I can honestly say that in the last four years, during my time on the committee, not one of the deliberations of that committee—and some of them have been very sensitive decisions—has ever leaked to the press. I believe that the Minister can be very proud of his committee.

My major aim during this Estimates debate is to address the Chamber on the activities of the Division of Employment Planning and Training. The division's function is to encourage and assist in the training of a highly skilled work-force and to foster the creation of jobs for the benefit of industry and the community generally in Queensland.

The division's specific roles are—

- to administer and develop vocational systems, including apprenticeship, traineeship, private providers and skills recognition arrangements;
- to promote and encourage the increased quality of training, particularly in the private sector;
- to investigate and develop training and employment policy, programs and systems, to meet the emerging needs of industry and the community;
- to facilitate systems of assisting persons into employment, including self-employment; and
- to service and support the Industry and Commerce Training Commission and committees appointed under the Act to enable them to achieve their objectives.

The division has a staff of 137 and consists of six branches.

The Employment Planning and Development Branch, through comprehensive surveys and investigations, analyses the future needs within Queensland for skilled workers in all areas of industry and commerce. This branch is also responsible for such key activities as the development of traineeships and advice generally on employment and training policy.

The Employment Initiatives Unit of the division develops, implements and administers schemes that are designed to enhance the employment prospects of Queenslanders who are seeking work. The unit assists unemployed individuals and small groups to establish or purchase their own businesses and also helps community groups and local government to establish and run employment-generating programs.

The Field Services Branch is the division's main area of direct contact with employers, apprentices and trainees. Training consultants of the division are available to assist employers to formulate training programs for all skilled workers, including apprentices. In addition, they liaise with industry and commerce advisory committees and the Division of Technical and Further Education and assist with the welfare and conditions of apprentices and trainees.

The Information and Promotion Branch is responsible for the division's promotional activities, which aim to increase the quantity and quality of training within industry. The Administration Branch is responsible for the operations of the apprenticeship and traineeship registration system in Queensland.

Mr Davis: I thought you were too bright to read a prepared brief.

Mr HENDERSON: The honourable member's statement is not true. I point out to him that I wrote it all myself.

Mr Vaughan: You transcribed it.

Mr HENDERSON: I said that I wrote it; I did not say that I made it up. I wrote it; okay?

Mr Vaughan: You are the first honest bloke on that side of the Chamber to admit it.

Mr HENDERSON: I did not mislead the Committee; I said that I wrote it.

The Administration Branch also organises college training for apprentices and trainees, and ensures that they are provided with travel and accommodation assistance.

An Opposition member interjected.

Mr HENDERSON: Transcription is not my art; it is writing.

Finally, the Secretariat Branch provides secretarial support to the Industry and Commerce Training Commission and 17 industry and commerce advisory committees. It also ensures that training matters raised by regional advisory committees are appropriately followed up.

I would now like to highlight some of the more notable achievements of the Division of Employment Planning and Training. The Industry and Commerce Training Commission and its industry advisory committees ensure that training curriculums are kept up to date with the needs of industry. This is most important if training is to meet changing technological requirements. The commission has also reviewed block release training, and during 1987 a number of trial apprenticeship courses were conducted, including shorter, more frequent blocks and day release training. Shorter blocks have already been introduced into the plumbing trade and are being examined in carpentry and joinery. Day release training was offered in sheet metal working and fitting and turning. During 1986-87, two new trades of green-keeping and motor mechanics—fuel injection—were established.

Traineeships were initially recommended by the Industry and Commerce Training Commission as a means to extend formalised training into non-trade areas of employment. This proposal was taken up by the Kirby inquiry into labour market programs and subsequently the Commonwealth Government. The division now works very closely with the Commonwealth Department of Employment, Education and Training on the development of traineeships.

State Government officers have played a leading role in a number of Commonwealth/State working parties on traineeships, and this is now reflected in the extensive development of traineeships in Queensland. This is also an area in which the commission has been able to foster a joint and consultative approach between unions and employers, and indeed the Queensland Confederation of Industry, the Trades and Labor Council, and the Australian Workers Union have a formal agreement to support traineeships.

The Industry and Commerce Training Commission is the body responsible for approving traineeship proposals, monitoring the training provided and issuing traineeship certificates on successful completion.

Traineeships under the Australian traineeships system are aimed at achieving a fundamental reform in the training arrangements available to schoolleavers in non-trade areas. It is a new vocational training system separate from apprenticeships and other training for young people who previously did not receive any substantial vocational preparation prior to entering the labour force. It is focused primarily at 16 to 18-year-old early school-leavers. Traineeships are usually for a period of 12 months and combine vocational education and training with work.

Traineeships have been developed in a number of occupations, including commerce; general office and legal; the Australian public service—office/clerical; the State public service—keyboard services; the retail industry; building and construction—concrete-workers, field construction and maintenance; local government—office trainee; automotive—replacement parts, tyre services and exhaust services; furniture removal; hospitality; Telecom; and warehousing.

Over 1 200 trainees have now commenced in Queensland, which has proportionally the greatest number of trainees in the private sector of any State.

Mr Campbell: What about last year?

Mr HENDERSON: The Queensland Government has made a strong commitment to traineeships and will employ over 400 during this financial year. For the benefit of the honourable member, I will repeat that.

Mr Campbell: What about last year?

Mr HENDERSON: I am talking about this year. It is typical of the honourable member to live in the past. I repeat: the Queensland Government has made a strong commitment to traineeships and will employ over 400 in this financial year. Some 170 trainees are already employed by the State Government. The Queensland Government's contribution to the administration and development of traineeships includes—

- the rebate of pay-roll tax on the wages of first-year trainees;
- provision of accommodation and travel assistance, similar to that provided for apprentices;
- contribution to promotion and development costs;
- the provision of administration and field monitoring; and
- appropriate certification upon completion of traineeships.

Another field in which there has been a substantial development and State Government support is group-training schemes. As at 30 June 1987, Queensland was financially supporting 16 group-training schemes in various centres throughout the State. Equal funding is provided by the Commonwealth Government. Group schemes involve the employment of apprentices and trainees by a community company which then places them with small employers who would not normally be capable of engaging apprentices and trainees in their own right. In this way training opportunities are increased. These schemes are very successful and currently provide apprenticeship and traineeship opportunities for over 800 young Queenslanders. These schemes will continue to grow in 1987-88, particularly for the employment of trainees.

Promotion was a major area of activity of the division in the last year. The division ran a number of careers markets throughout the State, including the Gold Coast, Rockhampton, Central Highlands, Mackay, Charters Towers, Townsville, Cairns, Atherton and Brisbane. The Brisbane careers market attracted over 50 000 young people and was strongly supported by both public and private employers.

Particularly important was the annual awards function of the Industry and Commerce Training Commission where the trainee of the year, apprentice of the year and employer of the year were recognised and awarded certificates. The awards function aims to increase the status of vocational training and encourage both employers and individuals to invest more in vocational training.

A most important promotional activity is Work Skill Australia, where young persons and tradesmen compete against each other on the basis of competence in particular skilled trade areas. These competitions are designed to show the importance of skills and to increase the status of the trades. Queensland was represented by 91 young people from six regional areas at the third national finals of Work Skill Australia held in Adelaide in June 1987. Queensland conducted the finals in 1985. The Queenslanders accounted for 21 per cent of the medals awarded, winning seven gold, nine silver and four bronze. The seven gold medalists are now part of the team to represent Australia at the 29th International Skill Olympics to be held in Sydney in February 1988.

Mr Palaszczuk: They will do well.

Mr HENDERSON: They will do very well, and I am certain that they will come back with heaps of gold medals. They are typical Queenslanders. They are winners, just like the Queensland Government. The department is financially supporting each of these gold medalists, with assistance for training prior to the competitions.

The employment initiatives schemes of the division are most important because they are based on a philosophy of self-help and community initiative. The programs include—

(1) The local employment development program, which provides a grant of up to \$5,000 to encourage local community-based groups to research and develop ways of improving employment prospects in local areas. During 1986-87, 19 groups were funded.

(2) The self-employment venture scheme provides for an interest-free loan of up to \$4,000 for unemployed individuals and up to \$8,000 for partnerships to establish their own self-employment venture. During the year, 90 ventures involving 145 unemployed people were funded. Successful applicants who are in receipt of social security benefits would normally also qualify for receipt of the Commonwealth new enterprise incentive allowance for the first 52 weeks of operation of the new venture. These ventures are also assisted with business advice and training. A number of ventures have commenced employing additional staff. This is another example of a very successful co-operation with the Commonwealth Government.

(3) The innovative employment and training program provides for grants of up to \$30,000 to incorporated community-based groups which operate employment and training programs to enhance the employment ability of unemployed people. In 1987-88, 42 schemes will be funded. Some examples of the schemes funded include Bridging the Gap, run in conjunction with Brisbane Rotary and which provides employment counselling for young unemployed, and the Gold Coast CYSS, which has received State funding on several occasions for hospitality courses for the unemployed. Over 70 per cent of students have been placed into employment.

(4) The local government employment and training scheme is designed to encourage local government to initiate employment and training programs on a local or regional basis. Grants will not normally exceed \$40,000. Eligible projects should assist local government to provide additional employment and training initiatives, implement specific development strategies and provide the expertise and

support of advisory professionals to encourage business and community-based employment programs. In 1987-88 five schemes were funded.

The division has certainly been involved in a number of worthwhile and innovative initiatives. Nevertheless, there are important challenges and issues facing the division and, indeed, Queensland. The importance of vocational training and its relationship to productivity is only slowly being recognised. Clearly Queensland and, indeed, Australia need to improve their productivity if they are to compete on world markets. Vocational training is an important component of increasing productivity. This message, however, needs to be sold to employers, employees and the community generally.

It appears that Australia invests about as much as West Germany, Japan and the United States on education and training in the public sector; but it is private investment where Australia lags substantially. We need to encourage substantially increased investment in education and training by both employers and individuals. We need to look at how this will be done, how we can structure the market and provide incentives to make it more worth while for both private companies and private individuals to invest more in training.

Thirdly, there are still many young people who enter employment without adequate vocational training. One of the aims of the Industry and Commerce Training Commission is to extend entry level training, either through apprenticeship, traineeship or full-time training arrangements, to every young person who enters the labour market. This is a significant challenge, and honourable members will all agree that it is most important.

Finally, there is an ongoing requirement, particularly now in times of significant technological change, to keep training relevant to industry. This is an important role for the Industry and Commerce Training Commission and its various advisory committees. The committees, to do this job, must have the right people and must keep up to date with industry requirements.

I commend the Minister for the initiatives that have been undertaken in the Division of Employment Planning and Training, and I will certainly support him in addressing the most important issues facing this area of Government activity in the future.

I conclude by saying again how much I have appreciated working with the Minister over four years. I wish him all the very best in the future. I sincerely understand—

Mr Davis: Bye, bye.

Mr HENDERSON: Just listen to this. I can say sincerely that I understand why the Minister is probably one of the three most popular Ministers in the Government of Queensland.

Mr WHITE (Redcliffe) (3.27 p.m.): I am pleased to take part in the debate and make an early observation about comments made by the member for Mount Gravatt. He must be the leader of the push for "Vince for Premier". I guess that we could do a lot worse. It also should be mentioned that it is becoming more and more a common practice for Government back-benchers to rattle off speeches prepared either by the department or by National Party headquarters.

Sir William Knox: Disgraceful.

Mr WHITE: It is disgraceful, and it really is of concern in our democratic processes that members come into the Chamber with prepared notes and rattle off speeches. Very often they know little about what they are saying. In effect, they are being the mouthpiece for other people. It ought to be noted that that sort of thing is an ongoing practice that has become more prevalent in recent years. I would have thought that back-bench members of Parliament such as Mr Henderson, who I understand is a member of the Minister's committee, ought to have been able to stand up this afternoon and make a contribution without having to rattle off a speech from prepared notes obviously organised by the department. That is rather a shame. I do not say that with any personal malice

towards the member concerned. However, I make the observation that, as far as our democratic way of life is concerned, it is undesirable.

Mr Hayward: He may not have been too happy about it himself.

Mr WHITE: Maybe the member had to carry out his duties for his Government and his party.

Nevertheless, one has to move into the debate today. The item on top of the list to which I make reference is industrial relations in this State. In recent years, honourable members have seen the unprecedented provocation by a Government against trade unions, many of which have traditionally acted responsibly.

When I was a Minister of the Crown, I had negotiations and relationships with trade unions, particularly the State Service Union. It is rather an appalling state of affairs that in this State the Government has taken on its own employees who are members of the State Service Union. It is fair to say that that union has exercised a form of moderation and a form of reasonableness over many, many years. I must say that in many of the difficulties that I had in running the Prisons Department, it was the State Service Union that helped the Government pull itself out of trouble with the prison officers.

Although it is an unfortunate state of affairs, it is worthy of note that the Government seems to be getting the message that progress is not made by the use of confrontation. I know that the Government can quite rightfully point to the electricity dispute and say, "We won that brawl", but the only reason that the Government won that brawl was the stupidity of union-leaders and their inability to use the normal processes of conciliation and arbitration. In spite of that, throughout that dispute, nothing was done about the union-leaders.

Sir William Knox: They have all got off scot-free.

Mr WHITE: As the honourable member for Nundah, Sir William Knox, has pointed out on a number of occasions previously, the union-leaders got off scot-free. It is members of the union who have paid the penalty.

I really believe that the Minister, for whom I have great personal regard, is endeavouring in his own way to do the right thing by the people of this State. I am quite sure that many disputes have involved decisions that have not been made by the Minister but have arisen, indeed, out of a direction given by the Premier. At long last, not only are the people of Queensland alert to the Premier but also his own party has finally woken up that that man has been out of control.

During recent years, the Government has continuously made statements of provocation about unions; yet, when one looks at Government projects, what can be seen? There are big placards or big signs stating, "No employment without a union ticket." If the Government really believed in non-compulsory unionism, as the Liberal Party does, that state of affairs simply would not be allowed to prevail. If honourable members want to see for themselves, they should go to some of the sites that are to be found around Brisbane.

Sir William Knox: They have been Government undertakings.

Mr WHITE: As the honourable member for Nundah points out, they have been Government undertakings.

Another example of the Government's failure is in the case of schoolteachers in independent schools who endeavoured to do something about their position. In spite of all its rhetoric, the State Government did not come to their aid.

The role of government is not one of confrontation. It is to be a role of providing the necessary mechanisms by which industrial disagreements can be resolved. Through the various industrial and conciliation legislative provisions, the mechanism is in place to provide resolution. If the Government does not think that the Industrial Commission

is doing its job, the Government has, and always had, the opportunity to do something about that.

One cannot talk about industrial relations purely and simply in the context of State affairs. The Parliament ought to be aware of the ACTU corporate plan, commonly known as the Kelty/Carmichael model. The ACTU is currently pushing the Federal Government to accepting the Swedish model, which ultimately and inevitably will lead to a further centralisation of powers, to the extent that the major economic decisions affecting this nation will be carried out by joint consultation between big unions, big business and big government.

It is not in this nation's interests to have a centralised system of industrial relations. In a nation the size of Australia with such an enormous land mass and with such great diversity, not only in its population and its geography, but also in the nature of the industrial bases of the various States, it is absolutely ridiculous to assume that an evenness should be applied right across the board, because, quite frankly, many industries cannot afford the awards and conditions that have been laid down, particularly those which have come from the Federal jurisdiction over a period of time. Everyone knows of the difficulties that have occurred over the years as a direct consequence of the flow-on from awards, particularly the metal trades awards.

It is pleasing to see that the recommendation of my colleague Sir William Knox in respect to the arrangements of industrial relations in this State has come to fruition and that the industrial relations division of the Public Service Board has at long last been transferred to the Department of Industrial Affairs. That is a very good thing.

I would like to take the opportunity to comment about small business because I think all of us have come to know—at least, I hope so—that small business is the greatest employer of labour in this State and in this country. Small business employs at least 60 per cent of the work-force. Through small business, increases in employment opportunities are being created. In a State such as Queensland, everything possible should be done to help small business, but the Government appears to be helping with the right hand and hindering with the left.

There is certainly a consciousness by the Government that something has to be done, and I guess that the establishment of the Small Business Development Corporation itself has been a step in the right direction. Reference has been made to the very colourful report that has recently been prepared. That report is worthy of mention and perusal because it makes a contribution to the matter of employer/employee contracts, an issue which has been the subject of significant debate. In industries such as hospitality and tourism there is a very good argument for employer/employee contracts. In those industries the option for such contracts should be explored. Such contracts would need to be registered with the commission so that employees who work in those industries are not denied their normal rights as employees and so that they would have the protection of the arbitration system. That is not a radical departure. I find it very hard to understand why the Labor Party has kicked up such a fuss over allowing a greater degree of flexibility in the workplace. It would give small-business enterprises the opportunity to employ more people, to be more flexible and, in many instances, to give employees the opportunity to earn better salaries than they are currently able to achieve under existing awards.

Recently the Minister introduced for small businesses and farmers the right to use the services of the Consumer Affairs Bureau. That is a very good thing. As a matter of fact, at the moment I am aware of a case involving a person in my electorate. That case concerns a small business operator. At a later stage I will probably draw the attention of the Chamber to that matter. Jan Taylor is considering that case, and I am sure that from that will come some good advice.

When one speaks about the Small Business Development Corporation, one needs to be conscious of the fact that it is a quango—a statutory authority. Most statutory authorities have an inordinate capacity to grow and expand. I simply sound a slight warning and say that the Government must not let it get out of control. I notice that

the Budget contains an increase of more than 10 per cent in the funding of the corporation. As long as the corporation provides a central focus for small business and plays a role that gives small business a direct voice in Government, it is a good thing. I think advisory services and services that point people where to go to obtain other services are also very good. The corporation should be careful not to get into the business of competing with management services and staff-training services that are currently being provided by industry organisations.

In talking further about the corporation, I should say that a lot of useful information is flowing through to people in small business not only through the services available but also through the educational material, which is very helpful. At a recent visit at the invitation of the Minister and Coleene Anger, I was pleased to speak to the staff of the corporation and to see their anxiety to be of service. In all, I think the Government should be supported for its initiatives in that regard. I simply add the reservation that it should be careful to ensure that the corporation does not get out of hand.

On the other side of things, what is concerning small business to a very large degree is the increasing cost of running a business. I refer particularly to pay-roll tax. No doubt the member for Nundah, Sir William Knox, will make reference to that when he speaks tonight. It is an iniquitous tax, it is escalating and it is a detriment to the creation of employment in this State. The very concept that people should be taxed for employing others is fundamentally wrong.

Another matter of growing concern to the small-business community is red tape. Any person who is running a business knows what that is all about. When one commences a business today, it is simply not a matter of filling out one Government form but indeed of filling out a copious variety of forms and on each occasion paying anything from fifty to a couple of hundred dollars just for the privilege of getting into business. The Minister who formerly had responsibility for small business—hopefully he will be the next Premier—indicated that he intended to set up a one-stop shop for business. I do not know what has happened about that. Perhaps the Minister might like to comment on that later.

Another matter of growing concern to business is stamp duty, which is becoming more and more onerous. In Queensland, stamp duty is payable on the full value of freehold, leasehold, goodwill, plant and equipment, stock, leases of equipment and almost anything else that is transferred. It is also payable on bank loans, cheque accounts, hire-purchase agreements, house and life insurance cover, motor vehicle registration charges and Bankcard bills. All of those things attract stamp duty. It also flows into other areas such as trademarks, patents, registered designs and franchises. One could go on and on about the imposition of stamp duty. I know that the Budget contains provision for stamp duty concessions for first home owners, but I really do think the Government should look very closely at stamp duty as it affects small business.

Before I wind up, I think it would be appropriate to make some comment about the trading hours issue. Last year's disastrous experiment on the Gold Coast prior to Christmas was a fiasco. In fairness to the Minister, I point out that after those fiascos he was able to convince his Cabinet colleagues that deregulating trading hours overnight is not the way to go and it had to be considered sensibly.

The Young committee that was set up did an excellent job. Its recommendations would have widespread support. Flowing from the Young committee recommendations is the Minister's intention to legislate to create a new trading hours classification for retail stores known as the independent retail stores, that is, independent operators who employ six people or fewer. I hope that it works. I have my reservations and doubts about it. Quite frankly, I think that the major chains and corporations will drive a bulldozer through it within 12 months, that an application will come before the commission and that indeed probably before Christmas there will be all-day-Saturday trading in the Brisbane metropolitan area.

If the Government has not yet learned a lesson on trading hours, I do not think that it will ever learn anything. There has to be flexibility in trading hours, as has been

advocated by the Liberal Party. However, flexibility and decision-making on trading hours must be through the commission, where the interests of all parties—employers, employees, the various industry organisations and consumers—as well as awards and conditions of payment can be considered carefully.

While the Minister is present in the Chamber he might give honourable members an indication of what he will do about Expo. It seems to me that, if the Government is intent on attracting tourism during the period of Expo, it will have to consider doing something about trading hours, particularly for Brisbane's CBD area.

As the member for Mount Gravatt said, it has been an interesting time since Mr Lester became the Minister. I am quite sure that his heart is in the right place. I am equally sure that the Minister has been bludgeoned into doing a number of things against the advice of his departmental advisers. Nevertheless, the message seems to have been received, and a more rational approach is once again being taken to the matter of trading hours, industrial relations and business generally.

Mr ALISON (Maryborough) (3.48 p.m.): It is with pleasure that I take part in the debate on the Estimates of the Minister for Employment, Small Business and Industrial Affairs.

At the outset, I congratulate the Minister most sincerely on the job that he is doing for this Government and for this State. He is doing an excellent job in a very difficult portfolio, if not the most difficult portfolio, particularly in regard to industrial affairs.

One of the great things about this Minister is that he consults. Whether it be in relation to legislation or some other matter, the Minister consults the industry concerned and he consults his departmental advisers. He talks with the members of his committee and his other colleagues and he listens to anybody who has something constructive to say. The sum total is that the best legislation is produced or the best decision is reached. Honourable members have witnessed that over the past three or four years with this Minister.

As a committee member, I place on record my appreciation for the manner in which the Minister treats his committee members by keeping them informed. The committee meets virtually every week at least once when Parliament is in session. If suggested or proposed legislation is not being considered, the members of the committee are briefed by various departmental officers on the problems of the day. That is appreciated by me and, I am quite confident, by my colleagues on the committee. The members of the committee are kept informed which, I believe, puts them in a position in which they are better able to fulfil their roles in representing their electorates and endeavouring to play a role in the government of the State.

While I am handing out bouquets, I hand a bouquet to the Minister's departmental staff. I have spoken with Mr Graham Swan and members of his staff on many occasions over the past few years. One does not always get the answer or the decision one wants. One cannot win them all. However, one certainly gets the best answer possible for oneself or perhaps for one's constituents in a very courteous and prompt way. That is greatly appreciated by myself and my constituents.

It is a privilege for me to participate as a member of the Minister's parliamentary committee under his portfolio of Employment, Small Business and Industrial Affairs. His responsibilities are very far-reaching and diverse. He is responsible for some 30 individual pieces of legislation and his department's staffing complement exceeds 1 200 persons.

There are several major operations under his control, including the Workers Compensation Board of Queensland, the Consumer Affairs Bureau, the Division of Occupational Safety, the Division of Employment Planning and Training and the Small Business Development Corporation. In addition, the Minister is responsible for the Weights and Measures Branch, clocks, holidays and the Anzac Day Act. As the Minister has previously indicated, the horology section, which is responsible for time pieces in

use in Government offices and schools, is under the control of the Division of Occupational Safety.

All honourable members will be aware that all Ministers and their departments have been placed in difficult circumstances because of the financial constraints and limitations placed on them during the current financial year. There is no need for me to elaborate on the reason why the Government has had to take such strong measures, other than to say that the State's revenue has been substantially reduced as a result of the actions of the Federal Labor Government in passing on its own budgetary problems to the States. It is quite ironic that Mr Keating, the Federal Treasurer, was bragging that he has slashed Federal Government expenditure by something in the region of \$4 billion. I will not go further into that matter, except to say that out of the \$4 billion alleged slash in Federal Government expenditure, the States had to wear \$1 billion. I do not know who he is fooling, but he is not fooling too many people by that ridiculous claim.

I reiterate that this year the Department of Employment and Industrial Affairs has been allocated from the Consolidated Revenue Fund a sum slightly in excess of \$29m to carry out all of the activities required of it. This figure represents an increase of approximately 6.5 per cent on the amount allocated to the department during the last financial year. Other speakers will elaborate in more detail on the specific activities of the individual branches of the department. The Minister indicated in his speech that \$1.75m will be made available this financial year from his department's budget to further employment prospects in this State. In fact, over the last three years, a total of \$3.16m has been allocated for employment-generating schemes, with very good results.

I would like to touch briefly on some of the less-prominent areas of the activities of the department. In this regard, I would refer to the administration of the Holidays Act. We are all aware of the prescribed statutory holidays such as Christmas Day, Anzac Day and Good Friday. However, the department has the onerous task of processing numerous applications each year from local authorities for specific holidays granted in terms of the Holidays Act. Each local authority throughout the State—and I would remind honourable members that there are some 133 local authorities in Queensland—is eligible to apply to the Minister for the granting of a public holiday on the occasion of an annual agricultural, horticultural or industrial show. In some of the larger local authorities application is made for holidays on different dates for different sections of the shire to coincide with the shows in the specific towns throughout that shire. In addition, the 15 Aboriginal community councils are now also eligible to apply for holidays in their areas.

Furthermore, the Minister approved of the granting of 12 special holidays in various areas of the State during 1987. These holidays, which are in effect bank holidays, relate to employees of banks, insurance companies and the public service. They are mainly for the purpose of local race meetings and rodeos in the more isolated areas of the State. These occasions are great social events attended by practically everyone in the community. With so many applications to be processed, it can become confusing to retailers and other business people as to when holidays have been granted and for which areas. I understand that, in order to overcome confusion, the Minister has made every endeavour in recent years to arrange for as many holidays as possible to be notified in the one gazette and for this to take place in October or November preceding the year in which the holidays are sought. Needless to say, it is not always possible for local authorities to apply for holidays so far in advance, and thus sympathetic consideration is given to these councils and the applications are processed when received. However, I would urge all local authorities to endeavour to respond to the Minister's request for early advice of the date of the holidays sought.

There are a number of individual holidays that are presently topical. In particular, I make reference to a proposal submitted by the Minister for consideration relating to the transfer of Labour Day from the first half of the year to the second half of the year.

I would point out that there are eight public holidays observed in Queensland in the first six months of the year and none, apart from the Christmas holiday, which

includes Boxing Day, in the second. However, some areas do have a show holiday during the latter part of the year.

I am advised that the Minister's department has been in receipt of numerous complaints over the years as to the preponderance of holidays in the first part of the year and the lack of holidays in the second half. In an endeavour to overcome this situation, the Minister has had his officers examine the matter with a view to giving some consideration to reallocating one of the existing holidays to the latter part of the year. Whilst one could reasonably expect the labour movement generally to oppose any proposal to relocate the Labour Day holiday from the first Monday in May, I point out that the Labour Day holiday, or Eight Hour Day as it was known in some areas, is presently observed in New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory on the first Monday in October. In South Australia it is observed on the second Monday in October. Indeed, the only other place in Australia where Labour Day is observed on the first Monday in May is the Northern Territory. In Victoria, Western Australia and Tasmania, Labour Day is observed during the month of March. It would seem reasonable for the Labour Day holiday in Queensland to be reallocated to the first Monday in October.

In this connection, I understand that the Minister, with the concurrence of Cabinet, has sought the views of the community at large to this proposed change. Indeed, not only has he sought the views of the Government members of this Chamber, but he has also sought the comments of all members and all registered unions of employees and employers. I am aware that the numerous submissions that have been made to the Minister's department are presently being processed, and the Minister has informed me that he hopes to make a further submission to Cabinet in the near future.

One other matter which has been the subject of public comment is the decision of the Government to observe the Boxing Day holiday in 1987 on Monday, 28 December. I point out that this practice has existed for some time when 26 December falls on a Saturday. I understand that on previous occasions when this has occurred, major retailers have entered into an amicable arrangement with the relevant unions not to trade in the metropolitan areas on Saturday, 26 December. Of course, it is in the interests of the holiday-maker as well as all retailers in tourist centres for major retailers to trade on the Saturday. Indeed, this makes good sense, and again I would compliment the Minister and the Government for the decisions they have taken on that matter.

Whilst on the subject of holidays, I would like to mention that it had been evident in recent years that the Government has stood firmly by the policy of not granting additional holidays. This action has been subject to criticism from time to time. However, the Government has considered the priorities of Queensland as a whole from the point of view of production and the prosperity of the State in the long term.

The Government has maintained this policy by not granting an additional holiday on Monday, 25 January 1988. However, as it is the nation's Bicentenary, a decision has been taken to depart from the traditional practice of the Australia Day holiday being on the first Monday following 26 January and declaring the public holiday in Queensland for Australia Day as Tuesday, 26 January, which will be observed as a public holiday throughout the country.

One other area of the Minister's activities that receives little publicity is the functions of the Anzac Day Trust. Following an amendment to the Anzac Day Act in 1964, the formal traditional observance of Anzac Day was to take place in the morning. The legislation provided for the conducting of sporting activities, race-meetings and the like during the afternoon.

The Anzac Day Trust has benefited from the collection of revenue and donations by the sporting organisations and other related businesses that operate on the afternoon of Anzac Day. These funds have been put to good use by distribution to assist such organisations as Legacy, returned servicemen's organisations, the Salvation Army and other areas in which welfare assistance is provided to ex-servicemen and women and their dependants in times of need.

I note that in the trust's annual report the increase in income of some \$200,000 during 1986-87 was largely attributed to the fortuitous circumstance that Anzac Day 1987 fell on a Saturday. This is no doubt due to the fact that a very substantial portion of the income is derived from a percentage of the total amounts wagered on totalisators and with book-makers at race-meetings conducted on Anzac Day. Members will appreciate that Saturday race-meetings are patronised to a far greater extent than are meetings held on other days of the week, even on public holidays.

It is regrettable that voluntary donations for 1986-87 increased by an amount of only \$895 to the amount of \$15,489. I suggest that this is a very sad commentary on the attitudes of the clubs, businesses, places of public amusement and other organisations that open for trading on the afternoon of Anzac Day. Of course, it could also mean that they were not aware of the benefits available to them under the Anzac Day Act by their making donations to those very worthy organisations. Perhaps more should be made of that aspect through the media at the appropriate time.

The lack of support by the business community in recent years is viewed with such concern by the members of the trust that they have taken the most unusual step of mentioning in their annual report that two companies, which undoubtedly benefit from trading on Anzac Day and which had been regular contributors since the "open" half-day was introduced, no longer donate to that most worthy cause. It was also suggested that the recent change in corporate ownership of one of these companies from our State to another may have contributed to this change in attitude. It should be obvious to all members to which company I refer, in view of the heavy demand for its products on the afternoon of Anzac Day. I am confident that all members would support the trust's sentiments that it would seem appropriate that all organisations benefiting from trading on Anzac Day should donate to the Anzac Day Trust Fund.

Undoubtedly all honourable members would join with me in commending the members of the Anzac Day Trust, who donate their services free of any charge to the State, for their continuing efforts to assist the families of deceased servicemen and women as well as ex-servicemen and women and their families.

I turn now to one of the small but very important divisions in the Department of Employment and Industrial Affairs, namely, the Government Statistician's Office. Under the provisions of the State's Statistical Returns Act and the Commonwealth and State Statistical Agreement Act, the Government Statistician's Office is responsible for ensuring that the essential statistical information needs of the Government are met. In view of the very wide range and complexity of contemporary Government functions, it is no small task to ensure that all areas of Government are provided with the statistics that they need to ensure that Government decisions affecting the household and business communities of the State are based on the best-possible knowledge of the issues under consideration.

Because of time constraints, I cannot cover all areas in which statistical information services are provided to the Queensland Government by that office. However, I would like to take the opportunity to mention some of the more interesting and important issues which the office has addressed over the past 12 months.

The first area I would like to mention is the health and safety area, to which the Queensland Government attaches great importance. The Government Statistician's Office has undertaken three major initiatives which have helped to improve the range of information available to the Government in this area.

As the department's annual report indicates, the Government Statistician's Office has established and maintains an industrial accidents database, which provides information in respect of all industrial accidents occurring in the State. This facility is used by the Division of Occupational Safety in the department and by other authorities to determine areas where action can be taken to improve the occupational health and safety of the State's work-force.

I am pleased to note that, as a result of the policies of the Government and the activities of the Division of Occupational Safety, the Workers Compensation Board and industry itself, the importance of accident prevention continues to be given appropriate emphasis. As a result, the State's accident rate has declined from 81 per thousand workers in 1981-82 to 58 per thousand in 1985-86, representing a reduction of 30 per cent over the four-year period.

The Government Statistician's Office has also played an active part in the State's fight against the problems of drug and alcohol abuse. I understand that in the last financial year a drug and alcohol statistical data centre was established through the joint efforts of the office and the Health Department's Alcohol and Drug Dependence Services. As a result of that initiative, the Government is obtaining considerably more information about areas which most require attention to help reduce the devastating effects of those problems that are faced by contemporary society.

No discussion of the health and safety area would be complete without mentioning the importance that attaches to accurate statistics on the causes of death in our community. In conjunction with the Registrar-General and the Australian Bureau of Statistics, the Government Statistician's Office maintains one of the most comprehensive mortality statistics databases in Australia. In fact, the State's records of deaths extend back prior to Federation.

Because all deaths have been included and their causes accurately described, medical researchers in the State, Australia and even overseas have used these statistics as a basis for research, which has contributed to significant medical break-throughs and improved the quality of life for all members of the community. Accurate statistics about deaths are also important in estimating the population of the State. I understand that population statistics are important for two main reasons. Firstly, they are used as a basis for the tax-sharing arrangements whereby the Federal Government returns to the State tax-shared funds which are applied to the essential functions of Government.

Secondly, accurate population figures for all parts of the State help to plan appropriate services to all sections of the community. Education, hospitals, roads and other transport services provided by the Government are planned and developed using statistics about the nature and size of the population in various parts of the State. I note that the Honourable the Minister is well aware of the importance of accurate population figures to a rapidly growing State such as Queensland.

Prior to the national census last year, the Minister and officers of the Government Statistician's Office visited many areas of the State, including my electorate, to support the Government's campaign to ensure that all Queenslanders were counted in the census. The latest official figures show that this campaign was extremely effective. In fact, as a result of the census the State's population is now estimated at 32 000 persons more than was the case before the census.

A major component of the State's population growth has been migration from other States to Queensland. These latest figures clearly show the desirability which so many Australians attach to the Queensland life-style. The State has drawn migrants from other parts of Australia at a very considerable rate over a very long period. In the period between the 1981 census and the 1986 census it has been estimated that a net total of 86 218 interstate migrants moved to Queensland. By comparison, the Labor States of New South Wales and Victoria experienced net losses through interstate migration of 62 717 and 41 519 respectively. Although the long-term effect of all these migrants to Queensland must be to strengthen the State's economy, it does place some significant short-term pressures on the labour force. These pressures combined with historically high interest rates and low international commodity prices have adversely affected employment in a number of major industries in the State.

In spite of those problems, the State's labour force has continued to grow very strongly, as the Minister has already indicated. In the last five years the Queensland labour force has increased by 155 300, or 14.4 per cent. This compares with only an

11.7 per cent increase nationally and reflects the rapid growth in the State's population and economy.

I have no doubt that the current surge in international tourism, the very beneficial effects of Expo and the improvements now being forecast in international commodity prices will result in continued strong employment growth for the State and that this will in turn help reduce the State's level of unemployment.

I have so far discussed a fairly limited but important range of activities involving the Government Statistician's Office. I would now like to mention a Government initiative which the Government Statistician's Office has become considerably involved with in recent times. A major problem faced by Governments is that, although the need for statistical information is recognised, the process of collecting that information can at times impose an unreasonable reporting burden on the household and business communities.

Time expired.

Mr HAYWARD (Caboolture) (4.08 p.m.): The Government has legislated for the establishment of various public bodies whose primary purpose is to involve themselves in the private sector and the market-place. The particular statutory authority that I wish to discuss in this Estimates debate is the Small Business Development Corporation, whose budgeted allocation for 1987-88 is \$2,020,000 compared with \$1,069,000 expended in 1986-87.

The Small Business Development Corporation was set up under the Small Business Development Corporation Bill introduced into Parliament on 20 May 1980, because it was stated—

“... there is an urgent need to provide further assistance to this particular group”—
that is, small business—

“to help it to meet present-day requirements, costs and the problems associated with its day-to-day activities.”

The annual report for the corporation for the year ended 30 June 1987 notes that incoming calls to the corporation were 41 155, which was a rise of 114 per cent on the previous year. Consultations totalled 3 462, which was a rise of 78 per cent.

Despite the fact that some of those figures may have been inflated because of the Small Business Development Corporation's involvement in the trading-hours inquiry—I am certain that it would have been in some way—there can be no doubt that there is a demand for the services provided by the Small Business Development Corporation.

I refer to the corporation's strategy, which was outlined in the recent annual report. To maximise its economic impact, the corporation's priorities are—

- (1) To help sound businesses with potential develop appropriate improvement programs.
- (2) To respond to businesses experiencing constraints and help them with development programs to achieve renewed growth.
- (3) To encourage appropriate persons to enter into business and help them to do so successfully.
- (4) To help existing small businesses to develop their productivity to its fullest potential.
- (5) To quickly respond to business under threat and assist them to develop an effective, competitive response.
- (6) To advise persons on appropriate action when their businesses are not viable.

The question that I wish to debate initially is the effectiveness of the corporation in its dealings with small business. Despite the independent research that is quoted in the annual report, which appears to show it to be very successful, personally I have

some lingering doubts. No doubt all members of this Parliament have had constituents come to them with various business problems—problems which are quite serious but, nevertheless, in many cases have occurred because of a lack of communication with their respective financial advisers or because they have no financial adviser.

A reaction I have had from people who have been to the Small Business Development Corporation is that they have received no satisfaction. They were given a lot of brochures, but what they wanted was to talk to someone about their problems. Their feeling was that it was difficult to find someone to whom they could effectively explain their business problems. Those problems could be to do with the people themselves, and it is something that the Small Business Development Corporation could have a good look at.

Other accountants have said to me that the Small Business Development Corporation has been sold in such a strong way to the community that when small-business people go there for advice, their expectations that their problems will be resolved are far too high. Taking into account the stated aims and objectives of the corporation which I detailed before, I wonder whether the staffing could be looked at more carefully or whether the strategies I mentioned before could be revised to bring the corporation to a more educative and less competitive role? The honourable member for Redcliffe, Mr White, touched on that matter earlier during his speech on the Estimates.

When the corporation strategy is examined, it can be seen that a person seeking advice would have every reason to have high expectations of completely satisfactory advice being given. This makes me wonder whether the strategies that are outlined by the corporation are appropriate. Another accountant said to me that there was too much literature and not enough talk. He argued that many of the people who dealt with the corporation do not want to read: they want to hear.

To be completely frank, I must inform the Committee that there have also been problems with the Small Business Development Corporation and members of the two major accounting bodies—that is, the Institute of Chartered Accountants and the Australian Society of Accountants. These problems arise over whether or not the Small Business Development Corporation will cost those bodies some clients. There was a strong feeling in the accounting profession that the Small Business Development Corporation was very aggressive in its activities, which were mentioned earlier in the debate. The problems concern mainly the proposals of the Small Business Development Corporation to set up shopfront centres and franchise them. This was seen by many accountants to be a direct poaching of their clients and an intrusion into the accounting area. However, my understanding now is that the Small Business Development Corporation has compiled a list of accredited accountants to cover the whole of Queensland and its functions as a register of accredited professional business services.

The position with regard to the professional bodies is that they had been antagonised over the concept of a select referral list of accountants for clients of the Small Business Development Corporation because, in their opinion, that has the effect of favouring one accountant over another. That is an intolerable situation because it is a fact of life that, in Queensland, all practising public accountants are registered with the Public Accountants Registration Board. So the effect of the Small Business Development Corporation has been to place it in a confrontational, competitive role with some accountants. That is certainly unfortunate.

My understanding is that the Small Business Development Corporation is attempting to resolve these problems, via consultation with the various accounting bodies and with the Queensland Law Society.

The sorry facts of life are that some people put as much thought into buying a can of tomatoes in the supermarket as they put into buying or setting up their own businesses—very little indeed! They are prepared to part with substantial sums of money with only a cursory glance at the books.

The Small Business Development Corporation must orientate itself to try to influence these people to seek some advice when they are thinking about a new business. That is

the orientation and the direction in which the corporation should go. It is certainly a difficult problem and one that I am sure most members of this Committee have experienced.

Perhaps the solution might be to introduce a subsidised consulting arrangement between the business-purchaser and a public accountant. The subsidy, organised through the Small Business Development Corporation, would act as an incentive to the potential purchaser to obtain relevant advice. Certainly, procedures would naturally have to be introduced to avoid people taking undue and unnecessary advantage of the system, because, in a small-business sense, the wheat would have to be sorted from the chaff. A subsidy scheme would certainly cost some money, but if a moment's thought is given to the level of bankruptcy in Queensland and its consequent drain on the public purse, surely the subsidy scheme is worth a try.

During my speech in the Budget debate the member for Warrego, in an interjection, claimed that most of the bankruptcies in Queensland were "housewives and ones on the dole". If he has checked the figures since then—and as I am sure the Minister knows and all of the Opposition members know—he would know that such is not the case.

The annual report by the Attorney-General on the operations of the Bankruptcy Act 1966 for the period 1 July 1984 to 30 June 1985 showed a total of 1 032 bankruptcies in Queensland. In 1984-85 Queensland had the second-highest number of business bankruptcies—that is, 510—in Australia. Queensland also had the second-highest number of non-business bankruptcies—522—in the same year. Queensland had 27.1 per cent of the national business bankruptcies, which is more than a quarter of all the national business bankruptcies, and 19 per cent of the national non-business bankruptcies.

The three major causes for business becoming bankrupt in Queensland were the lack of business ability—I suppose not a lot can be done about that, but certainly the Small Business Development Corporation could be looking at that—followed by economic conditions and the lack of sufficient capital. As a proportion of total business bankruptcies—that is a claimed 21.2 per cent—because of economic conditions more people became bankrupt in Queensland than in any other State of Australia.

Unfortunately, the statement by the member for Warrego highlights his appalling lack of knowledge concerning small business in this State and his complete lack of empathy and sympathy with this vital area. However, the bad business bankruptcy figures for Queensland, if they do nothing else, highlight the need for effective business advice, and they certainly reinforce the doubts that I have been expressing about the Small Business Development Corporation and its strategy.

On 15 September a question was asked concerning a subcontractor in Chinchilla who was "asked by a union organiser to join the union". Part of the Minister's predictable answer referred to the union bludgeoning little people into submission and that by going on and on with their activities, jobs are lost. He then said—

"Those unions have done the wrong thing."

He continued by saying—

"I am more than happy to have my department investigate the matter and come up with a definite way to overcome the difficulties suffered by the subcontractors in Chinchilla, who make an important contribution to the community, and provide them with some assistance."

The matters at Chinchilla are important to this Estimates debate because they concern the Division of Occupational Safety and safety issues on building sites in—in this particular case—Chinchilla, and throughout Queensland generally.

In a letter in the *Chinchilla News and Murilla Advertiser* titled, "Where is my freedom of choice?" an anonymous writer claimed that a union official had decided his working future. I have in my possession some photographs of the building site on which the subcontractor to which I referred was working. No-one in this Chamber can doubt that the Division of Occupational Safety would not prosecute on the spot in this matter.

I will now show to the Committee photographs of the scaffolds used on that particular job. These particular scaffolds have bricks on the saw-horses, and they have no support for the main scaffold ledger, which is loaded with bricks. There is no bracing on the scaffold frames.

Mr Davis interjected.

Mr HAYWARD: The Minister is back now. He was more worried about attacking unions than about concentrating on safety issues.

The brickie's scaffold should have had six planks on it. There are no handrails or kickboards on the scaffolding. Those are designed to prevent people falling off scaffolding and injuring themselves.

Mr De Lacy interjected.

Mr HAYWARD: It reminds me a little of the navigational matters that the honourable member for Cairns raised this morning. He showed that safety was being ignored there, too.

The other photograph I have here is of one of the electrical leads on that building site. The lead is damaged and has no visible inspection tag. The lead should be tagged and verified by an inspector from the Division of Occupational Safety. That has not been done—at least, it is not visible as having been done. The “innocent little person”—that was the Minister's description—on the Chinchilla Commonwealth Bank construction site was a subcontracting brick-layer, Steve Taylor. I will set the record straight on what happened on that building site, about which the Chamber heard a great deal. Two union officials, a John Edwards from the Builders Labourers Federation and a Mark Hickey from the Building Workers Industrial Union, visited the site and Hickey asked Taylor if he knew that the scaffold of which I have pictures was in breach of State Government safety regulations. Predictably, Taylor's response was, “Are you the union bloke?” Hickey said, “Yes, I am the union bloke, and would you please hop down from that scaffold as it's unsafe?” Taylor burst out with a bundle of anti-union expletives and made certain derogatory remarks about Hickey.

Taylor climbed down and general discussion was had with the site foreman about the legality of the scaffold. T. F. Woolam and Son, the principal contractors on the site, had employed a Barry Ross as the site foreman. He agreed that the scaffolding was illegal and very dangerous. Where were the people from the Division of Occupational Safety?

Interestingly, the discussion then turned to the method of payment of Taylor's employee, that is, his labourer. Edwards then discovered that Taylor was paying by what he described as an all-in method of payment, that is, cash in hand. Under the building industry agreement and State law, that is illegal. Edwards asked, “Are you going to pay the labourer award wages?” Taylor had no answer to that.

Both organisers then approached the site foreman employed by T. F. Woolam. It must be clearly understood that in Queensland all men on building sites enjoy award wages and the benefits of the industry superannuation scheme. I think what the Minister was getting at was that the contract signed by T. F. Woolam and Sons specified award wages, industry superannuation and union membership. None of those applied to Taylor's labourer. However, at this stage no mention had been made of whether or not Taylor was a member of a trade union. The organisers, Hickey and Edwards, approached Woolam's foreman and informed him that the company was in breach of the building industry agreement to which T. F. Woolam was a signatory. It was only then discovered that Taylor and his labourer were not union members. Hickey and Edwards then asked T. F. Woolam, through its Brisbane office, to resolve the situation, as it was a contractual matter. At no time did either union official request Mr Taylor to leave the site. That was later done by Woolam's foreman, Barry Ross. Hickey and Edwards left the site while Taylor and Ross were having a discussion. This matter was raised in this Chamber and used to bash trade unions.

An interesting postscript to what happened in that case concerns the Builders Labourers Federation organiser, John Edwards. When he walked onto the site, a piece of conduit was lying on the ground at the entrance to the site. As honourable members saw from the photographs, it is a particularly untidy site. The conduit had live electrical cable in it. Edwards stood on it, slipped over and smashed his knee on a brick upstand. He persevered at work until he could no longer stand the pain of the injury. He went back to work the next week. At the time he thought, "This is not a problem. It will be okay." However, after consulting an orthopaedic surgeon about his knee—and remember that this injury was sustained at the Chinchilla Commonwealth Bank site—Edwards has been off work now for five weeks on workers' compensation; so the State is paying for it through employers in this State who pay workers' compensation. Apparently Edwards may now face major reconstruction on his knee. That is a practical example of what happens when safety issues are ignored on a building site.

The Minister has been quick to condemn the actions of the building industry unions, but he knows, and the industry knows, that it is the building trade unions that carry out the work of his officers in the Division of Occupational Safety, particularly in the bush. That is what Mr De Lacy was talking about this morning when he mentioned navigational safety issues in areas outside Cairns.

This is not a direct condemnation of individual safety department officers, who are no doubt very overworked. It is disappointing and potentially tragic that the Budget figure for this vital area has been dramatically slashed from the \$1.769m expended in 1986-87 to \$1.478m budgeted for 1987-88.

Mr De Lacy: Shameful!

Mr HAYWARD: Thank you, Mr De Lacy. It certainly is shameful. That is a reduction in expenditure of 16.4 per cent. In reality, the reduction is more than that.

The building unions are faced with having their organisers carrying out the work of the Division of Occupational Safety. However, this National Party State Government refuses to confront safety-negligent employers, preferring instead to make political capital out of union-bashing, particularly in country areas. That is disgraceful when building workers' lives are put at risk because of ineptitude on safety issues by this State Government and because of its determination to confront trade unions.

The dramatic reduction in the 1987-88 budget of the Division of Occupational Safety is certainly a disgrace. It should be resolved. It has put the trade union movement in a position in which its organisers have to spend most of their time chasing up and looking after safety issues, particularly in country areas. Members of the Opposition who have had experience as organisers would know what I am talking about.

Mr HYND (Nerang) (4.28 p.m.): In supporting the Minister's presentation of his Estimates, I address my remarks to the administration and processing of workers' compensation in Queensland.

In presenting his Estimates the Honourable the Minister mentioned that the Workers Compensation Board of Queensland administers the most efficient workers' compensation system in Australia. I commend the board for its continuing successful operation and the way in which it leads in all facets of workers' compensation in Australia. On a cost/benefit analysis, all Queenslanders must benefit.

Workers' compensation is a most interesting and important subject, as it affects employers, employees and members of the public generally. It affects employers through the cost of premiums; it affects employees through the benefits payable and the services provided; and it affects members of the public because goods purchased and services obtained have a workers' compensation premium component added.

From 1916 to 1978, workers' compensation was administered as a single authority by the SGIO (Qld), now known as Suncorp. In 1978, the Government directed that the Workers Compensation Board of Queensland be established as a separate entity to

administer and process workers' compensation in Queensland. That move aroused considerable interest and comment, with assertions being made that the cost of workers' compensation would escalate and services would diminish. That has not been so, and the administration of workers' compensation in those nine years has gone from strength to strength through the increase of services, such as rehabilitation, extra field officers throughout the State and involvement with the further encouragement of safer working practices, etc. Costs have been well contained and the cost per \$100 of wages as at 30 June 1978 was \$1.56, compared with \$1.50 as at 30 June 1987.

I refer now to the employer situation. At times the Workers Compensation Board has had to tread a fine line, having responsibilities on the one hand to the workers, and on the other to the employer and community as a whole. All honourable members would have to agree that the board carries out these responsibilities in an unbiased manner for the benefit of all concerned. There is no doubt that, overall, Queensland has the best managed and most efficient workers' compensation system in Australia.

In his speech the Minister alluded to the national survey released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics during the last financial year which showed the average cost of workers' compensation to all States. I consider that these figures need to be repeated. In Queensland the average cost is 1.5 per cent as compared with New South Wales at 3.5 per cent, Victoria at 2.8 per cent and South Australia at 3.6 per cent.

The merit bonus system bears some reference, and in 1962, although under the terms of the Act there was no charter in respect of safety, it was decided that the workers' compensation authority could and should encourage safety in industry. It was recognised that any success in encouraging safety in industry would alleviate personal family suffering and reward those employers who instituted adequate, efficient and effective safety procedures in their work-force. The scheme decided upon was the merit bonus scheme, which was operated successfully from 1962 to 1978 by the department of workers' compensation within the State Government Insurance Office, and from 1978 to the present time is operated by the Workers Compensation Board of Queensland. As the name of the scheme suggests, it is an incentive scheme to encourage employers to be safety conscious. Under the scheme an employer can earn bonuses commensurate with his success in the field of safety. In effect the bonus represents a refund of a proportion of the assessed premium and is dependent upon the ratio of claims paid to assessed premium for that year. An employer can earn up to a 50 per cent reduction in his premium by way of merit bonus.

During the nine years from 30 June 1978 to 1987, just over \$320m has been returned to safety-conscious employers. The merit bonus system has a distinct bearing on the overall number of claims and on the reduction of the severity of injuries suffered. Thus there is an overall effect on the payment of weekly benefits, lump sums and an overall effect on common-law claims.

I turn now to ambulance discounts. Closely allied to the employers' moral responsibility to provide safety in the methods of work used, is the moral obligation to provide adequate and efficient methods of medical attention should an employee receive an injury at work. In order to encourage the provision of these facilities, provision has been made under the regulation of the Workers' Compensation Act for payment of a discount of 5 per cent to an employer who provides and maintains an approved ambulance service on his premises. These facilities are important in reducing the severity of injuries.

The Workers Compensation Board is further involved in accident prevention by supporting the Queensland branch of the National Safety Council of Australia through a substantial grant from the fund each year to assist in educating employers and helping in the institution of safe working methods.

In the nine years to 30 June 1987, the board assisted the National Safety Council with grants totalling \$1.92m. In addition, the board, in conjunction with the National Safety Council, has instituted the Queensland industrial ergonomics project to educate employers in aspects of ergonomics to reduce the risk of sprain and strain injuries. The board is providing an amount of \$225,000 to this project over a three-year period. In

the first two years of this project, some 126 organisations have taken advantage of the services, including some 1 900 attendees at 100 courses. A total of 39 surveys have been conducted for 29 employers, and 46 companies have joined the Queensland industrial ergonomics project as formal members.

Additional field staff positions in Brisbane and the district offices have given the board greater resources to tackle the problem of uninsured employers and, I believe, those officers have been most successful in this area.

As to employees—it is pleasing to note that there was a marked decrease in the number of claims lodged for compensation benefits during the 1986-87 year. The 8 per cent decrease is attributed to greater emphasis being placed on safety in the workplace. I have not encountered any difficulties in the payment of benefits to injured workers. Where I have had any queries, the district office at Southport or officers at the head office in Brisbane have quickly given information and rectified any matters that have needed rectifying.

Earlier, I alluded to uninsured employers. I must bring to the attention of the Committee that where an injured worker's employer is an uninsured employer, that injured worker has nothing to fear concerning his or her workers' compensation entitlements. All that he or she is required to do is lodge a claim with the board, and if there is entitlement to benefits, payment will be made whether the employer has a policy or not. The follow-up of the employer is then the responsibility of the Workers Compensation Board.

The Workers Compensation Board is to be congratulated on its development of rehabilitation services for those workers who are unfortunately injured. Rehabilitation counselling services have been increased in Brisbane with the appointment of additional qualified counsellors.

Counselling services have been extended to Rockhampton and Townsville district offices with the appointment of counsellors. In addition, the board in a number of districts utilises private qualified counsellors on a sessional basis. Rehabilitation counselling and medical review services are provided on a regular periodical basis to the board's 20 district offices. The development in rehabilitation has now culminated in the construction and opening of the South Brisbane centre to provide rehabilitation services to the board's clients. The centre provides occupational therapy and physiotherapy as work-assessment and work-conditioning services to clients reaching the end of their period of incapacity and offers a speedier return to full working capacity.

As to funding—much has been written in the press of recent times concerning the unfunded liability of workers' compensation schemes in the southern States. I refer particularly to Victoria, where it is alleged that the scheme is some \$2.4 billion underfunded. A prudent insurance company should provide for outstanding liabilities on an ongoing basis in order that, so far as workers' compensation is concerned, the employers of today pay for injuries of today and any continuing liability in respect thereto and do not place the financial liability on the employers of tomorrow.

The Queensland system is a fully funded scheme with provision for outstanding liabilities for all claims, including common-law claims, being provided for with actuarial advice at the end of each financial year. In providing for outstanding liabilities in a fully funded scheme, there is the ability for such funds to be invested and thus greatly assist the scheme.

For the nine years ending 30 June 1987, a total investment income of \$220.7m was credited to the fund. This has assisted in both keeping premiums at an acceptable level and maintaining a fairly generous merit bonus scheme.

In relation to hospital expenses—over a number of years there have been accusations, particularly from southern States, that the one cost factor that assists the Workers Compensation Board in containing overall costs of workers' compensation is the Queensland public hospital system, because the board does not contribute. That is completely untrue,

as the board does meet its liability for the treatment of injured workers both as in-patients and out-patients at public hospitals. The board makes a grant each year to the State Health Department based on statistics—for the 1986-87 year, a payment of \$6.68m and for the five years ending 30 June 1987, a total of \$29.5m.

In addition, the board, in terms of the Act, allows the payment of private hospitalisation in certain circumstances. For the five-year period ending 30 June 1987, a total of \$10.5m had been paid.

In researching the annual reports of the Workers Compensation Board, I was most surprised to learn of other grants made by the board to various organisations and services involved in the treatment of injured workers, rehabilitation, promotion of safety or research. I would like to detail some of these—

The Royal Flying Doctor Service of Australia (Queensland Section)—

This service involves the transportation of seriously injured workers, mainly from outback areas, for urgent medical treatment. For the nine years ending 30 June 1987, a total of \$184,670 has been paid.

Queensland Ambulance Transport Brigade—

In terms of the Act, no payment is allowed for travelling of a lesser distance than 25 kilometres. Thus, this grant is made to the State council of the QATB for distribution to ambulance centres for the transportation of injured workers of a distance less than 25 kilometres. For the nine years to 30 June 1987, a total of \$355,800 has been paid.

Coal Miners Health Scheme—

The board agreed to support the implementation of the Coal Miners Health Scheme by a grant of \$25,000 per year for three years. For the three years to 30 June 1983, a total of \$75,000 has been paid.

Next is one that honourable members will have to pay attention to.

Australian Mesotheliome Register Fund—

The board has agreed to make an annual grant of \$1,000 per year for five years commencing 1982-83 to assist in the establishment of this register.

University of Queensland Post-graduate Medical Education Committee—

This committee is involved in lecture tours of the country areas. Medical specialists travel to isolated country towns to help local medical practitioners keep abreast of recent advances and help them with the problems they have in their day-to-day work.

This includes medical conditions relating to workers' compensation. A grant each year to this committee has been made since 1978 to assist with expenses relating to these tours. For the seven years to 30 June 1987, \$9,250 has been paid.

Chair of Orthopaedic and Traumatic Surgery, University of Queensland—

This chair has now been established and a professor commenced duty at the beginning of 1984. The establishment of this chair was in danger of being lost due to lack of available funds. As the Workers Compensation Board has a very real interest in orthopaedic conditions, it saw a need to have the chair established. It was agreed that the board would provide 25 per cent of the annual funds for a seven-year period. In addition, it is providing funds in respect of research associated with the chair.

National Association for Training the Disabled in Office Work (Qld) NADOW—

A commercial training unit was established in Queensland during 1979-80. A grant to the association was commenced that year. For the six years to 30 June 1987 a total of \$31,000 has been paid.

Independent Living Centre, Queensland—Repatriation General Hospital Greenslopes—

This centre was commenced during the 1981-82 financial year to provide a display of available aids and an information service for the handicapped. The board sees this as an integral part of assisting with the rehabilitation of injured workers. It has been

used extensively by the rehabilitation section. For the six years to 30 June 1987 a total of \$27,000 has been paid.

Zoonosis Survey (Meat Industry)—

Zoonotic diseases are, by World Health Organisation definition, those diseases which are transmitted from vertebral animals to man. Such conditions are particularly relevant to abattoir-workers and thus become the concern of the Workers Compensation Board. The most common of these are Q fever, brucellosis and leptospirosis. In an endeavour to understand further the incidence of this type of illness amongst abattoir-workers, the board has funded a research project to be carried out by the department of social and preventive medicine at the University of Queensland. This project has involved considerable co-operation with employers and employees, and has cost in excess of \$100,000.

I would like to commend the Workers Compensation Board and the Minister for an excellently run workers' compensation system for the betterment of all Queenslanders.

Mr SMITH (Townsville East) (4.48 p.m.): Many people in Queensland, in looking at the functions of Government, would see the department that the Minister for Employment controls as one of the most important, if not the most important, in Government.

In many instances, if the department is unable to assist a victim of unscrupulous people, that victim, be he a worker or a consumer, is unlikely to be successful in obtaining redress.

It is interesting to note that previous administrations in this State have awarded the responsibility for this department to a senior Minister. The fact that the Government put a new and junior Minister in charge is indicative of its view of the role and importance of the department. Simply put, when it comes to the situation of who should be protected—the exploited or the exploiter—then the Government certainly knows where its money and supporters come from, and the victim is frequently left to his or own devices.

The portfolio covers many facets, and there are a significant number of annual reports to be studied if any sort of an assessment is to be made with respect to the department's overall area of responsibility. The fact is that most of the reports covering the ministerial responsibility only became available late last week, thereby providing little opportunity for detailed reading and investigation.

The deliberate withholding of annual reports and other information covering Estimates to be debated is an old tactic of the Government. I would like to offer the comment that a Minister in charge of this portfolio, rather than seeking to avoid close scrutiny, would welcome it as an opportunity to prove that his stewardship had in fact been sound. Unfortunately, this Minister does not possess that confidence. In fact, he has become known as the "Minister for back-flips". He has had to back-flip so frequently that one could say that he is now an experienced artist. I guess that because, as a back-bencher, the Minister was renowned for walking backwards, now that he is a Minister it is a natural progression for him to do back-flips.

In 1985, the Gold Coast trading hours fiasco brought Gold Coast National Party members into the street to tear up their National Party membership cards. That was before the Minister went into reverse over that matter and—I might add—after getting his riding instructions from the Premier.

Last December-January, the deregulated trading hours experiment drew severe criticism from many quarters, including areas that have in the past supported the Government. Quite apart from the scorn that was justifiably heaped on the Minister and his Government, a sizeable number of small traders went to the wall as a direct result of this ridiculous episode. Others almost had their business destroyed and were able to continue only by massively increasing their obligations to various lending institutions.

During the past year, honourable members have also had Green Papers, Mark I and Mark II, for proposed contract-labour legislation and Mark I and Mark II of the actual legislation. What that really indicates is that the legislation presently before the Parliament is really in its fourth edition in a time-span of only a few months. I doubt that even the most extreme of the Government's supporters would be confident that even now the legislation is in its final, obnoxious form.

The whole episode brings sharply into question—

- (a) Who is actually promoting the legislation?
- (b) Who in the Government fully understands what is being proposed?
- (c) Who or what will be the beneficiary of such draconian provisions?

I suggest that in attempting to define the beneficiaries, it would not be too hard to isolate them because of the wailing and breast-beating of the people who clamoured for an end to penalty rates. That call has been heard echoing around the corridors of this Parliament for years.

Even after it had been shown in evidence time after time that penalty rates had a minimal effect on overall cost in the tourism industry—and abolition of penalty rates is certainly what contract labour is aimed at—the extreme elements still carry on with indulgent self-pity for having to pay fair and reasonable rates of pay.

Today, the latest back-flip occurred. It was indicated that no legislation would be introduced in respect of the abolition of the 17.5 per cent holiday-leave loading. The matter will be taken back to the Industrial Court, which is the place where the Minister would have been told, by anyone who knew anything about it, to take it in the first instance.

I turn now to comment on other matters. I want to touch on the responsibilities of the Division of Occupational Safety because, in the instance I will outline, I believe that that branch has a responsibility. If that is not the case, then action is required to change that position. I ask the Minister to listen fairly attentively to this matter because at first he might think that it does not have anything to do with his portfolio.

I draw attention to the lack of supervision—probably due to the lack of staff—during construction, and later during survey, of vessels used in the tourism industry. Nobody can deny that the gods smiled benevolently on the day on which the fire occurred on the Reef Link II off Townsville. It was very fortunate that the disaster occurred close to Townsville on a day that was clear and on a flat sea. It would not be difficult to imagine a very different scene and outcome if the influencing factors had not been so favourable. I can say with a high degree of certainty that the board investigating the accident will give Doug Tarca and the crew on the day a clean bill of health: but what it must find is an astonishing shortcoming in the safety provisions of the boat, both in design and in the execution of construction by the builder at the construction stage. It must also find certification of this and other similar craft totally unsatisfactory.

My clear understanding is that, by and large, the materials required to maintain adequate safety preparedness would add very little to the construction project. The investigating board will find, for example, that the valve to cut off the fuel supply to the engines was inaccessible, although its basic location certainly met the requirements of the relevant code for design. What happened was that the fuel simply continued to be supplied. It fed the flames because the valve was inaccessible to anyone who tried to reach it and turn off the fuel. It is certainly of concern to me that other similar vessels would incorporate the same inherent design shortcoming or that type of installation.

The whole incident has done irreparable damage to the tourist industry. It may be that the Minister for Employment, Small Business and Industrial Affairs may wish to elaborate on that, but it is my understanding that while surveyors from the Marine Affairs Division would be responsible for issuing a certificate prior to a vessel's entry into service, it is the responsibility of the office of the Minister for Industrial Affairs to oversee adherence to machinery and safety Acts while the vessel is under construction.

In drawing attention to the very serious situation regarding safety and construction standards, no criticism of departmental officers is intended or implied. I am simply saying that there were not people on the job to do it. It is quite clear that many areas of Government inspection are grossly understaffed. It does not really matter whether the responsibility rests with the Minister for Industrial Affairs or the Maritime Services Minister, the fact is that present staff levels are still inadequate for providing the inspections and supervision necessary to discharge a responsibility of the machinery and safety branches.

I would like now to offer a few comments about the Workers Compensation Board. I do not intend to deal with the whole operation, because that would require an extensive debate to deal with its many facets. Frequently I do see people who are desperate in respect of their financial affairs after the bread-winner has been involved in some sort of an accident and it becomes a matter of payment or non-payment of compensation. What I am focusing on is the delay which sometimes occurs between when the person believes he or she is eligible for a benefit and the actual time when the benefit is received.

I want to place on record that I am satisfied that officers of the board, particularly those based in Townsville, respond to inquiries from my office, but over a period it has become quite evident that, with the present level of staffing, the office cannot process a claim, particularly if there is any complexity, within a reasonable time. Of course, that leads to some people being put into a very worrying position. In most instances, that position could have been avoided if the staffing level had been adequate. I would certainly ask the Minister to have a look at that situation. I do not think that it has been brought to his attention before, but it is a serious and real situation.

Mr Yewdale: The Minister's department doesn't advise people waiting lengthy times for compensation that they are eligible for social security payments. They let them go for weeks and weeks without advising them.

Mr SMITH: That is when I see them. They reach the desperate stage before they come to see me.

Mr Lester: I have Mr Campbell downstairs now. If you would like to meet with him when you have completed your speech, I will arrange it.

Mr SMITH: I would certainly welcome a discussion on those problems.

I indicated that my comments on the Workers Compensation Board would be brief, but I do want to refer to the case of a constituent, a Mr Lewis James Elliott of 128 Palmerston Street, Townsville, who I believe has not been appropriately dealt with by a particular medical board. Although it might seem like a one-off case, it is indicative of what can happen to people. I think it is good that it is placed on the record. Again, I have no reason to think other than that, in most instances, the considered verdict of the particular medical board is anything but fair and reasonable. However, I do think that occasionally a case gets off the medical and administrative rails, as it were, and no amount of external input seems capable of correcting the situation. That can happen in all walks of life.

Mr Elliott applied for workers' compensation in respect to an injury that occurred on 6 March 1987, for which he made application for compensation on 19 March 1987. On 31 July 1987 he was referred to the orthopaedic board. Prior to his accident, Mr Elliott was fully employed, but the board found that, while the injury was permanent, it resulted in only a 5 per cent disability, thereby attracting a lump sum settlement of only \$2,523.50. In the board's letter to Mr Elliott on 7 August the finding was conveyed to him and it was also pointed out that there was no right of appeal. The reasons for non-appeal are well known and, I think, accepted, because, generally speaking, they are fair.

But circumstances do arise when, I believe, a review is justified. I acknowledge that occasionally reviews are put in place. What I find surprising is that Mr Elliott presented information from Doctors Fraser, Tan, Watson and Lewis to the Workers Compensation

Board and included letters and certificates from the specialists to the effect that he is permanently disabled and unfit for further employment. He even had evidence acceptable to the Police Department that the wearing of a seat-belt would be prejudicial to his condition.

It has been represented to me that at the medical board hearing the examination was in fact superficial. The whole session, including the taking of statements from Mrs Elliott, who was asked a lot of irrelevant questions, took just on 20 minutes. On 17 August of the same year I wrote to the manager of the Workers Compensation Board in Townsville setting out the circumstances of the case as I understood them. On 20 August the local manager, Mr Leo McManus, who is an excellent officer, replied in much the same vein as the original Workers Compensation Board's letter to Mr Elliott, except for the fact that he did name the Brisbane orthopaedic specialist who had heard Mr Elliott's case. He confirmed that reports from Doctors Fraser, Watson and Lewis were reviewed by the Brisbane board.

For the foregoing reasons the Townsville manager, with his limited authority, saw no purpose in any review. I am not critical of him in that respect. I suppose that was as far as he could go.

I then decided to write to the Townsville doctors, two of whom, after gaining Mr Elliott's permission, agreed to provide further information. I will quote the reply from one of the doctors. In part he says—

“I have absolutely no doubt that the Orthopaedic Board determination of permanent partial disability of 5% of working capacity is totally unrealistic.”

Remember that this comes from the specialist. He also said about Mr Elliott—

“He will never work again in any capacity, is in permanent constant pain, unremediated by conservative means and with no indications for surgery, and has a gross detraction from quality of life with severe restriction on all activities of daily living. He is invalid pensionable on medical grounds.”

In spite of all that, the board considered that this chap had a 5 per cent disability. On the table of percentages as adhered to by the Workers Compensation Board, the loss of a great toe attracts 15 per cent disability, as does the joint of a thumb, while even a joint of a great toe represents 8 per cent. How on earth can a board determine a disability of 5 per cent for a person with the state of disability of Mr Elliott?

I do not believe justice has been meted out, and I request that the Minister instruct the Workers Compensation Board to have the case reviewed, preferably by a new medical board. I do not think that is too much to ask.

Before leaving the area covering the Department of Employment and Industrial Affairs, I want to express my concern at the staffing levels of the inspectorate. The member for Bulimba, Mr McLean, who is the Opposition spokesman on these matters, touched on that this morning. I would point out that the caseloads of the officers based in Townsville are excessive, a fact that must be known to the Minister. The simple truth is that it is not much use having laws and regulations in place if they are unenforceable because offenders consider that there is an excellent chance of not being brought to account. I am not in a position to know about staffing levels in areas other than my own, but I do suspect that, as is the case with many other Government services, provincial and country Queensland are not serviced as well as the metropolitan area.

I consider that a realistic assessment of the situation in Townsville is that the officers are engaged almost fully in responding to complaints, whereas they should have sufficient time to do planned visits to industrial and commercial establishments and provide an educational service rather than being seen purely as enforcers.

In another area of the Minister's responsibility, the Consumer Affairs Bureau, the north is disadvantaged. I notice that the report of the bureau shows that 14 inspectors are stationed in Brisbane and one in Rockhampton. It seems quite remarkable that no

officer is based in Townsville, especially because when the officers visit Townsville they often comment on the level of what amounts to petty fraud.

Mr De Lacy: What about poor old Cairns?

Mr SMITH: I think it is in the same boat. And it is a very leaky boat, isn't it?

I ask the Minister to rectify the situation that Townsville, the largest city in the north, has no inspector, as is the case with Cairns, which is also another very big centre of commercial activity.

I have noted some inexplicable attitudes on the part of this Government which seem to transform into even worse policy agenda under the present ministerial stewardship. For years members of the Opposition have been urging control of the growth and proliferation of shopping centres. Only this year has the Government shown any sign of being prepared to examine the problem, which it claimed previously did not exist. In fact, what it was all about was that the Government was not game to take on its white-shoe developer mates.

As a result of the ongoing policy of no restraint, over the years a number of independent retail businesses have been decimated. That does not show up in the statistics. I describe a truly independent retailer as one who either owns or leases his or her premises, and where the business can trade and advertise in the way that best suits the particular business.

To say that a retailer in a large supermarket is independent would require a significant distortion of the truth, when frequently even the goodwill reverts to the centre's ownership on the sale of a business. Retailers have progressively lost ground to the corporations and multinationals, to the extent that to maintain that they are in fact independent would be an unconcealable untruth.

The long-established retailers have been butchered and the big outlets have taken their place. Those big outlets just do not play a full part in community development. When it comes to putting up funds for local projects, they are noticeable by their absence.

The other side of the coin is that the Government has positioned itself to crush flea markets throughout the State. That, of course, will be a tragedy because not only have these markets become part of the community scene; they also provide the opportunity to sell a range of hand-crafted and home-made goods which find a ready acceptance in the community.

The allegations that the majority of stock offered for sale at markets is either stolen or commercial stocks that are being liquidated is just an unsubstantiated rumour circulated by the markets' opponents. There is no doubt in my mind that the white-shoe brigade is behind the push to get rid of the flea market, and I will be agreeably surprised if the Minister does not introduce restrictive legislation during the next few weeks of this sitting of Parliament.

In the short time available to me I want to point to the difference in my sympathy and support for the genuine small-business operator and contrast that with my opposition to the highly politicised Small Business Association. One of the most hypocritical acts of that association was to oppose trading hours deregulation because—

Time expired.

Mr HINTON (Broadsound) (5.08 p.m.): It is with great pleasure that I rise to support the Minister for Employment, Small Business and Industrial Affairs in the presentation of his Estimates. I recently dubbed him the Minister for consultation. I did that because of his very consultative approach to matters such as the voluntary employment contracts, the trading hours issue and his dealings with the trade union movement.

Recently I had the privilege, with the Minister, of visiting six coal mines in central Queensland. The Minister and I engaged in consultation with both the mine management and the coal-mining unions in regard to matters of occupational safety. It was a very

rewarding experience. The Minister certainly demonstrated his very considerable consultative powers.

I have been very disappointed with the contributions by members of the Opposition to this debate. In fact, Government members have heard whinging from many members of the Opposition, in particular the member for Brisbane Central, who did a considerable amount of whinging about the fact that the department had obviously assisted with the research of members. Why not? It has been a pleasure to hear well-researched submissions from Government members as opposed to the pretty vacant contributions by members of the Opposition. The speech by the member for Brisbane Central consisted of 20 minutes of waffle. I venture to say that there was not one positive thought expressed in his whole speech. Little improvement was to be found in the speech by the member for Caboolture. I do not believe that there was one positive thought in his entire speech either. The whole speech was just one negative harangue. It needed a lot more research and thought.

I was a bit happier to listen to the member for Redcliffe. He acknowledged, as have other honourable members—including some Labor Party fellows, even if a bit begrudgingly—that the Minister has done an excellent job in his portfolio. The honourable member for Redcliffe acknowledged this. He also complained about the fact that Government members' speeches were well researched. However, he only touched lightly on everything; he never went into any subject in depth. I am pleased that he supports the legislation regarding voluntary employment agreements. He backed this support up with the fact that the legislation is now not very strongly opposed by the union movement. I recall that this year during the first session of this Parliament, when this Government first published the Green Paper and introduced the legislation, many unionists visited my office. They expressed a great deal of concern. They had all sorts of arguments about problems with the Industrial Commission and the fact that people would be exploited, but those arguments have largely disappeared. There is not so much an acceptance of the legislation by the union movement, but a complete lack of resolve and argument left in them to combat it.

I listened to the member for Redcliffe when he referred to pay-roll tax. All Government members would agree with his sentiments that pay-roll tax is an imposition on and a disincentive to employment. The honourable member did not bother to mention the fact that over the years this Government has reduced pay-roll tax. Honourable members must recall vividly that the Federal Government has cut Queensland's revenues by \$468m. The same services cannot be expected if this kind of money is cut off Queensland's income. Whenever I have gone to community meetings, I have noticed that two demands are made of the Government: the first is for increased services and the second for reduced taxes. Of course those two things do not go together very well. This Government would love to provide more teachers, police and industrial inspectors, as put forward by the honourable member for Townsville East, but it cannot do so if the State's revenues are cut by the Federal Government and substantial new taxes are not introduced.

I commend the Minister on his management of the department and congratulate his officers, in particular Mr Graham Swan. As a member of the Minister's parliamentary committee, it has been a great pleasure for me to work with these people. The Minister's committee was probably the most active in the Government and it has been a pleasure to be a member of it.

In regard to industrial relations, I refer to the present situation that is to be found in the coal-mining industry. I am very concerned about my constituents, because there are the two coal-mining towns of Dysart and Middlemount in my electorate. At the present time the residents of those towns, and in particular the business people in the towns, are greatly concerned at the possibility of an extended strike over the unions' push for a national coal authority. The unionists have given a blank cheque, in effect, to their union-leaders to do what they like in this regard. Today I have been talking to people in the area and they are very concerned that there may be a strike for a week

or longer over a cause that is completely hopeless and is not supported by the coal-owners, the Queensland Government or their own government, the Federal Government. In fact, it is very strongly opposed by Mr Hawke and Mr Kerin, who is the Minister in charge of that portfolio, and for damned good reasons.

Mr Lester: It is not even supported by the people living there in those towns. It is New South Wales. They have got the numbers.

Mr HINTON: That is quite right. I have suggested to the union movement in those towns that the sooner the Queensland sector of the mining unions divorces itself from New South Wales, so it is not pushed around, bullied, intimidated or out-voted by them because the voting system they have is a complete gerrymander, the better.

I refer now to the way in which some of the union decisions are taken in Queensland. When a delegates' conference is held, two delegates from each mine attend. For example, at Goonyella the QCEU has 200 or 300 members and two delegates represent them at the conference. In the Ipswich area, a mine with approximately 20 members still has two delegates, so one can see that a massive gerrymander system is operating to the disadvantage of the people from my area of central Queensland. I suggest to the members and to the union movement that it is time they got their act together and cleaned up the electoral processes within the union.

Returning to the national coal authority—it is no good replacing the expertise of the companies that are involved in selling coal with an army of public servants. I am very pleased that the Federal Government has recognised that. It is something that must be recognised also by the unions. It is not just a question of selling a whole heap of coal and saying that it is all the same. There are many different varieties of coal, and they are not necessarily comparable in Australia. For example, Goonyella coal may be of a quality similar to that of South African coal. South Africa would be the country with which Australian companies would be competing. That problem will not be solved by setting up a national coal authority and by putting inexperienced public servants into the jobs of people who have gained expertise by working for mining companies. I urge the people from my area to vote against the resolution of the mining unions and to try to avoid the strike if it is at all possible.

I have been requested today to make a few brief comments about the decentralisation of the services of the Minister's department. I do that with pleasure because I represent not only a vast rural electorate but also an industrial electorate. Queensland, because of the diversity of its great primary and extractive industries, has historically been the most decentralised of all the Australian States, and it has consistently been the policy of the Queensland Government to provide ready access to all of its services to persons working in those industries and necessarily residing in areas remote from this State capital. The Department of Employment and Industrial Affairs is no exception. Of course, in a State as vast as Queensland, the provision of Government services to its citizens in remote areas is very costly. Consider the problems of the district industrial inspector at Mount Isa in servicing an area larger than the State of Victoria.

The Minister himself lives in central Queensland, and before entering Parliament he conducted a very successful business in Clermont.

Mr Davis interjected.

Mr HINTON: The Minister knows full well the problems faced by people living in remote areas. I point out to the member for Brisbane Central that I have recently visited Clermont. I can assure him that the Minister is held in very high regard in that town.

The Minister has shown, in a practical way, his support for people living in remote areas. Since becoming Minister for Employment, Small Business and Industrial Affairs he has extended the services of his department to a number of centres in which they were not previously available. He has, for example, established an office of the Division of Occupational Safety and an office of the Industry and Commerce Training Commission

of his department in Clermont, a district office of the Workers Compensation Board in Emerald, a district office of the Consumer Affairs Bureau in Rockhampton and an office of the Weights and Measures Inspectorate in Nambour. That is a continuing, wide spread of his services throughout Queensland.

It will make the member for Brisbane Central happier that nearer to Brisbane, in Ipswich Road, Woolloongabba, in a new initiative, the department will later this month open a regional office of the Industrial Inspection Branch and the Division of Occupational Safety, which will service industry and the public on the south side of the city and in areas south to Beenleigh. The honourable member for Brisbane Central will feel happier about that. He should not worry about the country people. I commend the Minister for his efforts.

The Industrial Inspection Branch is an important functional division of the Department of Employment and Industrial Affairs. Inspectors hold multirole appointments as industrial inspectors, inspectors of factories and shops and inspectors of workers' accommodation. Theirs is a comprehensive and a very difficult task. The primary functions of the inspection branch are to ensure that awards and agreements of the State Industrial Commission are observed. I have heard quite a few members of the Opposition, who are former union delegates, complain that those functions are not being carried out. It is very important that the Industrial Inspection Branch is well staffed, as it is, and that its officers are doing the good job that they are at present.

Another function of the Industrial Inspection Branch is to ensure that the rules relating to the health, welfare and safety of workers under the Factories and Shops Act are observed and that the orders of the Industrial Commission relating to trading hours are observed. The Minister's proposals for legislation in this area have been widely hailed. I was very pleased to hear the member for Redcliffe also strongly supporting them. The proposals have been very well accepted by the Queensland public.

Another primary function of the Industrial Inspection Branch is to ensure that workers on pastoral properties are adequately accommodated. That has been a matter of concern in the past. All honourable members are well aware of the old shearers' hut situation and the problems of railway housing in the past. We are also aware that those matters have been improved substantially and continue to be improved by the department.

Complaints are lodged and investigated with the branch when legislative or award provisions or requirements have not been met or entitlements have not been received or paid. Inspectors have an obligation not to disclose any information which is gained during investigations, except in those circumstances permitted by the Acts. All complaints received alleging breaches of Acts and awards, etc., are investigated and, where it is found necessary, arrears of wages, etc., are claimed and adjusted or other action is taken to obtain compliance with the law. In other words, the workers of Queensland are protected. I was very interested to note that Opposition members made no substantial complaints about the job that the department is doing in that regard.

Generally, inspectors are empowered to enter the premises concerned, question employers, employees or other persons who may be of assistance, require the production of documents and claim and adjust arrears of wages where underpayments are involved. Under certain legislation, inspectors examine and approve plans for factories and shops, issue requisitions to rectify defects in work areas or accommodation and take and remove for analysis any substance or material where the safety or health of workers is involved.

Because most employees are concerned mainly with obtaining moneys owing, and most employers are more concerned to meet their obligations and get rid of the problem than to become involved in lengthy litigation, a high degree of voluntary compliance with the various requirements has been achieved with few prosecutions.

The process of conciliation—bringing together the parties and rectifying the problem—is a major aim and one of the success stories of the department. However, when voluntary compliance with regulations is not achieved, or a serious or deliberate breach has been committed, legal proceedings may be instituted against offenders.

Prosecutions may be lodged within 12 months of the commission of most offences or, for certain breaches, within six months of the offence coming to the notice of the inspector. Proceedings may be commenced during the 12-month period following termination of employment to recover wages that were earned during the 12-month period prior to termination of employment. Proceedings for recovery of long-service leave may be commenced within three years of termination of employment.

The Industrial Inspection Branch also performs an important role, contributing to industrial harmony by providing an independent advisory service supplying up-to-date information on the provisions of the various State industrial Acts, regulations, awards and agreements.

Advice and counselling is given to employers and their representatives, traders, contractors, unions and employees as to their rights and obligations under State industrial legislation. Those services, which are of vital importance to employers and employees alike, are provided by the Department of Employment and Industrial Affairs from district industrial inspector's offices in the following 23 centres throughout the State: Ayr, Blackall, Bundaberg, Cairns, Charleville, Emerald, Gladstone, Gympie, Hughenden, Ingham, Innisfail, Ipswich, Longreach, Mackay, Maryborough, Mount Isa, Nambour, Rockhampton, Roma, Southport, Toowoomba, Townsville and Warwick. The services are widely diversified to protect Queensland workers, and they do so very efficiently indeed.

Inspectors travel widely in their districts to bring the services to people no matter where they are situated. All industrial inspectors in country areas are also inspectors under the Consumer Affairs Act—another very important role. Each district office is an office for receiving and investigating consumer complaints and distribution of consumer education literature. The district industrial inspector's office is the office for the Industry and Commerce Training Commission and the base from which commission inspectors, training consultants and promotion officers operate.

I do not have time to mention all of the good work that is done by the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Commission, nor do I have time to mention the services that are provided by the Division of Occupational Safety. Needless to say, the services that it provides are widely distributed across the State. That division enjoys a distinguished record of achievement and is held in very high esteem.

At present, within the coal-mining industry, the FEDFA is fighting to retain the services of the Division of Occupational Safety, such is the high esteem in which that division is held right throughout that industry, which covers a large proportion of my electorate.

The area of consumer affairs is also widely distributed and very effective across Queensland, and I commend the Minister for his administration of that section of his portfolio.

In conclusion, I point out that the department is being administered excellently by the Minister. I have heard calls in the Chamber today for him to be Premier. I hope that that does not go to his head too quickly. I might add that he has a competitor in the Chamber. However, I certainly endorse—

Mr Beanland: Is that Brian Austin?

Mr HINTON: I cannot see Brian Austin. I certainly endorse the comment that either of the two gentlemen would make an excellent Premier.

Again, I congratulate the Minister on the quality of his administration of his department.

Ms WARNER (South Brisbane) (5.26 p.m.): It gives me very little pleasure to speak on the subject of industrial relations in Queensland as it is practised today by the Government. People would probably be fairly well aware of the arguments that have been used throughout the industrial relations debate in Australia both for and against

what the Queensland National Party Government has been doing systematically since 1983. The National Party probably had the desire to do it before that time, but did not actually get its act into gear until 1983, when it attained Government in its own right and felt that, in spite of the gerrymander, that gave it a mandate to inflict upon Queenslanders what can only be described as the most anti-worker experiment that has been conducted in Australia to date.

The Government's conduct has been fuelled by the passions and the ideologies of a group of people called the New Right, who are not confined to the shores of Australia but, indeed, can be found particularly in the United States and in Great Britain, where Margaret Thatcher has taken up the cudgels in a big way to make that country virtually unbearable to live in for a whole range of reasons. One is the high level of unemployment; others are the low standard of living and the social dislocation that followed the implementation of the policies of the New Right.

When I talk about the policies of the New Right, I am talking about a fundamental notion that a country can have a profitable capitalist economy only if indeed its workers are paid the lowest-possible price for their work. I suggest that that idea emerged earlier, in the nineteenth century. Indeed, at that time, workers were paid appallingly. Casual workers turned up to factories. If the job was going at the time, they got a job; if they did not get a job, they were turned away. They were working 16 hours a day. At the time it became a national scandal that workers had to live in those conditions. Many charitable people had to intervene to try to provide food and basic living standards. Charity was high, but actual basic conditions of justice were not available within the community.

In the progression towards the end of last century, enlightened industrialists realised that, if they pay workers a fair amount of money for a fair day's work, they will in fact get better productivity and increase their profit, and that the economy of the whole country will improve. That is the principle that then emerged. A whole range of humanitarian industrialists started implementing it. Cadburys was one of them. Particularly those with a religious background—Quakers and so on—started implementing that principle. Simultaneously, there was the development of trade-unionism. It grew out of a sense among workers themselves of trying to collect together to find ways of obtaining justice in what was basically an unjust society.

Australia has had the privilege of being one of the most industrially advanced nations in the world in terms of fairness of its industrial relations system. That system is based on the idea that conciliation and arbitration are its corner-stone.

Mr FitzGerald: Why do we have such a high strike rate compared with other countries?

Ms WARNER: In fact, that is not the case. Australia has a low strike rate compared with those in other countries. Over a long period, Australia has set an example to the rest of the world on how to conduct the relationship between employer and employee in the best possible way—that is, by having an arbiter. That does not mean that the right of people to strike is taken away. What it means is that people have the right to demonstrate their capacity to withhold their labour because they are free workers and they are not slaves. Simultaneously, people will have an opportunity to put their case before an independent umpire and, in doing so, they can have the expectation that a decision will be made and will be made not merely on sectarian grounds but in the best interests of all parties concerned.

If one accepts that it is necessary to make profits, what must be arbitrated in Queensland's system is the level of profits versus the level of wages. There is a necessary conflict between those two things. That conflict exists in our society, but ways and means can be found of dealing with it.

It could be dealt with in terms that the Queensland Government has suggested—by reference to the law of the jungle. The result would be that the highly organised

sections of the work-force would be able to demand higher wages from boom industries but the poverty-stricken industries at the other end of the spectrum, which employ relatively industrially weak workers, would not have the benefit of surplus and would be restricted by their industries' small profits.

I put to the Minister that all industries are essential and that all the workers in this State deserve a fair day's wage for a fair day's work. If that is the case, I suggest that it is in the interests of this Parliament and of this society that the arbitration system be maintained and strengthened. Honourable members should not try to knock it because they do not like one or two of the arbitration commission's decisions. Honourable members should try to make the system fairer and more reasonable.

What happened this year was that the Minister introduced, supported, and promoted the notion of introducing contract labour legislation, with the very idea that the role of the Industrial Commission would go out the window. I say that because under a system of contracts, under the proposal contained in the Green Paper and what eventually became the written legislation, the role of the commission was so severely restricted that it could not play a significant role within the industrial relations system. The Industrial Commission became a completely useless body. If the Minister has his way and pursues the course that he argued for, the workers will move away from the award system towards a contract system. I do not believe that that will in fact be the case, because every suggestion put forward by the Minister about his portfolio has, for one reason or another, fallen on stony ground. For Queenslanders, that has been of great benefit; for the Minister, I am sorry to say, it has been a great misfortune. But it indicates the level of political miscalculation that has been a feature of his portfolio for a very long time.

What I am trying to address are the fundamental, philosophical questions about the role of the Industrial Commission. I defy the Minister to tell me that today he was serious when he said that the matter of the 17.5 per cent holiday-leave loading should go to an independent umpire. That was the first time that the Minister spoke of the Industrial Commission in terms of its being an independent umpire.

Mr Randell: That is not right.

Ms WARNER: That was reported in the newspaper this morning. Was the Minister misquoted? Perhaps the Minister can correct Tony Koch from the *Courier-Mail*. Did the Minister not say that the 17.5 per cent holiday-leave loading matter would be put before the arbitration commission; that the Government would make a submission to that effect; that that was fair, reasonable and just because it was, after all, the Industrial Commission that granted the leave loading; and that the Industrial Commission is the arbiter—the fair arbiter—according to the Minister?

I welcome the comments made by the Minister because I think that they show an optimistic turn being taken in industrial relations in this State. I hope that the Minister will continue along that path and will not be diverted by any crackpot schemes.

Fortunately, there will be a demise of the sorts of blinkered policies that for some time have been promoted by the Premier. It is to be hoped that some latitude, leeway and sanity will be introduced into the industrial relations arena in this State, because it has been sorely lacking for some time. As this is a debate on the Estimates, I ask the Minister whether he sees a role in the future for the Industrial Commission.

Mr Lester: That's the reason for having an independent inquiry into the commission—to let people representing the commission, the unions, industry and the legal profession put forward their points of view.

Ms WARNER: I am glad. That is a step forward for the Minister, but perhaps he should wait until he replies rather than taking up time in my speech. Perhaps when he does reply he could inform the Committee what the problems are within the Industrial Commission that he would like to see fixed. That has never been explained. It has never been explained to us what is wrong with the Industrial Commission or what is wrong with its decisions. The Government may not like one or two of them, but I would say

that that is just the nature of the game. But what is fundamentally wrong with that and what is wrong with the process? I would like the Minister to address those questions. If he is to set up an inquiry, I would like to know why he thinks it is necessary.

Inquiries can be conducted for two different reasons. They can be carried out to strengthen an institution or they can be carried out to try to establish the negatives that it is felt are in it. I would like the Minister to tell the Committee and the people of Queensland what his current thinking is about the role of the Industrial Commission.

During the last six months, in the field of industrial relations, a whole lot of ordinary workers have felt significantly under threat. The nature of that threat—or the evidence of it—has been articulated by large numbers of unions which, in a spirit of unity, have had to mount campaign after campaign to defeat the Government's measures on a whole range of issues. Thank goodness that in the case of the contract legislation the unions have been largely successful. They, as well as ordinary members of the public, have managed to persuade the Government, through techniques of argument and of delivering evidence, that the legislation was really going too far; that it really would not establish a fair industrial relations system in Queensland; and that it would inevitably have led to massive abuses of the system.

I am deeply worried and concerned about the new diluted form of contract legislation that is now before the Parliament. Although whole sections of workers are not now covered by the legislation, the fundamental problem still is the hours of working. The new contract legislation is not as ambitious as the first legislation was. What the Minister is trying to do is remove, by the back door, penalty rates in awards. He does not have the guts to argue each case in the Industrial Commission.

I return again to the role of the commission. The commission is the place in which such matters should be arbitrated. It is not up to the Parliament to come up with bright ideas on the subject. Parliament does not have that level of expertise and it does not carry out that role. In fact, if the industrial legislation that has been passed by Parliament over the years since 1983 is looked at, it will be seen that it has virtually uniformly been to the detriment of Queensland workers. Queensland workers are waking up to that. While the Minister is trying to bash trade unions, what in fact is happening is that trade unions are being given a role which they have never had before—the role of being the educators, the only ones with any sympathy and the only ones with any credibility in industrial relations. They are the ones that develop the arguments and put the rational point of view. They are the ones that call people together in large numbers to discuss common problems. This Government does not do that. This Government, in the middle of the night, pushes legislation through the House and it then says, "We have a mandate to do that because we were elected on 38 per cent of the vote." What a lot of rubbish. The Government has never consulted workers.

A Government member interjected.

Ms WARNER: That is not the point. Is the honourable member trying to suggest that, because Thatcher won in a fair system—and I would argue that Great Britain has a fair system—

Mr Stephan: Which seat didn't we get a majority in?

Ms WARNER: Honourable members opposite have different sized seats. They should not dodge the subject. Let me get back to the issue of industrial relations in this State. The trade union movement is the movement—

Government members interjected.

Ms WARNER: If members opposite wish to speak, they should do so later, and certainly not all together.

I return to the role of the trade union movement in this State. Recently Queensland trade unions have demonstrated quite clearly to everybody in Australia that they are

the ones who are responsible; they are the ones who are prepared to take up workers' concerns; and they are the ones who are able, in a way that this Government has not been able, to tap the real feeling of workers in Queensland and to demonstrate that. They have done it so successfully that they are achieving success after success, and the Government's industrial relations policy is in tatters.

I am glad about that. I am sorry for the Minister concerned because I am sure that it is not entirely his own fault, but he has been listening to the wrong advice. Hopefully, that advice will disappear soon so that Queensland will have a chance of a reprieve from what I would suggest would be a return to the sorts of conditions that existed in the nineteenth century, which I described at the beginning of my speech. That is what we are trying to avoid, because we know that that leads to poverty. In fact, it leads to generalised poverty, which is not wanted. We want the workers to have a decent standard of living, not because it is fair, just and all that sort of stuff and not because we are nice people and we want everybody to eat three meals a day, to have a roof over their heads and for their kids to have an education—although I suggest to the Committee that that is a reasonable thing for any civilised society to want. Workers should have a decent standard of living not just because of those things but because, unless they are paid decent wages that provide a level of surplus, the economy will not improve. That is so because people will not be buying produce. If they do not do that, people will be unable to sell things. If that happens in a capitalist society, there will be no profits. Without profits, there will be no growth. Without growth, there will be depression. That is not what any of us wants, so I suggest to the Government in very rational terms that it makes absolute sense to pay people a decent wage. I know that it is in the interests of individual employers who would like to make some quick profits to say that they cannot afford to do that. It is the job of the Government to resist those get-rich-quick merchants.

Mr FitzGerald: What about survival?

Ms WARNER: Survival is what I am talking about. I am talking about survival for all of us. I am not talking about survival for just one or two people; I am talking about survival for all of us. I am also talking about having an independent and fair arbiter who can make judgments on those things. I think that is a really critical factor.

The people of this nation have, as I said, been blessed by the fact that over a long period of time there has been a humane approach. Australia has been an example to the rest of the world. It has had one of the highest standards of living. Because of a few bigoted ideological positions that have been experimented with and adopted in this State, it is in danger of losing those standards. To date that ideology has not worked. The abolition of the 17½ per cent leave loading will not work. Even if the contract legislation is implemented, it will not work. The Government did not win its argument with SEQEB workers, because it has not really cut costs in that industry. The industry remains massively inefficient. It was not the workers' wages and it was not the workers' demand for a job that was the problem; it was management. It still is management.

When will this Government understand that the blame for the economic problems of this State cannot be laid at the door of workers by saying that it is the level of wages that is the problem and that, therefore, everything possible has to be done to reduce it. If the Government does that it will reduce everybody's standard of living, including that of its own members and of its members' mates. Under those circumstances, the standard of living of everybody except for a very, very small few will be reduced.

I realise that this Government has not been elected popularly; but, in spite of that, for a moment I will go along with the sham and suggest that the Government should act in a responsible way for the benefit of all Queenslanders. I realise that it is in essence a sectarian Government that has been elected by only a few for the benefit of a few, but for a moment let us pretend that it is a responsible Government.

Any responsible Government would reinforce the role of the Industrial Commission. Any responsible Government would turn the corner and change the direction of the Queensland Government's entire industrial relations approach. If that does not happen Queensland will be turned into a Third World economy and it will be touch and go whether the National Party will be at the top of it when that happens; some other petty-potentate dictator will take over. That is in fact what the Government is suggesting.

Of course, in Australia that is not really possible because, after all, the nation is a federation and Queensland is not a nation State. So the system does have some safeguards. Of course, that is exactly what happened with the proposal to abolish the 17½ per cent holiday-leave loading: the safeguards in the system came through. The fact that Queensland workers had the facility for Federal award coverage scared the Government. The fair system that has been developed in Australia over a long period of time defeated the petty, narrow-minded, penny-pinching policies of this Government and in fact the fairer Australian system—the Federal system—the national Government and the fact that Queensland is a State of the Commonwealth are what saved Queensland workers. Unfortunately that has the effect of throwing the whole Queensland Budget into ruins—into tatters. The Government will have to do its sums again and eat crow on this one because it was wrong and it was beaten. Unfortunately, the Government was very arrogant. The Opposition told it so, and it is telling the Government so again.

Mr GATELY (Currumbin) (5.45 p.m.): It is with great delight that I support the Minister for Employment, Small Business and Industrial Affairs in the presentation of his Estimates.

At the outset I will take on the Opposition spokesman, Mr McLean, in regard to some of the comments that he made. He stated that this Government is making second-class citizens of the residents of Queensland. I say that that is rot. Mr McLean said also that this Government does not give the citizens of Queensland a fair go. If anyone is not giving this State a fair go, it is Bob Hawke and Paul Keating, who are ripping this State off and not giving Queensland the funds that it should be given. Let there be no doubt about it—

Mr Randell interjected.

Mr GATELY: I will take that interjection. The ACTU will come into it, too. I will get to that later. I also have to deal with a few remarks that were made by the member for South Brisbane, Ms Warner.

Mr McLean suggested that the Government is threatening the Industrial Commission. Let me make it very clear to the Labor Opposition in this Parliament: if anyone's taskmaster is threatening people, it is the union movement threatening employers and Governments in this country. It is because of the attitude of the union movement that this country finds itself in the economic mess that it is in today. Do not let there be any mistake about that.

I will take up another point raised by Mr McLean. He said that this Government will not change its mind. Oh, what a change! What a change it is! I remember listening to debates in relation to the issue of wide and narrow combs brought on by unions. I listened to people being threatened. I have seen people being bashed by none other than the union thugs. I recall an incident in the western part of New South Wales where the union thugs threatened the local Ford agent. They said to him, "If you fix that man's car, we'll fix you." That is the union movement for you.

My goodness! I think it is time that my Labor friends had a really good cold, hard look at themselves and realised the devastation that they have caused for this nation. It is the very reason why honourable members are debating some of these issues today in this Parliament.

I turn to the comments made by the previous speaker, Ms Warner. Goodness gracious me! The member for South Brisbane has the hide to come into this Chamber and tell honourable members that there is a gerrymander in Queensland. Gerrymander

my foot! There is no such thing as a gerrymander. I will put out that little fire for her without any doubt at all.

Queensland has a zonal system that was introduced by none other than the Labor Party. The Labor Party introduced the zonal system. The redistribution in Queensland in 1985 created seven new seats. No-one would deny that this State is developing at a rate faster than that in any other State in Australia.

Now the Labor Party is screaming, "gerrymander". My friends behind me have stuck their sticky little fingers on to the same bit of sticky paper. The Liberal Party wanted to have a redistribution. It was going to jump into bed with the Labor Party and have a referendum on the issue.

I turn to what happened in New South Wales, or the State that is called New South Wales. "NSW" really stands for Newcastle/Sydney/Wollongong. That is all that the Labor Party in that State is worried about. The Premier of New South Wales had his redistribution or his thimble and pea trick. What does he call it? It is not a redistribution. However, he created 10 new seats. What is heard from the Queensland Labor front bench about that? Not a word!

The honourable member for South Brisbane and her party call for one vote, one value. I suggest to the honourable member for South Brisbane that what she and her party are attempting to do is to disadvantage the country people of this State and the people of the far-flung areas of this State to the extent that they would prefer that they did not have representation at all.

I remind the honourable member that the people she wants to disadvantage, the primary producers of this State, are in fact the backbone of this nation. Their primary produce is the result of many hours of painstaking, dedicated labour under the most severe conditions, which are ever-present and ever-changing from drought to medium years, with a few good years thrown in. These are the people who have pioneered this country and made this State and nation what they are today. Yet they have been bashed by unions.

The honourable member for South Brisbane claimed that this Government was bashing unions. It is about time somebody had the guts to bash them. I am not talking about engaging in fisticuffs, like my punchy friend and the little lightweight from the other side, because that is the only name I can give him. For years the primary producers have been bashed by unions through strikes which hold up the export of wheat, wool and other items from this country. The claims made by the unions, for example, that there are no custard tarts, are questionable. I suggest to the honourable member and the Labor Party that many of their beloved union friends are weaker than a group of tarts. Get one of them out on his own, and he goes to water.

Let us have a look at the nationality of the union organisers: English, Scottish, Welsh, with a small smattering of the wild Irish. Why? It is because the average Australian worker is too apathetic to stand up and be counted. He has also contributed to the malaise of this country. It is time that instead of shutting up, he woke up, stood up and began to speak up. Then the country may get somewhere.

The latest available statistics indicate that six in every 100 wage and salary earners, or two in every 100 persons, living in Queensland sustain injuries in industrial accidents. Honourable members are no doubt aware of the high cost that the community, the family and the individual ultimately bears as a result of occupational accidents and diseases. Indeed, the cost of workers' compensation claims alone in Queensland is of the order of \$162.18m per annum. This does not take into account other identifiable costs directly attributable to an occupational accident or disease, which increase this amount to a minimum of \$648m per annum in Queensland. The fact is that most accidents do not happen; they are caused. We must strive to eliminate those causes.

The vast and ever-changing industrial expansion with allied changes in technology currently being carried out in this State has placed a tremendous burden on the resources of the Division of Occupational Safety. However, it is a credit to the Chief Safety

Engineer, Mr Bob Hitchcock, and his staff that they have responded well to the needs of industry. I would like to address just some of the particular achievements of the division.

In the past, it was traditional that the Government adopt a strict enforcement and reactive approach to the needs of industry. That approach has now been modified, particularly when notice is taken of the various amendments that have been made to the legislation administered by the division. The division's policy is now more aligned to a self-regulatory approach to certain low-risk situations throughout industry, with considerable emphasis being placed on an advisory and educative attitude.

Although a self-regulatory approach is laudable and will help to free industry and small business from a great deal of restrictive requirements, it will still be most necessary to maintain a system of checks and balances. Other countries and areas which have tried the purely self-regulatory approach have, to their cost, found with experience that self-regulation in toto does not work. There is too much self-interest involved, which leads to a large lowering of standards. The situation then becomes difficult to recover. It cannot be emphasised enough that all persons, employers and employees have a role to play and are responsible in various ways. However, the elimination and control of occupational accidents and diseases begins at the top of any business or organisation.

If top management is not committed, it becomes extremely difficult for lower-level personnel to perform. All too often it is forgotten that management in this area is just one part of the total concept of good management. Complementary to this, employees' attitudes must change in Australia from the old "she'll be right, mate" approach to their own safety.

I instance the situation at the RAAF base at Amberley. Work is being carried out on the F-111 aircraft that have sustained a break-down in the sealants that are used to seal the fuel tanks. Some very highly corrosive materials are used. They have a propensity to cause dermatitis and long-lasting injuries to workers. If people working with those materials do not wear the protective clothing that is provided, they are endangering their own lives and safety. Yet, at times, one can walk into the RAAF base and find employees who are not using the safety equipment provided by their employer. That happens not only at the RAAF base, but also in other industries, and it has been observed in many instances. The worker must take more notice of what he is being told about the use of safety equipment.

By way of example, I point out that the Minister recently introduced a Bill to amend the Construction Safety Act. That Act is very paternalistic and describes in great detail how construction work is to be performed and what materials are to be used. Although that approach is very good in that it provides a great deal of valuable information, it sometimes hindered a progressive building and construction industry.

This anomalous situation was rectified by giving the Chief Inspector of Construction power to vary prescriptive subordinate legislation in low-risk situations in respect of methods of work. This is but one example of how the Minister and his staff are pursuing a goal of a safe and productive building and construction industry, allowing a degree of flexibility, whilst retaining the checks and balances.

I previously mentioned how emphasis is now being placed more on an educative and advisory role for officers of the division. Training and education is now one of the most important facets of the division's activities. Courses are conducted for riggers, scaffolders, dogmen, explosive powered tool operators, trench safety, formwork and falsework design and project safety officers throughout the State. In addition, a number of highly informative and well-illustrated publications, brochures and information sheets have been produced on a range of subjects such as scaffolding, formwork and falsework, the safe use of explosive-powered tools and demolition. These publications have proven to be of immense value to personnel in the building industry.

In an endeavour to illustrate how work-related injuries affect family life and to provide a greater public awareness of occupational injuries, Safety Week is now staged

on an annual basis. It is a pity that it was not in existence when I was riding a bike. Perhaps I would not have been knocked over and suffered some of the injuries to which honourable members have referred today.

The use of Safety Week as a vehicle to bring to the attention of the public the need to be aware of the trauma and costs associated with occupational injuries should not be taken lightly. Displays highlighting the need for safety in industry are conducted not only in Brisbane but right throughout the State, by utilising a departmental/community approach. The success of Safety Week may be best measured by the public response in visiting the displays and the subsequent inquiries transmitted to officers of the division about a wide variety of occupational-safety matters.

The ongoing promotion of occupation safety has been further enhanced by the creation of an awareness program that allows a continuous flow of information to the community. This program includes display trailers that can be used for training and for information purposes at such venues as agricultural shows and construction sites, factories and shopping centres. The education of all people in matters of occupational safety and health is regarded as a very important facet in the struggle to reduce the incidence and costs of accidents and disease.

Sitting suspended from 6 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr GATELY: I would now like to touch upon some matters pertaining to the 17½ per cent leave loading, which seems to be so near and dear to the hearts of the Labor Party members and the union movement. I particularly want to refer to comments that were made by Mr Clyde Cameron, the man who created and was credited with having coined the term “fat cats” to describe senior public servants. As you would agree, Mr Temporary Chairman, he is a man who has never been one to mince his words. His comments were, “We need desperately to cut the size of the public service”, but he believed that there were less-ruthless ways of going about it than by using his formula for sacking up to half of the Australian public service. He struck a more practical note with his call for the abolition of none other than flexi-time, which he himself implemented during the heady days of the Whitlam Labor Government. He also failed to mention the greatest of his industrial follies, which dates back to the time when he was Minister for Labour, namely, annual-leave loadings for all workers.

Holiday-leave loadings came about in nothing but dubious circumstances to begin with, when shift-workers on the wharves complained about losing overtime pay when they went on leave. It is ludicrous that those loadings should have ever spread throughout the work-force. The loading is paid even to those workers who have never done overtime in their lives.

Mr McLean: You wouldn't have a clue what you are talking about.

Mr GATELY: Yes I would. The honourable member should not fret about that. I will take things one step further and give the honourable member a little more information. It seems that he is becoming a little agitated at the facts.

Mr Brian Burke, the Premier of Western Australia, called for an end to the 17½ per cent leave loading for all workers except those working regular overtime. That is fair enough. Taking that one step further, we get to the Prime Minister, Mr Hawke, who encouraged employers to challenge the loading, declaring that the concessions made in good times should not be assumed to be in place for ever. Is that not an amazing revelation by none other than Mr Hawke, the man who, together with Mr Willis—when they were both cohorts in the ACTU—fought like hell to get it and now realises the folly of his ways? What an indictment on this nation of Australia! This country is unable today to meet that commitment, which it can no longer afford.

I return to the matter of occupational safety.

Mr Scott: You didn't do too well on that one.

Mr GATELY: There was no need to. To put it bluntly, there is no guts in it. It ought to be turned off. That is what will happen to the leave loading when the matter comes before the commission and the Government can prove—as it will do—that the nation cannot afford it.

I want to mention another matter that was raised earlier today during the debate. The Labor Opposition members were castigating this Government for what they claim is its non-performance and its lack of thought for the workers.

This Government has spent \$8.6m establishing a rehabilitation centre to help rehabilitate those persons who have been hurt during working hours. The primary function of that centre is to carry out assessments, identify the needs of injured workers—

Mr Davis interjected.

Mr GATELY: That is in contrast to the rubbish that Labor Party members are trying to shove down the necks of the people of Queensland. They are trying to be the goody-goodies, telling the Government that it is not doing anything. I challenge them to deny what I am saying. It is there, it is in place, and Opposition members did not put it there. They had nothing to do with it. All that they can do is denigrate what this Government is trying to do.

That rehabilitation centre is staffed by a rehabilitation team that includes medical officers, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, psychologists, nurse-employer liaison officers, trade instructors and managerial and support staff. It is there primarily to help get workers who have been injured back into the work-force. That puts to rest the lie that was told in this Chamber today that the Government does not care for the workers. What rot!

In addition to the aforementioned, the division prepares and distributes a wide range of technical information sheets for use by industry and organisations. The information set out in the sheets covers such items as safe use of plant and equipment, advice on legislation, particularly new legislation, and general items of interest on safety. The division, with self-help education in mind, distributes a wide range of safety-oriented films.

So far in this speech, I have mentioned activities and initiatives in broad terms being carried out by the construction safety branch and the occupational safety branch of the Division of Occupational Safety. The machinery branch of the division has the unenviable task of setting the standard for the operation and use of machinery throughout Queensland. Machinery in this sense covers items such as boilers, large and dangerous pressure vessels—

Time expired.

Hon. Sir WILLIAM KNOX (Nundah—Leader of the Liberal Party) (7.36 p.m.): I rise to support the Minister in the presentation of his Estimates, which are significant to many thousands of Queenslanders. The Acts administered by the Minister determine the welfare of many of them; and, as far as consumer protection is concerned, possibly everybody sooner or later.

Mr Davis: Don't forget to say that Liberal Party policy is to get rid of the 17½ per cent loading.

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: I will make it quite clear. I am pleased that the honourable member quoted partly from what I have to say. I will complete the quotation for him.

The Minister has given earnest attention to his portfolio. Apart from the bungle on the trading hours issue, he has been very successful.

I deal firstly with workers' compensation. The workers' compensation story in this State is quite impressive. I take some pride in having established the separation of workers' compensation from insurance in 1978. Although there were reservations about having workers' compensation established as a separate authority, particularly by the

public service and people who might be potential beneficiaries, it works extremely well. The change-over to the existing establishment was very smooth, due very largely to the quality of the officers who worked to see that it would be achieved. The reservations have disappeared. There were other problems not generally known, but they were overcome for the same reason.

Premiums have been kept at a very low level. The benefits are as good as anywhere in Australia. Due to efforts in industrial safety, claims have been reduced. Benefits have flowed to the community in various forms. Other speakers have mentioned the donations being made to other bodies, which help to reduce accidents at the workplace.

Mr McLean: A socialist scheme.

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: No, it was not. That is where the honourable member is wrong. Workers' compensation has been accepted right throughout the free world, regardless of political views of Governments in office.

Mr McLean: Every other State in Australia is run by free enterprise.

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: No, it is not. The honourable member is not up to date. Other States have now adopted the Queensland system. All that is needed is a single insurer. The single insurer is the secret of success. A multiplicity of insurers is a recipe for disaster.

In Victoria, so many companies were involved in workers' compensation that premiums went sky-high and got out of control. They were trying to keep people in business who did not have a sufficient base to be able to handle workers' compensation. The other States are the same. The Labor-controlled States had exactly the same problem. That is why they all came to Queensland to find out how it worked.

Mr Lester: You had a pretty important role in that as Minister, too.

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: I did. However, it was not as Minister for the portfolio that the Minister now holds; it was when I was Treasurer. Workers' compensation was a Treasury responsibility. When I was Treasurer, the State Government Insurance Office was divested of workers' compensation, which was placed under the portfolio now held by the Minister.

Mr Davis: You were such a disappointment that they could do without you.

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: Well, the reason was to try to keep the workers' compensation premiums as low as possible and also to make sure that the benefits flowing to the claimants were as high as possible. The benefits are as high as those applicable anywhere in Australia. It all comes about by having a single insurer.

Other States, which are now Labor States, flocked to this State to find out how it was done. They either copied Queensland's system or they are in the process of copying it. The Minister has probably given advice to them on the system.

Mr Lester: It means that, across the board, the private people do better because of the single authority. Therefore, it is private enterprise, isn't it?

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: It could well be that a consortium of private enterprise could be given a charter to be a single insurer, which, indeed, has often been done in insurance to cover aeroplane accidents and things of that sort. That is one way in which it could be done. A single insurer could hold a charter in exactly the same way as the Workers Compensation Board does. In effect, today the Workers Compensation Board is virtually a private insurer.

Mr McLean: Oh!

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: The honourable member is showing how ignorant he is of this.

Of course, it is really not insurance at all. It is a welfare fund, supplied by employers for the benefit of their employees. The scheme provides the lowest premiums in Australia, optimum benefits and the lowest costs. All of that has come about since 1978. Other States are now learning how to do it.

One of the major contributions that was made this year was the rehabilitation centre opened by the Minister in June. The centre is the first of its kind in Australia. It is financed out of workers' compensation surpluses. It has already produced results in this State by reducing the number of claimants and getting people back into the workforce at a much earlier stage.

I congratulate the Minister and his officers on that initiative. It took eight years to get it to its present stage, but that had to be so in order that the best way to handle a rehabilitation centre might be discovered. I have had the pleasure of inspecting the centre and I recommend to other honourable members that they also should go through the centre if they have not done so. The work of the centre is tremendously beneficial to workers in this State and will contribute, in no small manner, to their well-being. I congratulate the Minister on ensuring that the project was completed.

On the question of the 17.5 per cent holiday-leave loading, let me make the following position quite clear. As I said when the Budget was presented to the Parliament, the Liberal Party feels that this matter should go back to the Industrial Commission because that is where the matter was argued and determined, and that is where the Government obeyed the ruling on that occasion. Queensland was the first State to introduce the 17.5 per cent holiday-leave loading.

Mr Scott: Why should it now be in question?

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: Because that is open at any time. On 10 September, I asked a question in the House about whether, at any time since 1973, the Government had approached the commission to have the 17.5 per cent leave loading entitlement repealed or ameliorated. The Minister answered to the effect that at no time had an approach been made to the commission for any variation to the 17.5 per cent leave loading. It is open to any participant who is registered in the commission to apply to have the 17.5 per cent leave loading provision varied.

Now the Government intends to approach the commission in the correct way, as the Liberal Party recommended at that time. Private enterprise, which has had an application before the commission for approximately 15 months, now intends to proceed with its case. It is appropriate that it should be reviewed at this time. Some months ago it was appropriate for it to have been reviewed.

Reference was made earlier in this debate to Mr Clyde Cameron's statement that the provision was the greatest mistake—and he was an officer of the AWU, as I recall it. He said that the greatest mistake this country ever made was to apply the leave loading universally. Originally the philosophy was that it was intended only for those on shift work and in prejudiced occupations.

The leave loading was granted universally in this country and Queensland was the first State to adopt it. Regrettably, the Government, although it had plenty of opportunity to go to the commission at any other time when it did not like it, adopted an attitude of saying, "We don't like it now. We are going to legislate." The Liberal Party pointed out to the Government, publicly and in this place, that it was not possible to legislate satisfactorily in relation to the leave loading. The Liberal Party also pointed out that it would create undue and unnecessary industrial turmoil in this State because one section of the community was to be legislated against, whereas other sections of the community would be forced to listen to the decisions of the Industrial Commission. The Government is taking the leave-loading matter back to the Industrial Commission, which is the proper place for it to be debated and decided on.

I would hope also that there would be a review of the attitude to flexi-time. Flexi-time does have shortcomings. Anybody who has had anything to do with the public

service will quickly find the shortcomings that arise in flexi-time. I think it is true to say that flexi-time has not worked in the way in which the people who thought of it and designed it thought it would. Again, the Government has never approached the commission or the people with whom it made an agreement. Flexi-time was not introduced as a result of a ruling of the commission; it was as a result of an industrial agreement reached between the public service unions and the Government that led to its introduction. The terms of flexi-time were incorporated in the agreement and registered in the commission.

At no time in that period, as the Minister said in the Chamber as a result of a recent question by me, has the Government approached the unions to have that agreement varied. In order to remedy the shortcomings that have occurred, now is the time to have that agreement varied. Many of those shortcomings appeared some time ago and no effort was made to reassess them and to renegotiate the agreement. In some circumstances, there is room for flexi-time. There is room for consideration of the employees' special circumstances. The convenience of the employer must be taken into account and, above all, the production of a service to the community and to the people, which should not be put at prejudice by virtue of arrangements made between the employee and the employer—that above all other things—should be taken into account in the agreement that is eventually reached. Whatever shortcomings have arisen—and there have been many—in regard to flexi-time should be accommodated and handled in a proper way with the negotiating ability of the Government's advisers and the unions' advisers to come up with a new and better working scheme. I hope that that will be the way in which it is approached. For many people flexi-time has turned out to be a boon. Properly supervised and disciplined, it can be a tremendous advantage to employees in many circumstances and without prejudice to the public.

The matter that I wish to dwell on for the remainder of my contribution is the proposals by the various committees that are looking at changing Australia's Constitution, and to put those changes before the people of Australia. I refer to those matters that come under the responsibility of the Minister, and particularly to industrial relations. I will quote from a booklet entitled *Australia's Constitution Time to Update*, which is a summary of the reports of the advisory committees to the Constitutional Commission of September 1987. In regard to industrial relations I will refer to the recommendations of those committees. In case the Minister has not had them brought to his attention, I will do so now and I hope that he will be able to look at them in greater depth later on. The booklet deals with industrial relations and the recommendations of the body, which is now reaching the completion of its studies. Not too many people have been taking notice of that body, but it will become fairly influential in the politics of this nation. Page 27 of the booklet states that the committee's recommendations are that the Federal Parliament have a concurrent or shared power with the State Parliaments over industrial relations and employment matters generally. It states further—

“This would give the Federal Parliament the capacity to deal comprehensively with industrial matters and to create any machinery it wished to deal with industrial relations issues. It would enable the Commonwealth to legislate about wages and conditions of work which are an important factor in national economic management.”

At the moment the Commonwealth Parliament does not have the power to legislate directly on industrial conditions. It has the power to delegate those matters to the Federal Industrial Court, but it certainly has not got the power to legislate directly in those matters. I do not warn the Minister, but I alert him, and I hope that other State Ministers will be alerted, to the fact that, should the Federal Parliament have direct power to legislate in industrial matters, it will be to the detriment of this nation and not to the progress of the nation.

Just as the Liberal Party has argued here that the 17½ per cent leave loading should go back to the Industrial Commission, where it rightly belongs, and that the Government should not legislate on it, so too should all honourable members argue that the Federal Parliament should not have power given to it to legislate directly on industrial conditions.

At the moment it is prohibited from doing so by the Constitution, and it should not be given that power. I bring that to the attention of the Minister.

There has been lots of sabre-rattling by Federal politicians on the Labor side to take over occupational health in this nation. On that subject, page 30 of the report of the committee reviewing the Constitution states—

“For a variety of reasons, the Committee recommends that the Federal Parliament not be given an express power over occupational health and safety . . .”

I will not read the remainder to honourable members. I am pleased that that is the recommendation of the committee, that the Federal Parliament not be given direct power over occupational health and safety. If anybody wants to control private enterprise in this country, he should give the Federal Parliament direct legislative authority over occupational health and safety. If that were to happen, there would be so many regulations that people would not be able even to start a business.

I bring to the attention of the Minister page 34 of this fairly significant document, where it deals with the question of consumer protection, which comes under his responsibility. The report contains the following—

“The Committee decided that the Federal Parliament should have power to pass standard uniform consumer protection laws, which could be supplemented by State provisions, either more stringent or designed to deal with a particular local situation.”

I emphasise the words “could be supplemented”. At this moment the consumer laws of this nation are in the hands of State legislators because they know and understand the problems facing their localities and the people who are directly involved. The people can go quickly to the Consumer Affairs Bureau in this State and to similar bodies in other States and have their matters remedied. They can go to the Small Claims Tribunal and the various other agencies that exist. Again I alert the Minister to that recommendation of the committee reviewing the Constitution.

Mrs Nelson: Don't you also agree that that would be the second tool to take over the private sector—

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: It could well be.

There is room for the Federal Parliament to be interested in, and committed to, consumer protection. It has responsibility particularly for customs and quarantine provisions, which can relate directly to consumer protection. The National Health and Medical Research Council, which is not a body of the Federal Parliament but is a body set up by the States and the Federal Government, also plays a very vital role in consumer protection. The existing agencies can be improved; greater co-operation can be encouraged; but the States should not legislate themselves out of the responsibility of looking after consumer affairs. I am sure the Minister shares my view on that and I hope that he encourages other Ministers in other States to adopt a similar view.

Mr COOPER (Roma) (7.55 p.m.): I am pleased to be able to take part in the debate on the Employment, Small Business and Industrial Affairs Estimates. Along with other Government members and the Leader of the Liberal Party, I pay tribute to the Minister. He has certainly always kept his committee well-briefed and well-informed. He has been absolutely painstaking in explaining all aspects of his portfolio and his legislation. I cite as examples the voluntary employment contracts and the trading hours issue. Those are both very politically sensitive matters. The Minister has toured the State to explain these things. He has been willing to amend where necessary and to modify where necessary. He certainly always listens and responds. There is absolutely nothing to fear from either of those initiatives.

It is quite obvious that legislation in regard to voluntary employment contracts will be introduced in the next few days or in the next few weeks. It will be good for the State; it will be good for employers; it will be good for employees; and it will be good for consumers. I urge the Minister to continue to explain and respond to his committee,

to parliamentarians and to other people. He is setting a very good example in that regard. The Minister has drafted model legislation in the past; he will draft more model legislation in the future. The Minister is himself a model in the way he goes about his duties.

I have certainly worked well with the Minister's departmental heads, their officers and staff. They are a very loyal and dedicated team who always adopt a very fair and even-handed approach. I commend them for it.

There are many aspects of this department. I cannot possibly cover all of them tonight. However, one of the vital sectors is the Industrial Relations Division. That division actually plays a very vital role in the framework of government in the industrial relations area. It advises the Government on industrial matters; it puts the Government view before industrial tribunals; and it ensures that industrial relations matters are kept in Queensland. It also assists departments and statutory authorities in the management of their industrial relations functions, which is an absolutely vital and necessary role that has to be played.

An example of that assistance was the Expo site and the operations of the Expo authority. The Expo site was a very obvious area for potential industrial disruption. Honourable members witnessed the Federal Parliament House caper in Canberra. Its cost went from a figure of some \$200m to \$1,000m. The Expo site certainly provided the opportunity for that sort of thing, but the Industrial Relations Division provided advice to the Expo authority and to unions on all industrial relations matters. It represented the authority in disputes before the commission, quite obviously with success.

All is well with Expo; everything is on schedule. Something that could have been disastrous has been averted. Congratulations should be extended to the Expo authority, to the unions and to the Industrial Relations Division. I believe that they have all combined very well.

Another classic example was the Barker-Barambah Irrigation Project just a little to the north of Brisbane. The employees involved in that project were already receiving a site allowance which had been awarded by the State Industrial Commission. The problem arose when they sought agreement from the Government of an amount which would have greatly increased their allowance. That increase was refused. However, instead of taking the matter to the Industrial Commission the union decided to strike. The Industrial Relations Division then sought an order from the commission for employees to resume work, which was subsequently granted. The employees refused to comply with that order, and as a result they were prosecuted. Eventually the employees returned to work, but only after months of strikes. They are at work now pending a decision by the commission. The actual work of the Industrial Relations Division has certainly been recognised by the Industrial Commission. The only losers in that dispute were the employees because they were being led by blinkered union-leaders who have tunnel vision.

Another matter of major import in regard to this portfolio is the second tier wage increase. This second tier increase can be granted following the last State wage decision. The increases can be awarded or agreed to provided that there is a cost trade-off. So a 4 per cent increase, or part thereof, can be awarded if cost-savings are made in the area of, say, work practices, provided that they are effected to the tune of whatever the rise happens to be, be it 4 per cent or part thereof.

That arrangement, as it was worked out, was supposed to be taken seriously. Other States have not really taken it seriously. In quite a number of instances other States have demonstrated sleight of hand. However, the Queensland Industrial Relations Division is heavily involved in ensuring that the commission requirement of genuine offsets is met in this State.

The Industrial Relations Division is also involved in advising the Government in regard to the abolition of flexi-time. Some people believe that flexi-time is workable. I believe that it should be employer controlled and that all employees should report for work as directed. The employer should know the whereabouts of his employees. In the

past, in certain instances flexi-time has been a rort, and it needs close scrutiny. Reasonable working hours can still be agreed to by handling the matter on a discretionary and managed basis. If the working hours of 9 to 5 are returned to, there may be transport problems and so on. There is a necessity for some form of staggered working hours, and the Government will welcome the advice and guidance of this division.

Another very important policy initiative of the Queensland Government occurred after the 1983 election when the Industrial Affairs Advisory Unit was formed. I have had quite a lot of contact with the manager of that unit, Mr Phil Greenhill. That unit was formed because of the need for advice on industrial issues from an independent source. It has provided that independence of advice to the public, employees and employers, so that when problems do arise in the workplace, it can provide useful information and advice. In the past it has proved that it can prevent work disputes from occurring or has directed the parties in the right direction for them to obtain correct and appropriate advice and assistance. The unit has been a boon and an innovation for the department.

Some examples of matters that have been referred to the unit for advice relate to the provisions of the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act, the Industrial (Commercial Practices) Act and the Wages Act. Some of the areas concerned include the following: the powers of inspection by union officials; the duty of employers to allow entry to an inspection of premises by industrial inspectors; the power of unions to recover union dues; union membership issues, such as preferences, closed-shop situations and annual contributions; union black bans, strikes and secondary boycott actions; prejudice of employee by reason of membership or non-membership of a union; union levies; termination of membership of industrial union by members; and inducement of persons, other than employees, to become members of an industrial union of employees.

I will cite an example of the resolution of a problem that arose in the past and had a happy ending. The resolution of one such problem which provided particular satisfaction was in the case of a union member's widow who, because of an anomaly in the fund rules, was not eligible as a beneficiary under the union's mortality benefits fund. Representations were made by an officer of the unit to the trade union concerned and also to the administrators of the fund. This resulted in an *ex gratia* payment being made to the widow to the full value of the benefit. In addition to that, because of the anomaly that came to light as a result of the unit's involvement, the union was very pleased to undertake to change the rules of its fund to ensure that no future irregularities of a similar kind occurred.

In dealing with some of these issues, it was often necessary to obtain the assistance and co-operation of officials or staff of both industrial unions of employers and industrial unions of employees. The information and advice obtained from these sources during the past year have achieved a great deal. The unit should be given a top commendation, and I encourage it to carry on in its work.

The third aspect of the department that I would like to touch upon is the role and function of the Industrial Inspection Branch. This branch was formed to ensure that awards and agreements of the State Industrial Commission are observed. I cite as one example the recent case of the Roma motel. I know both parties involved and do not believe that it was a deliberate attempt at slave labour or anything of that kind. It emphasises the need for voluntary employment agreements, which will be implemented in the not-too-distant future. I have spoken to both parties about that issue. The department will be taking all the necessary measures to make sure that justice is done. The people who operate the motel are highly respected people. They are extremely concerned about any embarrassment that they may have caused. They will face the department and the law, as would anyone else in those circumstances.

The branch was also formed to watch over trading hours. Once the trading hours legislation is passed, the branch will not have to worry about that as much as it has in the past. The branch will also make sure that pastoral workers' accommodation is up to scratch. The branch acts in an advisory and counselling capacity for employers,

employees, unions, contractors and so on, particularly as far as their rights and obligations under State industrial legislation are concerned. Much can be achieved by advice, counselling and by bringing parties together.

A review of the industrial relations system is being undertaken at the moment. An update is needed to ensure that the system keeps pace with reality. Disputes can occur because of archaic or outdated rules. A high-powered committee has been set up to make a full and careful inquiry into the operation of the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act. Amongst other things, its terms of reference are to consider whether its provisions are sufficient to meet the requirements of present and future social, economic and industrial circumstances, and in particular whether they are sufficient for the purpose of prevention and settlement of industrial disputes, the interests of disputants and the community as a whole; and whether what, if any, amendments to the Act or procedures or new legislation or procedures are desirable to achieve those requirements and purpose.

Submissions have been called for and it is likely that hearings will be held in the future. That is a responsible and constructive step by the Government.

The current Act was enacted in 1961, and although it has been amended since then, it was not looked at in totality, so this time it will be looked at in totality to ensure that it meets contemporary and future requirements.

The committee's scope is restricted in only a couple of areas. One area is trading hours, which have already been reviewed, and on which legislation is pending. The other area is the electricity industry, which, as honourable members know, has already been catered for.

The Government will not let the review develop into a fiasco similar to that created by the Commonwealth Government when it gave birth to the Hancock report. That much-vaunted, expensive and certainly protracted exercise gave birth to the Federal Government's Bill. To phrase it accordingly, the Government midwives quickly drowned it. That Bill was introduced in a most irresponsible manner. It tried to deny parties access to the common law. That is, there is one law for the unions and another law for the people. That is totally and completely wrong. It certainly drew criticism from the employers. It also drew its share of criticism from the ACTU. It is very fitting that the Bill lapsed. It lapsed with the prorogation of Federal Parliament. I doubt very much whether we will see it in anything like the form in which it was presented.

I do not know how the Commonwealth Government can justify the expense of the Hancock inquiry and the lack of action on recommendations that it has publicly supported. I will never know why it indulged in such an exercise. We must adopt a modern, enlightened approach to industrial relations. Everyone has to be seen to be fair and reasonable and always with a view to looking at the productivity side of things as the main criteria, not greed.

I thank the Minister, his officers and staff for the work that they have done throughout the year and in anticipation of the work that they will do throughout the coming year. I commend them for their dedication and the contributions that they make. I certainly look forward to a very productive future with them.

It has been a pleasure to take part in the debate on the Minister's Estimates.

Mr BRADDY (Rockhampton) (8.10 p.m.): The debate on the Estimates presents an opportunity to review the year in relation to the department. Despite what the honourable member for Nundah said, it has not been one of the greatest years either for the National Party Government or for the Ministry whose Estimates are being debated this evening.

Let me consider some of the aspects of the administration of the department. First of all, I mention the trading hours trial, to which the honourable member for Nundah referred. He conceded that that trial was unsuccessful for the Minister for Small Business. Unless one considers some of the other aspects of the National Party administration during the year, there have been more comings and goings in that sphere than one would

believe possible. Only when one compares the relativity of this matter does the Minister escape with isolated instances of disdain. The issue of the ICI plant and the Lindeman Island fiasco are two examples that helped the Minister escape any more opprobrium than he otherwise may have endured. No doubt when debate begins on the new legislation relating to the shopping-hours trial, that subject can be dealt with in more detail. As I have stated previously, the report that was requested by the Minister from the trading-hours committee criticised him in relation to that aspect.

Today, this Chamber witnessed yet another signal defeat for this Government. The Minister, Mr Lester, was forced to carry the burden in this Chamber for the Premier. I refer to the Government's backing-down on the taking away of the 17½ per cent leave loading from public servants.

The Minister stated that the Premier had never promised or indicated that there would be legislation in relation to that matter. Of course, that is not correct. The day after the Premier presented the Budget in this Chamber, he announced that the Government would be legislating to remove the 17½ per cent leave loading. He also made that statement in reply to questions from media personnel.

It is absolutely incorrect and nonsensical to suggest that the Government never intended to legislate in relation to the 17½ per cent leave loading. The Government has backed away from that legislation only because of the strength of opposition from the Labor Party and the trade union movement in this State. Once again the Government has been caught introducing suggestions that it was unable to proceed with, firstly, because it did not have the common sense to introduce proper suggestions and, secondly, because it did not have the courage to proceed with its proposals.

At the last State election the Labor Party predicted that the 17½ per cent leave loading would be taken away. Labor Party members suggested to the people of Queensland that that would happen and they were told they were scaremongering; that it would never happen. After the election the Government attempted to take away the leave loading. The Premier stated that that would be done. Because the Premier is undergoing a prolonged period of severe criticism throughout this State, he had Mr Lester, as the appropriate Minister, make the ministerial statement on this issue. The Premier should have made that ministerial statement. At least Mr Lester had the courage to get up and do something that the Premier was not prepared to do. That represents a signal defeat, firstly, for the Premier and, secondly, for the Government. It represents also a signal victory for the Labor Party and the trade union movement in this State.

Mrs Nelson: Is this your leadership speech, Paul?

Mr BRADDY: It is not a leadership speech; it is a speech about a failed leader.

Mr Beanland: You are not a failed leader, Vince. You have not got there yet.

Mr BRADDY: I am talking about the Premier, who made the initial statements about the leave loading and failed today in this Chamber to follow it through. Instead, he asked the Minister for Small Business, Mr Lester, to carry the can for him.

Mr Lester: I did a good job, too, didn't I?

Mr BRADDY: The Minister carried the can as well as anybody could carry the can—slipping and slopping around the place. But at least he carried the can, which was more than the Premier was able to do.

The second matter that we have to review this evening is another signal defeat for the Minister. I refer to the proposal by Mr Lester, which was accepted by Cabinet at Kingaroy in February of this year, that there be set up a committee to examine ministerial rezonings to protect small business in this State.

Mr Lester: We have got a committee, and that is a local government committee. That is looking at that now. We didn't let you down on that.

Mr BRADDY: At another stage this year, the Minister in fact told honourable members that he was stunned when he went to shopping centres both at the Gold Coast and in Brisbane to find, firstly, that the shopping centres were virtually without customers and, secondly, that so many of them had vacant shops. The committee that he hoped to set up to examine those matters was taken away from him and some sort of nebulous committee has been set up under the Local Government Minister.

The situation is, as it always has been, that big business has the ear of this Government and that ministerial rezonings, it appears, unfortunately, will continue. On occasions, Government members have defended ministerial rezonings, as occurred recently when the Local Government Estimates were debated.

This year the Government has suffered signal defeats on three fronts: the trading hours trial fiasco, with the Minister now backing away from the recommendations in the report; the removal of the 17½ per cent leave loading, which again the Government is backing away from; and the ministerial rezoning position, which the Minister for Small Business obviously is sensible enough to be concerned about but does not have the strength in Cabinet to actually do something constructive about.

I turn now to another aspect of the Minister's department and responsibilities, that is, the matter of consumer affairs. I start by complimenting the Minister on one aspect of the consumer affairs portfolio, that is, the appointment to Rockhampton of an inspector to carry out the work of investigating consumers' complaints. The inspector concerned, Mr Glen Dever, does an excellent job. He does not regard himself as being a pen-pusher or a person who weighs paper. When complaints come in—I have referred quite a few to him—he sets about investigating and conciliating rather than just writing out a standard letter inviting a reply from the firm against whom the complaint has been made.

Mr Lester: I will pass on your good comments to him.

Mr BRADDY: I thank the Minister.

Mr Dever has done an excellent job. His manner and style of operating are very good. Of course, the problem is that he is so successful that it casts in a very poor light the failure of the Government to have other Glen Devers around the State. Consumer affairs inspectors have been appointed in Brisbane, and there is one in Rockhampton. What about Townsville?

Mr Lester: We are going to do it.

Mr BRADDY: What about Cairns, Ipswich and all the other large areas of the State? What about the provincial cities?

The Government is failing in its duty to protect consumers. My observation of how much work arises in Rockhampton makes me certain that a similar need exists in other areas.

A few minutes ago, the Minister interjected to say, "We are going to do it." The program has not been announced. The Budget papers do not make it at all clear when the inspectors will be appointed or to which areas they will be appointed. I suggest that the Government has not given emphasis to the importance of this problem in order to rectify it.

Mr Lester: I made the same comment about Rockhampton three years ago. I said, "We are going to do it." We did it. The next step is Townsville, the Gold Coast, and so we go on.

Mr BRADDY: I ask the Minister when that will happen in Townsville, the Gold Coast and so on. Perhaps the Minister will inform the Chamber in due course of the timetable, because at the moment it is on the never-never. Inspectors of that type are really needed, because the complaints that I receive and refer to the department are numerous.

Another area in which the Consumer Affairs Bureau could improve its performance relates to a price-watch role in Queensland. Work of this kind carried out by other States leaves Queensland for dead by encouraging people in business in those States to keep price rises to a minimum level. I am not just talking about the voluntary price-watchers that are in existence. The Government must take an interest in this. At another time, I will be talking about this matter and making positive suggestions in relation to it.

However, I now suggest to the Minister that this is an area in which the Government is failing and definitely needs to lift its performance.

Mrs Nelson: Why don't you make those suggestions now? This is the right debate.

Mr BRADY: The member for Aspley asks why I do not make them now. The reason is that I do not believe sufficient time is available to outline them now. I will make those suggestions at an appropriate time and place.

Mrs Nelson: You have 10 minutes.

Mr BRADY: The member for Aspley might think that she could do it in nine or 10 minutes, but I do not believe that my duties as shadow Minister require me to outline those suggestions during an Estimates debate, which is a summary of several aspects. I will make appropriate suggestions during the course of a debate or at a time that I believe is more proper and allows me to go into more detail.

There are a good story and a bad story in relation to the Small Business Development Corporation. The good story is that the corporation seems to be able to provide educational material and carry out educational programs fairly well. During the year I visited the Townsville office to see what was going on there. I believe that it is quite a good program.

Mr Lester: He is a good officer, too.

Mr BRADY: Yes. I think that it is a good program. I congratulate the Government on the Vote to increase the money that can be spent on it. However, I believe that the Small Business Development Corporation is not carrying out to the full extent the charter that it should be carrying out. Its performance falls far short of what is required. I do not believe that sufficient development of what the corporation sets out to do has been achieved. It is certainly true that it carries out an educational role well, but when one looks to what goes on in Victoria in relation to regional development and encouragement of industries and small-business to become established, it is obvious that Queensland falls far short of the mark.

In this State and in this department, there is no understanding of regional business development in the true sense of the term. No investigation has been carried out into what different regions have to offer, and no positive financial encouragement has been offered to businesses to become established in Queensland.

Mr Simpson: That is a broad statement.

Mr BRADY: It is a broad statement, but if honourable members went to Victoria and saw what the Victorian Government is doing in the Latrobe Valley and in the Geelong region, and contrasted that to what the Queensland Government is doing, they would be very embarrassed.

The Bjelke-Petersen Government has no understanding of regional development. A study by people with open minds of what has occurred in Victoria would lead the Queensland Government to offer a better deal.

If such a study were undertaken, the reasons why unemployment in Victoria is at a much lower level than it is in Queensland and why unemployment programs are much better advanced in Victoria than they are in Queensland might well come home to this Government. However, this Government refuses to learn from Labor Governments. This Government abuses Labor Governments anywhere they exist, no matter whether

they be in Fiji—as the Premier's recent statements indicate—or in any other part of Australia. The leader of this Government has a totally closed mind to anything that is done by the Labor Party, whether it is being done in Australia or in Fiji.

I turn my attention now to other figures indicating the existence in this State of significant problems which must reflect on business development. First of all, I refer to the revenue that is taken by the Government. It is now a commonly understood economic factor that if the Government takes too big a slice from the public, particularly from business, that can have the effect of inhibiting business growth.

What is the situation revealed by the Australian Bureau of Statistics in relation to revenue taken by the Queensland Government? The realities are that from 1980-81 to 1986-87, of all the Australian States, Queensland had the highest growth in State revenue. It grew by 118.1 per cent, whereas the average growth of the other States was 95.6 per cent. So, despite this Government's cry that it is a small-tax Government and that it encourages business, particularly small business, the reality is that it has been the Government that has taken the highest growth in revenue over that period. Indeed, it has also had the highest growth in expenditure. Let me refer to that factor as an illustration of how this small-taxing, small-spending Government operates so that business can have an opportunity to grow.

Over the last three years, Queensland recorded the highest growth in expenditure of any Australian State. Queensland's rate of 97.7 per cent compared with the average for the rest of Australia of 84.1 per cent. They are Australian Bureau of Statistics figures. Once again, this myth of the low-taxing, low-spending Government is exposed for what it is—a National Party charade. Unfortunately, expenditure and revenue are unlike other areas, in which the Government backs down when it is exposed. They are not like matters involving Lindeman Island, the chlorine plant, the extended shopping hours trial, or abolition of the 17½ per cent leave loading, all matters in which the Government backed off. In spending money and taking money from the public, the Government never backs off; it just keeps on going. Of course, Queensland does not have a public accounts committee to keep track of where the money is going. This Government is lumbered with the fact that the myth does not measure up. As I said, it is the highest-spending Government in terms of growth of Government expenditure and it is the highest-taxing Government in terms of the growth of all the Australian States.

What effect has that had on business and business people in Queensland? By turning to the bankruptcy figures, one will see the effect. From 1983-84 to 1986-87 there has been a factor of 98.5 per cent in general growth in bankruptcies in Queensland. It is almost double the Australian rate of growth—almost double! When the growth of Government expenditure and Government revenue is considered, the effect that it has had on business confidence and the collapses of business in Queensland will be seen.

What this Government is trying to do is introduce a business education program through the Small Business Development Corporation, as though that will solve all of the problems. Of course it will not solve the problems. It will help some people whose bankruptcies are brought about by inexperience and lack of knowledge in business, but certainly will not help the people who operate in an economy that has been ruined by people who are too busy with other matters to run the economy properly.

We in the Labor Party urge the Minister for Small Business to take an interest in this State's general economy, to really urge the Government to do something about its revenue base—to really cut that—to operate an economy that will generate work and new businesses, and to set up regional industries and regional growth patterns. Only then will the growth in the rate of bankruptcies in Queensland not remain at almost double the Australian rate.

Mrs NELSON (Aspley) (8.30 p.m.): I speak tonight to support the Minister in the presentation of his Estimates for this financial year. Before addressing some issues concerning his departmental responsibilities, I wish to pay a personal tribute to the Minister. This year I have served on his committee and I think it would be fair to say

that the Minister works his committee harder than does any other Minister in the Parliament. He certainly informs his committee better than any other Minister. He is in grave danger of getting a swelled head from all the tributes that he has received from the members of his committee. However, I believe that he deserves the tributes of his committee members because, despite the hard work and the long hours that many of us have had to put in over the past months, he is the sort of person who listens and takes on board points of view.

Far from the member for Rockhampton talking about the Minister's backing down, I believe that Vince Lester is one of the most effective and strongest Ministers in the Government. He is prepared to take on the difficult issues and manage them well. If he believes there is room to change on a matter of policy or principle, he is not ashamed to go out and say that he has changed his mind and do it. Not a lot of politicians in this country are prepared to do that. So I pay him a personal tribute in this Chamber tonight.

Mr White: He knows how to walk backwards.

Mrs NELSON: Yes. In fact, I was going to start out by saying that there were a few people in the media and in this Chamber—witty and sophisticated people, not necessarily clever people—who thought that they might gain some amusement at some of his past comments about walking backwards, but the charity for which he did that was not amused; it was just terribly grateful. Those people who are also concerned about which way certain doors should swing or not swing were also very grateful. The disabled people of Australia were very grateful to him for raising an issue which nobody else seemed to care about. So sometimes being witty and sophisticated is not as successful as being a plain talker with a good and big heart.

I wish to make a couple of comments on statements by the member for Rockhampton. I do not think that he ought to escape unscathed with his statistical analysis of Queensland's taxation and revenue collection. I draw the Committee's attention to an article in today's *Australian Financial Review* that quotes the IPA report on State Budgets around Australia. It gives most of the Australian States a caning for the dramatic increases in revenue that they have taken from their residents and in fact praises the Queensland Government for its economically responsible Budget. Could I point out to the member for Rockhampton, in his absence—

Mr Scott: He is in the Chamber.

Mrs NELSON: I beg your pardon! He is over speaking with the Minister.

Could I point out to the member for Rockhampton that in fact Queensland's increased tax take was \$26 per head? This year the Commonwealth's increase was \$340 per head of population. The total increased tax take in New South Wales was \$403m, which is \$71 per head. Victoria's figure per head of population was \$69, Western Australia's was \$61 and South Australia had the figure of \$75.

Mr Littleproud: That is not taking into account the amount of money that they will take off people by cancelling the family allowances.

Mrs NELSON: Absolutely.

It certainly does not take into account the fact that Queensland is short changed \$470m by the Commonwealth in its Budget. Despite that, according to the Institute of Public Affairs report published in today's *Australian Financial Review*, the Queensland Government still managed to bring down in this Chamber an economically responsible Budget.

I also wish to point out to the member for Rockhampton that it is easy to say anything with statistics, but to blame the Queensland Government for the high rate of bankruptcies in Australia is just downright politically dishonest. Most businessmen in the community will say that the things that crippled them in the last three or four years

were high interest rates and punitive additional taxes brought in when Bob Hawke became Prime Minister.

Mr Braddy: Those taxes and interest rates were Australiawide. Why was Queensland worse off?

Mrs NELSON: Because Queensland has more entrepreneurs and risk-takers. Any economy that has small business, risk-takers and entrepreneurs is the first to suffer from economic circumstances of the type created by the current Federal Government. If the honourable member would like me to detail more statistics, I will dish up the British and European inflation rates. They show that the Australian inflation rate is running at almost three times the British inflation rate. Unemployment in Britain is now on the decline; unemployment in Australia is still on the rise and the inflation rate in this country will be into double digits by the end of the year.

Members of the Opposition praise the Federal Government's economic management and try to sheet all the blame home to the Queensland economy when they know very well that national economic policy is what causes bankruptcies.

Mr Braddy: Twice as bad as any other State.

Mrs NELSON: The other thing that the honourable member can do is fudge figures. I will examine some of those figures at another time when it suits me. The honourable member is fond of saying that he will present facts at another time. I will have a debate about that with him at another time in another place.

Mr Scott: You have 15 minutes left.

Mrs NELSON: I have a lot more to say. I see that the witty and sophisticated but not necessarily clever members opposite are at it again.

Today, Governments need to provide services that assist the economy to grow and the welfare of the individual to improve. I believe that the need for smaller government across the nation has been recognised first by the Queensland Government. It is important that services provided by Governments are self-funding as far as possible, particularly on the basis of the user pays.

I pay tribute to the Small Business Development Corporation. I agree with the member for Rockhampton in that the service provided by that corporation is an excellent one which could be expanded. I would certainly support the Minister in any representations that he might wish to make to see that that service is expanded Queenslandwide.

The member for Rockhampton made the allegation that the Queensland Government does not understand regional planning, regional business divisions or whatever else. If one examines Queensland's history and the way in which Queensland functions as a State, one finds that Queensland is the most decentralised State in Australia. In fact, Fred Campbell, the former member for Aspley, was one of the people most involved in trying to develop a regional industrial business base for this State. I think it would be fair to say that other States are now looking to the way in which Queensland has operated for more than 40 years.

As a female member of this Parliament, I want to pay a tribute to two executives in the public service. The first is Coleene Anger, who is the General Manager of the Small Business Development Corporation. I think that she is doing an outstanding job. I also take this opportunity to congratulate Jan Taylor on being appointed the Director of the Consumer Affairs Bureau.

In his speech, Sir William Knox addressed the issue of the constitutional documents that all honourable members have received in recent weeks. Like Sir William, I had a close look at some of the recommendations in the report. I believe that all State Governments, regardless of political persuasion, should be very careful before they allow a number of the recommendations in that report to be adopted.

Sir William and his colleagues maintained that regulations concerning occupational health and safety could tie up the private sector, but consumer affairs management or domination by the Commonwealth Government could tie up the private sector completely. It is not in the national interest to have the sort of junta that the Commonwealth Government seems to want to have with these constitutional proposals and the ACTU proposals for huge unions. Together, they are a recipe for economic and social decline in Australia. Government in Australia ought to be decentralised and diminished, not centralised and expanded.

The member for Rockhampton also referred to the need to have Price Watch. It is about time that somebody in Australia put to bed the myth about the Elaine Darling Price Watch, which I call the Mickey Mouse Price Watch——

Mr Henderson: Minnie Mouse.

Mrs NELSON: I stand corrected by the member for Mount Gravatt—the Minnie Mouse Price Watch. It certainly needs to be exposed for the fraud that it is. Honourable members are probably aware of the hypermarket that exists in the Aspley electorate. When the manager of that organisation rang Mrs Darling and asked, “Why wasn’t the hypermarket included in your Price Watch campaign?”, he was told, “It might distort the figures.” That is an amazing assertion.

Mr White: I thought you were against the hypermarket.

Mrs NELSON: I have never said I was in favour of it. I am stating the facts. I have not changed my position on that, and everything I have said about it has come true.

Mr Beard: Give us the facts.

Mrs NELSON: The facts are that that organisation was obliged to insert advertisements in the *Courier-Mail*——

Mr Innes interjected.

Mrs NELSON: The honourable member for Sherwood is being even more witty and sophisticated, and even less clever.

The manager of that organisation was obliged to insert advertisements in the *Courier-Mail* outlining the price structure that existed in his retailing outlet, and made very strong public statements in an attempt to reveal to the public what a fraud that Price Watch campaign was. The amateur nature of the campaign was certainly revealed when some comparison studies were done showing that it was not even comparing like products displaying the same “use by” dates. I believe that the Australian public and a number of the major grocery outlets have every right to be outraged and amused by the fact that all of the cheapest grocery outlets in Queensland were to be found in the electorate of Lilley. I do not know about other honourable members, but I think that that is a most remarkable coincidence and also untrue.

Mr Lee: The hypermarket did well.

Mrs NELSON: I do not shop there.

Mr White: I have seen you there.

Mrs NELSON: I do not do my grocery shopping at the hypermarket.

Mr Lee: Just checking out the prices.

Mrs NELSON: I use the small boutiques.

Mr Lee: The shops around the supermarket?

Mrs NELSON: I do not indulge in amateur theatricals. I go to the centre. I do not do my grocery shopping there. I do my grocery shopping at the Coles in Robinson Road—for those honourable members who find it so terribly interesting.

I wish to comment on another consumer affairs program which causes me great concern, and that is *The Investigators* on the ABC. *The Investigators* could really be termed a kangaroo court in consumer affairs. There may be people in the Labor Party to whom it gives a warm inner glow, but I really believe that the presenters are in a privileged position and that, in most instances, the way in which the cases are presented does not give the defendant—for the want of a better word—a real opportunity to present his case.

Various State Governments may want to do more in the area of consumer protection, and I believe that Queensland is on the right track. I do not believe that amateur exercises such as the one conducted by the member for Lilley, for purely political purposes, approximately three months prior to every Federal election and those conducted by the ABC—which I believe fall into the dangerous category of wanting to perform the role of Government in this nation—

Mr Lee: What do you think of *Choice*?

Mrs NELSON: I genuinely believe that *Choice* magazine and the ACA are becoming quite a serious problem in this country.

Mr White: It has a very good article on condoms.

Mrs NELSON: Did the honourable member for Redcliffe assist with the research? The honourable member might like to outline further information on that to the Chamber later this evening. That may be a significant part of the honourable member's speech.

Mr Prest: He is talking from experience.

Mrs NELSON: He is speaking from having been personally involved in the research.

I wish to spend a little time speaking about what I believe to be one of the most significant achievements of the Queensland Government—the development of the rehabilitation centre. I am delighted to see from the report on the administration operations of the board that a further \$1m has been reserved for the purposes of rehabilitation of injured workers in Queensland. That total reserve now stands at \$4m and provides a firm base for the board to enhance service delivery throughout the State. Queensland has come a long way in the field of rehabilitation in a relatively short time and has become the leader of all other Australian States. I do not believe that any honourable member in this Chamber would deny that.

From very humble beginnings, when only one officer of the board was engaged full time upon this work, Queensland has progressed to the stage at which there are now 62 officers. The implementation of rehabilitation services has been gradual, purposeful and successful, and also self-funding. The rehabilitation portfolio of the board is centred on the branch itself, which has 22 officers, and the South Brisbane centre, which has 40 officers. The task of the branch is to provide assistance to injured workers whose incapacity period is likely to be more than six weeks.

In the case of seriously injured workers, intervention is immediate upon the acceptance of a claim. It is an accepted fact that early intervention is the key to a successful program. I have done some research on some of the private sector programs throughout the world. The program that is being conducted by the Queensland Government will certainly match any of those schemes. Although the branch is located in Brisbane, it has full-time rehabilitation counsellors in Townsville and Rockhampton. It also provides services to other regions by way of regular visits by counsellors, who are employed on a fee-for-service basis in Cairns, Mackay, Maryborough and Southport.

I believe that in the future the board plans to extend services to regional and metropolitan areas. I am sincerely hopeful that one of those centres will be established

on the north side of Brisbane. That is necessary. As I represent an electorate on the north side of Brisbane, I would like the Queensland Government to adopt that as a high priority. I am not the least bit biased.

Mr Lee: You are not biased by any means.

Mrs NELSON: As the honourable member says, I am not biased by any means.

I believe that counsellors will be stationed at all major provincial cities. I would like to support the Minister in any representations that are made to expand the service and the finances for it. I think that the officers will be able to provide regional services to enable Brisbane counsellors to take on larger caseloads in the metropolitan area.

The branch is responsible for the referral of injured workers to the South Brisbane centre. It was opened only on 28 June and commenced receiving clients on 3 August. It was built at a cost of \$8.2m, which included the purchase of the land. It is envisaged that this outlay will be recouped within five years. To date, 102 workers have been referred to the centre. It has not yet been built up to its full capacity.

One surprising factor is that a number of workers who have been offered an opportunity to attend the centre have gone back to work instead. No-one is suggesting that they may have been stretching out their time on workers' compensation, but the centre has had the bonus effect of getting people back to work without the necessity for additional help.

I pay a tribute to the manager of the centre, Mr Ian Brotchie. He was a long-standing professional colleague of mine in my former radiographic days. He has worked hard and come a long way. I support the outstanding work that he is doing at the centre.

Finally, I would like to comment briefly on what I see is the changing face of industrial relations in Australia. I do not believe that we can any longer cling to the rhetoric, as the Labor Party tends to do, of excessive demands in a time of declining economies. There is no doubt that Australia has serious economic problems. Its industrial relations platform ought to be closely interwoven, with the Government, the private sector and the trade union movement working together in the best interests of all Australians. I believe, therefore, that some of the outdated rhetoric of the Marxists—and that is the philosophy on which they base their claim to government—well and truly ought to be off the national agenda. Far from making things bigger and having centralised government, big unions, big business and big government, they ought to look closely at the need to decentralise and to create smaller government and smaller, enterprise-based unions and industry-based unions. The days of taking a fast buck from the employer are over, because the country can no longer afford the luxury.

Mr GOSS (Logan) (8.49 p.m.): I rise to speak briefly about one particular matter that affects a constituent of mine and that came to my attention recently.

In view of all the glowing tributes that have been made to the Minister, I thought that I should also join in the debate in my own fashion and congratulate not the Minister but all those National Party back-benchers for managing to congratulate the Minister in almost identical terms. It must mean that the Minister is indeed a very great and competent Minister or that the back-benchers are all equally sycophantic.

The matter I raise relates to a specific example of what I think are the damaging consequences of the employment policies of the Minister and the Queensland Government, particularly to the basic conditions of ordinary working Queenslanders. I have a long print-out of ABS statistics that indicates that Queensland has consistently and almost continually had the worst unemployment rate in the country. All honourable members are aware that a range of economic indicators can be quoted, and the Government has its two or three that can be trotted out from time to time to suit its case. The broad range of economic indicators shows that Queensland is doing very poorly in comparison with the other States. What is the difference? Clearly, we have a national economy that has had troubles. However, with the implementation and manifestation of Federal

Government policies, the economy is starting to turn around. In other States the reaction or the turn-around has been quite different.

As to Queensland's poor performance—the major difference between Queensland and the other States is its administration, which is locked into the myth that it created during the good times in the mid-seventies. How proud and cocky this Government was when it claimed credit during good times. However, now that times are bad, this Government wants to blame the Federal Government.

When it comes to costs—this Government wants to pass them on to ordinary working Queenslanders, who already have the lowest weekly earnings of all Australian workers. Not only does Queensland have the worst economic indicators but it also has the worst wages and basic conditions. This Government and the Ministers want to take those basic working conditions even lower.

The Government's PR machine has really run out of steam. The current publicity about the Fitzgerald inquiry, vice, morals, condoms and what have you really obscure the serious problems that exist in Queensland together with the serious maladministration and neglect of the economy, particularly in relation to this Minister's responsibilities.

As I have said in relation to basic working conditions of average working Queenslanders, Queensland has the lowest average weekly earnings of any State. All honourable members have witnessed the disaster of policy implementation of the leave loading, together with the very convenient and contrived argument that has now been put forward by the Minister that the decent Australian thing to do is to go off to the umpire and to abide by his decision. Until the Minister received advice from departmental officers, his attitude was——

Mr Lester: I never said that we would legislate.

Mr GOSS: No, the Minister did not say that he would legislate. I understand that he is letting it be known to whoever will listen that it was really the Premier's idea and that the Minister is really the good guy; that, when it came to king hitting Queensland workers by legislating, it was really somebody else's idea and that the Minister is really a good guy.

The problem is that even in Queensland there is a concept of ministerial and political responsibility, and this Minister will wear it in the same way as his Premier, the rest of his Cabinet and the rest of his Government will wear it, because that is what they were planning to do. The fact that they were thwarted is due to no effort or study on their part. They are now stuck with a situation in which they will take their case to the commission. They will probably lose it and then take it out on Queensland workers through dismissals. There is certainly some distance to go before the final outcome of that case. In terms of policy implementation and in providing security and certainty for Queensland workers and industry, it has been a disaster. The fact that the Government does not know what it is doing and does not know how to implement its policies can hardly engender the confidence of either the work-force or businesses.

The particular case that was brought to my attention relates to the much-vexed question of contracts and, in particular, to the suggestion that people will be undercut in terms of awards or acceptable standards. The case to which I shall refer does not relate to a registered award but rather to an unregistered agreement—an arrangement that has been struck between unions, such as the Transport Workers Union on the one hand, and major employers on the other in relation to owner/drivers of motor vehicles and the conditions under which they operate. It is a clear example of how the Government will allow the unscrupulous employer—and they are not all unscrupulous, but clearly there are a substantial number who are—to take advantage of people in tough times. The Government will facilitate it. That is my objection to its policy and its administration.

Clearly, there are unscrupulous employers who will take advantage of that and who will exploit the circumstances by getting people to buy their own jobs. That is something that is really reprehensible and objectionable to most of the Australian community and

to most of the Australian work-force. People who are unemployed and others who are seeking work should not have to buy their jobs.

This case is exacerbated by the circumstance that I propose to outline. It relates to a man from Logan City by the name of George Hunter, of Loganlea. He had been an owner/driver for some years. He was out of work and had the proposition that I am about to outline put to him. It came from Brisbane Taxi Trucks and Couriers. To make sure that it is clearly understood exactly what that private company is up to, I will read the letter, or proposed contract, into the record. It is from Brisbane Taxi Trucks and Couriers of Sumner Park, signed by Mr Merv Collins, dated 24 July 1987—

“To whom it may Concern.

George Hunter is desirous in purchasing a 8T D1211 Truck. On purchasing this vehicle he intends to obtain work for same. On interviewing Mr Hunter I feel that he would be most suitable for our State Government Contract which is with the State Works Department.

A contract will be entered into by Mr Hunter & Brisbane Taxi Trucks for the sum of \$5,000.00. This will be for 40 hours a week work for 700.00.

There is no Benefits namely Holiday pay Sick pay etc.

I understand that the price of the truck is \$15,000.00 a total of \$20,000.00

On payment of the \$5,000.00 the contract will be entered into for 12 months work plus an option of 12 months.”

The first point to be made is that this private company is selling off State Government contracts for transport purposes. Furthermore, the ordinary Queensland worker is being demanded to pay \$5,000 for a job. It is a job that is only for 12 months, with an option of a further 12 months. On top of that, of course, he has to buy the truck. However, what was really objected to and what made it non-viable was the loading on the top—this cream on the top; this pay-off, as it were—to the company of \$5,000 for the 12 months' contract.

Mr Lee: What was the market value of the truck?

Mr GOSS: It was a fair price—\$15,000. He accepted that. What he objected to was having to pay \$5,000 for his job.

I table a photocopy of that letter for the record.

Whereupon the honourable member laid the document on the table.

Mr GOSS: The point is that not only has he got to pay that money for his job, but in relation to the established, accepted record—the unregistered agreement entered into by the TWU and major employers to establish the bench-mark for the industry—he would have received \$700 a week and none of the benefits named, such as holiday pay, sick leave, etc.

I understand that, earlier this year, the relevant rate for a truck of that size was \$18.50 per hour, or \$740 per week—\$2,000 per annum more than would have been paid under the contract. From June of this year, the rate was \$20.80 per hour, or about \$832 per week—an extra \$6,500 per annum. Therefore, the Government's attitude facilitates circumstances in which the unscrupulous employer is able to offer a contract under which an individual not only has to buy his job for \$5,000—and for 12 months only—but also loses between \$2,000 and \$6,500 compared with the accepted award rate. On top of that, he is denied the ordinary and accepted entitlements such as holiday pay, sick pay, etc. It is not an award; it is most reprehensible and objectionable; it is an example of what the people of Queensland will see more and more of under this Government and this Minister's administration.

What I would like to see clarified by the Government and, in particular, by the Works Minister, or whoever is responsible for those contracts, is: what is the basis of the tender made by Brisbane Taxi Trucks and Couriers? What is the price tendered by

that company? I suspect that it is being paid even more than the \$700 per week by the Government and that that is another skim-off.

Essentially, the question comes back to the payment of \$5,000. I would like to know whether the Government is aware of that practice. If so, why is this company getting a special deal? Are other companies getting special deals? Is this just another of the many cases involving this Government in which special deals are arranged for special friends, and in which special treatment is arranged for the VIPs? Is this another instance in which the great majority of Queenslanders can go and jump in the lake because the Government only has to look after the special people or because it only has to look after the VIPs? That is what the National Party Government is really all about.

If the Government is not aware of this practice, and if it is not aware of the particular case of the onselling of State Government contracts for a profit without any contribution, what does it propose to do about it? The Government's response will be an interesting test of its attitude in respect of such cases but, clearly, its track record up till now has not been good. The Queensland Government's track record is designed to put the employer in a position in which he can simply crush the worker if he wants to exploit a situation. In tough times, he can make that worker buy a job and undercut his fellow workers.

A year or so ago, some people thought that the TLC-sponsored advertising campaign was being somewhat dramatic in showing people underbidding each other to get a particular job. Quite clearly, what has been seen lately indicates that those advertisements were an accurate reflection of what can happen and, furthermore, what is happening.

Some contracts of this type have already been exposed by representatives of the Trades and Labor Council and by my colleague the honourable member for Bulimba, who raised the matter of pizza delivery businesses that operate in Queensland. There is a lot more to be told in relation to that particular case in terms of the exploitation of working people—and, in particular, young people. It is disgraceful and cruel to set young people off on their working career by having them forced into a situation in which they underbid each other, pay for their job and have to give up certain basic conditions that have been won over a long period.

Now that times are tough, the Queensland Government wants to blame the Federal Government. It wants to pass the costs of the tough times on to the ordinary workers instead of picking up its own administrative game and doing some of the things that other Governments, such as the Victorian Government, have done. Other Governments have taken steps to generate economic activity and employment opportunities and have thereby achieved fair and reasonable conditions for the working people of their States, instead of cutting people back to pay for the cost of economic policy failure and their confusion of economic policy.

Mrs HARVEY (Greenslopes) (9.03 p.m.): I rose in this Chamber approximately 18 months ago to state my views on the Federal Government's policies on employment. At that time, I said that the Federal Government's policies were entirely wrong; that its attitude presupposed that, from Canberra, members of that Government knew what was required in all parts of Queensland; and that programs such as the Community Employment Program were only bandaid measures that would have no real effect, other than to be seen to be doing something instead of doing nothing. Time has proven my opinions to be absolutely correct. As all honourable members would know, CEP and many of the other Federal Government initiatives have been wiped.

Again I stand in this Chamber to say that the Federal Government's attitude with regard to the whole area of employment and industrial affairs is wrong, and it is not getting any better. Honourable members should not suppose that the Federal Government's attitude of thinking that it knows what is best for every nook and cranny around the country is the right attitude.

I decided that what I should talk about tonight, for the information of honourable members and the community generally, are aspects of the history of the Department of

Employment and Industrial Affairs and place into context the fact that in Queensland the Government has been looking after its own for a very, very long time. Long before the Federal Government thought about duplicating what the Queensland Government is doing, this Government had established the initiatives.

When one sees how the Department of Employment and Industrial Affairs has developed historically, it is obvious that it has grown as a result of the needs of the community in Queensland for the Government to address local employment issues. I will outline some of the history of the Department of Employment and Industrial Affairs.

Mr COMBEN: I rise to a point of order. I believe that this is the debate on the Estimates of the Department of Industrial Affairs and not a simple history lesson which the honourable member seems to be attempting to give the Committee in a very childish fashion. We are interested in knowing about the Estimates presented by the Minister, not in a history lesson.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr Booth): There is certainly no point of order, and I will be listening to the debate.

Mrs HARVEY: I used to be a schoolteacher. Obviously I am losing my touch, because the member for Windsor does not seem to have understood my preamble to the discussion on the history of the department, which places the entire thing into the context of the Estimates. Perhaps I ought to brush up on some of my teaching skills, or perhaps the member is having difficulty in penetration, and there is the odd student who does have that problem in getting ideas through. Nevertheless, I will persevere and hopefully by the end of this debate something will have penetrated through to the member for Windsor.

Compared with the many other departments engaged in the administration of the State of Queensland, the Department of Employment and Industrial Affairs has had only a short history. A separate department dealing with labour-related matters was not created until September 1926, 67 years after self-government. Before that date, however, the Government of the State had been closely involved in an entire range of matters now administered by the department. Those activities included legislation and protective measures in areas such as wages, conditions of employment, safety in the workplace and apprenticeship matters. For much of the period before the creation of a separate department, those activities were administered by the Department of Public Works.

The department, as created by Order in Council published in the *Government Gazette* of 24 September 1926, was first set up under the name Labour and Industry, with the Honourable David Gledson, ALP member for Ipswich, as its first Minister. It is both a reflection of changing times and also perhaps changing emphases that over the last 60 years the department's name has itself changed several times. The departmental names by which it has been known include Labour and Employment, Labour and Tourism, Industrial Affairs, Labour Relations, Employment and Labour Relations and now Employment and Industrial Affairs.

The name of the department gives only a broad idea of the diversity of activities involved. Some idea of the variety of matters dealt with can be gained from the list of Acts administered by the department which are contained on page 6 of this year's annual report. Among the many important areas included is occupational safety. The Government knows what is safe. I should point out that in this case I had the great honour of accompanying the Minister round various factories and through various workplaces looking at occupational safety. I do compliment him on taking a very personal interest in the safety of all the workers in Queensland.

Mr Lester: We baked bread in Weipa, didn't we?

Mrs HARVEY: That is right. I rose at 3 a.m. The Minister must have arisen even earlier because he was waiting outside. It was still dark. We went to mix dough. It was a good lesson for me. On the odd occasion that I have had time since then, I have baked bread at home. Again, it is a case of this Government being prepared to get in

there and do what the workers are doing, not sitting back in Canberra and pontificating about what is good for Queensland. That is an example of the way in which members of this Government do not mind rolling their sleeves up and getting into the hard work alongside all of the other workers.

The department is also responsible for employment planning and training. A fair bit of that has been initiated by the Minister himself. Industrial inspection, consumer affairs, weights and measures, workers' compensation and the office of the Government Statistician are also administered by this portfolio. This simple listing suggests the magnitude of the task of administration for the Minister and his departmental officers. It is a very broad and diverse portfolio. It is to the credit of the Minister that he manages to cover all of those diverse areas to the extent that he does.

I shall return to the history of the department. Prior to its formation there was in Queensland a legislative structure involving labour matters, which was subsequently consolidated and progressively developed by the department.

I turn now to factories and shops. The late nineteenth century was in all Colonies of Australia a time of great social and economic development and of new Government involvement in many areas of community concern. As in the other Colonies, Queensland's legislators were very concerned about the conditions of work in a number of industries, especially in urban manufacturing.

Mr Comben: Occasionally you rise to reasonable heights, but this is one of your lower efforts.

Mrs HARVEY: If the honourable member for Windsor pays attention, he might learn something.

Consequently, in 1891 a royal commission was established to inquire into and report upon the conditions under which work was done in the shops, factories and workshops of Queensland. The royal commission's report attracted widespread debate and discussion, laying the foundation for the passing of the Factories and Shops Act of 1896, an Act that carries through to today in its importance and significance for many of the workers of Queensland.

In the circumstances of the time, the Factories and Shops Act was a significant step forward for the health, welfare and safety of workers. It included provisions preventing sweating of labour and other abuses and set down specific sanitary arrangements. Minimum ages for young workers were provided in certain industries. A chief inspector of factories and shops was appointed to enforce the provisions of the Act and regulations.

In 1900 new provisions were added to the Act regarding the safety inspection of boilers and the closing hours of factories and shops. Records show that the first boiler was inspected on 1 January 1901. So the Queensland Government has been taking a very personal interest in its workers from a very long time ago. 1908 brought further significant legislation with the factories and shops area being effectively divided into two parts.

Mr Burreket: Mr Comben is not listening. Can you draw his attention to what you are saying?

Mrs HARVEY: I think the member for Windsor is looking up a dictionary. I can appreciate his problem.

The division was accomplished via the Factories and Shops Act Amendment Act of 1908 and the Inspection of Machinery and Scaffolding Act of 1908. This division into the separate elements of hours and conditions in factories and shops, and the safety requirements for the operation of machinery, boilers and scaffolding, closely followed the pattern of legislation in New Zealand at that time.

For the next 40 years the format of the factories and shops legislation remained essentially the same, with minor amendments in 1914, 1916, 1917, 1920 and 1922.

In 1945 a significant amendment created a Factories and Shops Welfare Board, consisting of the chief inspector as chairman, an employers' representative and an employees' representative. The board's function included making recommendations to the Minister on issues concerning the general welfare of employees. In 1960 an amendment to the legislation broadened the responsibilities of the welfare board by incorporating the concept of occupational safety and health.

Since July 1961, 11 safety rules have been included in the regulations of the Factories and Shops Act. These provide protection for workers in respect of a variety of occupational hazards, including lead, asbestos and noise. All honourable members should appreciate that the department has had to keep pace with more recent hazards such as lead and asbestos and has had to upgrade its rules.

I will deal now with occupational safety. Until the change of Government in 1957, and except for a brief period between 1929 and 1932, the machinery and scaffolding sections of the department were attached to other Government departments, such as Public Works and Mines.

Since 1957 the activities in this area have increased significantly. The establishment of the Division of Occupational Safety in 1959 signified the trend in safety legislation and promotion in Queensland, in accord with rapid industrial growth and the growing complexity of modern society.

Opposition members interjected.

Mrs HARVEY: Honourable members opposite are a noisy rabble. If only they would listen, they would learn something.

Training and education in safety principles and procedures continue to be a major focus of the activities of the division. Legislation pertaining to safety at work has been continually re-evaluated and reviewed.

Mr Lee interjected.

Mrs HARVEY: As a constituent of mine, the member for Yeronga should be supporting me and not interjecting.

The Inspection of Machinery Acts and the Inspection of Scaffolding Acts were extensively amended during the 1960s, particularly to deal with safety on construction sites and with heavy machinery. A new licence and certificate system was created for operators of boilers, cranes and tractor engines.

In 1971 a major step forward in safety regulation on construction sites occurred with the enactment of the Construction Safety Act, which superseded the Inspection of Scaffolding Acts. That Act has since been amended a number of times, most recently this year, in order to keep pace both with the requirements of industry and the public's interest in a safe working environment.

Mr Burreket: I have never seen the Opposition so animated. Keep it up.

Mrs HARVEY: Thank you, Mr Burreket. If I keep persevering something will penetrate in time.

Another initiative came into force in 1976 with the introduction of the Rural Machinery Safety Act. It was administratively logical in 1979 for work associated with the inspection of motor vehicles to be removed from the department's responsibilities.

We have indeed progressed greatly since the passing of the Inspection of Machinery and Scaffolding Act in 1908. In 1909 one report stated—

“The Act, when first put in operation, was very much opposed and criticised, and was thought to be a very harsh measure and would be the means of stopping industry and blocking enterprise, and virtually kill the northern mining fields; however, after the Act had been in operation a few months, the feeling generally improved, and it was general comment—‘Pity it was not in force ten years ago, as much valuable machinery might have been saved.’”

At least today I hope we might not only include men and women in that sentence but also place them first. I reiterate that we have come a long way since those early days.

I turn to industrial relations. Industrial disputes of varying severity and magnitude are, of course, a sad but seemingly inevitable part of the history of all industrialised countries. In fact, one of the first of Queensland's recorded strikes occurred in 1861 on the Ipswich coal-fields—

Mr COMBEN: I rise to a point of order. I draw your attention, Mr Temporary Chairman, to the provisions of May, the Standing Orders of the House of Commons, that speeches should not be read but copious notes are allowed. This member has been reading verbatim for all of the 14 minutes of her speech. It obviously should be disallowed. The member should at least be referring to copious notes.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr Booth): Order! I have no doubt that that is what the honourable member is doing.

Mrs HARVEY: I assure you, Mr Temporary Chairman, I would not do anything other than use copious notes in this Chamber.

The first legislative indication that the Government was prepared to accept a role in the industrial relations scene was the introduction in 1886 of the Trade Unions Act. I do have a very good memory for dates, Mr Temporary Chairman. This was based on British legislation and gave legal acknowledgement to the existence of workers' organisations.

Following the pastoral strikes of the early 1890s, the Legislature passed the Peace Preservation Act of 1894. It was designed to prevent a repetition of the serious acts of violence committed in central Queensland during the shearers' strike.

It was not until 1908 that a statutory form of wage regulation was attempted with the Wages Boards Act, though similar legislation had been rejected by the Legislative Council in 1906 and 1907. Wages boards were joint boards of representatives of employers and employees to fix wages and to determine working hours.

In 1912, following the Brisbane general strike, the Industrial Peace Act was passed. This legislation created for the first time in Queensland an Industrial Court. Like the Peace Preservation Act of 1894, the Industrial Peace Act was enacted immediately after a serious industrial upheaval, and was principally aimed at quelling industrial turmoil rather than as a means of arbitrating in industrial disputes. Nevertheless, the principle of arbitration had arrived.

I turn to employment. The department and its antecedents have played a very important role in the employment planning and administration area since the nineteenth century. Until the Commonwealth Government began to assume responsibilities in this area, the department was heavily involved in administering the various measures of unemployment relief, insurance and assistance.

The 1980s have once again seen an expanding role for the department in this vital area during a time of difficult economic circumstances. In March 1984 a new Division of Employment Planning and Training was established. The division is administratively responsible for the Industry and Commerce Training Commission. It is a responsibility that I believe the department is carrying out extremely well.

In 1923 it was considered that the time had arrived for the apprenticeship system to be reviewed and placed on a secure basis. Accordingly the Apprenticeship Act of 1924 produced a complete remodelling of the apprenticeship scheme. A conference, chaired by Chief Justice McCawley, was convened to make recommendations, and as a result, the control of apprenticeship was placed under the Minister for Public Works. The secretariat of the apprenticeship committee was transferred from the Education Department. The care of apprenticeship matters was placed under the Labour Branch of the Department of Public Works and thence went to the new Department of Labour and Industry in 1926.

Significant changes to apprenticeship matters were made by legislation in 1929, 1945, 1964 and 1974. The most recent major change occurred in 1979, when the Industry and Commerce Training Commission was established with wider functions than the former apprenticeship executive, embracing the many aspects associated with the training requirements of the State.

It is hoped that this select history of some of the activities and responsibilities of the department have been of interest—I am sure that members opposite have managed to find something of interest in this information—not only for its intrinsic historical value, but also because it has attempted to demonstrate the vital and evolving role that the Government, through the Department of Employment and Industrial Affairs, has in the diverse matters administered by the department in the interests of the people of Queensland.

I maintain that the history of the evolution of the Department of Employment and Industrial Affairs suggests that the Queensland State Government has had a long role in looking after the workers of Queensland. Members of the Opposition seem to feel that they have some special right in representing the working person and that there is something special about what they offer in terms of solutions. Constantly they stand up in this Chamber and try to tell the Government what is good for the people in the work-force. Yet this history demonstrates that in the years since the late 1890s, right through to the present time, the Queensland Government has looked after its own people. It has been responsible for them and will continue to be responsible for them through the Minister for Employment, Small Business and Industrial Affairs.

When one has a Minister who is not scared to go out and face the worker and not scared to participate in the work-force with the worker, one has the kind of representation that really means something. I will always oppose the kind of centralised socialist Government that tries to turn the entire work-force into one almighty Australian commune and have everyone descend into an area of mediocrity for his or her own good. I will oppose that as long as I am in this Chamber, however many years that may be.

I congratulate the Minister for Employment, Small Business and Industrial Affairs on the way in which he has negotiated with unions and his attitude towards workers.

Time expired.

Mr SMYTH (Bowen) (9.23 p.m.): I rise to address this Chamber on the Estimates of the Department of Employment, Small Business and Industrial Affairs. This is a very important portfolio in terms of the economic and social areas within Queensland.

Mr Scott: We are about to hear a most worthwhile dissertation on the subject.

Mr SMYTH: Most certainly.

The Minister for Industrial Affairs, Mr Lester, enjoys his portfolio and the confrontation that it involves. For many years this National Party Government has selected for the industrial relations portfolio Ministers who have a dislike for unions. During the Government's 30-year term of office the State of Queensland has been divided on many issues. Every time there has been an election in this State, and in the years when the Liberal Party was in coalition with the National Party, the Government created a dispute in the public sector in an effort not to save money for the State, but to divide people for its own political ends.

Government members interjected.

Mr SMYTH: I know that there are very few Government members present in this Chamber this evening. I think I can count five, including Mr Lester.

Mr Scott: Mrs Harvey drove them out.

Mr SMYTH: I would not say that of Mrs Harvey.

Disputes have been created with railway workers, electricity workers, teachers, mine workers and, recently, public servants. In past years, those disputes cost the State of Queensland millions of dollars. And for what? For this Government to win elections at the expense of workers and tax-payers in this State! The way the National Party Government has responded to industrial unrest in the past most certainly leaves a lot to be desired. The practice of union-bashing has been the order of the day, except on one occasion when the Government's conservative colleagues in Canberra, the Liberal/National Party conservative Government of 1980, decided to impose a housing tax on workers. The mine workers throughout Queensland and New South Wales entered into a dispute that lasted for 11 weeks. The Premier, Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen——

Mr Hayward: Is he still the Premier?

Mr SMYTH: I do not know whether he is the Premier, but he is still there. Mr Lester might want to take his place tomorrow.

Joh Bjelke-Petersen started condemning mine workers, saying that the dispute was a threat to Queensland's image as a reliable supplier and was a cost to our economy, and branded workers as communists. But within a week he was supporting mine workers in their fight because a State election was to be held at the end of that year. During that dispute of little people, as Mr Lester, the present Minister for Industrial Affairs, has referred to many workers in this State, Mr Lester was reported frequently in the press. The people of the Central Highlands know what he will do to gain publicity. During an earlier dispute involving coal-miners, the *Courier-Mail* of 14 July 1978 referred to Mr Lester's donating money to the strike fund. In this Chamber honourable members have heard Mr Lester condemn unions and workers. In doing so, he would put their families on the street. In that particular dispute, Mr Lester donated \$5.

Mrs Harvey: How much did you give?

Mr SMYTH: I am pleased that the honourable member asked that question. I was involved in the housing-tax dispute. Like every other worker in the Central Highlands, I gave my wage every week to provide money to people who were to be taxed because they received funding from employers for their housing. Support was given by people on cane properties and beef properties. The people on beef properties donated beef so that we could continue our strike and so that the families who were starving could be fed. Does Mrs Harvey support that? Does she think that a Government should come into such a situation? I hope that she does not. If she does, she should not be in this Chamber.

Mr White: Free bread?

Mr SMYTH: I will deal with bread later. How much time do I have?

The article in the *Courier-Mail* states——

“Vince said he was sorry for our members”——

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

Mr SMYTH: I apologise. The article states——

“Vince said he was sorry for our members who were having a rough time, and he felt he could give them a bit of a hand . . .”

Mr Scott: Supporting strikes, was he?

Mr SMYTH: Certainly his hands must have been small. He was like the people to whom he referred.

It is clear that the members of the Government are anti-worker. Some of the statements he made certainly indicate that. I notice that the National Party member,

Mr Cooper, has left the Chamber. In his speech to this Assembly in the Address in Reply debate on 24 February 1987, he said—

“In a great civilisation people are individually free, and let it not be forgotten that those who are not willing to fight for their freedom certainly deserve to be enslaved.”

Isn't that great coming from a Government back-bencher? Isn't it great to talk about freedom in our society—a typical national socialist idea—to enslave people to work for a fully capitalist idea that they support; to support the people who support them? They are not interested in the rest of the Queensland public. They are interested only in those people who support themselves and who donate to the Bjelke-Petersen Foundation.

Mr Gately: You just told us that our Minister supported the people who were on strike.

Mr SMYTH: I believe that the honourable member must be a bit thick, because he cannot grasp the conversation, with all due respect.

One honourable member opposite had a business in Clermont, which is a small country town. He employed an apprentice, who was expected to start work early each morning—probably like Mrs Harvey did; she started work early making dough—two hours before other workers. He also delivered the product after work to Capella and Blair Athol. He was not paid for that. After a period, the apprentice became aware that he was not being paid overtime. He was working 50 to 60 hours a week. His case is a little bit like the case of the young girl from Roma, which was mentioned in relation to contract legislation.

Mr Hayward: It is not unique.

Mr SMYTH: No, they are everywhere. This is a completely different case. If honourable members listen, they will find out to whom I am referring.

The employee to whom I have referred also found out that his employer had filled in the time-book on Sunday night, a week before the work was carried out.

Mr Hayward: At least whoever that employer was had a time-book. Most of them haven't got time-books.

Mr SMYTH: I realise that some employers do not have time-books.

The honourable member opposite was very cunning. He paid that apprentice \$2 over the award without telling him. That young person did not know what his entitlements were. In the process of going to work, he was still learning what they were. He wanted to do a good job for his employer, but he was being taken down. Because his employer was paying him \$2 over the award, that apprentice was not eligible for overtime.

The young man to whom I am referring was involved in a car accident in which he suffered a deep cut to his hand. Considering the type of work that he was expected to undertake—which I will tell honourable members about at the end of this charade, if they like—a doctor gave him one week off work. However, the honourable member opposite insisted that he could have only two days during which to recover. That resulted in the cut breaking open, causing that young person even more suffering. The employer would not employ more staff when the workload became too much. He encouraged schoolchildren to work for him after school and paid them a mere pittance. This information was conveyed to me by the person who was worked against by the employer. That young apprentice could not put up with his employer and left before his apprenticeship had been completed. It is a sad thing to see a person go through four and a half years of an apprenticeship on low wages and, in this case, not be paid overtime; used and abused for those four and a half years, only to lose the opportunity to become a tradesman.

That honourable member to whom I refer is the Honourable Vince Lester, a baker from Clermont.

Mr LESTER: I rise to a point of order. I find those remarks offensive because they are not true. They should be withdrawn. It is about time that members started telling the truth in this Chamber. The honourable member is talking absolute garbage. I thought that this was a place of truth, not a place for concocted stories.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr Booth): Order! The Minister finds the honourable member's remarks offensive. I point out that they appear to have very little to do with the matter under discussion. The honourable member will withdraw the remarks.

Mr SMYTH: What I am doing is pointing out——

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! The honourable member must make a decision as to whether or not he will withdraw the remarks.

Mr SMYTH: I will withdraw them.

I intend to point out the economic situation that exists in this State with regard to employers who employ young people and do not pay them the correct wage. I will refer also to the implications that employers—not all employers; Queensland has a lot of good employers—will be encouraged to use young people as they have done in the past.

The industrial scene in Queensland created by the Government is such that, if any Government member walks on to a mine site in this State, the miners will go on strike, because the National Party Government members have not bothered to communicate with the unions or bothered to consider the hardships that those miners endure. The people of Queensland need a Government that will work with all sections of society to ensure that the economics of the State are not frustrated by industrial disputes caused by the Government. We need a Government that will converse with a good cross-section to ensure that things such as public holidays, which are very dear to the hearts of the workers of this State, are not interfered with.

I refer now to public holidays such as Labor Day. The Honourable the Minister, Mr Lester, spoke about the economics of changing the Labor Day holiday to a date later in the year.

Mr Gately: What was the nationality of the organiser up in the area you are talking about?

Mr SMYTH: I am not sure. The member for Currumbin just asked me about the nationality of the union delegate in my area. Mr Petersen has always said that Queensland must be kept together. However, we have an honourable member in this Chamber who is from New South Wales. Not only that, but he came from the Labor Party in New South Wales, and he used to ride a motor bike. Isn't that terrible! Just look at him. Anyway, the honourable member should just sit still and be tame.

The Minister indicated that the date of the Labor Day holiday should be changed. He said that there are too many holidays in the beginning of the year. If Mr Lester and his Government had their way, for purely economic reasons they would change all holidays in Queensland to working days and retain only three.

Mr Lester: I wrote a letter to members of all political parties seeking their views. You know that.

Mr SMYTH: In answer to the Minister, I say that it does not appear that his contract labour legislation will go anywhere, anyway.

However, during the last election campaign, the Government of the day realised that, if its members walked on to a mine site, the miners would go out on strike. Just before the election, Senator Flo Bjelke-Petersen went to the town of Collinsville fully expecting that the miners would go on strike, which would cause adverse publicity for the Labor Party. The miners called the shots, realised what the Government was going to do and stayed at work. Also, Mr Lester visited Moranbah and granted a public holiday

on the Friday, thinking that everybody would go to the beach for the week-end and that nobody would vote. He must think that the central Queensland workers are pretty dumb.

Government members interjected

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I call the Chamber to order. Persistent interjections are quite clearly out of order.

Mr SMYTH: Thank you, Mr Temporary Chairman. They are a rowdy bunch, I know. Look at them.

Mr White: Does that mean the only time they work is when Senator Florence Bjelke-Petersen goes up there?

Mr SMYTH: I do not know how to take that. I believe that the honourable Liberal Party member is being facetious. He should know better. He is supposed to be able to get into Government on the workers' vote. With accusations like that, I do not think that he will succeed.

The miners did not go to the beach on the week-end. With absentee votes, the Labor Party gained a majority. Honourable members can be sure that the majority was recorded at 85 per cent, which is uncommon. That indicates that the people who live in those towns were very much aware of what the Government of the day was up to.

I turn now to the reputation of the Honourable Minister for getting legislation passed through the Parliament and for having economic policy accepted by the general public. I cite the deregulation of shopping hours to illustrate the point that I am making. I am sure that the Labor Day movement will become a non-event and that contract labour legislation will also become a non-event. These matters indicate clearly that the Government does not concern itself with consulting people affected by its policies, which is a clear indication that members of this Government think that they know best. They make all the decisions. They are born to rule. With all due respect to Government members, they honestly think that they know what the people of Queensland expect of them.

Let me turn now to examine the Government's track record during the last two years. It is appalling.

Mr Gately interjected.

Mr SMYTH: The honourable member for Currumbin's record is pretty appalling, too.

Mr Gately: Look at the Labor Party's record of the last 30 years—a pretty dismal one, isn't it?

Mr SMYTH: Well, the Labor Party has won office at the Federal level a couple of times but I do not think that the National Party ever has.

Mr Davis interjected.

Mr SMYTH: Are they collector's items, or does everybody want to get rid of them? What about the "Joh for PM" T-shirts? What are they worth now?

The honourable member for Aspley insisted on having small government, small industry and small unions. She said that unions should be industry-related and that they should be small. The only reason that the National Party Government would want organisations to be small is so that it can gain control. In Queensland, that is exactly what this National Party Government is trying to do. It needs to control everything.

The National Party Government wants to control all workers in this State. That is the reason why other gambling facilities, such as poker machines, are not available in this State.

Mr FitzGerald: Should Governments govern?

Mr SMYTH: I am sure that the honourable member for Lockyer will have his turn after tomorrow's meeting. By then he will know who his leader is.

Mr FitzGerald: Should Governments govern? That is the question.

Mr SMYTH: Governments should be of the people.

Mr Hayward: Thirty-nine per cent of the people.

Mr SMYTH: I thank the honourable member. Only 39 per cent of the people of Queensland voted for the National Party Government.

Mr Hayward: Support for the Government was down to 30 per cent today.

Mr SMYTH: Take note that it is down to 30 per cent.

Mr FitzGerald: What percentage of the people voted for the Labor Party?

Mr SMYTH: It was 48.5 per cent.

Time expired.

Mr BEANLAND (Toowong) (9.44 p.m.): This evening, I take the opportunity to speak about several matters. Included in those matters later on will be plenty of opportunities for the Minister to stand up and be counted. I believe that a number of opportunities are available within the Estimates presented by the Minister to show honourable members whether or not he is premiership material.

Of course, honourable members appreciate how he is forced to rush in on a number of matters; how he was forced to rush in with legislation to provide 24-hour trading over the Christmas period; how, in fact, various other Ministers are to blame in relation to the somersault over the 17.5 per cent loading and the shambles that that has got into; how problems have arisen with the growth in the number of shopping centres, and so on. This will be an opportunity for the Minister to stand up and be counted on a number of these issues, instead of just following along with other Ministers in Cabinet. This will be an opportunity for him to let honourable members hear his particular views.

After hearing the honourable member for Greenslopes very ably read out her speech—she showed us that she has that ability—I am sure that she, too, will be able to stand up in this Chamber and read out answers to all those Dorothy Dix questions without notice that she will be asked. As I say, there are plenty of people who can follow in the Minister's footsteps.

What I want to talk about first of all is the challenge to the Minister and the department over whether they are efficient in every aspect and whether or not the Minister does in fact support the need for efficiency auditing within the department. If one looks at the report some weeks ago of the Public Sector Review Committee, chaired by Sir Ernest Savage, one finds on pages 69 and 70 a clear recommendation of the need for efficiency auditing, or value-for-money auditing, in this State. That certainly applies to this Minister's department as it does to other Minister's departments. Page 17 of the report clearly sets out that the committee therefore considers that the Government should recognise the need for the necessary resources to be made available to enable progressive introduction of servicewide efficiency auditing to ensure value for money. This may necessitate amendments to legislation to clarify the charter of the Auditor-General.

However, it will be seen from the Premier's Budget Speech that Cabinet has clearly resolved not to proceed in that manner. When one looks at the comments there, it is clear that considerable opposition was expressed to the implementation of those recommendations. The reason given was that there was a consensus view. I would be pleased to hear whether the Minister's consensus view supported this or not, because I believe very important questions relating to the efficiency of the Minister's department are raised. I am not trying to say that the Minister's department is not in fact efficient in many aspects; I am sure that in most aspects it is. However, as with all sections of

not only Government operations but also the operations of corporations in the private sector, there are always avenues available for improving efficiency through value-for-money auditing. That is exactly what I am talking about here. The Savage Public Sector Review Committee strongly supported the need to upgrade the present internal audit operations procedures, which were attached to the Treasury but which I understand have now been downgraded and transferred to the consultancy services division attached to some section of the Public Service Board that was transferred to the Premier's Department.

One finds not an increase or an upgrading of efficiency auditing within Government operations, but in fact a downgrading. In view of the point raised by Mr Savage, that is very important. It relates very much to getting value for the dollar out of the Estimates that are being debated today. As I have said, this is an opportunity for the Minister to stand up and be counted, as I am sure he will be, because he is wanting to show a clean pair of heels to the other Ministers. Members of the Liberal Party know that the Minister will be able to stand up in this Chamber tonight and show us that he has that strength and that he is leadership material. I am sure that he is not one who agrees with this consensus view.

If one looks at what this State does have, one will see that there is clearly not only no efficiency auditing now but also no public accounts committee and no Upper House. The Labor Party fixed that up years ago. All that is left is a consensus view. To say that the consensus view is that this proposal would defeat the whole concept of ministerial/permanent head accountability and introduce a further form of central agency control is not just rubbish; it is piffle and utter nonsense. It shows a complete lack of understanding by whoever those Cabinet Ministers were who came to that particular consensus. I know that some Ministers might be petrified by the thought of having efficiency auditing take place, but it would seem, as it does elsewhere throughout the Westminster system and throughout this nation's State and Federal Governments, that that would be a great opportunity for all Ministers to show their true colours to ensure that every aspect of their departmental operations was in fact up to scratch and that the tax-payers of Queensland do receive value for their dollar.

The Savage Public Sector Review Committee also recommended the establishment of a Cabinet Budget committee comprising three Ministers. The need for that was certainly brought home to me when I looked at the latest bungle with the 17½ per cent holiday-leave loading. One of the very facets that Mr Savage pointed out in his review was the need for such a committee to ensure that the Budget in its final form reflects Government policies and priorities. He said that that would emphasise ministerial control of this vitally important area of Government administration. That would ensure that the bungle that has occurred with the 17½ per cent holiday-leave loading and the proposed legislation did not occur in the first place.

The establishment of such a committee would mean political input into the Budget. The Treasury boffins would not have the sole input. Other Ministers apart from the Premier would have input into the Budget. Clearly what happens in this State is that the Treasury has the first and final say, with the Treasurer, who in this case just happens to be the Premier as well. So a second most important feature of the report of the Savage committee has been consigned to the waste-paper basket. Because there was no political input, the Government did not think the proposal to abolish the 17½ per cent holiday-leave loading through in the first place before it was brought to this Chamber. That has been highlighted by the statements that have been made here today and those made previously by the Premier. I would hope that tonight we will hear the Minister give his support for the concept of a Cabinet Budget committee so that the Government of the day can have greater political input into the formulation of the Budget.

I know the Minister has received correspondence about having the Australia Day public holiday on the actual day on which Australia Day falls, that is 26 January, and not on the following Monday. I recognise the fact that many people like to have a long week-end. For years now the public holiday has been held on the following Monday. I

believe it is time for this country and for this State to recognise that Australia Day is a national day. It is not something to be put off for another day just so that people can make a long week-end of it.

Anzac Day is commemorated on the day on which it actually falls. Whatever day 25 April might be, that is the day on which the nation celebrates Anzac Day. Each year as individuals we celebrate our own birthdays on the actual day on which they fall. Just to make a long week-end of it, the Minister does not celebrate his birthday on the following Monday. These days he might no longer be celebrating them in the forward motion, he might be winding them back; I am not too sure. I am sure that, whatever birthday he is up to, he celebrates it on the actual day on which it falls.

As the Minister pointed out, next year Australia Day will be celebrated on 26 January. That will mean it will not be a long week-end. The public holiday will actually be held on 26 January. That will be an excellent opportunity for the Minister and the Government to commence having the Australia Day public holiday on the actual day on which Australia Day falls, not on some other day just to make a long week-end of it.

I am sure that everyone looks forward to 1989 and to having the Australia Day holiday on the actual date. Market surveys conducted in 1987 found that 88 per cent of the people interviewed were aware that Australia Day had recently occurred. That compares to something like only 40 per cent of people being aware some eight or nine years ago of the celebration of Australia Day. Of those people interviewed in that survey, 74 per cent had participated in some form of celebration. So there is certainly a greater acknowledgement of Australia Day. If one looks around not only the State but also the local authorities throughout the State, one finds that Australians generally are celebrating more and more their national anniversary.

I notice that recently the Federal Labor Minister for Veterans' Affairs indicated that he wanted to see Australia Day celebrated on Anzac Day. Probably that is the policy of the Labor Party: to do away with the national birthday. However, there is a vast difference between Australia Day and Anzac Day. They signify two different occasions. Of course, Anzac Day is a commemoration and a remembrance of all those who sacrificed themselves, and those who have survived are honoured and remembered on that day.

It is not possible to celebrate Australia Day on Anzac Day. The problems are easily recognised. Some Australians have their origins in countries with which Australia was formerly at war. Those people are now Australians. They are living in this country and they are part of the Australian nation. So it is not possible to have a joint Anzac Day and Australia Day. As I have said, they are two different celebrations, totally independent of each other. While we look on Anzac Day with a great deal of pride, we also look on our national birthday with a great deal of pride and reaffirm our commitment to achieving a strong and prosperous Australia and to bringing all Australians together. That is more important than ever with the growing awareness of Australia Day.

It also occurs to me that Australia is unique in many respects. The Australia Day that is commemorated in this country is not the anniversary of some battle or other. Australia was founded in a way totally different from the way in which most other nations were founded. Most other nations had violent births, with battles being fought.

In 1989, the Minister has the challenge of declaring the Australia Day holiday on the actual day on which Australia Day falls. Of course, I am sure that as Premier the Minister will be able to do that.

I turn to small business. I was very disappointed to see that the Minister is setting up another committee to investigate the proliferation of shopping complexes throughout the State. I am not sure that that will actually happen because I notice that the Premier said that of course there was no need for a shop study.

Every time the Minister says that he is having a study conducted, the Premier says that there is no need for one. I am sure that if the Minister is having a study conducted behind the Premier's back, that will not do his Premiership aspirations any good at all.

Perhaps the Minister had better wait a little while, unless he can talk to the other Cabinet Ministers. The real problem is with Cabinet. I am sure that in a couple of years' time the Minister will be able to take care of that.

The facts are that it is through ministerial rezonings and special Acts of Parliament that shopping centres have proliferated. Studies to investigate that are not needed. It is quite clear what the problem is. One only has to talk to small-businessmen around the State. Any small-businessman will tell the Minister what the position is in regard to shopping centres.

It is up to the Minister and his fellow Cabinet Ministers to ensure that the proliferation of shopping centres does not continue. The Minister should talk to the Minister for Local Government and the current Premier. I know that Mr Ahern, along with other Cabinet Ministers, strongly supports this. This is the Minister's opportunity to ensure that the Government keeps its sticky fingers out of local authority town-planning matters. Only then will local authorities have an opportunity to plan properly and to stop this proliferation of shopping centres which, as all honourable members know, is causing so much hardship to small shop-keepers and other small-businessmen right throughout the State.

Studies are not needed. What is needed is a little action, which the Minister can take by ensuring that in future there are not more ministerial rezonings, which are now occurring weekly, that there are no more special Acts of Parliament, which are occurring on a regular basis, and that these decisions are left to local authorities.

Another matter to which I wish to refer is the horror dolls that are presently available in the market-place. Nothing is more alarming to me than the number of horror toys that I suddenly find are being sold in toy-shops. A number of toys feature maimed and disembowelled children. I think it is a sign of a sickness that is creeping into the toy-manufacturers when these sick and macabre toys are produced.

Some of the toy dolls have their stomachs spilling out. A famous one is called Patty Plate Glass doll. She portrays a little girl who has walked through a plate-glass door. She is bleeding and has stitches all over her. This is something which must be of concern to this Government—although I am not advocating that the Government rush out and bring in a whole stack of new regulations. Clearly, regulations are required.

Such regulations were implemented regarding the games of Skirmish and Rambo to prevent these games from going around the country; but this matter is far more serious. This Government has to be concerned about the kinds of toys that are made available and placed onto the market. It is disgusting to see what is being inflicted upon the minds of today's children. As responsible adults—not merely members of Parliament—we have a duty to stand up and ensure that toy-manufacturers do not flood the market with this type and design of toy.

I understand that the Federal Government has recently set up a committee to inquire into toys that are available in the market-place. It is examining what toys are presently available and identifying those toys that have so-called victim characteristics, depicting physical injury, mutilation and deformity. Unfortunately, that committee does not have the breadth of representation on it that many people would wish to see. For example, I understand that there is no-one on the committee representing the States and certainly no-one on the committee representing early-childhood education. All of these matters are very important if an examination is to be made of toys that are available in the market-place.

This matter is something that society is reviling, and it comes as a terrible shock to people when they go shopping to see these products in the market-place. No doubt with Christmas coming closer, there will be a great proliferation of these toys in the toy shops and supermarkets around the State. That is another matter for the Minister to look at, as I am sure he will, through the Consumer Affairs Bureau. I pay tribute to the bureau for the tremendous work it does in the market-place, and it is to be congratulated. I know that, with the Minister's backing regarding these horror toys, the bureau will be

able to do something about them and they will be taken out of the market-place if the toy-manufacturers refuse to do it of their own volition.

I wish to conclude on one brief matter and ask the Minister to inform the Chamber of the reason why in this year's Estimates the code reference number of the actual Votes has been taken off the various line items. I am not sure whether this is as a result of efforts by the Treasury to show its muscle power and switch the line items around. I have had a little experience of Votes and how the line items can be switched around, because I have found people in other places who were able to do this if line items did not have particular Votes attached to them. I query whether or not the various departments will be able to do this, because no Votes are attached to the Estimates that are presently before this Committee. In each case throughout the Estimates there is purely a line item and no reason has been given for what is a very important aspect of this Budget by either the Minister, other Ministers or the Premier when he brought down the Budget.

Mr CAMPBELL (Bundaberg) (10.04 p.m.): I rise in this debate on the Estimates of the Minister for Employment, Small Business and Industrial Affairs having done one thing: I read this year's annual report of the Department of Employment and Industrial Affairs. That report illustrates the hardship felt by the young people of Queensland. When one reads the report and compares it with last year's report, one sees that the number of apprentices employed in Queensland has dropped once again. It is a shocking indictment on this Government and the Minister that the situation exists in which the number of apprentices training in Queensland is still falling. In 1982 Queensland reached a peak, and ever since that time the numbers have been reducing. For four years the Minister has said that his department will take steps to do something about the situation.

Earlier this year, a special Cabinet meeting considered a report. The Minister for Employment, Small Business and Industrial Affairs, Mr Lester, and the Minister for Industry and Technology, Mr McKechnie, said that \$18m was needed for trade training in Queensland. As a result of what the so-called Ministers can do for the young people of Queensland, they ended up with \$3.5m. They wanted \$18m, but received only \$3.5m. However, the Premier can still obtain an increase of 21 per cent in the amount allocated to the public relations and media office of his department.

Where are the priorities of the Queensland Government? Ministers say that something should be done for apprentices and training. The numbers of apprentices are going down and the amount provided for apprentices is being reduced. Yet additional sums are provided for mass media and public relations. The number of apprentices who are training is decreasing. All we have is talk. Industry cannot be attracted to Queensland, because Queensland does not have tradesmen. Large industry will not be attracted to Queensland when it does not have an effective training program of tradesmen and apprentices. I am not saying that; industry is saying that, because it is not employing apprentices today.

It is an indictment of the Government that since 1982 the number of apprentices in training has decreased. Queensland has fewer than 10 000, whereas Victoria has 44 000 apprentices in TAFE colleges.

I was shocked to learn that this year the Minister used deceit to try to hide his figures and be secretive about them. In the 1985-86 report of the Minister for Employment, Small Business and Industrial Affairs, Appendix 25 was a special summary that gave all the statistics of the total number of apprentices employed, the gross intake, those who completed their indentures, those who passed their examinations and those who received technical training at different TAFE colleges. That whole table is missing from the current report. There is only one reason why it was not provided. The Minister did not provide that table because he did not want to state the facts. The Minister, his department and the Government did not have the gumption to state the facts in the report.

Plumbing apprentices in Bundaberg who are doing their second-year block release must now travel to Cairns. The distance between Cairns and Bundaberg is further than

the distance between Bundaberg and Melbourne, which is two States away. That is what is happening with apprentice training in Queensland. That is the real problem. The Estimates presented by the Minister and the figures in the Budget have not provided any incentive.

Mr Gately: Are you aware that the same thing happens in New South Wales, where they have to travel the full length of the State?

Mr CAMPBELL: New South Wales is still training apprentices. As New South Wales is training apprentices, it is training tradesmen; therefore it is attracting investment. Queensland is not attracting investment in industry.

I would like to correct one assertion that has been made by National Party members. They say that if the wages of youth are reduced, youth employment is increased. They say that if wages are reduced, employment is increased. Statistics show that for Queensland that is not true. Although Queensland has had the lowest wages for three years, it has also had the highest unemployment. The latest figures for September 1987 show that Queensland has an unemployment rate of 9.3 per cent, compared with an Australian average of 7.7 per cent, and 5.7 per cent for the so-called socialist State of Victoria. If Queensland's unemployment rate was the same as Victoria's, an additional 50 000 to 60 000 people would be off the dole and employed in Queensland.

Mr Gately: Seriously, how many of those are permanent jobs?

Mr CAMPBELL: I am concerned about permanent jobs.

For the past three years Victoria has been able to maintain a low unemployment rate. That is a fairly good indication of permanent jobs.

Why is it that Queensland has the highest unemployment rate? Is it because it has the highest wages? No! Queensland has the lowest wages of all the States. For all employees in Queensland, the average weekly earnings were \$437.50, compared with an Australian average of \$456. That figure is not too bad, but Queensland is still below the Australian average. When it comes to women—they are the ones who are suffering under the male chauvinist Government that we have at present.

Government members interjected.

Mr CAMPBELL: As at November 1986, the average earnings of females were \$359.60, compared with an Australian average of \$372.50. That figure represents a substantial reduction.

Government members interjected.

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

Mr CAMPBELL: When it comes to women who have meaningful employment in managerial positions, in which they are above menial tasks and take part in the decision-making process, the Australian average weekly earnings for full-time adult females is \$464 per week. In Queensland, the figure is \$397. Females in managerial positions in Queensland earn close to \$70 per week less than their counterparts in other States. That demonstrates that there is absolutely no relationship between wage rates and the employment rate. What it does show, and Queensland is a prime example, is that the lower the wages that are paid, the higher the unemployment rate will be. That is what is happening here.

Mr Sherrin: I think you should get off that argument. You have made a fool of yourself.

Mr CAMPBELL: Another subject that arises, which I believe is very important, is net migration. Mr Sherrin is trying to indicate that lower wages should mean higher employment. Why is that not happening in Queensland? The only reason that can be given for it is incompetent leadership by this Government. Three or four honourable

members have spoken about migration and claimed that people migrate to Queensland because of the Government.

Mr Gately: That's right. I can testify to that.

Mr CAMPBELL: The honourable member was pensioned off from New South Wales. He had a bad back.

People come to Queensland for the sunshine. In reality, Queenslanders are paying a lot for that. Because of the unemployment rate in this State, young Queenslanders are leaving. The Australian Bureau of Statistics' internal migration survey shows that there was a net loss of 3 400 Queenslanders in the 15 to 24 age group. I am very disappointed that that number of young Queenslanders is leaving this State. There is one reason for that, namely, that they are not being trained. The apprenticeship figures for Queensland show that that is the case.

Mr MILLINER (Everton) (10.14 p.m.): The Estimates debate provides an opportunity for honourable members to speak about a very important sphere within our society, namely, industrial relations. The Minister could probably be described as the Minister for bad luck, because during the last few months he has experienced a considerable amount of bad luck over a number of issues, and he has been seen to be backing down.

One obvious example was the shopping hours fiasco. Last year, out of the blue came a trial deregulation of shopping hours. From the information gained from that trial, honourable members know that it could be described as an absolute failure. It severely hindered the operation of many small businesses. Whether honourable members like it or not, they have to accept that quite a number of small-business operators were severely injured financially by that trial deregulation of shopping hours.

Mr Davis: We had a number went to the wall.

Mr MILLINER: That is right. Quite a number of small-business operators did go to the wall. It is unfortunate that that was the case.

Mr Gately: That was because of excessive taxation by the Federal Government.

Mr MILLINER: The honourable member has got to be joking.

It was a direct result of the trial deregulation of shopping hours. It was an unfortunate exercise that went horribly wrong. Unfortunately, a number of people were injured.

Today, honourable members have seen a further back-down by the Government on the holiday-leave loading issue. There has been much public debate over the holiday-leave loading and much hysteria in that debate. This morning, on the radio I heard a gentleman claiming that the abolition of the holiday-leave loading would create many jobs. If honourable members examine the situation, they will discover that that is obviously not correct. The amount of money that is paid collectively in holiday-leave loading is considerable. However, honourable members will find that individuals receive approximately \$200 to \$300 in holiday-leave loading.

If an extra job is to be created in a company, to save the amount of money that would employ an extra person that company would have to employ about 90 to 100 people. I have yet to hear any organisation say that with the abolition of the leave loading there will be a reduction in prices.

I have been in business, along with my colleague the member for Brisbane Central. When someone is in business, he builds into his price structure things such as wages and leave loading. The leave loading has been operating since the 1970s. Obviously, that leave loading has been built into the price structures that the retailers and the producers charge for their products.

A very important area of the Minister's responsibility is that of occupational health and safety. Unfortunately, there is an ever-increasing incidence of workers being injured on the job.

Mr Lester: That is becoming less. It is 8 per cent down this year.

Mr MILLINER: Yes, I know. What I am saying is that injuries are occurring on the job, and I am concerned when even one injury occurs on a job.

Tonight, on television there was a report of a worker being injured on the job. There is a great need for an extensive educational campaign amongst workers to make them aware of the potential dangers in the industries in which they are engaged.

In his contribution to the debate, the honourable member for Bundaberg outlined the situation with apprentices. Obviously, we reap what we sow. A situation is developing in which we are seeing a shortage of skilled tradesmen. That has been brought about by the fewer numbers of apprentices being trained by industry. I have always maintained that industry has an obligation to train apprentices. Governments should be doing everything possible to encourage industries to carry out campaigns to ensure that adequate tradesmen will be available. A number of training schemes are emerging. However, I question the value of some of those sorts of training schemes.

In this day and age, employers require a skilled work-force. Training is being carried out in many areas, particularly at TAFE colleges. A number of other organisations are also engaging in training young people for the work situation. I am very pleased to say that I am involved in an organisation that engages in that kind of training. I refer to the Community Youth Support Scheme, known as CYSS. Admittedly, that is a federally funded organisation.

Mr Lester: We give them a bit of a hand in some instances.

Mr MILLINER: The Queensland Government certainly does. I am not denying that. I am merely saying that the CYSS is playing a valuable role in society by assisting young unemployed people. In many cases, the young people who go to CYSS centres have been unemployed for a long period, unfortunately, and are unable to cope with the structured training in places such as technical and further education colleges. I emphasise that the CYSS organisation does not try to take over the role of TAFE colleges. Obviously, because of the amount of money available to the CYSS organisation, it would not be in a position financially—nor would they have the physical means—to compete with a TAFE college. However, I believe that a tremendous amount of co-operation exists between CYSS training centres and the TAFE organisation.

I have no doubt that TAFE colleges play a tremendous role in providing people with the necessary skills to embark on careers in the work-force. I am fortunate to have my electoral office situated next door to the Grovely TAFE college, which is an annexe to the Ithaca college and which undertakes training in the horticultural industry. It is very pleasing to see the type of students who come out of that TAFE college and to note the skills that they acquire while they are there.

The horticultural industry is expanding greatly and very quickly. There are a great number of opportunities available to be taken up by young people. I am pleased to see that the college has promoted a course in the preparation of cut flowers, which has proven to be one of its most successful courses. When I first spoke to the principal of the TAFE college, he indicated that a lot of the cut flowers that come on to the market in Queensland were being imported from New Zealand. The TAFE college embarked on a course to train young people in that field of employment. The principal told me that all of the graduates of the college had been snapped up and have received gainful employment. It is tremendous to realise that those people are getting jobs.

A matter that causes me grave concern is the proliferation of shopping centres. The problem created by shopping centres being built here, there and everywhere has been around for a number of years. I know that the Minister and members of the Government say, "Well, that is private enterprise", but I believe that the Government should seriously investigate the number of shopping centres that are being built.

I believe that town-planning should be adhered to strictly. Obviously, shopping centres are needed and some shopping centres will need to be expanded. However, the

economic impact of the construction of a shopping centre ought to be considered carefully. The Government ought to take into account the future growth of an area to ensure that an overproliferation of shopping centres does not occur. Business people who take up premises in shopping centres need to be assured that they will make a living from the business.

Another very contentious issue that will be brought to the attention of honourable members in the not-too-distant future is the issue of work contracts. I do not intend to elaborate on legislation that is before the Parliament, but, as a general principle, I wish to express my vehement opposition to the prospect of contracts.

Instances have occurred in which people in industry have in fact been ripped off. Queensland has a tried and trusted system known as the arbitration system, which administers awards covering workers. I personally believe that that system is the best system. I believe also that in relation to the holiday-leave loading issue, today the Government acknowledged that the Industrial Commission is the place where those issues should be determined.

Members of the Opposition are aware of the situation that exists on the Gold Coast in which workers are being underpaid. I understand that workers were underpaid to the extent of approximately \$100,000. I express my concern about the contract labour issue and reiterate my vehement opposition to a system of contract labour.

Another activity that is absolutely necessary and should be encouraged and expanded is the education of small-business people. I know that today the Minister provided copies of the booklet entitled *Better Small Business*. I wonder how many copies of this booklet were produced and to whom they were distributed. Each member of Parliament received a copy of it together with a covering letter. I just wonder how widely distributed this sort of literature is.

Mr Lester: We can give you some if you want them.

Mr MILLINER: I just want them distributed.

Mr Prest: I want proofs of the photographs.

Mr MILLINER: The Minister would obviously want the booklet distributed, because it has his photo in it and he is mentioned a few times.

To get down to the issue of education of business people, I certainly would like to see provision for encouragement to women in industry and business. I do not believe that women are getting a fair go. Recently I read an article about a woman who worked for a very large retail organisation. She had been working there for something like 20 years and had worked her way up through the ranks, but when any vacancies occurred in managerial positions she was overlooked.

Mr Gately: Was she just short of a gallop?

Mr MILLINER: No, she was not short of a gallop. She had had plenty of gallops and plenty of wins. In fact, that woman was training the managers of the stores in which she was working. I would certainly like to see greater encouragement to women in business.

I notice that the Whip is giving me the wind-up signal.

Mr Yewdale: Fourteen women managers out of 400.

Mr MILLINER: That is right. Fourteen women managers out of 400. There is something to be said about that.

I certainly hope that the Minister gives attention to the comments that I have made in this debate.

Hon. V. P. LESTER (Peak Downs—Minister for Employment, Small Business and Industrial Affairs) (10.27 p.m.): I thank all honourable members for their contributions

to the debate on the Estimates of my department. The members of my parliamentary committee have also done a great job. They are the honourable members for Maryborough, Mount Gravatt, Gympie, Nerang, Broadsound, Currumbin, Roma, Aspley and Greenslopes. Members of the Opposition have also done a reasonably fair job. Members of the Liberal Party have also made comments. I appreciate those comments because I think they have all been very useful in this debate.

It would be remiss of me if I did not convey my sincere appreciation to all members of the staff of my department. They have done a particularly good job. They have worked very, very hard. Obviously they are well aware that they have a Minister who tries to recognise their efforts and who involves them in ordinary and very specific issues of government.

Several honourable members raised the question of the abolition of the annual-leave loading. The honourable member for Bulimba also alleged contempt by the Government for the role of the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Commission. The honourable member for South Brisbane also asked me to comment on the future role of the Industrial Commission. In doing so I would refer him to the ministerial statement which I made in this Chamber this morning regarding the Government's intention to apply to the Industrial Commission to have the leave loading abolished for State Government workers. I am pleased to hear that the honourable member for Nundah agrees that this is the proper course of action to be taken.

The Government's policy in respect of major matters relating to salaries and conditions of employment is that they are issues for determination by the umpire. I said that this morning. As the loading was introduced into awards by the commission, the Government believes that it is appropriate to make application to the commission to abolish such loadings in times of economic difficulties, as there are in Australia at present.

I am sure that honourable members will agree that these actions hardly suggest that the Government shows contempt for the Industrial Commission's role. Why would the Government set up a committee to enhance the Industrial Commission's efforts in Queensland at the present time, and why, with the trading hours issue, would the Government go against the committee's recommendation and still make sure that the Industrial Commission has the final say in many trading hours matters? It is absolute rubbish for the Opposition to suggest that the Government has contempt for the commission. In fact, the Government has not outlined how it would tackle the holiday-leave loading. Today it has made the announcement as to how it will do it, and, of course, it has caught the members of the Opposition unawares.

The honourable member for Bulimba also criticised the question of funding for my department's activities, including employment creation and other functions. I will give the facts of the matter. Firstly, the unemployment figure for Queensland is not 9.7 per cent, as the member says, but 9.3 per cent, which is the very latest official figure and which is only a fraction higher than the New South Wales rate—that is, in a Labor State. Secondly, the figure quoted also completely ignores the very high levels of employment growth that have occurred in Queensland in recent years. I have already indicated that the State continues to sustain the fastest rate of population growth of any State. Interstate migration into Queensland from other States causes this State to grow at a rate 30 per cent faster than the national average. New jobs are being created for these people who come to Queensland to enjoy the benefits of the State's way of life and Government. Since I became Minister in August 1983, the State's labour force has increased by 14.4 per cent, but the national increase was only 11 per cent. So nobody can say that these people do not think that the Government is doing a good job. In view of the comments of the honourable member for Logan, I would draw his attention to my remarks regarding this matter.

Thirdly, a point which needs to be considered when debating the Estimates of a State Government department is that, since the Labor Government came to power in Canberra in 1983, the proportion of Federal Government outlays returned to the States

for general revenue purposes has declined by 13.4 per cent. No wonder the State's expenditure has to be curtailed.

Some people think that the Queensland Government can continue to go on doing all sorts of things, even though money from Queensland is sent to Canberra by way of tax-payers' contributions but is not given back to the State. In fact, the amount was cut back by 13.4 per cent, but members opposite continue to tell the Government to employ more people, to do this and do that. Obviously that is the reason why members opposite are not the greatest economists in the world; they do not know what economics is all about.

In spite of these Federal funding attacks on the State, the Queensland Government recognises the importance of the work of my department. In the period since I became Minister of the department, the department's expenditure to enable it to undertake these vital functions has increased by more than 56 per cent, excluding the transfer of the Small Business Development Corporation as an addition to my portfolio. I am quite proud of this achievement during my term as Minister.

I am also proud of my permanent head and others who have helped me. I think that together we have gone along pretty well. I am proud of the members of my committee who have got behind me here in the Chamber and helped. I am proud of the National Party people in the Parliament who have helped. However, I am not quite so proud of the members of the Opposition, because all they wanted to do was to slam, to knock and to belt. That is not the way to get on in this world.

Another issue that the honourable member endeavoured to make was that recent legislation was anti-union. This is a typically narrow view which ignores that the legislation was intended to be pro-Queensland. That is one of the reasons why the strike rate in Queensland is the lowest in Australia. I give credit to the unions. I have already said that today. Good luck to them. They have done a good job. It is about time that the Government said so. After all, I am not too proud to say that their strike rate has been lower. That is better for the whole of the State of Queensland.

The only unions that need have any concern are those that do not recognise that they should be subject to the law in the same manner as other groups. The Government could not condone a situation where vital Queensland industries could be held to ransom by unions and union officials concerned only with their own self-interests. The Government is not about helping unions that do not want to do the right thing. As the Premier so often says, if they give the Government or the public a problem, the Government will give them a bigger one back.

On the question of the Green Paper on occupational safety—the honourable member is well aware that I invited wide input and this resulted in a considerable number of submissions. Those submissions have been examined by my officers and the Green Paper is at an advanced stage of preparation. The ultimate aim is to develop ways and means of eliminating and/or reducing hazards in workplaces and to produce legislation that is in line with industry needs and requirements.

The employment of a 15-year-old by a Roma motel was raised by the honourable member for Brisbane Central. As the honourable member is aware, legal proceedings have been commenced to protect the employee's entitlements, and so they should be. In addition, proceedings have been commenced for offences regarding the time and wages record not being properly kept. The employer is defending all actions, and the matters have been set down for hearing at Roma commencing on Monday, 26 October. Justice will be done, whatever the outcome may be.

The honourable member also raised the question of rip-offs of employees working in the Gold Coast area, as well as levelling criticism at the staffing levels and activities of departmental inspectors stationed in the area. During the year ended 30 June 1987, inspectors stationed at the Gold Coast received and investigated 534 wage complaints lodged at the office in addition to carrying out other inspections. Additional inspectors have been and will continue to be made available to assist in the investigation of wage

complaints in the Gold Coast area. Such an arrangement has been found to work satisfactorily. However, once employment contracts are introduced, the situation will be resolved considerably.

Another aspect raised by the honourable member for Brisbane Central was the matter of arrears of wages, etc., adjusted by industrial inspectors. As I indicated in presenting my Estimates, in excess of \$926,000 was adjusted by industrial inspectors on behalf of employees during 1986-87. I give credit to my industrial inspectors for their efforts in that regard.

The alleged thousands of dollars owing by employers to employees in the survey conducted by various officers of trade unions on the Gold Coast are yet to be proven. Much of the time they are all talk. Indeed, in the final wash-up it will be interesting to know just how much is collected by the unions and distributed to employees. They will probably keep the money for membership fees, but we will wait and see.

The honourable member for Brisbane Central also referred to the lack of prosecutions initiated by the Consumer Affairs Bureau. I make it clear to the honourable member that I do not regard the number of prosecutions as being any indication of the success of an organisation; in fact, quite the reverse. I am sure honourable members will agree that if the only way of cleaning up the market-place was to go through the expensive and time-consuming process of prosecution, nothing else would be done. And perhaps that explains why States with a high number of prosecutions do not seem to solve as many complaints as Queensland. Solving the complaints is the bottom line.

Consumer agencies should use prosecutions as the last resort. They obviously do not have any deterrent factor if the experience of other States is any indication.

Mr Vaughan interjected.

Mr LESTER: It does not deter them one bit. The member for Nudgee is well aware of that.

The Queensland Consumer Affairs Bureau helps tens of thousands of people. It does not spend its time grandstanding in court.

The decision to remove the chlorine plant from Brisbane, which was taken during my period as acting Industry Minister, was raised by the honourable member for Mount Gravatt. Let me say that that decision was taken after significant contributions by a number of people who all acted with goodwill, including my colleague the Honourable the Minister for Industry and Technology, who was overseas at the time. I have great regard for the Honourable the Minister. He has been helpful in many ways, such as being involved in the sale of Q-Net. I think that that needs to be made very clear.

The honourable member for Redcliffe alleged that the Government was now attacking its own employees. What rot! I would remind the honourable member that this Government has, during its term of office, granted to its employees significant improvements in conditions of employment. Indeed, the Government has taken the initiative in many areas and has recognised the needs of its employees throughout the length and breadth of the State. Examples in this area include transfer conditions, leave and locality allowances. In addition, the superannuation deals that the Government is negotiating at the present time are very favourable to State Government employees in the State of Queensland.

The question of pay-roll tax was also raised by the honourable member for Redcliffe. In this regard I bring to the member's attention the survey conducted by the ABS entitled *Major Labour Costs, Private Sector, Australia, 1985/86*. This survey shows pay-roll tax as a percentage of total labour costs in Queensland as being 2.8 per cent. It is 3.7 per cent in New South Wales, 3.8 per cent in Victoria and 3.5 per cent for Australia as a whole. Again Queensland is ahead of the other States.

So far as trading hours during Expo 88 are concerned, I think that the main organisations will approach the Industrial Commission to ask for a relaxation of restrictions during Expo. That is the obvious thing to do. However, the Government

will let the umpire decide. I hope that all of the organisations, big, small or otherwise, get together and make a joint submission to the commission on this very important occasion. This would be appropriate, given the international status of the event. It would not be opposed by the Government and would be supported by all concerned.

The spectre of the increasing centralisation of industrial relations was also raised by the honourable member. This is a problem of which the Government is well aware. While the necessary interventions, etc., are expensive and resource-consuming, the Government will continue to do what it can to prevent the intrusion of the Federal system into Queensland. An outstanding example is the success of the Government in the ETU case. I do not believe that matter needs to be taken much further.

The honourable member also raised the matter of what he called compulsory unionism. He should be aware that there is no compulsory unionism in Queensland unless required by employers. Union preference does exist, but it is a matter that is awarded by the Industrial Commission. That must not be forgotten, and once again the umpire is supreme. If these awards apply on a Government construction site, the award must be enforced. It is the responsibility of the employers, not the Government. Many employers support this concept. If there is a simple solution, one wonders why the succession of Liberal Ministers in the Government did not implement it when they were in the portfolio.

Several honourable members raised a number of issues relating to the Small Business Development Corporation. Firstly, I would like to thank the honourable member for Redcliffe for his positive attitude and remarks about the Small Business Development Corporation. In reply to his question on what is happening to the one-stop information shop that had been suggested previously, I would say that the corporation is already providing this service for existing and intending small-business people. However, to enhance this function, a shop-front facility that will be readily accessible and visible to the small-business person is in the process of being implemented and will be in place within the next few months.

The honourable member for Brisbane Central, should know that the *Better Small Business* magazine is definitely not a waste of public moneys, as the corporation has shown initiative that the Opposition apparently does not understand. This opportunity to publish a magazine with issues of interest and concern to small-business people was given to a private company. The policy of the corporation is "to market this the best way we can and in the most private way"—referring to private enterprise. The agreement is that the corporation has some input into the content and will use the magazine as an information medium for small business. There is no waste of public moneys, as the magazine is produced commercially by a Queensland small business which has recognised the interest and demand of this sector for business advice and information. This magazine will prove very popular if the reception to this first issue is any indication.

I assure the honourable member for Caboolture that his doubts about the SBDC staff and strategy are unfounded. The corporation's strategy as a market facilitator is non-competitive with market-place resources. The corporation staff do a magnificent job of providing advice to the small-business community. That advice is both practical and educational.

The literature that clients are recommended to consider is designed to help them to understand their problem and to help themselves to solve those problems. Only when needed are external business advisory services recommended.

The corporation does not solve clients' problems when that role requires detailed and long-term services provided by accountants, lawyers and similar professional advisers. Indeed, 404 such referrals have been made in the first three months of this financial year.

Its role as an educator of business-operators and those intending to go into business is very beneficial. Attendance at courses run by the corporation in 1985-86 was 1 375

persons; 3 545 in 1986-87; and 1 453 in the first three months of this financial year. The efforts of the corporation's promotion are extremely successful.

The honourable member for Caboolture should be happy with the corporation's current strategy of encouraging those intending to go into business to attend a six-hour seminar prior to making this important decision. This involves making those people aware of facts such as how to obtain finance and prepare financial proposals, undertake market research and arrive at their cut-even point.

This program is being promoted as a priority by the corporation, which is happy with the latest survey statistics of people attending that course. A total of 46 per cent decided not to proceed with their decision to enter business until they were more prepared. That is commendable. This is a marked improvement on the 32 per cent in 1985-86. In this way the corporation is educating people prior to entry into business and believes that this will be instrumental in decreasing business bankruptcy in Queensland.

The honourable member for South Brisbane asked a question about the problems that led to the establishment of the inquiry into the provisions of the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act. There is no sinister intent. Quite simply, the Government is having an independent committee conduct an inquiry into the upgrading of the Act. After all, it is many years since that has been done.

As to the delays in the payment of workers' compensation—where it is obvious that there will be a delay, officers have been issued instructions to advise claimants to apply to the Department of Social Security for sickness benefits in the interim.

With respect to the case of Mr Elliott—this matter is being examined by the general manager of the board and I have arranged for the honourable member to speak with him.

I should like to thank the honourable member for Nundah for his complimentary remarks regarding the operation of the workers' compensation system in Queensland. There is no doubt that the members of the board and all the staff from Jim Campbell down do an excellent job.

I am pleased that the honourable member for Rockhampton has a grasp of the principles of small business, that is, that small business must be allowed a margin for profit and Government must not take too big a slice. I wish that all members of the Labor Party realised that. They must have incentive to invest and increase profits and thereby create more jobs and a better standard of living in the community.

I bring to the attention of honourable members the comments by the IPA in today's *Australian Financial Review* that the Queensland Government has handed down "the most restrained and responsible Budget for the second year in succession".

Those are not my comments; they appeared in today's *Australian Financial Review*. The institute estimates that in the current financial year Queensland will increase its tax take by only \$26 per person. That compares with a figure of more than \$300 by the Commonwealth Government. Honourable members can see how much better off Queenslanders are. The increase in Queensland was \$26; the increase federally was \$300 per person. Queensland is a long way ahead. Again, New South Wales is a long, long way behind Queensland. Let us forget that argument. The Labor Party has been done like a dinner.

That Queensland figure should be compared with the increases in the Labor State of New South Wales and in the other States. In the words of the member for Rockhampton, "If Government takes too big a slice of small business, it inhibits growth." He should take that message to Mr Hawke and his colleagues in the Labor States.

The honourable member for Bundaberg mentioned apprenticeship intakes. Although apprenticeship intakes have decreased, a number of points must be considered. The resources boom in the early 1980s created an artificially high apprenticeship intake. At present, the intake of 5 000 per year is broadly in line with the average over the last 10

years. There has been a noticeable growth in some fields, particularly the service industries of hairdressing and cooking.

During this financial year, my department has helped generate over 400 additional apprenticeships through the doorknock campaign and the efforts of the special field promotion team. Trade-based pre-employment courses have also assisted greatly.

I thank the last speaker, Mr Milliner, who endeavoured to make a useful contribution to the debate. Some of his comments were pertinent and showed that he has done a little more research than some other Opposition members.

Mr Prest: He worked hard on that speech.

Mr LESTER: Yes, I think he did.

I thank all honourable members for their contributions to the debate on the Estimates of my department.

During the last 12 months the Commonwealth increased its tax take per capita by \$340; New South Wales, by \$71; Victoria, by \$69; Western Australia, by \$61; South Australia, by \$75; Tasmania, by \$71; the Northern Territory, by \$89; and Queensland, by only \$26. So Queensland has done better than the other States.

At 10.52 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Under the provisions of the Sessional Order agreed to by the House on 16 September, I shall now put the questions for the Vote under consideration and the balance remaining unvoted for Employment, Small Business and Industrial Affairs.

The questions for the following Votes were put, and agreed to—
Employment, Small Business and Industrial Affairs—

\$

Department of Employment and Industrial Affairs	29,402,000
Balance of Vote (Trust and Special Funds)	292,338,000

Progress reported.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. L. W. POWELL (Isis—Leader of the House) (10.53 p.m.): I move—
“That the House do now adjourn.”

Performance of Honourable Member for Glass House

Mr COMBEN (Windsor) (10.54 p.m.): I rise tonight to articulate the concerns of the residents of the electorate of Glass House in relation to the performance of the honourable member for Glass House, Mr Bill Newton. Local residents have come to me with a list of concerns about environmental issues in which the honourable member and his National Party white-shoe brigade have played a deceitful and dishonest role. The white-shoe brigade gives favours to the local National Party and then receives from Mr Newton a pay-off for the favours granted.

Four examples have been given to me. Firstly, Bribie Island national park, promised 10 years ago, is still undelivered. The reason—the Turnbull brothers have not yet had resolved their totally unfounded claim to massive compensation for surrendering their occupational licences. Members will recall that the sad tale of this withholding of public land from the public was told by me last year. The Turnbull brothers, who still await their pay-out of a so-called “heirloom” title to land to which they have no legal right, are supporters of the National Party. A pay-off of approximately \$2m for surrendering and relinquishing their claim to the Bribie Island proposed national park land is a

spurious claim still pursued by Mr Newton, with no foundation in equity or law, because they are friends of the National Party.

Secondly, honourable members have seen the destruction of the beautiful Dux Creek area on Bribie Island. Three hundred hectares of mangrove and heathland were destroyed overnight by Vercorp Pty Ltd. The member for Glass House was a silent supporter of that loathsome toad the spokesman and publicist for Vercorp, Mr Brian Taylor, who supported Vercorp's policy of creating desolation and desecration by working on a policy of pushing it down so it cannot be stood up again.

Mr Brian Taylor's pay-out for that support was to organise young people to protest against Mr Bob Hawke's visit to Chermside shopping centre three days before the 11 July Federal election. Mr Taylor gave his young hooligans various posters indicating that they were Liberals and deliberately set out to bring violence to a Queensland political meeting, as well as to cause a row between the State Liberal Party and my own party. Although some minor violence occurred, I am thankful that tempers were kept in check against massive provocation on that day. The National Party Mafia from Glass House was hell-bent on bringing political violence to Queensland for the first time. It is to the credit of both the Liberal Party and the Labor Party in this House that we know what was in actual fact happening.

Mr Taylor and Mr Newton were aided in their vandalism and hooliganism by the owner/editor of the *Bribie Times*, who runs the lowest-standard so-called newspaper anywhere in Australia. He has absolutely no journalistic skills, and fewer professional ethics. The only place for him in this area is his support for Mr Newton and the National Party. As an example of the journalism of that newspaper, I read part of the editorial from the *Bribie Times* of 24 June 1987. One of the better paragraphs reads—

"I saw a Shadow Minister of the Queensland Government (who is better known for getting lost on his horse-riding exploits than his logical approach to his shadow portfolio) use all of the rabble-rousing invective at his command to play on the disturbed emotions of semi-intellectuals."

That related to a quite reasonable speech to a public meeting of 300 people.

Thirdly, the recent events in Coonowrin national park (Crookneck), where a local farmer deliberately trespassed on to the national park and cleared three areas, are an indictment of Mr Newton. When, after the second offence occurred, national parks officers were preparing summonses for the breach, the land-holder called up the debt owed by Mr Newton, and Mr Newton intervened to stop the prosecution proceeding. He perverted the potential path of justice as no other member would have done.

A fourth scandal is that a small aero club has acquired a considerable area of natural bushland and vacant Crown land in Caboolture, only after the personal intervention of Mr Newton and his influence on the Lands Minister. This was in spite of expert advice stating that the site was totally unsuitable because of flight paths over Caboolture and its proximity to Caboolture High School, a proposed hospital and a proposed TAFE college. Why was the land given in highly suspicious circumstances? Because the secretary of the club is Mr Gary Poole, who was heavily involved in Mr Newton's last election campaign and who supplied the campaign office for Mr Newton. The pay-off to Mr Poole was obtaining the vacant Crown land for Caboolture Aero Club against a range of objections and problems.

The end product is that the people of Glass House have a member who is well disposed to looking after the needs and wants of his National Party mates, whilst neglecting the needs and wants of ordinary residents of Glass House. He should be investigated for corruptly misusing his position as a member of this Parliament in a way that no other member presently in this House does. He is truly called the marshmallow of Glass House.

Time expired.

Retirement Villages

Mr HENDERSON (Mount Gravatt) (11 p.m.): Tonight I wish to draw the attention of the House to a scheme that I personally consider to be an unmitigated and undisguised rip-off. There is no more vulnerable section of the community than aged people. As a Government, I believe that members on this side of the House have a responsibility to ensure that the rights of the aged are protected against predatory people, particularly many of those who are in the retirement industry today.

As honourable members would know, a major industry that is emerging in Australia is the construction of retirement villages. In this House tonight I want to look briefly at one of those villages and pay particular attention to the way in which it is financed. The village I refer to actually exists in the outer suburbs of Brisbane. In fact, it has proved to be quite popular with a number of elderly residents.

Basically, the village consists of clustered townhouses, each consisting of two bedrooms. The company is currently charging about \$70,000 for a townhouse. Many elderly folk are entering into agreements. In many ways, the agreement is rather unusual. It is called a loan and licensing agreement. Basically, this is how it works: let us assume that the price of the townhouse is approximately \$70,000. Let us assume also that I enter into an agreement whereby I can pay cash. Interestingly, the agreement contains some very challenging clauses that I believe the Government and we, as members of Parliament, should be looking into carefully. One of the clauses is rather interesting. It basically states that should I decide, after three years, to sell my townhouse to whomever I please, the amount of 20 per cent of the selling price shall be automatically deducted from the selling price and paid directly to the holding company which, in effect, has contributed nothing towards the sale. In other words, if I choose to sell my townhouse for \$70,000, one-fifth of the selling price is automatically handed over to the company, in spite of the fact that it has played no role whatsoever in selling the unit.

In addition, the company charges \$36 a week as a maintenance and rates allowance which is, of course, paid to the Brisbane City Council or to the people who are maintaining the unit. What is interesting about this levy or payment is the fact that it is in no way whatsoever used to repair the interior of the unit. In other words, it is applied only to the external grounds, the external floors of the unit and so on. The occupant is responsible totally for the interior of the unit. Therefore, presumably, the \$36 a week covers rates, some gardening and the external maintenance.

An even more interesting clause is contained in the agreement which states that for each year in which the individual occupies the unit, and in the event of its being sold, 1 per cent of the selling price shall be deducted per year and paid back to the holding company.

Mr De Lacy: All the company directors are National Party members. They all wear white shoes.

Mr HENDERSON: I gathered that they were obviously good socialists because they believe in distributing wealth everywhere—particularly to themselves.

Let us assume that I occupied this unit for 10 years. What happens if I decide to sell my unit after 10 years? Let us assume also that I sell it for \$100,000 which might be the selling price at that time. Twenty per cent of that amount, or \$20,000, is automatically deducted and paid back to the holding company. One per cent, or \$1,000 for each year, is automatically paid back to the holding company so that the holding company gets \$30,000 for doing absolutely nothing. In the meantime, of course, I have paid \$36 a week by way of a maintenance levy.

It is also of interest to note that the clause relating to the 1 per cent levy states that the levy is variable; in other words, it may be varied upwards—increased. Even though I sign an agreement for a 1 per cent levy, this clause states that the levy is variable and, presumably, it would be varied upwards.

I consider this form of transaction to be an absolute rip-off and an unmitigated fraud on the people of Queensland by this company. I believe that as part of the Green Paper proposal that was recently produced on retirement villages, schemes such as this should really be looked into. They are nothing more and nothing less than an attempt to prey upon one of the most vulnerable sections of the community, namely, the aged. I think that these things should be exposed. They should be deplored. They should be outlawed.

I have hesitated to name the company but, unless it shows a tendency to review these agreements, at some time in the near future I may stand up in this House and name the particular development company involved.

Effect of Sanctuary Cove Development on Mosquito Research

Mr INNES (Sherwood—Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party) (11.05 p.m.): Tonight I would like to tell the latest chapter in the saga of Michael Gore, the baron of Sanctuary Cove and leader of the white-shoe brigade. On a number of occasions earlier this year Mr Gore was mentioned in dispatches. His latest action is to impede research of great importance to the people of south-east Queensland. That research is of many years' standing.

For several years, a research team of scientists from Griffith University, together with a scientist from the Queensland Institute of Medical Research, partly financed by the Albert and Gold Coast councils, have engaged in painstaking measurement and observations, to develop natural techniques to reduce mosquito numbers in those species that breed in salt-water marshes and wetlands. They include species that can transmit Ross River fever. This research has taken place on a wetland reserve controlled by the Department of Primary Industries on Coomera Island in the Southport Broadwater area of Moreton Bay. That island is across the south arm of the Coomera River from Sanctuary Cove, more's the pity.

The first major impediment to the research occurred when the south arm was bunded, without lawful authority, by Mr Gore. That bunding caused the inundation and flooding of the research area. This research has been going on for several years. Its purpose is to develop natural techniques by augmenting the drainage of such marsh areas, with the results hopefully to be used elsewhere in Moreton Bay for the elimination of those species. It is intended, it is hoped, that the techniques will be cheaper than repeated spraying and that it will be more effective because it will be constant and will naturally reduce the number of mosquito larvae and therefore, of course, the number of adult mosquitoes.

As I said before, the wetland reserve has been carefully surveyed, measured, and posts have been put into the area. They are used as co-ordinates. Trial drainage called runnels has been created. Sedimentation pins have been placed in that drainage to measure the extent of the accretion of mud, or loss of mud, according to the changed flows in the salt marshes.

The impediment to the area that was created by the bunding of the river, which, as I said, was against the law, caused the inundation and unnatural flooding of the area. It altered the flow of water in the area and destroyed the research results. Some \$40,000 has been expended by the local authorities in support of that research program. Probably \$100,000 worth of free research activity has taken place through the use of Griffith University scientists.

As a result of the bunding, a letter was written by the solicitors for the Griffith University to Sanctuary Cove and copies were sent to the Department of Harbours and Marine, the Department of Primary Industries and the Gold Coast Waterways Authority. That letter referred to the severe disruption and damage that the project had caused by constructing bunds across the Coomera River. An assurance was sought to ensure that no further damage was caused to the client's research program by the actions of the company and that written undertakings were given.

In August this year, some two months after the letter was written, and following a letter which was written in July 1986 when a previous act of bunding had taken place, Mr Gore responded that he did not know of the program and that if the developers had known they would have taken care not to cause the problems.

Last week the researchers went back to the area to find that a 3-ft wide pipe, 1.8 kilometres long, which was used for the piping of sand from Paradise Point through to Sanctuary Cove, had gone through the centre—through the guts—of the scientific research area. It had been put in place by heavy equipment which had caused trenches up to 60 centimetres in depth. It had totally destroyed and distorted the centre of the research area, \$100,000 worth of research work and years and years of effort. I am told that permission was given by the Department of Primary Industries, but that it did not have the courtesy to inform the research people, the medical institute, Griffith University or the local authorities of that permission.

Safety Inspections of Buses

Mr STEPHAN (Gympie) (11.10 p.m.): For a few moments this evening I wish to speak about the inspection of buses—in particular, school buses—and the new bus appraisal forms introduced by the Department of Transport. The forms, which have only recently been introduced, result in inspectors taking a lot of time to examine each bus. I am aware of one inspector who does only five buses in a day. With the number of buses that are on the road, that means that the time for inspection tends to get a little out of hand.

I am not complaining too much about some of the types of inspections that are carried out. Some of them are very necessary. I do not question the necessity for the safety of buses, which is of paramount importance whether they be carrying children or adults. For that reason I take no exception at all to the fact that the mechanical specifications of the vehicles are looked at very closely. Whether the service brakes be full air, air hydraulic, vac hydraulic or single or dual-line hydraulic, they must be looked at closely. The inspector must make sure that the handbrake is working properly. Whether the bus has power steering, power-assisted steering or non-assisted steering, it must be checked. Investigations into some recent bus accidents have shown that these aspects have not always been taken into consideration. The needs of safety have been neglected and the braking systems have been found to be less than adequate. Although the system itself may have been all right, it was in a run-down condition.

In very many ways brakes can fall into a state of disrepair. The appraisal form shows that some of the causes for rejection are that brake hoses are frayed or are leaking, wheel cylinders are leaking, brake linings are worn, the system has air leaks, the efficiency is below requirements, brake pipes are insecurely mounted, brake pipes are damaged or brake pipes are corroded. There is no question at all that these things should be kept in a very good state of repair.

Some of the causes for rejection of the suspension of buses are that the spring shackles are worn, the spring hangers are worn, the spring leaves are broken, the centre bolt is broken, the U-bolt is loose, the king pins are worn and the wheel bearings are loose.

Examples of causes for rejection of wheels are that wheel studs are broken, wheel nuts are loose, wheel nuts are missing and wheel rims are cracked. These give me cause for concern on the condition of some buses currently operating in the State.

Causes for rejection of the bodies of buses include excess movement in body panels, body panel rivets loose and body panels rusted. Large amounts of rust in body panels in buses is sometimes ignored. If a bus rolls over as a result of an accident, the body panels and framework must be in excellent condition to be able to protect the passengers as much as possible.

One of the sections of the appraisal form that does not appear to have anything to do with safety is the one that deals with paintwork. I do not see the relevance to safety

of badly faded paint or repaired areas having paint that is poorly matched to the existing paintwork. I also do not see the relevance to safety of the fact that accident damage is the reason for the poor match of paintwork.

The same thing applies to upholstery. If upholstery is dirty, not uniform in colour or patched with upholstery of a different type, it is supposed to be removed and replaced with upholstery of exactly the same colour. I wonder if that is not an example of the department's getting a bit carried away.

I am also very concerned about the amount of money that will have to be allocated to the supply of replacement buses if buses are to be removed from service when they are 20 years old. If that is so, somewhere along the line either the Education Department or the Transport Department will need to allocate sufficient funds for buses to be replaced every 20 years or for their safety to be inspected much more closely.

Time expired.

Congestion of Inner-city Traffic Routes

Ms WARNER (South Brisbane) (11.15 p.m.): I wish to speak about the continuing problem of congestion of inner-city routes by heavy and hazardous transport. The situation in my area is about to be exacerbated quite severely because of some changes that the Brisbane City Council is making to a particular area.

Ipswich Road has been a continuing problem for a long time. Shopping centres are dying, particularly the shopping centres of Annerley and Woolloongabba. Those shopkeepers are simply unable to keep their customers because people will not visit shopping centres where they cannot find parking spaces and where they can barely hear themselves speak to the shop-keeper in the shop. In addition to that, residents are moving out because they cannot cope with the noise, the pollution and the danger.

That problem is being addressed, and it is being addressed by groups of residents who are beginning to band together to bring these matters to the attention of the Brisbane City Council in a co-ordinated and organised fashion. One of the problems is that so far the State Government has been quite unresponsive about what should be done with Ipswich Road. I think that the Main Roads Department is pretty well tearing its hair out trying to find new methods of dealing with the volume of traffic on that road. However, there has not been any kind of consistent or co-ordinated approach or departmental policy plan that will address that problem in the future.

I return to the worsening of the situation in East Brisbane. The Brisbane City Council has proposed the removal of a right-angled bend in Lisburn Street, thereby making the route from Lytton Road down Latrobe Street, Elfin Street and Lisburn Street a more attractive prospect for heavy vehicles wishing to cut through to Logan Road towards the south.

These three streets have gracious old homes. A large number of elderly people live in that street. The houses are quite close to the road on small blocks, so that pollution and noise are a problem. It is basically a residential area which is now being turned into a thoroughfare. At the moment there is also incredible danger from hazardous transport. I understand that recently officials from the Department of Transport went out to assess the situation and, in a discussion with residents, said that they were quite horrified at what they saw. Nine road supertankers one after the other went straight down those streets.

The situation will become much worse because the Brisbane City Council says that it will remove that bend in the road and the traffic will come storming through there. The Brisbane City Council also says that it has no power to restrict traffic. I would challenge that and suggest to the Brisbane City Council that under section 35 of the Local Government Act, it has the power to restrict traffic. That section states—

“The Local Authority may close any road or part of a road permanently or temporarily against any particular description of traffic, and may prevent such traffic

in or upon any road so closed, provided that another road or route is available for such traffic in place of the road or part of the road so closed.”

A number of routes are available.

While I am on the topic of available routes, one of the things that the State Government said would happen as the result of the construction of the Gateway Bridge would be that most of the heavy transport that went through the city would be diverted. Clearly that has not happened.

So far the Gateway Bridge has not paid its way. It is a white elephant. It was a very expensive piece of propaganda. It looks very beautiful perched up there in a great arc over the Brisbane River. However, what is the use of it if it does not solve the traffic problems? Unfortunately, as I have said, the Gateway Bridge is a white elephant. I have a couple of suggestions to make to the Department of Transport and the Main Roads Department. Firstly, the Gateway Bridge toll must be reduced immediately. Secondly, the arterial road must be improved. It is far too narrow, the intersections are varied and complicated and, in one instance, there is negative camber, which makes things very difficult. If one talks to drivers about why they are driving in the inner city, they say that it is because they cannot go via the Gateway Bridge because it is too expensive and more hazardous than the congestion within the inner city. That is ridiculous.

The city council and the State Government have to bite the bullet and start restricting heavy transport in the city centre, otherwise the city will become a smog-infested polluted zone in which no-one can live. There is the prospect of having a gracious and beautiful city of Brisbane, but the city council will not take the responsibility for it. The State Government should be investigating the carting of dangerous goods through the city and putting some weight and muscle behind the city council to try to produce a more reasonable situation, as has been done in Sydney and Melbourne where regulation has worked.

Television Coverage of Cricket in Australia

Mr LITTLEPROUD (Condamine) (11.21 p.m.): I wish to speak about the television coverage of cricket in Australia.

Mr McElligott: Hear, hear!

Mr LITTLEPROUD: This is an issue which crosses all political boundaries. I know that the honourable member for Thuringowa is listening all of a sudden because he probably feels as strongly as I do about the issue.

All honourable member would have to agree that cricket is one of the most popular summer sports in Australia and, in addition to those people playing cricket, there are countless scores of people who are great spectators. One could sum it up by saying that cricket is part of Australia. Watching cricket is part of our life-style and heritage. It is almost a basic right.

The Australian Cricket Board controls cricket in Australia. I do not deny that it has every right to control the conduct of the game, the formulation of the rules, the conduct of the players on the field and the control of the crowds at the grounds, but I do oppose the stance it takes when it controls the television coverage of cricket. The situation now exists in which, through technology, cricket can be televised right throughout Australia, and yet that technology is wasted.

Dealing with the history of cricket—as a young fellow many years ago I can remember sitting before a radio—in recent years I found out that the sound effects were made by tapping a ruler on wooden objects—listening to Barnes, Bradman and those fellows making runs, and being in raptures.

Mr De Lacy: You were not around in those days.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: I was a good listener and I scored a lot of runs in the back yard at Mum's or in front of a radio.

It was normal that when the test series came to Australia, people from all over Queensland congregated at the Gabba to watch the test and the rest of the time they would have to go home and listen to the cricket over the radio. It then became possible through television to take cricket out to the people in the country areas. To begin with, day in and day out, the ABC televised cricket and many people out there worshipped that and spent many happy hours during the summer-time watching the cricket.

The hopes of people who lived even further out in the country were enhanced with the introduction of satellites. The ABC extended its coverage further. People in remote areas realised that here at last was their chance to have the same kind of facility to watch the cricket as the people in the inner areas had enjoyed for years. What happened was that commercialism came into the game and Mr Kerry Packer put forward an attractive deal. Although it might be rather cruel to say it, it is true to say that the Australian Cricket Board sold out to Mr Kerry Packer for 30 pieces of silver and in doing so blocked out the ABC.

This is a waste of this facility. Australia has the techniques to telecast cricket all over Australia, but the transmission is confined to that part of Australia controlled by Mr Kerry Packer or whichever particular network the Australian Cricket Board chooses.

Mr De Lacy: They privatised our national sport. They tried to close down our national sport.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: That is correct; and it goes further than cricket.

Today I am speaking on behalf of cricket-watchers. I urge the Australian Cricket Board and those bodies in charge of cricket in the various States to consider whether they have the right to control the airways and sell the birthright of ordinary Australians.

Mr McElligott: They argue that they need the money.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: Yes, they do. They argue that they need the money. I believe that the game is so great that it would have survived regardless. However, Mr Kerry Packer came in with the almighty dollar and he has done better out of it than anyone else. Certainly he used the medium of the top players and offered them the incentive that they were entitled to more money. He used that as a medium to get them to achieve his ends and the big losers have been the people of Australia.

I urge the Australian Cricket Board and all those administrators at top levels to think once again about what is happening, because I am sure there are many people out in the country who would agree with what I am saying. Australia has the capability for the ABC to telecast cricket throughout the length and breadth of the nation and I look for support from both sides of the House on this issue.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 11.26 p.m.