

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**WEDNESDAY, 9 MARCH 1988**

---

Electronic reproduction of original hardcopy

## WEDNESDAY, 9 MARCH 1988

---

Mr SPEAKER (Hon. L. W. Powell, Isis) read prayers and took the chair at 2.30 p.m.

### PRIVILEGE

#### **Premier's Ministerial Statement on the Economy, Withholding of Relevant Information**

Mr GOSS (Logan—Leader of the Opposition) (2.32 p.m.): Mr Speaker, I rise on a matter of privilege. I wish to raise an important matter, that is, the obligation of Ministers of the Government, when providing information and advice to members of this House in the form of major policy statements, not to withhold relevant factual information.

What I am referring to is that yesterday in the House the Premier and Treasurer made a ministerial statement, the purpose of which, members were told, was to report to them on the state of the Queensland economy. That ministerial statement failed to meet the standards expected of the Premier, both under the Westminster system and in the light of his pledge to provide an open and honest style of Government administration.

In defence of members' privileges, I wish to draw this matter to the attention of the House. To clarify the position for members, I wish to table a copy of the speech made by Sir Leo Hielscher to the Committee for the Economic Development of Australia in Brisbane on 28 January this year, from which the Premier's ministerial statement to the House was substantially drawn. Appended to that speech was a list of key economic indicators of Queensland's contribution to Australia's economic performance, including those indicators that were withheld from the Premier's statement. It is important that this be available so that members may have the full picture.

In conclusion, I also table a list of economic indicators that provide a balance to those tabled yesterday by the Premier.

*Whereupon the honourable member laid the documents on the table.*

### PETITIONS

The Clerk announced the receipt of the following petitions—

#### **Teacher Aide Hours**

From Mr Ahern (46 signatories) praying that the Parliament of Queensland will take action to reverse the Budget decision on cut-backs in teacher aide hours.

Similar petitions were received from Mr Simpson (143 signatories), Mr Campbell (301 signatories), Mr Mackenroth (15 signatories), Mr Sherlock (287 signatories), Mr Littleproud (4 317 signatories) and Mr Hamill (88 signatories).

#### **Relocation of North Coast Railway Line, Mackay**

From Mr Beanland (197 signatories) praying that the Parliament of Queensland will relocate the North Coast railway line away from the city limits of Mackay.

#### **Balance between Public Ownership and Private Enterprise**

From Mr Sherlock (35 signatories) praying that the Parliament of Queensland will take action to amend the Land Act and the Integrated Resort Development Act so as to maintain a balance between public ownership and private enterprise, particularly on Barrier Reef islands.

### Central Place Development

From **Mr Beanland** (45 signatories) praying that the Parliament of Queensland will ensure that the Brisbane City Council's town-planning processes will prevail especially in relation to the proposed 107-storey Central Place development.

A similar petition was received from **Mr Sherlock** (31 signatories).

### Bayside Bus Company, Wynnum, Manly and Lota Services

From **Mr Burns** (610 signatories) praying that the Parliament of Queensland will take action to review the licence to the Bayside bus company if adequate services cannot be provided in the Wynnum, Manly and Lota district.

### Fire Levy Charges

From **Mr Campbell** (20 signatories) praying that the Parliament of Queensland will ensure that a moratorium on fire levy charges is declared and a fair system is established.

A similar petition was received from **Mr Yewdale** (972 signatories).

Petitions received.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Honourable members, when I call upon the Clerk to read the list of petitions lodged, it would be helpful if honourable members could remain silent so that the petitioners at least know which petitions have been lodged.

## SELECT COMMITTEE OF PRIVILEGES

### Resignation of Mr W. K. Goss

**Mr SPEAKER:** I have to inform the House that I have received from Mr Wayne Keith Goss his resignation from the Select Committee of Privileges.

### Appointment of Mr P. J. Braddy

**Mr FITZGERALD** (Lockyer) (2.37 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

“That Mr Paul Joseph Braddy, member for the electoral district of Rockhampton, be appointed a member of the Select Committee of Privileges to fill the vacancy caused by the resignation of Mr Wayne Keith Goss, Leader of the Opposition, from the committee.”

Motion agreed to.

## STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE

### Resignation of Members

**Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, consequent upon a change in the Speakership of this House, the resignation of Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen as a member of the Legislative Assembly and the resignations of Sir William Knox and Mr Warburton from the Standing Orders Committee, several vacancies have occurred on that committee.

### Appointment of Members

**Hon. B. D. AUSTIN** (Nicklin—Leader of the House) (2.38 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

“That the membership of the Standing Orders Committee shall comprise—

Mr Speaker, Mr Ahern, Mr Gunn, Mr Goss, Mr Burns, Mr Innes, Mr FitzGerald and Mr Austin.”

Motion agreed to.

### FILMING OF PROCEEDINGS

**Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, the media have requested permission to film the Chamber since changes have taken place. I have given permission for that to happen tomorrow morning at question-time. They will be allowed to film only and not to use any sound equipment.

### PAPERS

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

#### Reports—

Department of Industry Development for the year ended 30 June 1987

Commissioner of Water Resources for the year ended 30 June 1987.

The following papers were laid on the table—

#### Orders in Council under—

Industrial Development Act 1963-1981

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

Industrial Development Act 1963-1981 and the Local Government Act 1936-1987

State Housing Act 1945-1986

State Housing (Freeholding of Land) Act 1957-1984

City of Brisbane Act 1924-1987 and the Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Act 1982-1984

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

Grammar Schools Act 1975-1984 and the Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Act 1982-1984

Education Act 1964-1987

#### Regulations under—

Local Government Act 1936-1987

Rural Fires Act 1946-1984

Fire Brigades Act 1965-1985

Fire Brigades Act 1964-1985

Education Act 1964-1987

By-laws under the Education Act 1964-1987

#### Statutes under—

Griffith University Act 1971-1987

University of Queensland Act 1965-1987

James Cook University of North Queensland Act 1970-1987

Rules under the City of Brisbane Act 1924-1987

Ordinances under the City of Brisbane Act 1924-1987

#### Reports—

Trustees of the Bowen Racecourse for the year ended 30 June 1987

National Trust of Queensland incorporating the Financial Statements of the Currumbin Bird Sanctuary for the year ended 30 June 1987

Fire Brigade Boards (Volumes 1 to 4) for the year ended 30 June 1987.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### State Service Superannuation Scheme

**Hon. M. J. AHERN** (Landsborough—Premier and Treasurer and Minister for the Arts) (2.44 p.m.), by leave: Considerable comment, much of it ill-informed and inaccurate, has been made in the media in recent times about the financial position of Queensland's State Service Superannuation Scheme. It is with the obvious concerns of the members of the scheme in mind that I find it necessary to make a statement to the House to correct these media reports and to assure members of the financial strength of their scheme.

As at 31 December 1987 the credit balances of the scheme stood at over \$2.9 billion, representing an average equity of about \$40,000 for each contributing member. These balances have increased by \$1,750m, or 157 per cent, over the last 5 years. In the same period, revenues paid to the funds have been 3½ times the amount necessary to meet all payments to members—that is, for every \$1 in benefit pay-out, \$3.50 in income has been received to meet it.

It is worth noting that, on present estimates, aged 55 retirement commitments can be met in full in 1987-88 from income, with a positive increase in fund balances at year's end.

Fund balances, such as those of all trust and special funds, form part of the public account, the maintenance of which is the responsibility of the Treasury. Contrary to suggestions that these funds disappear into the Treasury vault and are applied to unspecified purposes, the reality is that they are invested by the Treasury in gilt-edged, bank-guaranteed commercial bills, letters of credit and so on, as well as Commonwealth and other Government-guaranteed securities. The investments are absolutely secure, ensuring a good income stream for the scheme.

The Government's contribution to the scheme is not simply to meet current pay-outs under the scheme. The Government's contribution is the annual amount necessary to meet the Government's obligations as employer, which, together with the employee's contributions, is sufficient to fund the actuarially assessed future liabilities under the scheme.

If the detractors of the Queensland scheme want to make mileage out of the superannuation issue, I suggest that they look closely at the position of other States, in which real shortfalls occur and continue to occur with schemes that only require the Government to contribute as benefits are paid. This is the very situation in which huge unfunded liabilities occur, a situation which the Queensland scheme avoids.

I want to make it quite clear to all concerned that the scheme has none of the defects of its counterparts in other areas.

**Mr Burns** interjected.

**Mr AHERN:** It is sound in every sense and, from an accounting perspective, does not have an unfunded liability. Income to the scheme is more than sufficient to meet commitments and accruing benefits.

**Mr Burns** interjected.

**Mr AHERN:** This Government has no intention of mortgaging its future by not having a fully funded and actuarially sound superannuation scheme, as some other State Governments have.

It is no wonder that Opposition members do not want to listen to the issue. They raised it as a public issue and now they want to divert public attention from it. That is not on. The Government will be heard.

Every five years a complete actuarial investigation is carried out, and the last report of the actuary, in late 1985——

**Mr Burns** interjected.

**Mr AHERN:** I will answer the honourable member on that issue later. The report shows that the scheme is in an actuarially sound position. The benefits that have accrued to date are fully provided for by existing assets. All projected benefits can be met from future contributions and investment earnings, having regard to the present balances of the scheme.

**Mr Goss:** Tell us about police superannuation.

**Mr AHERN:** The Leader of the Opposition should not try to divert me from the argument. The Opposition's spokesman raised this issue.

**Mr Goss:** You're talking about superannuation.

**Mr AHERN:** Members of the Opposition should listen to the reply; it is a very reasonable one.

The very strong financial position of the scheme is evidenced by the fact that the retirement age was reduced from 60 to 55 from 1 January 1988 without detracting from the long-term viability of the scheme.

I trust that the debate on governmental superannuation schemes will now move away from Queensland, the only State to operate its scheme on a fully funded basis, and centre on other States—Labor States—in which the real problems and superannuation time bombs do exist.

In conclusion, let me say to members of other Queensland State Government superannuation schemes that their rights and benefits are protected in a similar way to those of members of the State Service Superannuation Scheme.

**Mr Comben** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The honourable member for Windsor!

**Mr Comben:** He was telling me——

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The honourable member for Windsor will remain silent.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Alleged Sale of Line Hill

**Hon. W. H. GLASSON** (Gregory—Minister for Land Management) (2.49 p.m.), by leave: Yesterday in this House, and last week in the media, the member for Windsor made accusations and claims against the Lands Department relating to a grazing property on Cape York known as Line Hill. According to media reports, it has been sold for \$14m, and it is proposed as the site for a \$300m tourist development. I wish to set the record straight, which the honourable member could have easily done himself, had he wished to check his facts.

The property known as Line Hill, or special lease purchase freehold No. 668, was to all intents and purposes sold by the Lands Department no less than 13 years ago. It was not, as the honourable member would have the media and this House believe, sold on 12 November 1987. It was sold to lessee Mr E. F. Huybers of Iron Range Developments Pty Ltd on 28 February 1975, when a formal offer was made to him after months of negotiations.

At the time of the application to freehold the lease—I repeat, 13 years ago—the price set by the department was considered fair and reasonable. This would have taken into account the fact that it was a grazing property, its isolation and remoteness from markets and, therefore, low production capacity and its difficulty of access.

I would also point out that part of the agreement was that Mr Huybers surrender to the Crown about 4 460 hectares of virgin rainforest, then part of Line Hill, and an adjoining lease also held by him known as the Iron Range rainforest. The sale did not include any beach areas, because the department imposed a beach protection esplanade varying in width from 140 to 400 metres along the entire shoreline. A request by Mr Huybers to have this reduced to about 30 metres wide was refused by me last year. The issue of the special lease, convertible to freehold, was recorded on 12 November 1976.

Today, 12 years later, Queensland has a tourist boom right along its eastern seaboard to north of Cairns; but, until now, no-one has been willing to invest the reported \$300m proposed for Line Hill into a resort so far north. However, even on today's values—the current unimproved capital value set by the Valuer-General is \$5,700, but it was only \$620 in the 1978 valuation period—the reported sale price of \$14m to Farndale Ltd certainly appears excessive.

To date, the main tourist development of note on the mainland in the region is the Wilderness Lodge on the tip of Cape York built by Air Queensland, but that is on a much smaller scale, obviously, than that proposed for Line Hill. However, if one can accept recent media reports, currently the tourist business on Cape York is not exactly booming.

For the honourable gentleman opposite to claim that the sale of Line Hill by the Lands Department in 1975 showed incompetence or corruption simply reflects his lack of knowledge of the case. With respect, it is he who is incompetent by failing to check his facts before rushing into print. The point that the final payment for the property was made in November last year bears little relationship to the price set 13 years ago.

Further, Mr Speaker, the honourable member went to great lengths to tell this House again, as he did the media on 3 March, that 53 per cent of Queensland covered by pastoral leases returns rents to the Crown totalling only \$1.2m. By partially quoting from the department's annual report, he had the audacity to yet again claim that the return showed "incompetence or corruption".

The Crown owns about 88 per cent of Queensland under a range of tenures, leases and reserves embracing both the best and the worst soil types. Of this total, the Lands Department controls 64 936 leases and tenures or licences to occupy over the vast majority of this land, which last financial year returned to the Crown more than \$21m in rents. By selectively quoting the pastoral leases only, the honourable member opposite set out to paint an entirely different picture as a cheap political stunt, because he should know that our pastoral leases cover the poorest type and most remote country in this State.

Obviously, on the basis of rents charged on a per head of sheep and/or cattle-carrying capacity of that country, rents when compared to better-quality country are low, and understandably so. However, the fairer average rent figure for him to have quoted would be that of the total Crown area, which shows a return of \$499 a year for an average area of 3 464 hectares and is a far cry from his quoted \$737 a year for an average pastoral lease of 56 142 hectares.

I might add that in that pastoral lease area—in the western parts of the State—thanks to actions by the Labor Government prior to 1957 to cut up larger viable properties into smaller selections, today 1 131 such properties are considered to be less than a living area and non-viable.

I would point out to this House that legislation was passed by this Parliament last year to bring into operation a common date for the assessment of all annual rents. This will cover new rental periods for pastoral leases and grazing homestead perpetual leases, as from 1 January 1990. The standard or yardstick for these rents will be set, following an inquiry by the Land Court, possibly later this year.

I do not wish to go further into the mass of statistics available, but would recommend to members interested that they read the Land Administration Commission's 1986-87

annual report for themselves. They certainly should not rely on the selective interpretation by the member for Windsor.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Prospect Marine Pty Ltd, Project at Whyte Island and Fisherman Islands

**Hon. D. McC. NEAL** (Balonne—Minister for Water Resources and Maritime Services) (2.57 p.m.), by leave: I would like to draw the attention of the House to a recent development relating to a proposal for the construction of a marina and associated facilities by Prospect Marine Pty Ltd on 33.7 hectares of land on Whyte Island and on Fisherman Islands near the mouth of the Brisbane River.

Honourable members may recall the decision in 1982 to allow this development to proceed, although the Port of Brisbane Authority at the time considered that the area was inappropriate for the siting of a project of this nature. The port authority saw the area as being required for the future expansion of activity related to the commercial shipping responsibilities of the port. It was also concerned that the marina would create an undesirable traffic situation in the port with the small craft exiting from the marina into the major shipping channel in the river and that the proximity of port-related industry would create conflict between visitors to the marina and the management of the industries in question.

The Government of the day believed that such a development was the best course of action, divested the area from the port authority and leased it to Prospect Marine on developmental conditions as a prelude to freehold title being granted to the developer. The lease commenced on 1 April 1983.

Since the granting of the lease the company has expended money and energy and has engaged a contractor to excavate a marina basin with rock revetment and reclamation of land. This work is nearing completion. The port authority has continued to be unhappy about the existence of this type of development in the main port area and has had discussions with the developer concerning his attitude to the possible abandonment of the project. Such discussions have been held with the concurrence of this Government because it believes that the decision of 1982 did not adequately recognise the strategic value of the area in terms of the anticipated future growth of the port and waterfront industry.

Negotiations have taken place between representatives of the port authority and the company with a view to achieving a mutually acceptable settlement whereby the authority would regain possession of the area.

The port authority has assessed the current value of the area and a settlement totalling \$2.5m has now been agreed by the port authority board and the company concerned. These moneys will be recouped from future users of the land and facilities. This settlement takes into account the value of the improved area following the existing contract which Prospect Marine will be required to see through to completion, and the conditions of the lease to the company.

The work to be completed by the existing lessee involving excavation, revetment, reclamation and drainage represents improvements which will be of great value to the port authority in the future use of the area.

This Government has reviewed a decision it sees as not in the interests of the best utilisation of port lands in a strengthening economy. The action now being taken will prevent the freeholding of this area, which, it is now considered, should properly remain within the control of the port authority.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Opposition Attack on Education System

**Hon. B. G. LITTLEPROUD** (Condamine—Minister for Education, Youth and Sport) (3 p.m.), by leave: Yesterday, the Labor member for Ipswich, who is the Opposition spokesman on Education, alleged that education in this State is in a crisis situation and that the response of the Ahern Government has been inadequate. He also claimed that since I have been Minister, the Government has acted on only two matters—withdrawal of amendments to the Education Act and provision of an extra \$4m for the education budget.

It appears that the honourable member's knowledge of education in this State, from school level to senior administration level, is extremely limited. Allow me to mention but a few of the many issues that have been addressed since I became Minister on 9 December last year—

- Cabinet has agreed to the appointment of an eminent educator, Dr Peter Botsman, as a special adviser to the Minister on post-compulsory education.
- The Government already had before it an extensive report on the tertiary entrance score and I have initiated action to implement one of the key recommendations this year, that is, that school-leavers be allowed to alter their tertiary course preference after receiving their TE score. It is intended to implement other recommendations in due course.
- I have also initiated major developments in higher education, particularly in response to the Green Paper released by the Federal Minister for Education, Employment and Training, Mr John Dawkins, last year. In a pioneering move, I called a meeting of vice-chancellors of universities and directors of colleges of advanced education in Queensland to consider a response to this and other related issues. I might add there are many issues of concern for Queensland institutions to consider, which results from the actions and policies of the Federal Labor Government.
- In this area of my responsibilities, I have also commissioned a study into the need for higher education facilities in the Sunshine Coast region and have advertised for submissions.
- The discrimination against Queensland since the Commonwealth Government assumed funding of tertiary education in 1973 has always been an issue of particular concern to me, so I moved early, as a Minister, to look at the situation. I have announced that a committee chaired by the member for Mansfield, Mr Craig Sherrin, will look into the issue of underfunding and possible alternative means of funding additional places in universities and CAEs for young Queenslanders.
- Amendments to the Education Act referred to by the Opposition spokesman are being further reviewed in the light of the transfer of technical and further education to another portfolio, the Federal Government Green Paper, and concerns still held by some members of the education community about the proposed changes to the Act.
- As a result of my consideration of a report on a review of teacher education titled *Project 21: Teachers for the Twenty-First Century*, I have held discussions with the Board of Teacher Education and a number of significant proposals from that report will be implemented this year.
- In the area of personal development and human relations education, it has been announced that a program will be introduced in school hours. In the context of the existing and highly regarded personal development program, which has been conducted after hours for several years, information has been sought on programs in other States and options are being considered for a

suitable program for Queensland secondary schools. We are at the stage of detailed planning to implement a program in school hours.

- Since becoming Minister, I have consulted with numerous individuals and groups, representing all areas of education, on the Budget and other issues. This consultation will continue, and, I might add, there is great cohesion at present in the education system.
- The Opposition spokesman also referred to an extra \$4m being allocated to education for employment of additional graduates. It should be noted that this will enable more than 80 per cent of graduates seeking employment with my department to have jobs by the end of June and almost all by the end of the year.

It is a fact of life that no profession can guarantee employment to all graduates from higher education, whether it be teaching, engineering or even journalism. Queensland's rate of employment of graduates compares very well with that in other States and countries. Teacher graduates in Victoria can wait up to three years for employment. In South Australia, I am told there are 4 000 applicants for 400 jobs this year. Western Australia has employed only 20 per cent of graduates.

**Mr Hamill:** What are the prospects for next year?

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** Better—for the information of the Rhodes Scholar with the State school background.

Overall, I suggest that one would have expected better from a Rhodes Scholar with a State school background than the Opposition spokesman's claim of a crisis in education—a sweeping generalisation with no basis in fact.

I have nothing but praise for, and confidence in, the teachers and education administrators of Queensland for the way they have accepted the challenge of a restricted Budget forced upon Queensland inequitably by the Labor Government in Canberra. The State schoolteachers of Queensland showed their professionalism and mature understanding of the situation when they voted recently against strike action.

It is worth noting a comment from the executive director of the Queensland Council of Parents and Citizens Associations, Mrs Joan McDonald, quoted in the Opposition spokesman's own local daily newspaper, that reports she had heard from schools indicated a "massive teaching crisis" expected by the Queensland Teachers Union had not yet occurred. Since the start of the school year regional directors of education have been monitoring the situation. There is no crisis to report.

There is no doubt that the restrictive Budget necessitated a review of priorities, a reduction in some programs and a rationalisation of some services, such as teacher aides, but the No. 1 priority has been to have a maximum number of teachers in front of classes. As a result, schools are adequately staffed. A school-by-school inspection would find some instances of classes being marginally over recommended levels, but invariably this is as a result of a principal using the prerogative to allocate staff as he or she sees as most suitable. Also, invariably, reported reductions in services, such as libraries, are caused by unfortunate but unavoidable decreases in enrolments.

The Opposition spokesman referred to people being "farmed back into the class room". The class room is not a second-rate place; it is surely what teaching is all about. He spoke also of a loss of expertise with the transfer of teachers back to the class room. The greatest loss of expertise has been the premature retirement of many educators because of the threat of a further Federal tax on superannuation or superannuation funds.

**Mr INNES:** I rise to a point of order. During the last session of Parliament a reasonable standard of behaviour was adopted with regard to ministerial statements. This is a very lengthy statement and I ask that you, Mr Speaker, direct the Minister to table the balance of the statement. He has just turned over to another virginal page.

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

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** I hope that the Opposition spokesman had his tongue in his cheek when he said I was a junior Minister. The Opposition spokesman and I came into this Parliament at the same time, 22 October 1983, but I have 12 years seniority on him in chronological age and 23 years of teaching. I am prepared to be judged on my achievements and have no need to enter further into such trivial debate.

Previously, in a circulated letter to newspaper editors, the Opposition spokesman claimed that the Commonwealth increased direct education funding to Queensland. He was also wrong then. The facts are, as the Treasurer admitted in Federal Budget papers, that an increase in per capita education grants was offset by cuts for specific purpose programs. Even so, such funding represents less than 1 per cent of the State Budget's \$1.3 billion education allocation. He would be better off addressing issues such as the Federal Government's worrying Green Paper on higher education, the underfunding by Canberra of higher-education places in Queensland and the Commonwealth's habit of introducing specific programs with much self-congratulation, but later passing the buck to the States by withdrawing funding, for example, to pre-school or kindergarten sectors.

Budget restrictions imposed by Canberra may have caused the rate of progress of education in Queensland to slow down, but it certainly has not stalled or slipped into reverse. As the Premier and I said in a joint statement following a meeting last week with representatives of the Queensland parents and teachers, additional funding for education in Queensland will be looked at as a priority by this Government for next year. Until then, we will continue to operate an efficient and effective education system that is second to none in this country.

**LEAVE TO MOVE MOTION WITHOUT NOTICE**

**Mr WELLS (Murrumba) (3.11 p.m.):** I seek leave of the House to move a motion without notice to present a Bill to establish a public accounts committee.

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

AYES, 39		NOES, 42	
Ardill	McLean	Ahern	Lester
Beanland	Palaszczuk	Alison	Lingard
Beard	Schuntner	Austin	Littleproud
Braddy	Scott	Berghofer	McCauley
Burns	Shaw	Booth	McKechnie
Campbell	Sherlock	Borbidge	McPhie
Casey	Smith	Burreket	Menzel
Comben	Smyth	Chapman	Muntz
D'Arcy	Underwood	Cooper	Neal
De Lacy	Vaughan	Elliott	Nelson
Eaton	Warburton	Fraser	Newton
Gibbs, R. J.	Warner	Gately	Randell
Goss	Wells	Gibbs, I. J.	Sherrin
Gygar	White	Gilmore	Simpson
Hamill	Yewdale	Glasson	Slack
Hayward		Gunn	Stoneman
Innes		Harper	Tenni
Knox		Henderson	Veivers
Lee		Hinton	
Lickiss	<i>Tellers:</i>	Hobbs	<i>Tellers:</i>
McElligott	Davis	Hynd	FitzGerald
Mackenroth	Prest	Katter	Stephan

Resolved in the negative.

**QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE**

**Beer, Tobacco and Petrol Taxes**

**Mr GOSS:** My first question is directed to the Premier. Will he rule out here and now the introduction of a beer tax, tobacco tax or petrol tax in Queensland either before or at the time of this year's State Budget—here and now?

**Mr AHERN:** The question is a bit of political rhetoric and nothing more. The Leader of the Opposition might just as well ask his Labor Prime Minister today whether he is prepared to rule out a tax on superannuation, which is due very, very shortly in this country.

The introduction of a superannuation tax is much more imminent than the introduction of any State tax at this time. Until such time as the Prime Minister gives a definitive answer to that question, the people of New South Wales who want an answer are entitled to assume that the answer to that question is "Yes".

I believe that a superannuation tax is a reality. There will be an extra superannuation tax just as soon as Barrie Unsworth gets his election behind him.

**Opposition members interjected.**

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! There is far too much audible conversation while the Premier is on his feet.

**Mr AHERN:** The budgetary position that confronts this Government is quite clear. I have announced it on a number of occasions, including yesterday in this Chamber. It is quite easy for all to see and to understand.

At the last Premiers Conference, Treasurer Keating told this State, along with other States, that it had to tighten its belt. A three-year rolling program was given to this Government. In terms of what the State would have received under previous Commonwealth financial assistance grants arrangements, Queensland is now \$150m worse off. This financial year Queensland received \$150m less, and next year, in the three-year rolling program, Queensland will receive, in broad figures, a further reduction of \$150m. In the third year, the Queensland Government has been promised a further \$210m cut-back in financial assistance grants to the State.

We were told in the back rooms that we had to increase State taxation up to the level of that of the other States.

If this State Government were prepared to lift the level of State taxation up to the level of the average of the other States in Australia, Queenslanders would be paying another \$245m annually in taxation. That is the record of this State Government on taxes. The Queensland Government will do everything within its power to manage this State competently. However, the Federal Government has indicated to the States that in a three-year program it will be very, very difficult for the States and they will have to tighten their belts.

I think that the Leader of the Opposition ought to direct his questions to the Commonwealth Government, which is calling the shots on this issue.

#### **Fitzgerald Commission of Inquiry; Superannuation Payment to Sir Terence Lewis**

**Mr GOSS:** In directing a further question to the Premier, I refer to legal advice reportedly presented to State Cabinet on Monday concerning the superannuation payment to the suspended Police Commissioner and the fact that Ministers considered 10 options for dealing with the position of Sir Terence Lewis in relation to his possible retirement and collection of a lump-sum pay-out.

In the light of the Premier's repeated promises of open and accountable Government, and in the light of a precedent set in this House on 19 November last year by the Deputy Premier, who tabled the Solicitor-General's advice on the question of Government powers over superannuation payments to retirees named before the Fitzgerald inquiry, I ask: will the Premier table the legal advice obtained by the Government and considered by Cabinet on Monday concerning Sir Terence Lewis and his superannuation payment? Furthermore, will the Premier outline the 10 options in this matter that were considered by Cabinet?

**Mr AHERN:** The Leader of the Opposition is trying to introduce politics into this issue. If it will make him any happier, I undertake to show the legal opinion to him.

**Mr Goss:** I want the public to know.

**Mr AHERN:** I undertake to make a copy of the legal advice available to the Leader of the Opposition. It is quite clear and freely available. As far as I am concerned, it is information that confirms the Queensland Government's position on the issue.

As the honourable Leader of the Opposition is trying to throw some politics at the Government on this issue, I point out that the Government has acted entirely properly in the circumstances. The Government is fishing in uncharted waters completely in this area. No other State of Australia has legislated in that area. "Buckets" Jackson in New South Wales was paid his full pension entitlement.

**Mr Goss** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr AHERN:** I ask the members of the Australian Labor Party opposite, who are pointing their fingers at the Government on this issue: if this is such a vital issue, why did their counterparts in the other States of Australia not take appropriate action when they had a directly similar case?

**Mr Goss:** I am concerned about Queensland.

**Mr AHERN:** Yes, yes!

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr AHERN:** The Leader of the Opposition is trying to divorce himself from Barrie Unsworth in New South Wales, but he will go down with Barrie. The New South Wales Government is the nearest example of a Labor Government for all to see, and the Goss Government will be like the Unsworth Government; and it will be just as popular, too.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr AHERN:** If members of the Labor Party feel so strongly about this issue, why did they not do something about it in New South Wales when "Buckets" Jackson was in the witness-box? The New South Wales Government paid it. That is what happened in New South Wales; the superannuation was paid.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I believe that I have been remarkably tolerant with both the Leader and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. I suggest that they now remain quiet while the Premier finishes his answer.

**Mr AHERN:** In New South Wales, payments were made in similar circumstances. I believe that the Queensland Government has acted to redress the immediate problem that it had. The Government has the balance of matters under active examination.

#### **Ministerial Statement by Premier on Queensland Economy; Accusation by Opposition of Plagiarism**

**Mr FITZGERALD:** I ask the Premier: is he aware of media articles yesterday accusing him of plagiarism? Would he please acquaint this House with the facts, and please do not "Goss" over them?

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The House will come to order, including the honourable member for Salisbury. I call the Premier, and I expect him to be heard in silence.

**Mr AHERN:** I note that overnight I was accused by the Leader of the Opposition of plagiarism. I suppose that the truth will out. The situation is very clearly that, in fact, I wrote Sir Leo Hielscher's speech. Having established that fact, and having been found out, I have to admit to it.

The plain facts are that, over the six-week period since I wrote the initial document, during which I have recited it at various dinner meetings and lunches around Brisbane—which have all been well attended—the facts have not changed.

**Mr Goss:** Why did you cut out the four?

**Mr AHERN:** The facts have not changed. I cut out many more than four. I cut out some of the more positive statements that could have been made.

I presented to this House a condensed document which I felt summarised the reality of the situation—and indeed, it does.

The Leader of the Opposition is attempting to talk down the Queensland economy. This Government is preparing an economic strategy for the State, and it has a program that will work.

I say to honourable members opposite: who is the judge in this situation? Eventually the people will be the judges. They will be the judges in New South Wales on 19 March.

At present an earlier criterion exists. Australia's Yankee bond issue, which was recently announced, is floating on the international money market. What, then, is the opinion of the international money market in respect of the financial strategies of this Government in comparison with others? For instance—if I can make this point because it is very interesting—just before we floated our Yankee bond issue on the international money market, the New Zealanders were in the market as well. Their bond issue is floating out there alongside ours. What is the opinion of the international financiers of the New Zealand bond issue in comparison with this Government's overall financial strategies? Are the New Zealanders being charged more or less for their money?

New Zealand has a Labor Government. The difference between our bond issue and New Zealand's bond issue is very substantial. At present, our money is floating on the international money market at 15 base points less than the New Zealand currency is floating on the bond market. That represents a very substantial judgment on the part of the international financiers and is one that I am quite prepared to stand by.

#### **Dumping of Nuclear Waste in Australia**

**Mr FITZGERALD:** I ask a second question of the Premier: has his attention been drawn to an article that appeared on the front page of yesterday's *Australian* in which Mr Neville Wran, a former New South Wales Premier and now the chairman of CSIRO, has revealed a plan to make Australia the dumping-ground for US and Soviet nuclear waste? If so, what is the Premier's response?

**Mr AHERN:** I saw the article to which the honourable member has referred, and I thought that perhaps someone in New South Wales is trying to help Barrie Unsworth again.

It seems that the faction debate in Australian politics is being played very, very hard at the moment. In the circumstances, Barrie Unsworth's problems in New South Wales are quite severe. The fact that a story such as that can be floated at such a critical point in time for the New South Wales Government obviously indicates that the Labor Party is full of feuding and that the ultimate judgment will be made in New South Wales.

I am aware of the strategy that has been recommended. It has existed for a long time. I understand that the proposal relates to the development of a facility at Tennant Creek, which is not in our State. As far as the Government is concerned, it is prepared to look objectively at the issues as they are presented.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I call the honourable member for Lytton—I am sorry, the Deputy Leader of the Labor Party.

**Mr BURNS:** Deputy Leader of the Goss Government.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order!

**Fitzgerald Commission of Inquiry; Legal Representation and Standing-down of Persons Named**

**Mr BURNS:** I ask the Premier: does the former Queensland Premier, Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen, continue to be represented in the Fitzgerald inquiry by Mr Callinan? If former Ministers are not to be represented at public expense, why does the tax-payer continue to bear the costs of counsel for former Assistant Police Commissioner, Tony Murphy? In order to be consistent with the so-called principles which demanded that Messrs Hinze, Lane and Lewis be stood down from their public positions—positions whose salaries are voted by this Parliament and whose authorities emanate from this Parliament—will the Premier now furnish Parliament with an explanation why the following people have not been stood down following strong allegations of serious impropriety against them: Angelo Vasta of the Supreme Court, Eric Pratt of the District Court and the Police Complaints Tribunal, “Top level Ted” Lyons of the Mortgage Secondary Market Board and Ron Redmond, the Acting Police Commissioner.

**Mr AHERN:** The answer to the first part of the honourable member’s extensive question is, “No.” I think that the question was: is Mr Callinan representing my predecessor? The answer to that question is, “No.” At the inquiry Mr Callinan is the representative of the Government.

**Mr Burns:** Only current Government Ministers?

**Mr AHERN:** The current Government and its corporate interest. That is the answer to the first part of the question.

In respect of the second issue relating to the position of senior counsel representing senior officers—this is an issue that has given me some concern. I intend to have further discussions in relation to the matter with the Attorney-General.

In relation to the third part of the question—in relation to the balance of issues—they are matters which have been considered one at a time. For his convenience, the honourable member has grouped them all together. I do not think that they sit comfortably all together. They need to be considered one at a time.

In respect of the various mentions of my current serving Ministers that have arisen from time to time, I have discussed the matters with them and in all cases I have received satisfactory explanation in respect of the various mentions that have been made. There are standards which apply to our Government, and they are being applied and will continue to be applied.

In respect of the allegations in relation to the judiciary, that is a matter for the Attorney-General and the Chief Justice of Queensland.

**Videotaping of Police Interviews**

**Mr BURNS:** I ask the Deputy Premier, Minister for Public Works, Main Roads and Expo and Minister for Police: why is he planning to spend thousands of dollars of public funds visiting London and the continent with the Acting Police Commissioner, Ron Redmond, to study electronic taping of confessions to stamp out verballing when Mr Redmond has been accused of the worst crime a police officer can commit, that is, verballing a person to obtain a murder conviction and put him away for life? Is it because of his expertise? Since the Lucas inquiry in 1977, Mr Justice Lucas; the Director of Prosecutions, Mr Sturgess; the Law Society; the Bar Association; the Civil Liberties Council; the Police Union; the Labor Party and the Trades and Labor Council have all called for and supported videotaping as a protection against verballing. I ask the Deputy Premier: why does he not spend the money allocated for this junket on buying the equipment and implementing the recommendations of the Lucas inquiry of 1977?

**Mr GUNN:** No doubt the honourable member is alluding to the Finch case. That matter has been through about 11 courts. It has been right up to the Privy Council. The matter has been dealt with by a jury. The honourable member should keep away from that aspect of it. Time and time again answers have been given.

With regard to videotaping—about 18 months to two years ago I did go to London to New Scotland Yard and was the guest of Sir Keith Newman. At that time, because it was a pilot scheme, he was not satisfied with its operation. However, I believe there has since been a great improvement. I have been invited back again. I think it is good politics to go back. It is my aim, of course, to introduce videotaping. It is a policy of Cabinet to introduce videotaping in due course, but we want a good scheme; we want a perfect scheme.

The Government will not shoot from the hip, as the honourable member for Lytton does and is noted for doing. Not only will the Government look into that matter but the matter of crowd control also will be looked into. Honourable members will appreciate that Expo will bring into this country the greatest number of people in its history. It is expected that 11 million to 12 million people will pass through the gates of Expo in six months. I think it is important—

**Mr Burns:** You asked the police to volunteer. You don't have enough policemen to control crowds.

**Mr GUNN:** I did no such thing. It is important that police control is provided. I think it will be a great exercise. I make no apology for taking the Acting Police Commissioner to Europe.

#### **Current and Future Staffing Levels, Queensland Prison Service**

**Mr STEPHAN:** In directing a question to the Minister for Corrective Services—

**Mr Davis:** Another Dorothy Dixier.

**Mr STEPHAN:** No.

I refer to the current staffing levels of the Queensland prison system. I appreciate the Minister's obvious concern about this matter. He has done a particularly good job. I ask: will he outline the current staffing levels and future prospects?

**Mr COOPER:** I thank the honourable member for Gympie for this question and for raising what I believe is a very important issue. It is timely to point out that, in the last few months, I have made it my business to inspect all the prisons in the system in Queensland. I have spoken at length to quite a number of prison officers. It is timely, and nice, that some attention is being given to the matter of prison officers' staffing levels and the problems that have been faced. Perhaps during the past couple of months more attention has been given to prisoners in "more prominent" positions.

I am aware of the difficulties that exist in staffing levels, just as difficulties exist in other areas, because of budgetary restraint. There are certainly reasons for that. The bright spot is that recently an additional 25 positions were advertised. The current levels under which the prison system operates have met approved budgetary levels. It is hoped that in the future some improvements may be made in staffing levels.

I am very mindful of the problems that prison officers are going through. They certainly are faced with many difficult challenges and there are many difficult tasks in the jobs that they are in. It is only fair and reasonable that their cause is mentioned.

I should also mention on record that, as of this moment, the department is recruiting 400 to 500 new prison officers to man the three new prisons that are currently under construction. It is in that way that I believe many of the problems that are currently faced can be alleviated.

I am mindful of the staffing levels, training procedures and problems that are being faced. I can assure the House honestly that the matter is completely in hand.

#### **Student Residential Accommodation, Griffith University**

**Mr STEPHAN:** In directing a question to the Minister for Education, I refer to the limited accommodation available for students attending Griffith University. Many students from country areas are unable to find accommodation on site. Some of the

limited places are being allocated to students attending other tertiary institutions and instrumentalities. The problem is being intensified by a demand for housing for Expo 88. I ask: what steps are being taken to ensure that at least first-year students at Griffith University have access to accommodation on site?

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** It is a fact that a shortage of student accommodation exists at all tertiary institutions in Brisbane. I have to advise the House that it is true that some places at Griffith University residential college are in fact going to students of QIT and also some of the staff of the Princess Alexandra Hospital. The reason is that the Federal Government directs that that should happen.

**Opposition members interjected.**

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** If Opposition members would listen, I could inform the House that my understanding is that, when the residential college was built, it was in time for the Commonwealth Games. Part of the agreement was that the allocation of accommodation would be on the basis I have already outlined.

The honourable member for Gympie might like to know that the Griffith University currently has a new residential college under construction worth approximately \$2.2m, which will offer an additional 80 places. I hope that that college will go some of the way towards alleviating the shortage of places.

#### **Redevelopment of Expo Site**

**Mr INNES:** I ask the Premier: did Sir Robert Sparkes speak to him in regard to the developers for the Expo redevelopment before the Cabinet meeting at which the River City 2000 concept was selected? Did Sir Robert Sparkes speak to any Ministers with regard to the developers?

**Mr AHERN:** I wish to make this matter and the dealings on this issue categorically clear. The honourable member's question contains a very serious imputation against me, the Cabinet and the committee which recommended this particular development. I completely reject any imputation of any improper dealing.

I can stand here today and state with 100 per cent certainty that I had no discussion with Sir Robert Sparkes in respect of the matter before it came before the Cabinet. What actually happened was that, as the Minister responsible for the matter, I went down to the committee, after some initial discussions preparatory to that over a period of time, to see what the recommendations of the committee members were. I went into a room with them and they took me through the various proposals which were on display.

**Mr Palaszczuk:** Or concepts.

**Mr AHERN:** Yes, the concepts.

I asked them to explain to me why they were making the particular recommendation and whether the city council's recommendations had been incorporated. They indicated to me that the recommendations had been incorporated and how they had been incorporated. I told the members of the committee that their recommendation would go to Cabinet on such-and-such a day and that it would be subject to debate and consideration at that time, which it was. After a brief discussion on the matter, and questions were asked and all the concept plans were displayed, Cabinet unanimously accepted the recommendations of the committee.

I then stated that I would take Sir Leo Hielscher and Sir Syd Schubert down into the press room for the presentation of the successful developer's concept, which I did. When I announced Cabinet's recommendation, I invited all those present—and it was a big press conference—to direct questions to Sir Leo Hielscher and Sir Syd Schubert in respect of the matter. This happened, and Sir Leo Hielscher took those persons present through a discussion of the financial aspects, and on that occasion there was a general discussion as to why the particular development was favoured.

For the honourable member to make any imputation that this Government has in any way favoured a particular developer is something that I find offensive. It is not true. I reject it completely and state quite categorically that the people of Brisbane, Queensland and Australia will be very, very proud of this post-Expo development.

#### **Redevelopment of Expo Site**

**Mr INNES:** I have a further question for the Premier on the same topic. I understood that the guide-lines that were supposed to be followed before a decision on the developer was made were that the preferred tenderers or expressions of interest were to be submitted to a technical committee in order for a short list to be produced. A short list of three developers was produced and I understood that then the matter was to go to a committee involving the Expo Authority. The Premier has described a scenario involving Sir Sydney Schubert and Sir Leo Hielscher. I ask: was the Expo Authority involved in the committee that the Premier says recommended the final developer, and did either of the other two developers, or any of the other developers, know that a casino was to be part of the proposed development?

**Mr AHERN:** Yesterday in respect of this matter I made a statement to the House detailing the membership of the technical committee. It comprises Sir Llew Edwards, Sir Leo Hielscher, Sir Sydney Schubert and the Town Clerk. So the Town Clerk was involved up to the point when the final three concepts were considered, and he indicated that any one of those three would meet the city council's requirements, subject to the matter coming back to the council for the further development of infrastructure needs, which was always agreed to and promised by me and is actually now happening.

If the honourable member researched the matter more closely, I think he would find that what his inquirer has probably asked him to ask is: does not the matter have to go back to the Expo Authority itself for final approval? The answer to that question is, "Yes". However, it has always been understood as a fact of life and a very real issue that had to be dealt with and understood completely that the State Government is underwriting this particular development, so if it makes a shortfall in some way or another it will fall on the Government's desk to find the extra moneys.

The Government was determined that the sole issue of money was not to be the only criterion. If it was to be the only criterion, that should have been stated when tenders were called. That was certainly not to be the case and would have been an entirely improper course for the Government to take. In the long-term interests of capital city development, I am sure that all honourable members would not have wanted the Government just to conduct an auction of the land. What we want there in the post-Expo phase is something about which in the long run we will be very, very proud. I think we can certainly be proud of what is proposed.

**Mr Palaszczuk:** Are you sure?

**Mr AHERN:** Yes. I am absolutely confident about that. That is the opinion of the chairman of the Expo Authority, who has indicated that to me, as have all other members of the authority.

**Mr Innes:** And the casino?

**Mr AHERN:** I will come to that issue shortly.

At this time things have been done in accordance with a certain sequence. When the new Government decided that a world trade centre and a casino would be appropriate on the site, it had a difficulty on its plate, that is, whether in the circumstances to go back and entirely re-call tenders from the beginning, which would have appeared to have been the equitable course. However, on closer inspection and when the matter was thought about in more detail, it was realised that, if a re-call process took place, that would place at a disadvantage those people who had expended enormous amounts of money on the proposal. As the process had proceeded almost to the point of fruition,

the Government decided to conclude that process and then negotiate the other issues with the final, favoured developer. The Government has done that.

**Mr Goss:** Favoured or preferred?

**Mr AHERN:** Preferred.

**Mr Burns:** You said "favoured".

**Mr AHERN:** So what is the difference in the terms?

I have carefully taken honourable members through every process and I can tell the House that every word I have uttered is right. There was absolutely no direct lobbying of me on this matter. The Government has proceeded to preferred developer status and negotiated with the preferred developer on the original tender called. That is an entirely proper course.

In summary, I shall take honourable members to other parts of the world that have conducted Expos. If one travels round the world and looks at all of those sites, one finds that most of them are not developed at all and that they are full of rats and cockroaches because no-one could agree on what ought to have happened after the conclusion of the Expo.

What this State has is a very fine Expo of which it can be very, very proud. It is looking very, very good.

**Mr Austin:** Which Labor opposed.

**Mr AHERN:** Yes, which Labor opposed and which the Government is underwriting.

I understand that tenders have been called for the demolition of the buildings on site so that the \$1,000m development can proceed to give the State a development of which it can be very, very proud.

#### **Coconut Island Solar Energy Project**

**Mr BURREKET:** I ask the Minister for Northern Development, Community Services and Ethnic Affairs: will he inform the House about the recent world break-through in solar technology in regard to the opening of the Coconut Island power scheme? Will he also inform the House about the ramifications of that scheme for power supplies to other similar locations throughout Queensland? Will he advise the House of the success of that project relative to that of any Federal Government initiative of which he is aware?

**Mr KATTER:** I thank the honourable member for the question. I will not bore the House by going over solar-energy details that have been given twice previously. Suffice to say that it is silent. In this case, in view of the isolation and the costs of alternative power sources, it is cheap. Of course, there is no pollution and there are no ongoing costs, with the exception of the replacement of the batteries once in the next 20 years, so the manufacturers claim.

Although I hate to score off my Federal colleagues, I am forced to bring to the attention of the House that beside the solar generator is a water-harvester that was built by the Federal Government at considerable expense. Recently, I was interviewed in heavy rain on Coconut Island. It was a source of great pleasure to me that the solar generator was working in the rain but, in sharp contrast, the water-harvester was not working in the rain.

I am pleased to be asked the question and to be able to bring the public's attention to the relative success of the two projects.

#### **Redevelopment of Expo Site**

**Mr SHAW:** In directing a question to the Premier and Treasurer, I note that in an interview shown on ABC television this month he confirmed that \$103m to be paid to the Expo Authority by the Government on behalf of the River City 2000 consortium

would come from cash reserves. I ask: exactly which reserves and what funds are to be used for that purpose?

**Mr AHERN:** Earlier today, in answer to questions, I indicated that it would have been quite wrong, and improper, for the Government to make money the sole criterion for the post-Expo development; to hold a very large auction over there and say, "Say whatever you like, but give us the maximum money and we will take it." That would have been a very wrong decision in the interests of our children and in the interests of our capital city, our State and our nation, for that matter. It is an extraordinary real estate development that can yield for many years to come extraordinary economic development for the State. Other criteria were involved rather than up-front cash payment.

It would have been comfortable for the Government were the best development in terms of all of those other criteria to be the one with the highest up-front cash payment; but it was not. If the honourable member for Manly is suggesting that the Government should simply have accepted the best cash option, surely——

**Mr Shaw:** No. All I am asking is where the money is coming from.

**Mr AHERN:** Well, it is implied in the honourable member's question, surely.

**Mr Shaw:** No, it is not.

**Mr AHERN:** Yes, it is. It is clearly implied.

If that were the case, it should have been stated in the tender called, but it was not. Having said that it would listen to various options, the Government is proceeding with the preferred-developer status in terms of all of those criteria. Therefore, what was ultimately selected was a \$200m payment over a number of years.

The honourable member asks, "How then is the Government to fund these moneys, which are not up-front cash payments?"

**Mr Shaw** interjected.

**Mr AHERN:** All right. I needed to put that in perspective for members of the Opposition, who will make further speeches on this matter, and for members of the media, too, so that there can be a complete understanding of the issue.

The Queensland Government, like all other State Governments in Australia, has certain cash reserves in trust and special funds of a substantial variety. These are currently invested in commercial paper, long-term bonds and other investments and are lent to local authorities, statutory authorities and so on across the board. In New South Wales, those cash reserves have been drawn down and spent in a wide variety of ways in order to save the Premier from defeat.

I am unsure what account this money will be taken from. It will probably be taken generally from capital, not recurrent, investments—from commercial paper.

### **Redevelopment of Expo Site**

**Mr SHAW:** My second question is also directed to the Premier. Yesterday the Premier informed the House that some proposals for the redevelopment of the Expo site were disregarded because they involved the inclusion of a casino licence. Is the Premier able to tell the House what financial arrangement was offered by each of the proposals disregarded because they included a casino? Which tenders were involved?

**Mr AHERN:** I thought that with great patience I took honourable members along this path. I hope that I do not have to take them along it again.

The preferred developer was selected on the basis of the agreed arrangements in the tender called and on all advices up until the point at which the Government decided to include a casino on the site. I pointed out in answer to a question by the Leader of the Liberal Party why the decision was made and why a judgment was made in relation

to fairness. That was the best way to proceed. A complete re-call of the whole exercise would have started a bun-fight the like of which has been replicated in many post-Expo sites around the world. I believe that I have answered that question——

**Mr Shaw:** I am asking for clarification of your statement that some were disregarded because they included a casino.

**Mr AHERN:** No. The honourable member is putting words into my mouth. The context of what I said is very, very clear. If the honourable member reads the answer that I gave today to the Leader of the Liberal Party, he will find that I answered that question completely.

#### **Mr P. Hassid; Eviction of Tenants**

**Ms WARNER:** In directing a question to the Minister for Family Services and Welfare Housing, I draw to his attention the actions of a Mr Phil Hassid, a landlord of 35 Brighton Road, Highgate Hill, who is evicting tenants from his block of five flats and five rooms for a period of six months, covering the duration of Expo. He is quite specific about that. One woman, a pensioner, has lived on the premises for 35 years. Of course, I could cite a number of other instances, as could every other honourable member of this Parliament, because members are receiving complaints at their offices on a daily basis.

**A Government member:** I'm not.

**Ms WARNER:** The honourable member is not? Certainly the problem goes as far as the south coast.

I ask the Minister what urgent action he will take either to stop these evictions or to assist people to be relocated?

**Mr McKECHNIE:** The honourable member and I have had some discussion about this matter. This afternoon I was rather amazed when she gave notice of a motion asking the State Government to do certain things, without asking the Federal Government to do something. I repeat that I am amazed that she did not mention the Federal Government. I know that the honourable member feels that the Federal Government has an obligation to do something.

**Ms Warner:** But so have you.

**Mr McKECHNIE:** Yes. Of course the Queensland Government has an obligation to do something. I am going to tell the honourable member what it is doing.

It is not too late to do something about it. The Queensland Government is taking some rather positive action. I am not being political when I say that under successive Governments in Canberra Queensland has received a bad deal as far as housing funds are concerned. That fact was acknowledged by the Fraser Government.

**Ms Warner** interjected.

**Mr Palaszczuk** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The member for South Brisbane has asked a question. Members should give the Minister the courtesy of allowing him to answer the question.

**Mr McKECHNIE:** As I said, Queensland has received a bad housing deal from Canberra when compared with that received by the other States. The bad deal was acknowledged eventually by the Fraser Government, which did very little about it, except to say that the funding equality would be phased in over a number of years. That phasing-in of equality of housing funds provided to this State by Canberra has not yet eventuated, although there is a time-limit on it, namely, 1992.

As to the Expo site—the Queensland Government is doing some positive things. As the honourable member would know, the Queensland Government has made available

funding for 26 crisis homes. The interest exists to take up that accommodation. Other organisations have been told that they have approval to buy more homes in addition to the 26 homes that I have already mentioned. I have been informed of that by the Housing Commission. As far as bond and rent relief is concerned—

**Ms Warner:** How much money?

**Mr McKECHNIE:** The honourable member should allow me to answer her first question. She can then ask a supplementary question if she wishes to do so.

As far as bond and rent relief is concerned, it is the usual practice for people affected to be placed in crisis housing for 28 days. In certain circumstances the Government has waived that requirement. After discussion with me, the Commissioner for Housing has made a definite statement that, provided tenants are responsible, they will not be put out on the street. Obviously, if someone has a history of wrecking a house, in those circumstances one would have some reservations. Provided that the tenants are responsible, there will be no problem.

I have made public statements that people should not be bluffed by landlords. If landlords are going to try to put people out on the street, they should refuse to go until they receive an eviction order. If those persons receive an eviction order, they will be helped. It is as simple as that. I have told the Commissioner for Housing to look upon it with compassion and—

**Ms Warner:** You try ringing him up and getting somebody rehoused; it doesn't happen.

**Mr McKECHNIE:** The honourable member is trying to debate the issue while I am trying to answer the question. I will not be sidetracked any longer.

The problem is exacerbated further by the fact that Queensland is not treated fairly. The Federal Government gave \$5m to help with the problems associated with the staging of a sporting event in Western Australia. I have said to the Federal Government, "Agree in principle to do the same thing for us and we will see that the money is spent properly and according to any guide-lines that you want to lay down."

A local Federal member, the Honourable Ben Humphreys, as an acting Minister, signed a letter saying that the residents could not do much and that the matter was being referred to the Minister in charge of Expo.

The facts of the matter are that I have not been in this portfolio very long and I asked quickly for help. Honourable members might be interested to learn that I am now parallelling the third Federal Minister in that period. It is a little bit hard to deal with Canberra when the Federal Government changes its Ministers as people change their shirts. The Queensland Government is doing everything it can. It is time that Canberra stopped treating Queensland differently from the other States of Australia. I hope that the honourable member will be more vocal publicly and in this House in her criticism of Canberra's not helping Queensland enough. It is not good enough for the honourable member to attempt to give notice of motions and to ask the State Government to give more when she has said nothing about the obligations of the Federal Government and the fact that it is treating Queenslanders unfairly.

I repeat that I have directed the Housing Commission to help responsible tenants who are evicted or who have been told that they will be put out on the street because they have been served with an eviction notice. I cannot do much more than that. Many rules have been amended in an endeavour to assist. I wish that the honourable member, the Leader of the Opposition and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition would become more vocal on this issue and would attack the Federal Government for not helping Queensland in the same way as it helps other States.

#### **Crisis Housing**

**Ms WARNER:** In asking a second question of the Minister for Family Services and Welfare Housing, I refer to the motion of which I gave notice today and to the fact that this Government has allocated \$500,000 for publicity to create closer ties—it will

benefit the National Party and its Ministers during 1988—and the \$3m that has been allocated for entertaining businessmen and official overseas visitors during Expo 88, which will be spent by Government departments.

I ask: how much money has this Government contributed towards the housing program that the Minister has just outlined? When will the 26 crisis houses that the Minister has spoken about come on line? Many individuals have been evicted from their homes not because they were irresponsible tenants but simply because their properties were being taken over for Expo. I have asked for those individuals to be housed. In any case, those 26 crisis houses are to be allocated to families. Many pensioners are involved in the evictions.

In view of the fact that the housing need is reaching crisis level, would the Minister agree that the provision of 26 crisis houses is totally inefficient? What action will he take to ensure that all persons who are adversely affected by Expo will receive protection from this Government?

**Mr McKECHNIE:** Unfortunately, the honourable member is a little slow to learn. She mentioned the \$500,000 that will be spent on publicity for Expo. The benefits that will flow to this State from Expo will be tremendous. It is important to the development of this State that people understand what Expo is all about.

The honourable member mentioned also the \$3m that will be spent on the 'corporate visitors' program. As the former Minister for Industry, I assure the honourable member that the benefits that will flow from the jobs that will be created in this State will be immense.

The honourable member went on to speak about the 26 crisis homes. I understand that nearly all of them have been purchased.

**Ms Warner:** They are not being used.

**Mr McKECHNIE:** To the best of my knowledge, those houses have been purchased. The organisations that want them can have them. Another group of organisations has been told that it can go out looking for more houses.

The honourable member spoke about providing houses for all the people who will be evicted because of Expo. I visited Atherton recently. Many people are housed at the women's shelter there. A very interesting debate is taking place between those people and real estate agents. Market forces must be allowed to operate. Approval has been granted for a housing worker to be located in that area, when one can be found. In that way people will be able to receive advice as to how to deal with landlords.

The Premier has pointed out how savagely Queensland has been treated by the Federal Government. The honourable member must understand that, in our financial climate, we cannot pluck money out of the air. The honourable member should be more vocal by making public representations to the Federal Government to play its part.

#### **Redevelopment of Expo Site**

**Mr De LACY:** I ask the Premier and Treasurer: what interest rate and other charges will be payable on the balance of the \$200m that is to be paid by River City 2000 to the Government over six years for the Expo site?

**Mr AHERN:** The offer that was made, which was accepted by the Government, was for a number of instalments—cash payments—over a number of years. The instalments do not contain a provision for an interest payment. It was an offer which was made, along with a complexity of other offers.

**Mr Shaw:** You are not suggesting it is interest free?

**Mr AHERN:** The honourable member seems to be having difficulty getting his mind around this concept.

One company offered cash up front and others offered instalment pay-outs over a number of years. The honourable member now asks whether interest is to be paid on the instalments. The tender offer related to a number of instalments. In considering and evaluating the tender, the Government placed an interest charge and a discount against inflation. Is that the sum that the honourable member would like me to do?

**Mr Shaw:** What figure is that?

**Mr AHERN:** Various sums were done. I do not carry the figures around in my head. At the time of the press conference, Treasury explained its conception of the evaluation. I will endeavour to obtain the necessary information and I will communicate it to the honourable member.

#### **Transfer of Cattle Husbandry Officer from Brian Pastures Research Station**

**Mr SLACK:** In directing a question to the Minister for Primary Industries, I refer to a report in the *South Burnett Times* of 2 March in which it was claimed that there are moves to take away cattle research from Brian Pastures Research Station near Gayndah. I refer in particular to the reported transfer of a cattle husbandry officer from the station and the suggestion that he is not to be replaced. I ask: is that report correct?

**Mr HARPER:** It is correct that until recently two beef cattle husbandry branch officers were stationed at the Brian Pastures Research Station outside Gayndah. At his own request, one officer was transferred to a position at the Tick Fever Research Centre at Wacol. The other officer, who is a senior officer, remains in position at Brian Pastures Research Station.

I am aware of the report to which the honourable member referred. As he knows, over a period we have discussed the future of Brian Pastures. Indeed, he accompanied me on a recent inspection of that research station. That station is operated by officers of my department with the assistance of the Australian Meat and Livestock Research Development Council, under Commonwealth jurisdiction. Some discussion has taken place at junior officer level—and I stress that it has taken place at what I consider to be junior officer level—suggesting that the officer presently stationed at Brian Pastures should move to Swans Lagoon. Media reports, based on discussions that have taken place in a public forum, suggested that this was as a result of the Savage report. That is in error.

Discussions have taken place as a direct outcome of a report that was prepared by a committee comprising Mr Anthony Coates of Eidsvold station, Mr Robertson, who is also a primary producer, and Dr Walker, who was the director of the pasture management branch. Although a recommendation was made by that committee that rationalisation was needed within the beef cattle husbandry branch and although notice is being taken of what those very competent people recommended to my predecessor in the matter, I have not approved any changes.

I can assure the honourable member and primary producers in the Central Burnett area generally who have a direct need for the research and extension work carried out at the Brian Pastures Research Station near Gayndah that I will not approve such a transfer at present.

I am mindful that the question of need should be looked at as part of a reconsideration of the department's obligations. I point out to honourable members that, unlike the Federal Government, the Queensland Government understands the value of rural research and extension. One only has to consider the record of the Queensland Government—

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

**MATTER OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE****Tape Recording of Evidence**

**Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, I wish to report that I have received the following brief written statement from the honourable member for Sherwood pursuant to the provisions of Standing Order 137—

“Dear Mr Speaker,

Under the provisions of Standing Order 137, I wish to propose a definite matter of public importance.

The matter is the urgent provision to the Queensland Police Force of the equipment training and procedures for the routine tape recording of interviews with persons suspected of committing criminal offences.

This urgency results from a crisis in the Queensland Criminal Courts in which juries are refusing to convict persons in cases that rely substantially on the evidence of Police Officers.

This crisis was publicly aired last week by the Detectives' representative on the Queensland Police Union Executive, Sgt. J. O'Gorman, in calling for the provision of tape facilities. He said that tape recording, by audio or audio/visual means, would prevent the constant allegations that Police were 'verballing' the accused person, which was so prevalent that Police were considering refusing to take cases to Court.

As a well-ordered society depends on a properly functioning criminal justice system, this matter must be addressed urgently. I therefore propose this matter be discussed.

Yours faithfully,  
(J. A. M. INNES, LL.B., M.L.A.)  
Leader of the Liberal Party.”

I presume that the honourable member has the necessary support for this?

Not fewer than five members having risen in their places to indicate approval—

**Mr INNES** (Sherwood—Leader of the Liberal Party) (4.23 p.m.): Mr Speaker, nothing could be more important for a well-ordered society than confidence in the criminal justice system—

**Hon. B. D. AUSTIN** (Nicklin—Leader of the House) (4.23 p.m.): I move—

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

Question put; and the House divided—

AYES, 43

Ahern	Lester
Alison	Lingard
Austin	Littleproud
Berghofer	McCauley
Booth	McKechnie
Borbidge	McPhie
Burreket	Menzel
Chapman	Muntz
Cooper	Neal
Elliott	Nelson
Fraser	Newton
Gately	Randell
Gibbs, I. J.	Sherrin
Gilmore	Simpson
Glasson	Slack
Gunn	Stoneman
Harper	Tenni
Henderson	Veivers
Hinton	
Hobbs	
Hynd	<i>Tellers:</i>
Katter	FitzGerald
Lane	Stephan

NOES, 40

Ardill	Milliner
Beanland	Palaszczuk
Beard	Schuntner
Braddy	Scott
Burns	Shaw
Campbell	Sherlock
Casey	Smith
Comben	Smyth
D'Arcy	Underwood
De Lacy	Vaughan
Eaton	Warburton
Gibbs, R. J.	Warner
Goss	Wells
Gygar	White
Hamill	Yewdale
Hayward	
Innes	
Knox	
Lee	
Lickiss	
McElligott	<i>Tellers:</i>
Mackenroth	Davis
McLean	Prent

Resolved in the affirmative.

**LAND ACT AND ANOTHER ACT AMENDMENT BILL****Second Reading**

Debate resumed from 8 March (see p. 4960).

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Does any member wish to speak?

**Mr COMBEN:** Yes, Mr Speaker. I am waiting for the call.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I am waiting for the honourable member to call.

**Mr COMBEN:** I was on my feet for some 10 seconds——

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The honourable member for Windsor has been here long enough to know that if he wishes to attract the Speaker's attention, he stands in his place and calls, "Mr Speaker".

**Mr COMBEN:** Mr Speaker.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I call the honourable member for Windsor.

**Mr COMBEN (Windsor) (4.32 p.m.):** I thought I may have been lost in the melee. A large number of members seem to be exiting the Chamber. I am quite fascinated that the majority of members voted to hear me, yet as soon as I get to my feet, they all leave.

**Mr Eaton:** They are terrified.

**Mr COMBEN:** They are, indeed.

The Land Act, which is now the subject of amendment, must be one of the least understood pieces of major legislation in the State. The Land Administration Commission is a very specialised body with a weighty and complex Act supporting it. Few members have understood the finer points of distinction between the new and different styles of tenancies created by the Bill.

The commission is a body of professionals controlling something like 80 per cent of the land of the State. Its influence extends from town and housing developments to the vast western pastoral leases. All types of land use have to be scrutinised and sanctioned by this giant department.

The Lands Commissioner, Mr Wally Baker, is often stated to be one of the most important and influential State public servants. The department is an anachronistic, frozen mammoth, probably more attuned to 1860 than 1988. The policies of peppercorn rentals in the western areas and freeholding land at a very cheap rate that it espouses would have been appropriate to a frontier State 100 years ago; they are not appropriate to the Queensland of today.

In the sleeping mammoth of the Lands Department and the Land Administration Commission, all the essential elements of public corruption exist: a very influential department controlling the resource that is important to the party in power in the State, that is, land. It is a little-understood department shrouded in archaic and mystifying regulations and terms; a department far from public gaze and understanding.

It is my belief that, not only does the potential for institutionalised corruption exist, but that institutionalised corruption actually exists. It is my belief that land management in Queensland is subject to political patronage and cronyism and is either corrupt or incompetent. Today the Minister stood in his place and said that for me to say that the department was corrupt or incompetent was wrong, yet he did not destroy in any way the facts that I put forth. I said that what had happened resulted from total incompetence.

The problems of the department and its stewardship of the land resources of this State can be put under three headings: firstly, the method of settling the amount of

annual rents for leasehold land; secondly, the method of settling the price of freeholding leasehold land in the State; and, thirdly, the influence exerted by the department, and, more especially, by its commissioner, Mr Wally Baker, in all matters affecting land in Queensland. I will come back to each of those. It is my belief that Mr Baker's diaries of political phone calls would make the Lewis diaries look like a bed-time story.

**Government members interjected.**

**Mr Stoneman:** They are absolutely grubby politics.

**Mr COMBEN:** Which parts are grubby? Which part is wrong?

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Booth):** Order! I ask the honourable member to continue with his address.

**Mr COMBEN:** I could not interrupt over the melee.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! When the honourable member is asked to continue, I suggest that he does so.

**Mr COMBEN:** I apologise.

**Mr Stoneman:** Apologise to Mr Baker, too.

**Mr COMBEN:** No.

In relation to the settling of annual rental for leasehold land, earlier this afternoon the Minister referred to a number of matters. However, he has not answered any of my concerns about whether the department is corrupt or just incompetent. The facts are as reported in the 1986-87 annual report of the Land Administration Commission. Those facts show an appalling situation. They show that pastoral leases in Queensland covering 53 per cent of the State and holding an average area of 56 142 hectares return to this State an average rental of \$737, bringing in a gross return of \$1.2m. The net return, after the cost of collecting that money, is obviously far smaller. It is obviously pertinent to a frontier State. It is not pertinent, nor is it commercially real, today to have that sort of return for over half the State.

The Minister says that I should have quoted other figures. The annual report contains a set of statistics. I have quoted the top line. He goes to the bottom line and says that I should be showing that the fairer average rental figure for him to have quoted would have been that of the total Crown area, which shows a return of \$499 a year for an average area of 3 464 hectares. Implicit in all the remarks by the Minister is that the figures are actually better if one examines the larger areas away from the pastoral leases and that better returns are obtained in central Queensland. However, I am saying that for \$500 a year one can rent on average 3 464 hectares, which is just over 7 000 acres of land. That is not commercial reality.

**Mr Glasson:** How little you understand about the commercial side of land in the pastoral leases. You wouldn't have a clue. You are a little boy lost, that's what you are. You were lost before you came into this place and you have been lost ever since, especially when talking about land matters. You accused the commissioner of being corrupt.

**Mr COMBEN:** Corrupt or incompetent.

**Mr Glasson:** You are an absolute disgrace.

**Mr COMBEN:** Corrupt or incompetent; one or the other. I do not resile from that at all. The Minister has to accept one or the other. The commissioner cannot lease 7 000 acres of land for \$500 a year and claim that he is doing it competently. The Minister's department is either wrong or someone is benefiting to some extent.

**Government members interjected.**

**Mr COMBEN:** It is quite obvious from the calls that are coming from the Government side of the Chamber, with everyone willing to fly to the defence of the Land Commissioner, that all the Government members are very personally acquainted with him. Part of what I intend to say this afternoon is that they are all so personally acquainted because they are members of the National Party and every time——

**Mr FITZGERALD:** I rise to a point of order. I find the assertions, insinuations and allegations made against me as a member of the National Party that I have an improper relationship with the Land Commissioner offensive. I ask the honourable member to withdraw it. If he has any decency, he will apologise.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! In view of the fact that the allegation has not been directed to the honourable member individually, I cannot allow that point of order to stand. However, I suggest to the member on his feet that, unless he has some proof of those allegations, it is a very foolish stance to be taking. I cannot see any benefit from it unless he has some proof.

I ask the honourable member to commence to speak again; however, he should keep to the subject. If he has serious allegations to make and he has the proof, he should make them.

**Mr COMBEN:** Mr Deputy Speaker, thank you for your impartial ruling and for not entering the fray.

The average Queenslander—the average person in the Windsor electorate—would look at the figures that the Minister produced in his annual report this year and say that something is wrong.

**Mrs NELSON:** I rise to a point of order. In previous remarks in the debate, the honourable member for Windsor actually referred to members present in the Chamber. I was present in the Chamber when he made those remarks and I believe that those remarks were in fact directed towards me personally. I ask that he withdraw and apologise for those remarks.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** In view of the honourable member's contention that the honourable member for Windsor used the words in the Chamber, I ask him to withdraw.

**Mr COMBEN:** I withdraw the remarks about the National Party members in this Chamber having a corrupt relationship with the Commissioner of Lands. Of course, what the Liberal Party members might have had for longer parts of their life-time is a different matter.

**Mrs Nelson:** You are an absolute disgrace.

**Mr COMBEN:** What does the honourable member expect? I am still saying—and thank you for protecting me in the same way as you showed your impartiality just now, Mr Deputy Speaker—that the average person in Queensland realises the total incompetence of a department which can produce for half of our land a return to consolidated revenue in this State of \$1.2m less costs. The Government is getting nothing back for over half this State. I do not know what the Minister thinks, but that is all that the Government is getting back. That is what the figures show.

**Mrs Nelson interjected.**

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The member is obviously not accepting the interjection. I ask the member for Windsor to continue.

**Mr Davis interjected.**

**Mr COMBEN:** I am not taking interjections from the Government side, so I will not take them from the Opposition side.

As I have said, the figures in the Land Administration Commission annual report for 1986-87 show the returns from pastoral leases. If one looks at the subtotal for

leasehold land as a total, one finds that 70 per cent of the area of Queensland returns to the State coffers in gross figures \$7.5m. For an average 4 260 hectares, there is an average return of \$264.

My contention is that in the view of average Queenslanders, that is an unfair return. The average corner store owner in a Brisbane suburb who pays \$100 a week sees someone getting 4 000 hectares for \$264 average rent per year. That shows that somewhere along the line the department is not being a good steward of this State's resources.

There is no connection with commercial reality whatsoever. The rentals are increased by the Lands Administration Commission in tune with the unimproved capital value determined by the Valuer-General's Department. The Lands Commissioner is being told by a number of people in this State that those rentals are too high and that they want them reduced. That sort of thing goes on. Diaries recording those sorts of phone calls would make interesting reading.

It would be interesting indeed to see what those rentals would be if they were put on the free market. There is an interesting point there. The Government had two ballot blocks up for ballot last year for which 2 000 entries were received. So there is obviously a demand there, which would provide a far greater return to the State of Queensland—if the Government was interested in seeking it out and if it was prepared to get away from a frontier mentality and away from a peppercorn rental situation.

The second matter of concern is the way in which prices for freeholding are arrived at. Honourable members heard a ministerial statement today on that subject. However, the recent media attention to Line Hill Holdings is only the latest in a string of similar cases. In the early 1950s King Ranch was freeholded for \$48,000. It was \$48,000 for 48 000 acres, that is, \$1 an acre. More recently, there was an attempt at freeholding Silver Plains at something less than \$5 a hectare.

Although honourable members have not had the pleasure of hearing the Minister comment further, last night he indicated that that \$5 a hectare was in fact not taken up. However, that land was immediately put on the market for approximately \$5m, and there was a massive capital gain. I say again that commercial reality is not being reflected in any way if that sort of property can be freeholded for one price and suddenly its price triples.

The Southedge station up near Mount Molloy—the Quaid property—was freeholded two years ago for \$48,000. That involved 30 000 hectares. The owner immediately thought that that property was worth enough to put in the largest privately owned dam in Australia, at a cost of \$4.7m, and a two-lane highway from the coast, up over the mountains. There is something wrong if this State receives \$48,000 when the developer says, "I am going to spend \$4.7m and I am still going to make a very hefty profit." The profits made by Quaid in the north, in the rainforests and in that area are legendary. The dogs are barking up there.

We now have the example of Line Hill. A value of \$2,100 was put on it, as the Minister said, 13 years ago. I accept that that valuation was placed on the property 13 years ago. But was the Lands Department looking ahead to see what the valuations would be in 10 years' time? Any blind Freddy could have seen that in 10 years' time development would be taking place along the coast. The property is located in a prime area. The Minister himself said that the owner had in fact given up land that became the Iron Range national park. That land is apparently beautiful land, as is Weymouth Bay. The beaches in the area are also beautiful. The area is a prime spot between rainforest national park and an Aboriginal reserve.

What did the Government say? It said, "All right, over 10 years you can pay \$200 a year, and you will be able to freehold it in 10 years' time." In fact, the Minister said that the period was 13 years. I would like to know what the average person in Brisbane would think of the idea of being able to move into a home today and in 13 years' time paying the current price. I would not mind moving into my house now and paying

\$45,000, because that is what it was worth 13 years ago. Effectively, that is what the Minister has done. He has not taken inflation into account.

**Mr Glasson:** You pay the bank when you buy a home. That is exactly what you do; you pay it off by instalments.

**Mr COMBEN:** Yes, with interest, which is 16 per cent.

I do not know what the interest rate was, but if the company paid the amount straight out, it was to be \$1,800. If the amount was to be paid over 10 years, it would have been \$2,100. That represents a total interest rate of about 18 per cent over 10 years, not 18 per cent per annum. It was 18 per cent over 10 years.

**Mr FitzGerald:** Per annum.

**Mr COMBEN:** That is not per annum.

Whatever it was, it was a pretty good deal. I still say that there has to be incompetence in the Lands Department and in the assessment of freeholding if the Minister can say that at that time it was worth about \$1,800 when 10 or 13 years later it is sold for \$14m.

Today, in a ministerial statement the Minister said that even on today's values the current unimproved capital value set by the Valuer-General is \$5,700, and that the reported sale for \$14m to Farndale Pty Ltd certainly appears excessive. There is something wrong if land that has an unimproved capital value of \$5,700 can be sold on the open market for \$14m. The Minister must concede that. The Minister said that it certainly appears excessive. Where is the commercial reality? I accept that the amount may be excessive, but for a \$5,700 UCV—

**Mr Glasson:** It is a mythical dream. There is a development worth over \$300m going in there.

**Mr COMBEN:** Why did the company pay \$14m? That is private enterprise! So what does this State receive? It receives \$2,100 and a private entrepreneur pockets \$13,990,000-odd. That is incredible. There is something wrong if that sort of valuation can continue. I cannot understand how the Minister can in any way justify that sort of increase. Why is it that the unimproved capital value is only \$5,700? The land must be worth more than that. Three thousand hectares nestling between rainforest national park and an Aboriginal settlement, with a fine beach!

I understand that negotiations are taking place in relation to the esplanade. However, the Minister said that they have been rejected. That is certainly not what the present owner said to the media two nights ago. Some sort of forward planning should have been done. Because of its lack of forward planning, the department is incompetent.

I move on to the third area of concern, namely, that the Lands Department in general is perceived by anyone interested in land in this State, other than the large graziers and developers, as a massive hindrance to land use in this State. That view is expressed by small-town dwellers who are looking for pieces of land on which to agist a couple of horses or conservationists who are looking for larger areas of land. The commission and the commissioner have no view of land other than clearing it and granting it to graziers and developers.

In this day and age when so much is spoken about environmental concerns and when the subsidisation of massive land-clearing has been stopped by removing taxation concessions, I find it amazing that a person can still lease land and make provision for the clearing of scrub. One of the Lands Department's primary aims is the development of every single piece of land in this State. Development of land under the terms of the Lands Department is far different from what the average Queenslanders and I understand development to be.

**Mr Stoneman:** You wouldn't have a clue.

**Mr COMBEN:** I believe that I have a very good clue.

I ask honourable members to consider areas that have been developed by the Lands Department where it has been a hindrance to conservation. For example, the Lake Whyba forest area was revoked in this House six years ago with the express intention of its being included in the Cooloola national park. However, that has still not occurred. At present the Lands Department is still trying to convince a number of Cabinet Ministers and Cabinet as a whole that there should be a housing development in that area. That land is in trust for the people of Queensland, and yet that trust is being abused.

The Palmerston national park extension is another example of Lands Department interference. It was declared as a national park just prior to the last State election, only after a decade of procrastination and stalling on the part of the Lands Department because it may have been able to be used for sugar-cane farming. At the time that it was being considered for that development, sugar-cane farming was an appallingly non-viable proposition.

Max Menzel is on public record as saying that he opposed the extension of that national park because of the possible development of that area for sugar-cane farming. He was aided and abetted by the Land Administration Commission and the commissioner.

Within the Lands Department there is evidence of cronyism, political patronage and politicians who are telephoning the Land Administration Commissioner and saying, "I have a mate whose lease has just gone up. I want to see it go up to a lesser extent." That sort of thing is occurring. Incompetence or corruption in the form of the amount that is paid for the freeholding of land in this State exists.

I do not profess to be an expert on the Land Administration Commission. However, I do know that there are skeletons in the Lands Department's cupboard. I have spoken recently to two senior retirees from that department. The Lands Department has a lot to answer for. There are skeletons in its cupboard and the Labor Party will be looking for them.

A full inquiry is needed into the Lands Department to ascertain precisely what is going on. I believe that, if such an inquiry were to take place, the Fitzgerald inquiry would pale into insignificance because of the deals that are being done and the friends of certain people who are receiving benefits from the National Party. It is a long tale and it will take a long time to come out.

I give notice that the Labor Party will be looking very carefully and very closely at the Lands Department. The people of Queensland do not want to see 53 per cent of the State flogged off annually for \$1.2m.

**Mr FitzGerald:** What do you reckon it should be worth? How much would you put the rents up?

**Mr COMBEN:** I would put them up to whatever was the free market value.

Two blocks should not be put on the ballot block system when 2 000 people are interested in them. If a quid cannot be made out of it, something is wrong somewhere. There certainly is something wrong. Something smells in the Lands Department. Something smells to high heaven. Seventy per cent of this State was sold for \$7m, yet 2 000 young farmers are looking for two ballot blocks. The Lands Department knew that it could make a quid out of those blocks. There is no difference between those blocks and all the others in the State. More ballot blocks should have been asked for. The Opposition will be looking very carefully at the Lands Department.

**Mr McPHIE (Toowoomba North) (4.56 p.m.):** It was with absolute amazement that I listened to the honourable member for Windsor. What gall! It is colossal that yesterday he made allegations about the Line Hill development. Today the Minister answered those allegations most comprehensively by refuting the misinformation and allegations made by the honourable member. Yet the honourable member returns to this Chamber today and repeats his same misinformation and unsupported allegations.

He has not learned a thing. He has not listened to a single factual thing that the Minister said. He has his own private ideas locked in his funny little head, and every time he stands up and speaks they come out. He pours those ideas out. I am amazed at a man who can do that. Some of the things that the honourable member said about the commissioner, Mr Wally Baker, were absolutely libellous. If the honourable member was a man with any substance, any backbone or any moral standing, he would not come into the Chamber and hide behind the skirt of privilege to make his allegations. He should make them outside, because that is where he has to defend them. He should go out there and make them. He is not worth a crumpet if he is not prepared to go outside and make his allegations.

**Mr COMBEN:** I rise to a point of order. The allegations of incompetence or corruption were reported on the front page of the *Courier-Mail* last week. They were widely distributed. If anyone wants to take action, I will give him a copy of the press statement.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Booth):** Order! The honourable member for Toowoomba North.

**Mr McPHIE:** That is most interesting.

**Mr Ardill:** Apologise.

**Mr McPHIE:** I look forward to receiving copies of them, and then I shall apologise for the allegations, because as yet the honourable member has not honoured his part of the agreement. If he wants to make those allegations outside, he should back them up with his documentation. It is an embarrassment to this Chamber that a person should come in here and do that sort of thing. The honourable member speaks with great authority. I do not know what his history is. One year I saw him in central Australia. Another year I know that he was riding a horse around and getting lost in the forest near Maryborough. However, I really doubt whether he has had any experience in the country, because he does not understand many things. He should not be allowed to speak in this Chamber on such subjects, because he does not understand anything concerning the land.

**Mr COMBEN:** I rise to a point of order. I spent the first five years of my working life working on properties in western Queensland and western New South Wales.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The honourable member for Toowoomba North.

**Mr McPHIE:** Progress is being made. We have found out that the honourable member has worked on properties out west, just as many other honourable members have. Everything that he says leads us on this side of the Chamber to recognise readily that he does not understand anything concerning land administration. He never has. I cannot understand why he speaks on behalf of the Opposition.

I am more interested in practical comments that come from the Opposition. I refer to those made by the honourable member for Mourilyan, who spoke yesterday on this Bill. He made a contribution to which a reply is able to be made, without honourable members on this side having to sit back in amazement and wonder how on earth a man could speak like the previous speaker did.

**Mr Glasson:** He never referred to the Bill at one stage.

**Mr McPHIE:** That is right. That is absolutely true. He did not refer to the Bill at one stage. I doubt very much whether he even read the Bill or knows what it contains. He was like a parrot. He is turned on and, no matter which Bill is being debated, the same sort of rubbish comes from him.

Yesterday the member for Mourilyan made the point that although the four main changes contained in the Bill are relatively small, they are significant in that they affect a very wide area and a wide band of people who hold tenure on different land.

A point that the honourable member could have developed relates to the different types of tenure that are not the run-of-the-mill tenures or rules under which land is held. I refer to the lesser known and possibly the more unusual types of tenure. In order to understand the Bill, and to come to grips with what the Bill is all about, one must definitely understand the Land Act and the meaning of it as well as land administration.

I wonder about what the honourable member for Mourilyan had to say. Perhaps he was padding a bit, because I believe that he does understand the Land Act. He spoke about the King Ranch holding at Tully River and spoke about a large number of cattle being turned off that property. He raised the possibility of land in the Tully River area being put under banana cultivation, but that is not relevant to debate on the Bill. The matters raised by the honourable member are relevant to free enterprise. In this country, market forces dictate to a tremendous extent what a primary producer does with a block of land in the free enterprise system. The enterprise has to be cost effective.

**Mr Eaton:** The point I was making is how does one get a block of land? There are some opportunities that are not open to other people. King Ranch has done a great job, but a lot of other people could have done the same thing, given the same opportunities.

**Mr McPHIE:** Many other people under the same circumstances could, yes. I agree with that. I should also point out that other people who own properties in the Tully River area do not make any moves. If they had the courage to have a go and make a move towards change, they could also be successful. Some primary producers will sit on a block of land and will work in one mode only for their entire lives or for a couple of generations, whereas other people who are more enterprising—and they can be found anywhere in business—will move with market forces. It is really the cost-effective use of land that I am talking about.

**Mr Eaton:** There should be no freeholding. It should be all on lease so that the Government at least has control. The other person holds freehold title and he has it for a lifetime or longer.

**Mr McPHIE:** Yes. Freeholding is a different tenure. Those matters and the way that titles can be converted are all significant in the context of an overall understanding of the Land Act; but the Bill is relevant to different matters.

I must take the honourable member for Mourilyan to task about his reference to the Glen Idol blocks. His reference to Glen Idol was more pertinent when he was referring to land ballots. The honourable member indicated that more people should be provided with the opportunity to move onto the land. In certain areas and under certain circumstances, I could not agree more. There must be more opportunity for young people to go onto the land. Glen Idol, however, was not a good example. It is pretty hard, tough country and a heck of a lot of money is needed to be successful in that area.

Let me go back to examine the circumstances under which the land ballot operated. Although I was not around for it, my father witnessed the cutting-up of land into many blocks in the years between World War I and World War II. The blocks that were put up for ballot were far too small. There simply was not sufficient area to make a living from—full stop. I have spent a bit of time on the land and I have seen examples of block sizes out at Quilpie and at Chinchilla. When I was a farmer at Chinchilla, at least two blocks were needed to make a marginal living. How the poor coots got on 20 years ago when there was only one block, I have no idea.

**Mr Casey:** They were not too small when they were put up.

**Mr McPHIE:** They were. I assure the honourable member for Mackay that they really were. I think they were too small. I do not think that circumstances have changed that much.

**Mr Casey:** Productivity methods change all the time.

**Mr McPHIE:** The honourable member would condemn those people to a peasant existence. Sure, a family on a block the size of a postage stamp situated in a marginal rainfall area can survive. They may have a horse and a few “killers” and grow their own vegetables; but the kids will have the seat out of their pants, and if they are lucky, they will get to school.

In that context, the standard of living has been raised and it is recognised that a greater area is needed to survive. However, the Government does not want peasant farmers on the land. It is almost as though the honourable member is suggesting that a small block on Heathlands near his electorate would be appropriate. What would happen if Heathlands was cut up into 2 000-acre blocks? A 2 000-acre block on the Darling Downs would be beaut, but a person would starve on 2 000 acres on Heathlands; yet there is magnificent cattle country in that area.

**Mr Eaton:** But you do not get the opportunity. If you make a mess of it, you lose the opportunity. The Government must create that opportunity.

**Mr McPHIE:** The honourable member for Mourilyan and I could probably talk about this all day, but I do not believe that the land ballot aspect is relevant to the Bill. That is the point I am trying to make.

I turn now to examine the points relevant to the Bill because it was last year when the Minister first introduced it. People reading *Hansard* will have to go back a volume or two to pick up the Minister's introductory speech.

Let me look at what the Bill is all about, because the Minister made the point that honourable members have not been referring to the Bill in the debate. The Bill addresses four distinct aspects of the Land Act: an adjustment of boundaries of title of trust areas held in trust under freehold title; a relaxation of provisions preventing some lessees of special leases from electing to have the Land Court determine their reassessible rent; providing the option, in respect of cash sales of auction sales for an estate in fee simple, for a deposit to be paid at the time of the sale with the balance to be paid within the specified period—as is done commercially; and the leasing by trustees of grants in trust or of reserves for a purpose contrary to or inconsistent with the purpose for which the land was so granted or reserved in the first instance.

This Government must be congratulated on its record on the first aspect which relates to deeds of grant in trust. I specifically refer to what has been achieved by this Minister and the Minister for Northern Development, Community Services and Ethnic Affairs, Mr Katter, in the north with Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders. So far 29 deeds of grant in trust have been granted to the Aboriginal and Islander councils containing over 1 million hectares of land. Those people have the deeds. The same situation cannot be found in any of the other States or the Northern Territory. That was the point I made yesterday when I was going crook about the Federal Aboriginal Affairs report. These people did not have the title deeds to the land, but this Government has granted them those title deeds. That is a big step forward.

**Mr Braddy:** What is the difference between the Northern Territory and Queensland? I missed your point yesterday.

**Mr McPHIE:** That is called a red herring to side-track the debate. If the honourable member for Rockhampton does not know that, I am surprised that he has the ability to be a qualified solicitor and to sit in this House. If he is so ignorant he could find that out very easily. I am not going to waste time during this debate in discussing that matter.

The issuing of deeds of grant in trust involved the cancellation of some 84 reserves and the creation of over 370 new reserves containing the necessary infrastructure for the management of public facilities and utilities within the trust areas. That is the way in which Queensland should be heading, and it is a credit to this Minister and to Mr Katter and their respective departments that Queensland is moving in that direction. It is a great record and it is increasing, because, as the Minister pointed out, negotiations

are continuing and further deeds will be issued for Torres Strait where there are over 200 islands. The Government has agreed that these islands can be added to the existing 14 deeds in that area. That matter is being brought to fruition and that, if nothing else, will be the thing that will stop the Torres Strait Islanders seceding from this nation. Something is being done for them by their parent State that is not being done for them by the Federal Government.

**Mr Eaton:** But you would not give them a normal lease under any circumstances. The Aborigines and Islanders could not get a lease from the Government.

**Mr McPHIE:** The honourable member for Mourilyan knows why.

**Mr Eaton:** No. There would be no need for titles or deeds of grant in trust.

**Mr McPHIE:** No. The Government has the land tied up in deeds of grant in trust with the Aborigines and Islanders holding the title. The Government has had to build in a protection mechanism to stop them from flogging it off to anyone who comes along. There is a risk that some of them would do that, but the majority of them are interested in holding on to their land. Some of the people in those areas have a great deal of pride in the fact that they hold the land and know that it is theirs and can be handed down to future generations. They are not likely to flog it off, but some of them might, as the honourable member knows. Smart dealers might put pressure on some of them.

There is another problem with the deeds of grant in trust in remote areas and primitive areas and it relates to boundaries. With the use of modern technology, information has been upgraded and is far more accurate. This part of the legislation will ensure that that is tidied up.

**Mr Eaton:** It will be like a mining claim; you put in datum pegs and go from there.

**Mr McPHIE:** New technology has revolutionised the operations of the department and other areas of the Minister's responsibility such as the Department of Geographic Information and details about mining. The technology is better than sliced bread. When everything is in place and it gets under way, the administration of land titles will be significantly improved.

I do not want to unnecessarily take up the time of the House, but I should say that the Bill provides for a relaxation of provisions that have prevented some lessees of special leases from electing to have the Land Court determine their reassessable rent. Surely that is part of the ongoing simplification of the conditions of land-holding and is consistent with the recommendations of the Savage committee. That will help simplify the whole process and make it much easier for people on the land to process property dealings.

In 1985, provision was made for the annual rent of other tenures to be first determined by the Minister. The Bill proposes that special leases be treated in a manner similar to the way in which other leasehold tenures are treated. However, the \$200 embargo that applies before a person is allowed to elect to go to the court will remain in place. That is designed to prevent any humbug from minor matters.

I have already mentioned the normal commercial practice of putting a deposit on something at the time of sale. That gives both buyers and sellers a bit of flexibility and helps with the negotiation of the sale price. That has been a commercial practice for years and years. Why should it not be used in the sale of Crown land? The Bill provides for that practice so that the terms of sale can specify that a deposit is to be paid at the time of the sale, with the balance to be paid within a specified time, or the entire purchase price can be paid at the time of sale. As I say, why should not that flexibility be available? I am sure the Savage committee would agree with that.

The Bill also deals with the use of land for a purpose that is contrary to or inconsistent with the purpose for which the land was originally granted. That is to deal with cases where land is virtually lying idle. More than 50 types of usage have been listed. If land is lying idle, why should it not be used for a useful purpose? It is a sensible amendment.

These sorts of amendments can improve the functioning of the Lands Department in so many ways, eliminate a lot of the red tape and help get on with the job of utilising the land in this great State. This provision in the Bill will enable race clubs and show societies to lease out areas in various ways and increase the area of their leases. That will enable them to function in a stronger and better way and provide a service to the public. I am all in favour of those sorts of things. There are good examples of that in Toowoomba, where the show society and the race clubs are very powerful and are operating strongly.

I think what I have said so far winds it up. I have tried to deal strictly with the contents of the Bill. So far Opposition members who have taken part in the debate have not done that. I thought that it would not be a bad idea for me to give a bit of a recap of the provisions of the Bill. The changes contained in the Bill are excellent. These ongoing changes are evidence of the dynamic leadership provided by the commissioner, who is present today. I congratulate him whole-heartedly. If I could apologise for the things said by those on the other side of the House, I most certainly would, but they have to account for their own misdemeanours. I am sure that the things said must have embarrassed other Opposition members. I congratulate the Minister and whole-heartedly support the Bill.

**Hon. W. D. LICKISS (Moggill) (5.15 p.m.):** I say at the outset that I deplore that this place has been used for the purpose it has been used this afternoon by the honourable member for Windsor. In the 25 years of my experience in this place there have been very few occasions when I have seen an outburst against a person who has been unable to defend himself on the grounds that honourable members have witnessed today. I would think that in his calmer moments, when he is judged by his peers, the honourable member for Windsor will not show up very well at all. The Liberal Party would dissociate itself from an attack of that nature on a senior public servant.

In his second-reading speech, the Minister said—

“This is a short Bill, which further underlines the Government’s intention and determination to streamline the procedures necessary for the efficient and practical management of the activities of our public administration to meet the needs of our community.”

The Liberal Party supports the legislation. What the Bill purports to do, it has done, and has done quite well.

I wish to refer to the issue of deeds of grant in trust, particularly for the Aboriginal and Islander councils, and the great problem that would confront any Government alienating the tremendous areas of land that it has for this purpose. It is well known that, when land is finally granted in fee simple, whether by way of deed of grant in trust or deed of grant, it has been customary to have that land surveyed and metes and bounds established before the title or deed issues. If one examines the tremendous amount of land that is being alienated in a short time and then examines the type of expense and time that would be required to survey that land appropriately for the issue of deeds of grant, as hitherto was the case, so that subsequent land dealings could take place, it would have been a tremendous task to undertake.

The Government is to be congratulated on the means by which it has utilised the technological advances of the Department of Mapping and Surveying to be able to produce titles for “about” areas but with boundaries that could be instated, if so required, on the ground. That is only possible now because of the technological advances in surveying and mapping in our time. Years ago, to fix a position unrelated to a known survey position or trigonometrical station, it would have required an expert surveyor to take an astrofix, and that fix would be only to a certain degree of accuracy. It would have been very difficult to be able to utilise astrofixes by competent surveyors with accurate time-checks to do the work that is required here. That would give a geographical position from which, by calculation, one could determine and run the metes and bounds necessary for the title to be prepared.

The Department of Mapping and Surveying, with the modern techniques now available to it can now fix positions very accurately. It is able to produce at reasonable expense the necessary descriptions which will enable those grants to issue and if necessary to accurately locate and mark the boundaries.

One point that has cropped up is that in general terms the deeds of grant delineating external boundaries are able to be produced, but then the general land handlings which need to take place within the areas of the deeds of trust—that is, if some of the area which I believe was prescribed within the deeds of grant which might be required for public purposes and needs to be surveyed off and surrendered for that purpose—can be likewise dealt with. I believe that this is one of the provisions that will enable that action to take place with a minimum of expense and without a great deal of loss of time.

I think that the Lands Department is to be congratulated for determining, through the Department of Mapping and Surveying in conjunction with its own Land Administration Commission, a method to enable this to take place. I believe that the crux of the Bill is to facilitate land handling.

The other three points seem to the Liberal Party to be reasonable and I believe should be adopted. Therefore, without any further ado—I do not wish to delay proceedings—I state that the Liberal Party approves of the Bill and supports it. I believe that it is a step in the right direction and that it will facilitate land handling matters when it comes to deeds of grant in trust as far as the Aboriginal and Islander affairs councils are concerned.

**Mr STONEMAN (Burdekin) (5.22 p.m.):** I have much pleasure in supporting the Bill, which will amend the Land Act 1962-1987. However, like the previous speaker, I must dissociate myself from the unbelievable statements that have been made this afternoon in this Chamber.

The slur on Mr Wally Baker was of the lowest order of gutter politics that I believe it has ever been anyone's misfortune to hear. I am ashamed that members on both sides of the House are in the unenviable position of having to listen to such a despicable display of what can only be called slimy accusations under the protection of parliamentary privilege. The member concerned should either produce the hard facts to back up his scurrilous accusations or do the decent thing and apologise to Mr Baker forthwith.

The member for Windsor has brought into sharp focus the need to review the provisions of Standing Orders that provide privilege for such statements. He has made a mockery of the status of Parliament; he has discredited the decent people whom he represents; he has stripped away from the Labor Party the much-sought-after veneer of respectability that its new leader seeks; and he has exposed the hypocrisy of statements made earlier in this Chamber by his leader in respect of the ALP's interest in maintaining decency in this State. As I said, I am ashamed and saddened that this House has been used for such a scurrilous attack.

In some of the moments of the flight of fancy through reality that the member for Windsor engaged in, he mentioned that the Land Administration Commission, and by inference this Government, is only interested in land-clearing. That is, of course, patently ridiculous. The Land Administration Commission and this Government—in fact, Governments over the years, including Labor Governments before I was in Queensland—have always been interested in the orderly development of this State. That is what the Land Administration Commission is all about. That is the very big job that it seeks to do.

On a number of occasions I have mentioned that the continuing settlement of this State is something of which all Queenslanders can be proud. As Queensland unfortunately cannot be made larger, the stage is being reached at which land usage has to be much more concise. However, regardless of what the Government does, the land usage of many large areas of land in this State cannot be made more concise. I refer particularly to some of those areas in the gulf and the peninsula that undoubtedly could be improved, but improving in many instances is just not viable or practicable.

The member for Windsor mentioned the low return that this State receives from rental. I suggest that in some cases it is found to be too high and, thankfully, this

administration has recognised that. On occasion, the Government has to take into account the severity of droughts and the situation in which graziers, farmers, some of whom are pensioners, and other people who lease land find themselves. Reductions have to be made either in the short term or over quite a lengthy period; yet the Labor Party, through Mr Comben, who I would hope is its spokesman only momentarily, seems to be saying that it wants to increase rentals. I find that unbelievable.

Rentals need to increase to keep pace with the value of the dollar, the value of land and so on. The spokesman for the ALP demanded that the Minister increase rentals. I take it that he was referring to not only the pastoral areas of this State but also the many thousands of holdings along the coastline that are rented by pensioners, young couples and others in all sorts of circumstances. Mr Comben had the gall to say, "The Queensland Government should increase those rentals."

**Mr FitzGerald:** It could be up to a factor of 10 or something like that.

**Mr STONEMAN:** Exactly. One would not know.

On the other hand, the Opposition's shadow Minister for Land Management, Mr Eaton, wanted to give all the land away. Frankly, I cannot work out exactly where the Labor Party is going.

**Mr Eaton:** Divide it up.

**Mr STONEMAN:** As the honourable member said, divide it up, and the Labor Party would make tennis courts of it. I had an old neighbour, whom I have quoted before in this House, who said that, if a tennis court was put up for ballot as a grazing block, 1 000 people would enter it. That is the fact of the matter in many instances.

Many people want to go onto the land, but unfortunately they have no real understanding of what it is all about. As I said, in some instances I am concerned about increasing rents. We need to be mindful to maintain accessibility to the land for the whole community, particularly in the administration of the land rental system in this State. We must be careful to maintain a balance so that all members of society, regardless of their capacity to pay, are able to aspire to take up land, use it and, where possible, convert it to a more secure tenure.

The honourable member for Mourilyan said that the Government was not considering the working man. It is interesting to note that in early 1983, while I was campaigning for election to Parliament, a large number of people came to me and said that they were worried that by some fluke the Labor Party might be elected to power. People were seeking to freehold their properties. They said, "If this mob gets in, watch out." That statement was made by working men who understand that security of tenure is vital. People want to know that they can take up a permit to occupy a special lease, an occupational lease or some other type of lease and then have the capacity one day to convert that land or some other land to a tenure that secures the sweat, blood and tears that they put into the property and the assets that have been built on it. A range of tenures allows that to happen. In some cases it cannot happen and does not happen.

The Queensland Government, through the Land Administration Commission, is maintaining that balance and should be commended for that. People are terrified that under a Labor administration they would not be able to work their way gradually into secure tenure. Thank goodness that that threat is receding. I was going to say that the threat recedes daily. In fact, following the outbursts such as those made by the member for Windsor this afternoon, that threat is receding hourly. I hope that our friends from the press are alert enough to expose those outbursts.

The workers have been forgotten. Contrary to what Mr Eaton suggested, the Queensland Government is considering the workers; they have been forgotten by the ALP. What about the workers in his electorate who are being put out of work? What will the people around Herberton and Ravenshoe do? They have no tenure. The same situation applies on the land. The jobs on the land have gone and the property-owners' land will be worthless.

On a slightly different note, I thank the Minister and his senior officers, particularly Mr Jim Donohue and Mr Warren Williams, who recently made a two-day visit to my electorate. Many issues were addressed, particularly in relation to small blocks in developing coastal beach settlements.

A great deal of concern has been expressed about some of those developments. Some of them commenced with semi-squatting, progressed to permits to occupy, and now—in common with so many pastoral areas of this State—are working towards more permanent and identifiable tenure. I suppose one could say that pioneering is occurring along the coast and in many other parts of the State. It is almost like the settlement of Queensland. In some of those small areas people cannot afford to buy blocks of land in the traditional sense. As a result, they hack away through the scrub, they find a bit of land and then they obtain a permit to occupy that land. Eventually, some more orderly development is required. Surveying takes place and there is a gradual securing of the efforts that those people have put into the land together with a recognition by the Government of those efforts.

I thank the Minister and his department for recognising that fact and for visiting that area, sitting down with the people, attending meetings without reservation or qualification, discussing people's problems and acknowledging those problems with appreciation and sensitivity in the interests of those people and good land management in this State.

**Mr Scott:** Some of those alternative life-style people?

**Mr STONEMAN:** The life-style of those people has nothing to do with this matter.

I am absolutely positive that at no stage do the Minister and his officers say to people, "What are you? What is your life-style?" They consider each individual case, the way in which those people have applied themselves, the way in which they have invested in the land and have improved it. They do not say, "Are you an alternative life-style person?"—whatever the honourable member might mean by that term. They do not ask, "Are you an ALP voter?" Because of the Labor Party's attitude to land tenure in this State, the Minister and his officers will be ensuring more and more that those people are not ALP voters.

The first area that I wish to mention is situated in the Thuringowa city area in the township of Cungulla. That area has recently been developed by the Land Administration Commission, which has spent a couple of million dollars on opening up blocks of land so that people who live close to the city of Townsville, and who would otherwise not be able to obtain seaside land, have an opportunity to purchase at a reasonable price good blocks of land in a holiday area.

The very same situation applies at Wunjunga near Beachmount Beach in my electorate. The Minister will recall a most interesting meeting that we had there. A particular problem exists in that area because, in the past, people have tended to take up blocks, obtain permits to occupy and then have expected more secure tenures in areas where that is just not possible.

The Minister will be interested to learn that the recent cyclone did not wipe out any of the homes in that area, which I inspected from the air. I was told that the tide came up to those houses, but not one sheet of iron was dislodged.

**Mr Glasson:** They might have had a very good foundation.

**Mr STONEMAN:** I believe that they have very good foundations.

Unfortunately and sadly, it appeared that quite a lot of the trees in front of a beautiful home of which the Minister took particular notice were damaged.

Many people have put a great deal of work into their blocks. The Minister and his officers recognised their efforts and the need to maintain those blocks of land. Those people cannot go beyond the permits that they have at the moment. They cannot go

beyond the level of improvement that they have at the moment. Quite contrary to Mr Eaton's statement—"What about the working man?"—the Minister and his department said, "Yes, we see your problem. We recognise that you have limited means. We are prepared to stay with you at your present level." Again I thank the Minister, his department and his officers very much for that attitude.

We also took the opportunity to visit Cape Upstart, which is an interesting area. Many other coastal areas are probably similar to it. Such areas have a beach in close proximity, behind which are a thin strip of land and a national park. The people at Cape Upstart have a particular problem, but I think they were very happy that the Minister and his officers were able to allay the fears that they held.

Land development and land management will always be sensitive issues. They have to be approached on a practical basis. The Government and the Land Administration Commission of this State are doing that. I am not suggesting for a moment—nor would I like to be quoted as suggesting—that Queensland has a perfect system of land management. That is why from time to time the Act is amended. It needs to be fine-tuned. The Act will continue to require fine-tuning. Our land management techniques will continue to require improving. I look forward to continuing to be a part of a Government that fine-tunes that operation in a manner that has led to the great development of this State, particularly in the last 25 years.

One of the problems associated with land development is that a query is always raised about the viability of the person who is going onto the land. That is a matter that Opposition members do not seem to understand. It is not merely a matter of throwing out land and allowing someone to go onto it. In many cases, those people have to be protected from themselves. That is being done with sensitivity and appreciation.

A matter about which I will speak further in the future is the development of the Lower Burdekin irrigation area. For the moment, I will conclude my remarks by repeating that I support the Minister and his officers. I believe that the amendments contained in the Bill are not only necessary but also very valid. I have much pleasure in supporting the Bill.

**Mr SCOTT (Cook) (5.38 p.m.):** I am pleased to be able to participate in this debate. I have in my notes that the Bill is an interesting little portfolio of changes to the Land Act. It might be said that every now and then those changes dribble into this Chamber. One wonders when the Land Act will settle down. The Act is a fairly thick document now. It has some extremely interesting parts tucked away in it. In fact, the Government's land rights policy is tucked away in its hallowed pages.

It is of interest to me that the Minister and his staff actually administer Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander land rights in this State. When the time is proper to examine the role of the Government in relation to Aboriginal and Islander affairs, representations have to be made through the Land Management Minister. With due regard to Mr Glasson, who takes his job very seriously, it is unfortunate that he knows nothing about Aboriginal affairs.

Frequently in this Chamber I have commented on the fact that the architect of Aboriginal land rights in Queensland is the staff of the Lands Department. My mind goes back to the time when a very potent person was in charge of Aboriginal affairs in Queensland, one P. J. Killoran. At the time I was extremely relieved—

**Mr FitzGerald:** Not again.

**Mr SCOTT:** I just happened to dredge from my memory that wonderful name. My mind goes back to the time when I first learned, very indirectly, that he actually was to have nothing to do with the Government's land rights legislation. I said, "Thank goodness for that."

It was very perceptive of the Lands Department staff of the day—and I think Mr Baker has to be given credit for guiding the Government through a very difficult matter—to produce a land rights policy that was not a land rights policy. When the substance

of the policy is read, it will be seen that there are points—and I will say this quite openly—in the Government's favour in regard to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander land rights. I believe that thanks are due to Wally Baker and the other members of his staff in the department for that. I have to say that it is very cunningly placed.

**Mr Glasson** interjected.

**Mr SCOTT:** Mr Glasson should not smile too readily, because he cannot get away from the point that he claimed publicly that Queensland does not have a land rights policy. The Queensland Government publicly denigrates the Federal Government for pandering to Aboriginal people by wanting a land rights policy and trying to implement it, yet that is what has been done in Queensland. However, many things are still wrong with it, and I will make comments about that during my speech.

I will now return to my remark that the Bill is an interesting little portfolio of changes. The first part of the Bill to which I refer relates to the method by which a change in lease rentals can be achieved. The Opposition spokesman, the honourable member for Mourilyan, has dealt with that matter adequately. I will not plough the same ground again. If I could sum up Mr Eaton's comments, I would say that members of the Opposition have mixed feelings about the whole aspect of administration of lease rentals and the size of blocks of land. All those matters have been commented on during the debate this evening. The Opposition makes no argument about minor changes in the way the rents will be determined—ministerial discretion versus the role of the Land Court, one might say. I believe that the Government will go its own way in respect to the way rents will be determined. The Opposition will not attempt to change that.

I take up the matter of lease charges in general in the way that it applies to the electorate of Cook. I have raised with the Minister a matter concerning a lessee of a relatively modest living area of land on Horn Island who suddenly found that his lease charges had increased by 1 000 per cent. When he received his "Dear John" letter from the department, he discovered that the lease charges had increased tenfold. When I made inquiries, I was told that the Government had a wonderful policy of making it easy for people to develop land in the early years of lesseeship by keeping the charges low. Out of the blue, when someone determines that that period has passed, these nice little people whose virtues were extolled by the honourable member for Burdekin—he even denied that any of them had particular life-styles of which the Government might be critical—had their charges increased tenfold. I see that the honourable member has not quite left the Chamber. If he were Minister for Lands, I wonder what he would say about a tenfold increase. The increase is hitting these people right between the eyes, unfortunately. The Labor Party is going in to bat for these small people over that type of issue.

Another problem relates to the times of inspection in my electorate. I must say that I enjoy a good relationship with officers of the Lands Department. I try to watch their activities very closely because I believe it is my responsibility to do so as a responsible member of this House. I am able to talk over problems with senior officers of the department and come to some sort of a solution. The answer is not always what I have suggested, but from the way I view the operations of the department it seems to me that those decisions are made quite fairly. Unfortunately, I have no insight into the bigger land dealings.

A lot of rumours and stories circulate that suggest that, in the State of Queensland, some people get a better deal than others. I find it very nice to sit down with senior officers and talk out the problems being experienced by people who live in my electorate. That goes for the Lands Commissioner in Cairns as well. I can make an appointment to see Mr Anders and be told pretty well what a situation is. I am not told anything that I should not be told. I am told about provisions that apply in regard to land assessment and matters that I may not have been aware of. It is nice for me, as a member of Parliament, to have access to that information. I repeat: the information does not concern the private business of people. I believe that staff of the department

know where to draw the line in that regard. It is nice, however, to be able to give constituents the correct information.

I have raised this matter many times in the House previously. I urge the Minister to allow his staff to make more frequent visits to remote areas, particularly the peninsula. The people who live there tell me that departmental officers can visit the area only once a year. I have said many times previously in the House that if a person makes an application in the first month after the visit by the departmental officers, he must then wait at least 11 months before the land can be inspected.

It seems that no transactions can take place without inspections. In some ways, I find that a little hard to understand because the department has experienced officers who have files with all sorts of information in them. I do not think that it is necessary in every case to have an officer stand on the land to look at it. However, in many cases it is necessary to examine the potential of the land and try to arrive at a fair value for rental or freeholding.

One of my constituents was most upset. He got onto me about trying to arrange an interview with the Minister. He asked me how often the Minister went up to north Queensland and I said that the Minister came up "now and then". The next day, I saw a report in a newspaper about the Minister having opened a facility for Aboriginal people in Mareeba. My constituent was tearing out his hair and saying, "If I had known Mr Glasson was going to be in the area, I would have arranged through you to have had some discussions with him." I am sure that I can obtain an undertaking from the Minister that he will go up to north Queensland at some appropriate time and talk to that constituent.

I must comment on the Line Hill matter. Again, it is rather interesting to note the way in which the honourable member for Burdekin skated round that issue. I was going to hold up a segment that appeared in the *Courier-Mail* today.

**Mr Glasson:** Your name was on the guest list to be at that opening.

**Mr SCOTT:** I have to apologise.

**Mr Glasson:** You knew I was going.

**Mr SCOTT:** No, I did not know. I was told that the honourable member for Tablelands found the Minister wandering around his electorate and said, "Bill, come and open this." That is what I was told.

**Mr Glasson:** Go on! The invitation was headed that it was to be opened by me.

**Mr SCOTT:** I understand that the Minister opened it very well and enjoyed the cup of tea afterwards as well. I know Mrs Collis very well and I would have been there. A petition was taken up to prevent that facility being established on Koah Road and the way the petition was taken around caused a great deal of heart-burning. I would have been happy for it to have been on Koah Road and I am happy that it is at Emerald Creek.

Getting back to Line Hill—one wonders how such values can be applied to land. If an entrepreneur can see \$14m worth of value in that rainforest area, he can put his money there and build. However, I do not think it will happen and it is pie in the sky. How can people freehold such areas so cheaply and then turn around and sell them? I am sure that action does not conform with the National Party's agrarian socialist policy that so many of its members frequently wave around in this House.

The comment I wish to make is not totally pertinent to this Minister's portfolio, but I will use this opportunity to say that if there is any likelihood of that kind of development going ahead, a proper agreement should be reached with the Aboriginal people of the Lockhart River community. I understand that the people have given some form of approval, but I do not believe that they have been provided with enough information for them to know exactly what they are approving. I intend to send them

the cutting from the *Courier-Mail* and I am sure they will be shocked when they learn the news that a city is to be established on their doorstep. That is what the cutting states and I put my faith in the journalists of the *Courier-Mail*. I know that they would not draw a longbow and lead the people of Queensland astray. I will be asking the people of Lockhart River whether that is exactly what they agreed to when they signed some form of agreement.

The previous owner of Line Hill was a well-known National Party supporter and his name was mentioned in the Minister's ministerial statement. He is Mr Huybers. Some of the National Party's former colleagues frequently went to Line Hill to do a little socialising and National Party organising. Ken Tomkins once used to visit that area. Mr Killoran would tear his hair out, because he would be attempting to discuss serious matters with the Aboriginal people and the Minister of the day, Mr Tomkins, and he would suddenly find that Ken had a yen to have a talk with Mr Huybers out at Line Hill. I am not sure what they discussed. They might have discussed donations to the National Party, which would have been quite legitimate, although I do not believe he should have done it in ministerial time and he certainly should not have done it when he should have been attending to Aboriginal affairs.

Mr Glasson interjected.

Mr SCOTT: Do not worry. I am lifting myself up. That sort of thing happened and the Minister cannot deny it.

Weipa is a good example of a very prosperous town. It is a mining community based on the employment provided by the mine. One only has to travel a few kilometres to the south to find the town of Weipa South, which is not as prosperous and where conditions are not as good or as nice. The company, Comalco, has lifted its game considerably in recent years. It has an extremely good relationship with the Weipa South Aboriginal community, and it is determined to keep it that way. The Weipa Aboriginal society has been in existence for some time and provides valuable assistance for the Aboriginal community, such as job training. I would like to see that type of an arrangement between this mystical development at Line Hill station and the Aborigines of the Lockhart River area.

Adjustments to trust areas are also involved in this mishmash of amendments under debate. I would like to know whether that matter has been agreed to amongst the Aboriginal people, because I do not believe that it has. It might have token ACC support. I understand that people have examined the legal implications involved. It does compromise the arrangement that was forced on to the Government, whereby any alterations to trust boundaries could only come about as a result of a decision in this House. These amendments are edging towards changing that agreement or arrangement with the Aboriginal people. I know that they will not be happy to have a road in that area imposed on them and to swap it for another piece of land which the Government tells them has a higher value. They will not have the necessary information at their fingertips to enable them to evaluate the qualities of that land and find out whether they will get a good deal or not. When a swap is to be arranged, I do not believe that they will understand because they will not have the information at their fingertips.

When will the Torres Strait Islanders receive title to what are loosely called the uninhabited islands? That was a firm promise of the Government. I am waiting—not with bated breath—to see those deeds issued. I heard a Government member take great pride in standing in the House and speaking about the issue of 29 deeds of grant, or something like that. What about those for the remaining Torres Strait islands?

I shall take a little time of the House to speak about those islands. One ought to note that a National Party candidate in that area led the charge for independence. I was amazed to learn that not one Government Minister dissociated himself from that man. The Premier received a delegation of eight members of the working party. In fact, I imagine that the Government paid their fares to come down here to talk about independence. That shows how loyal that National Party candidate is to Australia. If he

is given an inch, he will take a mile. He was given a little bit of credibility as a National Party candidate and then wanted to take half of the electorate away and give it to New Guinea or make it an independent south-east Pacific nation. That is just not on. Someone from the Government should tell him that.

Of course, the Minister for Community Services, Mr Katter, panders to those people. He talks constantly about the deputy chairman of the Island Co-ordinating Council and tries to give him great credibility; but, in talking about secession, the deputy chairman has been totally disloyal to Australia. Mr Katter must be prominent in the ranks of those Ministers who just have not been prepared to tell that person, the working party and the very few Torres Strait Islanders who have taken that line, just where they stand.

As the debate is about such areas, I shall take some of my time to make a comparison between Aboriginal communities and Torres Strait Islander communities. If it suits a very few Torres Strait Islanders to be disloyal to Australia and talk about secession and independence, no doubt there would be a very strong case for numerous Aboriginal communities to take the same line and say, "We want to form a black nation in Australia. We will let Queensland and Australia go by the way and form our own little black nation." I am very pleased to report to the House that no leaders of Aboriginal communities have stood up and said that they want to take their people along the road to independence.

It is quite valid to make that comparison. The same problems are encountered in all those communities. Problems of personal pride, social pride, social feeling and community pride are prominent and are caused basically by a lack of work and lack of productivity. That is the area in which the Government is open to the very strongest criticism, because it has done nothing in that regard. How can people have pride in their lives and in their young ones coming on and how can they take an interest in the education of their young people if in the future there will be nowhere for them to apply that education? That is what is lacking in the communities, although other specific things are also lacking in almost all those communities. The problems of health, education and the administration of their own communities without sufficient information and without sufficient training still exist.

I will further my comparison between Aboriginal communities and the Torres Strait Islander communities. The only employment possibilities for Aborigines is cattle work. All the big cattle stations surrounding the Aboriginal communities are owned by—I will use a racist statement—white private enterprise. There is no way in the world that the owners of those properties will sit back and allow a group of people to nationalise their holdings and say, "The Aboriginal people will have these properties." The Aboriginal people themselves have never said that. Where they can, they find work out there. They are not given the same work opportunities as they were years ago but, by and large, they are happy to co-operate with the owners of those stations who are providing work and training.

The record of the Government in the management of cattle properties by Aborigines is abysmal. Because in some ways that is part of the Minister's portfolio, he might know something about what is happening on those trust lands. The management has been a total failure. The properties have had competent staff but they have never been given the proper directives from the Minister or from the likes of Pat Killoran. The department's attempts to further the cattle industry have been a failure.

A similar comparison can be drawn with the fishing industry in the Torres Strait. There has been talk about the failed National Party candidate implying that some independent State up there, of which he would be the Governor, would nationalise the fishing industry. When I talk about that round the wharves in Cairns to the people who are licensed to fish up there for prawns and other products, they are shocked and horrified to think that a National Party candidate would talk about nationalising their fishing boats and say that the fishing industry will belong to the black people of the Torres Strait.

I set the record straight by stating that the ordinary people of the Torres Strait do not want any part of that sort of talk. They certainly do not want any part of independence. They are happy to be loyal Australians and loyal Queenslanders. They would be much more so if the Government would look after them a little better. That is the comparison that I draw.

When some of the previous Ministers wanted to get away from things at Lockhart River, they would go to Line Hill. In those days, when in the Torres Strait, they went on the Melbidir. They went to the cabin marked "Director" and sailed round the Torres Strait until a couple of them were sacked.

I make those statements—I do not make them lightly—because they demonstrate a dreadful lack of ability on the part of some of the Ministers' colleagues and a dreadful lack of strength on the part of the Government to really take up these things and achieve some results. That is what used to happen up there.

Mr Katter is trying to force those people into some form of private enterprise for which at present they are not fitted. He is holding up these great goals of endless amounts of money being able to be made if only the people will to into private enterprise. That is not the way that they want to go. I heard him stand at Seisia, at the very tip of Cape York, and criticise his own departmental officers because they were not forcing the Torres Strait Islanders of that little community of Seisia to go into private enterprise. I know that the reference was to all the other Aboriginal and Islander communities and all the executive officers on those communities. Mr Katter is critical of those officers because they are not saying to the Aboriginals and Islanders, "You must buy your houses. We have given you the chance to lease in perpetuity something less than a hectare of land with a little house standing on it which, unfortunately, we have never been able to maintain for you, but we want you to buy it." The Government wants them to have it as part of the great free-enterprise thrust that it is forcing on people who do not want any part of it. Who will pay for the maintenance of those houses? I am speaking of people who are on a minimum income. I have just demonstrated to the House that their children have no chance of gaining employment that will enable them to make a reasonable income. They are people for whom the Government is doing very little except trying to force them into private enterprise.

The Government has said that under its great land-rights policy it has given them the land, which is an asset that they can now realise and they can become capitalists and have pots of money and be well off from now on. The Government is leading the people astray. It is despicable for it to go on in that vein. Fortunately, most of the people in the area can see around the bill of goods that Mr Katter is putting forward. It is an extremely bad bill of goods. He is attempting to enlist the aid of the failed National Party candidate, the deputy chairman of the Island Co-ordinating Council in the Torres Strait. There is no doubt that he will be returned to that position. I do not doubt that on Yam Island the books will be cooked and that he will be returned as chairman. This time he might even be the chairman of the Island Co-ordinating Council and have a permanent secretary who is paid for by the tax-payers of this State and nation. He will be rigging up these little things and not be doing the things that the ordinary Torres Strait Islander people want.

On numerous occasions in this House I have said plainly just what is needed up there.

Sitting suspended from 6 to 7.30 p.m.

**Mr SCOTT:** Prior to the dinner recess I was speaking about the needs of both Aboriginal and Islander communities—

**Mr Austin:** I thought you had finished.

**Mr SCOTT:** I was highlighting the fact that Aboriginal people are in dire need as the result of neglect by this Government. In spite of the fact that Mr Austin does not

like me to say these things and is trying to make me sit down, I feel that it is my duty to keep saying them.

One of the Minister's colleagues tried to make some invidious comparisons today. I refer to the Honourable Mr Katter, the Minister for Community Services. He tried to use a Dorothy Dix question to imply—I do not think that he even implied; he made some quite fantastic claims—that what the State Government is doing in the Torres Strait area is so much better than what the Federal Government is doing. The Minister tried to tell honourable members that he was up there when it was pouring rain and that an electrical system that was supplied by the State Government was working whereas a water supply system that was supplied by the Federal Government was not working. That is totally untrue. The Minister for Community Services was doing what he does so often in this Chamber. I do not say that he actually stands up and tells untruths. However, he has a terrible way with words and simply misleads the House. The Minister talks round and round and round in circles. When one cuts through to the kernel, one finds that it is actually not true. He believes that he is telling the truth—

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Booth):** Order! I cannot allow the honourable member for Cook to continue in that vein, because Standing Order No. 120 states that imputations and personal reflections are not allowed. For that reason I suggest that the honourable member return to the Bill.

**Mr SCOTT:** I thank you for your guidance, Mr Deputy Speaker—

**Mr Davis:** He talks with forked tongue.

**Mr SCOTT:** Does he talk with forked tongue? I do not want to make any imputations about the Minister, Mr Katter. The way in which the man carries on is well-known in the electorate. If those people think that the Minister misleads people, that is their opinion. If the House thinks differently, let the Minister continue in that vein.

The Minister told the House that the electricity supply was superior to the water supply, which was totally unfounded. I must make that point, because it has not rained up there to fill the reservoir that was very kindly provided by the Federal Government. The electricity supply that the Minister has imposed on the people up there is nothing like the electricity supply of which he can avail himself. I made inquiries up there. I have to say that Mr Katter was kind enough to offer me a lift up there in the Government plane. I availed myself of that concession. I am quite pleased to inform the House—

**An Opposition member:** Have you got a bill for it?

**Mr SCOTT:** No, I have not received a bill for it, and I do not think I will. It was in my electorate and I was pleased to go there.

I found out that the good people of Coconut Island are able to use one 10-amp circuit in their houses. Mr Katter, if he wants to, can use 10 10-amp circuits or any multitude between one and 10 of 10-amp circuits in his house in Charters Towers. He can plug in any number of appliances in his house in Charters Towers. He can have all the electricity that he feels he can pay for. It is available to him. The poor people of Coconut Island, as I have told this House before, have a Mickey Mouse electricity supply, and the Minister tries to tell this House that it is far better than the water supply. Apart from the fact that the two things are not quite comparable, the service that is being provided by the Federal Government is far superior to the service that is being provided by his department. I stand by what I say.

I also say that the deed of grant in trust is not good enough—

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! What the honourable member is saying may be interesting and the honourable member may think that he is replying to something that has been said previously in this House. However, that has very little, if anything, to do with the Bill. If the honourable member's comments have anything to do with the Bill, I would like him to tell me how. If so, I will allow them. However, at this stage I think that the honourable member should return to the Bill.

**Mr SCOTT:** I thank you again, Mr Deputy Speaker.

The deed of grant in trust is the subject of the legislation being debated this evening. It is simply a fact that the Government of this State is changing the Land Act. I do not want to quote clauses——

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! I will agree with the honourable member that the deed of grant in trust relates to the Bill, but I do not agree with him that the electricity supply up there does.

**Mr SCOTT:** The electricity supply is erected on the trust land. The point that I am making——

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! I think that that is drawing the longbow. I will allow the honourable member to talk about the trusts.

**Mr SCOTT:** Far be it from me to argue with the Chair. I would be the last member of this Parliament to argue with the Chair. However, I do make the point that the Government is trying to fob off the people who live in this trust area with a substandard electricity supply. My argument is that giving those people a deed of grant in trust does not make up for the deprivations in their life-style that the Government is not relieving. That is the point that I want to make. In addition to that, with the deed of grant in trust the Government has a tiger by the tail and does not know where to go next.

Mr Katter tries to tell the good people of the Torres Strait and the Aboriginal communities on the one hand that they have received a great benefit with the deed of grant in trust, but on the other hand he tells them, "I am sorry, you cannot use it to gain credit from the banks because it does not represent collateral." I ask the Minister to inform the House of the Government's next step with the deed of grant in trust and to state the way in which the problem of being unable to use the land as collateral to raise money from banks will be solved.

The capitalist-supporting members on the opposite side of the Chamber know exactly what I am talking about. They know that they can go to their banks, mortgage their land and obtain endless buckets full of money, if they want to go that far; but the people in the Torres Strait and in the Aboriginal communities cannot do that. I would like to know what the Government intends to do about that problem. I do not believe that the Government knows what it is going to do about it or that it can solve that dilemma. Government members stand in this Chamber and tell everyone how good they are and how terrible the Federal Government is. I would like to hear an answer to my question.

I referred to the working party that was paid by the Government to come down to Brisbane to talk to the Premier. I have asked the Queensland Government not to take any notice of those so-called spokesmen who have called for independence, because they do not represent the ordinary people from the Torres Strait and Aboriginal communities. The ordinary people want something better than a deed of grant in trust; they want an improvement in their life-style. However, the Opposition does not know what the Premier told the members of that working party. He has not seen fit to inform this House about that. I ask the Premier of Queensland to tell the people of this State about the matters on which he spoke to the members of the working party. Did he speak to them about deeds of grant in trust? Did he tell them that he would resolve the problem of how they could obtain credit from banks through the deeds of grant in trust? I do not believe that he did that.

The Premier is going to the Torres Strait. I hope that he visits and looks at the trust lands so that he can see the problem at first hand. When he is in the Torres Strait, I hope that he looks at the life-style of the people in the area and that he comes up with some solutions to the problems. I hope that the Premier will be able to tell the people how their children will be able to obtain jobs, what must be their goal in life and how they can improve their life-style. Is the Government going to help them do that? Will it go beyond providing the sop of a deed of grant in trust? I hope that the

Premier talks also to a group that is known as the Port Kennedy people, who live on Thursday Island, which is in the centre of that area, and tells them what he will do for them on what I might term mainland Thursday Island. The people on Thursday Island do not have some of the benefits that have been extended to the people on the outer islands, such as deeds of grant in trust. The people of Thursday Island are worried about their life-style.

**Mr Glasson:** If the deed of grant in trust is not the answer, what is the answer?

**Mr SCOTT:** I am really flattered that the Minister has seen fit to ask me that question. If I had more time, I could tell him. I do not think that those people really want to deal in land.

Time expired.

**Mr BRADDY (Rockhampton) (7.39 p.m.):** I rise to join in this debate in my capacity as shadow Minister for Community Services. As the member for Cook, Mr Scott, pointed out very ably, the situation in relation to Aboriginal and Islander land in this State is a matter of great interest, importance and relevance for the Minister for Land Management.

Tonight, I draw the attention of the Parliament and the people of Queensland, and particularly the Minister, to aspects of certain anomalies and problems that still arise with land. The honourable member for Cook canvassed very well the issues relating to land on which communities of Aboriginal and Islander people live.

I draw attention to lands that are commonly known as country reserves. They are lands which are reserves set aside for Aboriginal purposes throughout the State but which are not presently occupied by Aboriginal communities. There are two such reserves in Charters Towers, for example. Other reserves are in Cunnamulla and Mount Isa. I deal particularly with the land in Mount Isa that is known as the Yallambee reserve. Families live on that reserve in Mount Isa. An organisation of Aboriginal people has been trying for some considerable time to have a deed of grant in trust issued to them in order to obtain land rights, as they understand it in the Queensland context. Although the Queensland Government refuses to admit that there are such things as Aboriginal land rights in Queensland, there really are, because to the Aboriginal communities that is what the deed of grant in trust legislation really is.

A schizoid condition exists in that two Ministers are responsible for Aboriginal land rights. The Minister for Land Management is responsible for this legislation and land tenure. The Minister for Community Services is responsible for the administration of the reserves and for relationships with the Aboriginal communities who live on those reserves. The time is long overdue for the Minister for Land Management to take a more active role in land tenures. He should confer with his compatriot and colleague the Minister for Community Services in relation to such matters.

**Mr Glasson:** We have done that actively to get the deed of grant in trust——

**Mr BRADDY:** I accept that the Minister has done that.

Particular problems in relation to those country reserves have been put aside. They seem to have been put into the too-hard basket.

Most of the people living on the Yallambee land are the remnants of the famous Kalkadoon tribe.

**Mr Beard:** Sort of.

**Mr BRADDY:** I said that some of them are the remnants of that tribe. Of course, some of them come from diverse Aboriginal communities and tribes.

In any event, the people living on that land are the remnants of Aboriginal tribes from around that area and elsewhere. As I understand it, the Kalkadoon tribe is the subject of documentaries and films that are being made at present. They were a fairly

warlike people who very actively resisted white colonisation. A very famous battle took place in that part of the world. As a result, the story of the Kalkadoon people and their struggle with the white people of Queensland—our ancestors—will be told right around the world. If the Aboriginal people of Mount Isa are left to languish without the rights to that particular land when that story is told, that will be a disgrace. However, I must point out that those people have the right to stay on that land.

The Mount Isa City Council is totally on side with the Aboriginal people—the Yallambee people—in their efforts to obtain a deed of grant in trust. However, no answers are forthcoming from the Queensland Government in relation to that matter.

**Mr Beard:** Mr Katter has promised me several times that he is about to grant that deed of grant in trust and, indeed, construct some housing on Yallambee reserve.

**Mr BRADDY:** Indeed, Mr Katter has made that promise on many occasions.

When that particular film is made and inquiries are made in Mount Isa, Mr Katter and this Government will be embarrassed.

I seek leave to table and have incorporated in *Hansard* pages 73 and 74 from the fifteenth annual State conference report of the Aboriginal and Islander Catholic Council. Those pages contain a report that is headed “Yallambee Developments since 1987 A.I.C.C. Conference”, which is a tabulation of events that has been set out by Frank Brennan S.J. dated 6 January 1988. Father Frank Brennan is the legal adviser to the Aboriginal and Islander Catholic Council and the Aboriginal Co-ordinating Council.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Booth):** I have sighted the pages. They are not too large to be incorporated in *Hansard*. The only problem that I have with them is that they deal mostly with housing. From the honourable member’s initial remarks, I gather that he can tie them in on the grounds that a deed of grant in trust should be allowed in that area. Is that correct?

**Mr BRADDY:** There is housing there, and more housing is being built. I intend to refer to that aspect shortly. Mr Katter has kept one of his promises. The land question is also mentioned.

Leave granted.

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

#### YALLAMBEE DEVELOPMENTS SINCE 1987 A.I.C.C. CONFERENCE

6 January 1987

Mr Katter guaranteed the building of ten new houses and community facilities.

20 January 1987

One of the existing houses burnt down, no replacement.

23 January 1987

People wrote to Mr. Katter.

2 April 1987

People wrote again to Mr Katter asking that the Minister meet with them on his next visit to Mt Isa.

3 March 1987

Mr Holding wrote to the people saying he understood the peoples desire to remain at Yallambee and said “I have written on many occasions to Mr Katter in an effort to secure the Queensland Government’s agreement to an appropriate form of tenure over the land”.

21 April 1987

Mr Katter’s secretary writes and says “Mr Katter would be happy to visit Yallambee as soon as his schedule permits him to do so, and I will be in touch with you in ample time to allow you to notify your members”.

1 May 1987

People write to Mr Katter saying “We are looking forward to your visit with us, which we hope will be very soon”.

6 August 1987

Mr Katter reported in the press "I am very surprised that work I had commissioned four months ago at the reserve has not been started . . . But if we receive co-operation from the Federal Government and the people on the reserve we might be able to complete the houses this year". Mr Katter was visiting Mt Isa; he made no contact with the people.

11 September 1987

Mr Katter's secretary writes "Mr Katter will be in contact with you shortly".

26 October 1987

People write to Mr Katter: "There have been many letters written to you, the dates of these letters go back as far as 20th March 1984. The latest one early September 1987 and still no definite word from you . . . When you and I spoke to each other at the Coordinating Council Meeting in Cairns in early July 1987. You had given us quite good and hopeful words to keep us going for a while longer, but sad to say, words are not going to keep the rain off our bodies when the next wet season comes. Or keep the people from scurrying under the little cottages for shelter. So could you please let us know when building will begin and what is happening about the tenure to the land of Yallambee".

30 October 1987

Mr Katter's secretary writes "Mr Katter will be in contact with you shortly".

21 December 1987

A press report that four new houses will be built at Yallambee Reserve in the new year.

During 1987, Mr Katter has not answered one letter from the Yallambee and Orana Park Aboriginal Corporation. He has not met with the people at Yallambee since May 1985. There has been no building commenced or title granted, despite all he promised at last year's AICC Conference. The Yallambee people have read of proposed developments in the press.

The Commonwealth continues to do nothing as Mr Holding saw "that the soundest solution would involve the support and co-operation of the Queensland Government" (12 September 1987) He said he had written to Mr Katter about the matter "on Many occasions" and that "no reply appears to have been received at this stage" (3 March 1987 and attachment).

On 27 October 1987 Mr Perkins submitted the Annual Report of D.A.A. for 1986-87 which states in relation to Queensland "One of the major unresolved land questions relates to what are commonly known as 'country reserves' . . . The State Government's intention in relation to these lands is unclear but indications are that some form of tenure will be negotiated".

On 10 December 1987, Mr Hand told Parliament "There are many however who remain dispossessed in their own land., and we shall continue to pursue policies, wherever possible in co-operation with State and Territory Governments, aimed at overcoming this problem".

Yesterday, 5th January 1988, I met with the people at Yallambee and they are still waiting, and waiting and writing another round of letters to state and federal ministers who have given up even answering their letters.

Frank Brennan S.J.

Toowoomba

6th January 1988

**Mr BRADDY:** Page 74 contains a reference to a press report that "four new houses will be built at Yallambee Reserve in the new year". That entry is dated 21 December 1987. I understand that presently four new houses are being built there. I congratulate the Minister for Community Services on finally keeping one of the promises that he made to the Yallambee people.

What has happened is that he has not kept his promise in relation to a deed of grant in trust. It is quite a small community now. I therefore seek to draw the attention of the Minister for Land Management to the situation and ask that he, as the Minister responsible for the land tenure of such reserves, take an active interest and deal with it as a matter of urgency.

The matter of Aboriginal land tenure and Aboriginal land rights in Queensland and Australia is complicated by the debate which exists right throughout the country. I can only say that one becomes a little uneasy about what the future might hold for land

rights for Aboriginal communities in Queensland. Consideration should be given to what the National Party in New South Wales is doing in relation to land rights for Aboriginal people. In this place it is common to hear National Party members criticising the Queensland branch of the Australian Labor Party for something that is done by the Labor Party in another State or federally. Only today did that occur. It is important that I refer to an article in the *Age* of 9 March 1988 relating to a problem which has just emerged and one which I wish to condemn. That article states—

“Tucked deep in the policy speech of Mr Wal Murray, who hopes to become the Deputy Premier of New South Wales, were a few lines that threatened the livelihood of some of the state’s newest entrepreneurs.

The National Party policy read: ‘Aboriginal land rights as applied under state and federal legislation have been an expensive and depressing failure . . . In government, we will abolish land rights in New South Wales.

The \$24 million annually which is now paid into Aboriginal land councils will be withdrawn. So, too, will the reserves presently held by the land councils.’

The policy, supported by the Liberal leader, Mr Greiner, has angered NSW black leaders, who claim that it will ruin enterprises developed by Aboriginal communities.

Mr Murray said a coalition government would direct land councils’ funds into areas of need for Aborigines, such as housing, health and education, and more teachers, nurses, doctors and aides. He denied that he was advocating a return to the handout mentality.

‘If there is a need, then that need will be met,’ he said. ‘The money will reach its target and will be accounted for. Many Aborigines will benefit and not just a privileged few as at present.’

State funding of 129 land councils in NSW has helped Aborigines develop sheep stations, shops, motels, office blocks and tourist venues. The NSW Land Council claims that most of the projects could be economically independent of government funding within five or 10 years.”

That is an indication that the National Party in New South Wales, with the support of the Liberal Party, is announcing that it will totally abolish the Aboriginal reserves in New South Wales. I sincerely hope that the National Party in Queensland does not follow the lead of its cousin just over the border.

Continually, as has occurred in the previous couple of days, speakers such as the member for Toowoomba North make attacks on the Aboriginal people for their failure to be entrepreneurial and to do things for themselves. Yet in New South Wales, when the Aboriginal people are doing things for themselves and setting up farms, properties and businesses, the National Party is making its move to take the land off them and remove the opportunity for the descendants of the original inhabitants of this country to develop their own land in their own way and in a way in which they can support themselves.

Therefore, I call on the Queensland Government to state carefully its policy and to reaffirm that it will at all times preserve land rights as they apply in this State—namely, the deed of grant in trust—as a policy that will be enhanced and will be removed only by this Parliament or by measures similar to those contained in this amending Bill, which I will be prepared to support.

It is indeed disquieting that in this country one branch of the National Party in New South Wales, as close to the border as Goondiwindi, is moving to take away the Aboriginal Land Councils from the Aboriginal people of that State. One can only hope that, for that and many other reasons, the Greiner/Murray team—the Liberal and National Parties—does not win the election in New South Wales.

I conclude by again drawing the attention of the Minister to the plight of these country reserves. Two areas near Charters Towers are also presently unoccupied. Members

of the Aboriginal community in Charters Towers have approached the Minister for Community Services. They have also approached me as the shadow Minister. They said that they wished to develop housing for their people on these reserves and they wished that the land could be vested in an Aboriginal organisation by way of deed of grant in trust. I commend their approaches to the Minister for Land Management and ask that he take an interest in them.

Debate, on motion of Mr Glasson, adjourned.

### **FRUIT AND VEGETABLES ACT AND OTHER ACTS AMENDMENT BILL**

**Hon. N. J. HARPER** (Auburn—Minister for Primary Industries) (7.52 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

“That leave be granted to bring in a Bill to amend the Fruit and Vegetables Act 1947-1972 in certain particulars and the Canned Fruits Marketing Act 1981-1985 in a certain particular and to construe certain provisions of the Primary Producers’ Organisation and Marketing Act Amendment Act 1987 in respect of currency references.”

Motion agreed to.

#### **First Reading**

Bill presented and, on motion of Mr Harper, read a first time.

#### **Second Reading**

**Hon. N. J. HARPER** (Auburn—Minister for Primary Industries) (7.53 p.m.): I move—

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

This Bill amends two horticultural industry Acts and makes a clarification to the construction of another Act. I will deal with each in turn.

The primary objective of the amendments to the Fruit and Vegetables Act is to assist the orderly marketing of fresh fruit and vegetables by ensuring that the quality of produce offered for sale is of a standard acceptable to consumers and that such produce is appropriately packed and accurately labelled.

Two amendments to this legislation are proposed to deal with problems that have emerged. The first concerns variances between States in standards for produce resulting from the use of differing criteria and terminology. This presents difficulties for growers supplying interstate markets and for merchants selling by description.

The Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service within the Commonwealth Department of Primary Industries and Energy is co-ordinating the development of a set of standards for export produce. It is intended that in order to facilitate trade, all States will adopt these criteria for the domestic market with minimal variation. This has been agreed to by the Australian Agricultural Council.

To obviate the need to reproduce these standards in complete detail in State regulations, it is proposed to incorporate in the Act the power to adopt, by reference, wholly or partly the standards of the Commonwealth Government or of a prescribed organisation. Such a prescribed organisation in future may include the Australian Standards Association.

The second relates to inflexibility in the use of regulations applying to picking dates for apples and the use of experimental packages. The Fruit and Vegetables Grading and Packing Regulations 1979 prescribe dates on or after which apples of the Jonathon and Delicious varieties may be picked and deemed to be mature. These dates should be altered from year to year because of variations in the maturation period caused by climatic conditions.

Due to the short period between the time when an accurate assessment of maturity dates can be made and the lead time necessary to effect an amendment to the regulations, changes often have not been effected. On occasions this has resulted in the sale of immature fruit being permitted.

The regulations also prescribe the types of packages in which fruit and vegetables may be packed for sale at the wholesale level. Requests are often received from industry for the trial use of a non-gazetted package to assess the performance of the unit in the market-place. At present the Act and its regulations do not provide for experimental use of packages.

The maturity of a significant proportion of fruit is determined by physical and chemical properties such as dry matter, soluble solids and acid content. The assignment of a minimum numerical value to one or more of these properties rigidly fixes the point at which various types of fruit are deemed to be mature. No allowance can be made under present procedures for seasonal variations either generally or in a specific locality. Amendment of the Act to allow the Minister or a person authorised by the Minister to alter these numerical values will accommodate the needs of both growers and consumers in times of special circumstance.

A single minor amendment to the Canned Fruits Marketing Act is proposed to allow the Australian Canned Fruits Corporation to continue to operate for at least the rest of this year pending a decision on the future of this organisation. The corporation operates under joint Commonwealth/State legislation and is currently under review by the Commonwealth Minister in consultation with his State counterparts, including myself, and with relevant industry bodies.

The opportunity is also taken to include a clarification provision in regard to the Primary Producers' Organisation and Marketing Act Amendment Act 1987. That Act which I brought before this House in September last year included a number of changes to penalty provisions. The actual penalty provisions in the Marketing Act itself are still in pre-decimal, or sterling, amounts. This is confusing and it is desirable that the amended penalties should appear in decimal currency. The clarification provisions achieve this and will avoid the need to make further amendments to the Marketing Act in this regard.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Casey, adjourned.

#### **QUEENSLAND MEAT INSPECTION AGREEMENT ACT REPEAL BILL**

**Hon. N. J. HARPER** (Auburn—Minister for Primary Industries) (7.58 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

“That leave be granted to bring in a Bill to repeal The Queensland Meat Inspection Agreement Act of 1932.”

Motion agreed to.

#### **First Reading**

Bill presented and, on motion of Mr Harper, read a first time.

#### **Second Reading**

**Hon. N. J. HARPER** (Auburn—Minister for Primary Industries) (7.59 p.m.): I move—

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

By an agreement made on 6 April 1932 between the Commonwealth of Australia and the State of Queensland, special arrangements were made in relation to the inspection of meat at the Cannon Hill abattoir of the Queensland Meat Industry Board. Among other things the arrangements provided that the State of Queensland pay the Commonwealth

the salaries for five Commonwealth meat-inspectors. This agreement was subsequently supported by legislation in this place by the Queensland Meat Inspection Agreement Act of 1932 and in the Commonwealth Parliament by the Queensland Meat Inspection Agreement Act (No. 15 of 1932).

On 12 October 1984, the State of Queensland gave notice of termination of the agreement of 1932. The agreement was subsequently formally terminated on 12 April 1985. The Commonwealth Act approving the agreement was repealed by the Statute Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) (No. 2) Act of 1984 (No. 165)—section 5 (2). That repeal was made effective as from 22 October 1984. The Queensland Act approving the now terminated agreement has not been repealed. The Bill currently before the House redresses this situation.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Casey, adjourned.

### **MINING MACHINERY ADVANCES ACT REPEAL BILL**

**Hon. M. J. TENNI** (Barron River—Minister for Mines and Energy) (8.01 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

“That leave be granted to bring in a Bill to repeal The Mining Machinery Advances Act of 1906.”

Motion agreed to.

#### **First Reading**

Bill presented and, on motion of Mr Tenni, read a first time.

#### **Second Reading**

**Hon. M. J. TENNI** (Barron River—Minister for Mines and Energy) (8.02 p.m.): I move—

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

The Mining Machinery Advances Act of 1906 was originally introduced to provide financial assistance towards the purchase of machinery and plant for mining and the treatment of metalliferous ores in this State.

It is important to note that the legislation was originally introduced as a means of assisting the mining industry at a time when the avenues available for financing high-risk mine development were very limited in Queensland. Today, however, a broader range of financing arrangements are readily available in the community and, accordingly, State Government financial involvement is certainly no longer necessary or appropriate.

It will come as no surprise to this House to learn that the Act has had very little use in recent years. For example, since 1975, eight applications for financing have been made. Two of these applications were of an informal nature only and were not pursued by the applicants in question. Of the remaining applications, two were withdrawn, three rejected and one granted. The advance granted was \$7,500.

It is also very relevant to note that the provisions in the Act regarding the recovery of any debt in the event of a borrower defaulting are both complicated and unwieldy. Similarly, the interest rates charged for loans in today's economic climate are very unrealistic.

In summary, we are considering an Act which was introduced over 80 years ago and which has been subject to very little review. It is no understatement to say that the provisions of the Act are both unwieldy and out of touch with the realities of today's mining industry. Accordingly, it is very appropriate that the Act is repealed as there is certainly no recently demonstrated need for the services which this Act was designed to provide for.

I commend the Bill to honourable members.

Debate, on motion of Mr McElligott, adjourned.

**LIQUID FUEL SUPPLY ACT AMENDMENT BILL**

**Hon. M. J. TENNI** (Barron River—Minister for Mines and Energy) (8.04 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

“That leave be granted to bring in a Bill to amend the Liquid Fuel Supply Act 1984 in certain particulars and to repeal The Motor Spirit Vendors Acts, 1933 to 1934.”

Motion agreed to.

**First Reading**

Bill presented and, on motion of Mr Tenni, read a first time.

**Second Reading**

**Hon. M. J. TENNI** (Barron River—Minister for Mines and Energy) (8.05 p.m.): I move—

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

The Liquid Fuel Supply Act 1984 provides for the management of liquid fuel in the event of a shortage of this fuel developing in our State. The present Bill seeks to amend the Act in two respects. Firstly, the Bill allows for the production of ethanol for inclusion in motor spirit as covered in The Motor Spirit Vendors Acts, 1933 to 1934, which it is proposed to repeal. Secondly, the Bill allows for the equitable distribution of liquid fuel between essential and ordinary users during any sustained period of liquid fuel shortage.

The Motor Spirit Vendors Acts, 1933 to 1934 were originally introduced to encourage ethanol or power alcohol production from sugar-cane and to reduce our dependence on foreign imported oil. Under the provisions of the Act, it is compulsory each year for oil companies to apply for a licence and to purchase at the prescribed price a certain quantity of ethanol for inclusion in motor spirit. The seven major oil-marketing companies are the only licence-holders and the total annual licence fees collected during 1986-87 amounted to the princely sum of \$17.50.

In recent years, the Queensland Government has considered that there has been no justification for ethanol substitution in motor spirit, and has exempted oil companies from the requirement to purchase ethanol.

From time to time, sections of the oil industry have pointed to the administrative burden of applying for annual licences, requesting exemptions and preparing monthly returns of motor-spirit sales. The industry has questioned the relevance of the Motor Spirit Vendors Acts and suggested that these Acts might be repealed.

Preparation of the amendment Bill was undertaken following an evaluation of submissions received in response to a Green Paper released in March 1987. The Green Paper proposed to incorporate the main provisions of the Motor Spirit Vendors Acts into the Liquid Fuel Supply Act. Most of the submissions had no objections to the proposal contained in the Green Paper. However, the oil industry suggested a modification to the legislation which would permit ethanol addition to be introduced only if economic circumstances were favourable.

A submission from a Queensland company engaged in research into the production of ethanol from sugar-cane indicated that any future ethanol use in Australia would be as an octane-enhancer, an additive commanding a premium price, rather than simply as a fuel-extender. Honourable members may recall that in March 1985 Cabinet approved that up to \$2m in funds be provided for the purposes of building a pilot plant to test the Sucrotech and Biowastech processes and to undertake feasibility studies on their commercial prospects.

The Sucrotech process is reportedly able to give superior yields in the conversion of sugar-cane and grains to alcohol. A final report on this project is expected to be released towards the middle of this year.

The Bill recognises that the production of ethanol could become economically viable and that its addition to motor spirit could be desirable for commercial reasons. The Bill therefore proposes to retain the basic power to incorporate ethanol in motor spirit in special circumstances, and recognises that the Motor Spirit Vendors Acts no longer provide the most appropriate means.

By repealing these Acts, the unnecessary licensing of oil companies will cease and the non-productive administrative procedures will be eliminated. Already, the accompanying regulations were allowed to lapse on 30 June 1987 under the Government's regulation revocation program.

Part VA of the Bill deals with ethanol substitution. This part incorporates the key provisions of the Motor Spirit Vendors Acts in amended and updated form. The provisions allow the Governor in Council to direct the principal suppliers of motor spirit to blend ethanol with motor spirit in Queensland, subject to adequate quantities of ethanol being available. The Bill also contains powers to stipulate the price of ethanol to be purchased and the amount to be blended with motor spirit. There is also provision to stipulate the suppliers of ethanol and to have returns of information submitted to the Minister.

There is no obligation to blend ethanol if motor spirit supplied from another company already contains the prescribed quantity of ethanol, or if motor spirit is the subject of interstate trade.

Failure to comply with a direction by the Governor in Council could lead to fines.

The terms "sale", "prescribed" and "motor spirit" are defined more closely in relation to ethanol addition.

The Bill also provides general indemnity when directions are given relevant to ethanol substitution.

With reference to liquid fuel shortages, the Bill provides for an amendment to section 29 of the Liquid Fuel Supply Act so that a permit system is no longer compulsory. It is now appreciated that a permit system would generally be impractical to deal with any short-term fuel emergency in Queensland. The Bill will therefore allow the sale of liquid fuel during a period of emergency in accordance with a direction of the Minister. However, the use of permits is retained as an option.

The term "rationed liquid petroleum product" is deleted as it is not relevant to the Liquid Fuel Supply Act.

Finally, penalties will be changed to use the new penalty units system and the amounts of penalties will be adjusted to reflect the changing value of money.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr McElligott, adjourned.

### **GAS ACT AMENDMENT BILL**

**Hon. M. J. TENNI** (Barron River—Minister for Mines and Energy) (8.12 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

"That leave be granted to bring in a Bill to amend the Gas Act 1965-1985 in certain particulars."

Motion agreed to.

### **First Reading**

Bill presented and, on motion of Mr Tenni, read a first time.

**Second Reading**

**Hon. M. J. TENNI** (Barron River—Minister for Mines and Energy) (8.13 p.m.): I move—

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

The Gas Act 1965-1985 provides for the regulation and control of the supply of gases for heating, lighting, transport and other power, and it provides for the regulation of the business operations of gas-suppliers, prices, safety matters and the quality standards of gases.

For some time, it has been apparent that the Gas Act has needed amendment to bring it up to date with the present-day needs of gas-users and to allow the market to develop more efficiently to take advantage of the increasing supplies of available natural gas and locally produced liquefied petroleum gas, normally called ‘LPG’ or ‘bottled gas’.

The introduction of these amendments is timely. There have been claims that the existing Gas Act is restricting industrial development and investment in Queensland. At the present time, commerce and industry in general is seeking new avenues for cutting costs and remaining competitive in an increasingly difficult national and international economic environment. The proposed amendments aim at allowing all gas-users the right to look for gas supplies at the lowest cost and on the best terms available. Both forms of gas have the potential for greater utilisation in Queensland provided producers have access to markets and consumers have access to resources. It is also timely in relation to the development of Queensland’s natural gas and LPG production capacity.

The Government is taking positive action to bring natural gas to Gladstone and to interconnect the State’s natural gas resources in the Denison Trough, the Surat Basin and the Cooper Basin for the benefit of present and future gas-users in central and southern Queensland. In the process, it is expected that the supply of LPG will increase also and that Queensland will become self-supporting and an exporter of LPG.

The preparation of these amendments has not been done hastily. A Green Paper was published in February 1987, and in response a large number of detailed submissions were received from a wide cross-section of interests. In addition, extensive discussions have been held between officers of the Department of Mines and the Management of the main gas-suppliers and users throughout the period of preparation of the draft legislation. Discussions have also taken place between respective Mines and Energy Ministers and the leaders of the gas industry and major consumers.

The issues raised in response to the Green Paper fall into four categories—namely the existing franchise system, the business regulation of franchise-holders, the priority of supply and several administrative matters of lesser importance. Each of these areas is addressed in the amendments which make up the Bill. Comment on the existing franchise system was divided between two groups.

The holders of existing franchises, in the main, preferred to retain the protective barriers of the existing system for both LPG and reticulated gas. They claimed that it resulted in stable retail prices, protected and encouraged them to invest capital, and allowed them to provide a secure supply and a guaranteed service to consumers.

Another larger group, on the other hand, saw distinct advantages in deregulation and the encouragement of competition, particularly with respect to non-reticulated LPG. It claimed that the existing system disadvantaged consumers by preventing competition and gave rise to inefficient and mediocre performance of franchised gas-suppliers.

The comments on the business regulation of franchise-holders were diverse but could not be separated entirely from the franchise issue itself.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The honourable member for Caboolture is undressed.

**Mr Tenni:** He didn’t affect me at all, Mr Speaker.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I will not tolerate such behaviour. I call the Minister.

**Mr TENNI:** It was apparent that the more the Government protected the business of franchise-holders by giving them a partial monopoly, the more regulation that was needed to protect the interests of the consumers and to achieve the Government objectives.

In this Bill, the Government proposes to open up the markets to competition and to reduce the amount of regulation of the routine commercial decision-making process of gas-suppliers. Comments were received on the existing provisions for priority of supply.

**Mr R. J. Gibbs:** Tell us about the way you've been standing over Queensland Alumina to use the natural gas.

**Mr TENNI:** I think that I will be able to answer the honourable member's question when debate on the legislation takes place in one or two weeks' time. I will be able to prove that what the honourable member said is completely incorrect. The existing Gas Act gives absolute priority for full gas supply at all times to the franchise-holders. Other consumers, for example, who take supply direct from a producer would obviously consider that was unfair, and the Government agrees.

Unlike the honourable member for Wolston, It is not expected that Queensland will be short of gas. However, both natural gas and naturally occurring LPG resources are not unlimited and it is appropriate that the Government should, in the end, be responsible for determining the priority of their use should that choice become necessary. Proposed amendments to the Act will establish that position clearly.

A number of administrative matters associated with the Act also need amendment. These stem either from the difficulties experienced in the administration of the present Act or from the general need to update the Act to bring it into line with modern practice. The appropriate amendments are included in the Bill.

The contents of the Bill are consistent with the recommendations of the report of the Savage committee. I should point out that the committee was chaired by Sir Ernest Savage, who, for many years, had been chairman of Allgas Energy Ltd. Its report has been adopted by the State Government as a basis for dealing with business regulations generally. In this particular case amendments to the Gas Act have been drafted which will allow for the rigours of competition in the market-place instead of the array of Government approvals and trade restrictions which currently apply to the existing Act.

Two whole parts of the Act dealing with business regulation and restriction of competition will be removed. This will allow for the commercial deregulation of LPG and the retention of a simpler, less-regulated franchise system which will apply to underground mains reticulation only. In this way, 54 of the 64 existing gas franchises in Queensland will be eliminated. I am sure that the members of the ALP will appreciate that.

**Mr R. J. Gibbs:** If you monopolise it, you will get all your mates from the National Party——

**Mr TENNI:** That would not be right.

At the same time, the Government accepts the possibility that some problems might occur with an uncontrolled deregulation of a market which is emerging from two decades of heavy protection. To limit those potential problems, a simple flexible system of licences will be used to ensure market forces take over fully through a process of orderly transition. The whole licensing system will then be removed.

A new feature contained in the Bill is the Gas Tribunal. That body is intended to give to the responsible Minister a means of investigating any matters serious enough in his opinion to justify Government intervention in the industry or the market. The Government will reserve the right to intervene if and when necessary; for example, to put a ceiling on prices in any particular case if any abuse of market power occurs. That is in case the Labor Party comes to power in this State; we want to be able to control it.

It would be appropriate at this point to describe the main features of the Bill more explicitly—

- (1) The new Act is expected to come into operation by two proclamations, the first almost immediately so that detailed arrangements for the changeover to a deregulated system can be finalised by negotiation with the affected parties, and the second at the time that deregulation actually takes place, probably at the end of the financial year.
- (2) A new concept of franchise will be adopted. Only bona fide networks of underground gas mains will be included.

I am sure that that will make Mr Gibbs happy.

Powers to construct and operate in streets and public places will be retained by franchise-holders and no other person will be able to build a second network over the same area. The franchise-holder will not be protected any longer from commercial competition.

- (3) Tolling arrangements whereby a franchise-holder can offer to transport gas through an existing network as an alternative to a direct pipeline supply under the Petroleum Act will now be permitted but will not be compulsory.
- (4) A Gas Tribunal will be established, consisting of one or more suitably qualified persons appointed by the Governor in Council for a maximum five-year term. That tribunal will advise and make recommendations to the Minister following an investigation of matters referred to it.
- (5) Following an accident involving death, personal injury or serious danger to property, an investigation will be made mandatory. In addition, a formal inquiry before a magistrate may be carried out and, in the case of a fatality, that inquiry could take the place of a coronial inquiry. The Minister will decide if those provisions are to be used.

**Mr R. J. Gibbs:** And you get Judge Eric P. Ratt to be the chairman of it. Eric P. Ratt; he'd look after it.

**Mr TENNI:** I thought that we could give the honourable member that job when he retires at the end of this term.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The Minister will continue.

**Mr TENNI:** The magistrate will report his or her findings to the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General, with copies being sent to the Minister for Mines and Energy.

I believe that Mr Gibbs would make a good——

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr TENNI:** This proposed amendment is an outcome of the 1987 LPG explosion in Cairns.

- (6) Existing franchise-holders with reticulation systems will be granted a franchise under the amended Act. However, the area of the franchise will relate to the location of the network only and will allow for genuine planned expansion. Other areas will be free of restrictions and the franchises will be removed. The new franchises may be defined and published by an Order in Council before the date of the second proclamation, but they will only operate after that date. In very special cases there is a provision for a period of 12 months during which the exclusive rights to supply bulk LPG may be retained. That will be the subject of further negotiations case by case.

Those are the key provisions for opening up the bulk LPG market to competition. They will also allow a number of companies to look at the business opportunities for reticulating natural gas in new locations such as Gladstone.

- (7) Where short underground gas mains connections are economic and desirable, they will now be permitted more freely. That will permit underground mains within consumers' premises and by an Order in Council will authorise short underground mains connections along streets and in public places which are not covered by a franchise.
- (8) Because a reticulation system represents a monopoly for mains supply of gas, the provisions entitling a consumer to a supply of gas, provided it is economic to the gas-supplier, will be retained. However, amendments to clarify the entitlements and procedures under the new Act will be made.
- (9) Amendments to allow meters to be tested and stamped, subject to the approval of the Department of Mines, should allow for lower costs without reducing the accuracy and reliability of meters.
- (10) A gas-supplier's licence is the device by which control over the transition to a stable deregulated retail gas market is to be achieved. To ensure that licences are removed later, a sunset clause is included, which terminates that whole part of the Act on 30 June 1995. It should be noted that all persons supplying gas in bulk will be licensed. This includes oil companies supplying automotive LPG but excludes all automotive service stations. The intention is to negotiate these licences to suit the circumstances of individual gas-suppliers but to bring them all to finality at about the same time. The licences need to be issued in advance of the second proclamation, because it will be an offence after that time to operate without a licence. Machinery provisions are included in the Bill and there is provision for a licence fee.

An important feature of the licensing is a requirement, which will appear in the new Act, that licence-holders will have to commit adequate resources to safety and training, reliability of supply and technical advice to gas-consumers. They will also have to undertake to service adequately the market in which they operate, including small and domestic users. This will be repeated in the licence and, in some cases, supported by regulations and letters of commitment to the Minister. I point out that failure to comply with licence conditions could lead to fines or loss of the licence.

- (11) Provisions in the existing act to enable the Government to decide priorities in the use of gas during emergencies will be strengthened. The existing requirements relating to major contracts, which commit indigenous natural gas to particular consumers, will be clarified and strengthened to ensure that the Government keeps control over allocations where limited natural resources, including LPG, are involved.
- (12) A major change will be the repeal of the whole part of the existing Act which regulates the business operations of franchised gas-suppliers. Those provisions are not only intrusive and inappropriate but, under current conditions, achieve limited benefits, and effectiveness. Instead, the Gas Tribunal will be established to carry out investigations and provide the Minister of the day with advice and recommendations. The tribunal will be used only in the event that serious matters arise which justify Government intervention. The Minister will have the right to recommend action if it is required and the Governor in Council will have powers of decision where excesses or abuse are evident.

**Mr R. J. Gibbs:** It sounds a bit like the SEQEB legislation, doesn't it?

**Mr TENNI:** No; this is good legislation—really good.

The main power will be to fix a maximum price. In carrying out its investigations, the Gas Tribunal is required to consider all the relevant facets of the operation of gas-suppliers, including the reserves accumulated before deregulation and the purposes for which they were approved. This provision addresses the main concern of the Brisbane gas-users group. The tribunal will operate when required in writing by the Minister to do so.

**Mr Comben:** Can't you speed up?

**Mr TENNI:** If I did that, I would be like the honourable member and I would not be able to be understood.

The Bill contains guide-lines for the tribunal in relation to prices but does not restrict the scope of its inquiries.

This new approach will leave gas-suppliers free to operate their businesses along normal commercial lines and make all their decisions, including pricing, in the light of market opportunities, and to meet all of their obligations as gas-suppliers. It represents, overall, a substantial freeing of the resources of the industry.

(13) Penalties will be changed to use the new penalty units system and the amounts of penalties will be adjusted to reflect the changing value of money.

(14) Other changes, mainly of an editorial nature, have also been included.

In summary—it is apparent that the Gas Act 1965-1985 has served the industry well over the past two decades. However, changing circumstances now require that some substantial amendments be made. It is believed that these amendments will allow gas-suppliers and gas-users throughout our State to adapt to the new conditions and demands which will be placed on them as they move towards the twenty-first century.

The main objective of the Gas Act is to ensure that a reliable and safe supply of gas in its various forms is available to Queensland gas-consumers in sufficient quantities and under conditions which will maximise economic growth and the welfare of our State. The amendments contained in this Bill are directed towards this objective.

I commend the Bill to the House.

**Mr SPEAKER:** The member for Wolston.

**Mr R. J. GIBBS:** It is obvious that the Minister has been sniffing gas.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr R. J. GIBBS:** In the light of that, I will move that the debate be now adjourned.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The member will withdraw those remarks.

**Mr R. J. GIBBS:** What—that the debate be now adjourned?

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The member knows what I am talking about.

**Mr R. J. GIBBS:** I withdraw the comment that he has been sniffing gas.

**Mr SPEAKER:** I thank the honourable member.

Debate, on motion of Mr R. J. Gibbs, adjourned.

### REVOCATION OF NATIONAL PARK AREAS

**Hon. G. H. MUNTZ** (Whitsunday—Minister for Environment, Conservation and Tourism) (8.31 p.m.): I move—

“(i) That this House agrees that the proposal by the Governor in Council to revoke the setting apart and declaration as National Park under the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1975-1984 of:—

(a) all those pieces or parts of National Park 3, parish of Epping Forest described as Areas ‘C’ and ‘E’ as shown on plan NPW 169 prepared by the Department of Mapping and Surveying and deposited in the Office of the Director of National Parks and Wildlife and containing an area of about 2.278 hectares; and

(b) all that piece or part of National Park 16, parish of Mulindie described as Area ‘D’ as shown on plan NPW 185 prepared by the Department of Mapping and Surveying and deposited in the Office of the Director of National Parks and Wildlife and containing an area of about 22.7 hectares, be carried out.

- (ii) That Mr Speaker convey a copy of this Resolution to the Minister for submission to His Excellency the Governor in Council.”

The first proposal is for the revocation of about 2¼ hectares from Epping Forest National Park in central Queensland. This national park of 2 663 hectares was declared in 1971 to protect the only known population of the northern hairy-nosed wombat.

The national park has restricted access status requiring permission in writing to enter because of the sensitivity of the wombat population to disturbance. Continuing research into the population, which has now increased to 54, has revealed a significant number of wombat burrows which are outside the park boundary.

Negotiations were conducted with the lessees of two adjoining properties to include these burrows. The design agreed upon follows existing fence lines for ease of identification of the park boundary. This necessitates the revocation of two small areas totalling 2¼ hectares. Action will then be taken for the addition of a total of more than 634 hectares to the national park.

The second proposal is for the revocation of almost 23 hectares from Forty Mile Scrub national park in north Queensland. This park of 4 619 hectares straddles the Kennedy Highway between Mount Garnet and Mount Surprise. When the lessees of Minnamoolka pastoral holding sought conversion of their lease tenure, discussions were begun for inclusion of part of the leased land into the adjoining Forty Mile Scrub national park. It was agreed that an area of more than 218 hectares would be surrendered for national park purposes.

A survey to define the new boundary found that, owing to the nature of the ground, a slight adjustment would be desirable before a new fence line was constructed. The Director of National Parks and Wildlife considered that, because a fence was essential to protect the vine forest vegetation from degradation by cattle, revocation of the land from the national park was acceptable. Action to extend the national park will follow soon.

I commend these proposals for approval by the House.

**Mr COMBEN (Windsor) (8.34 p.m.):** The Opposition always is concerned with the revocation of national parks in this State, but in this case it relies on the advice of the acting director of the National Parks and Wildlife Service that the integrity of the two national parks involved in these revocations is not affected.

It is still the case that Queensland has set aside less than 2 per cent of land for national parks, compared with the Australian average of 5 per cent for each of the other States.

**Mr Austin:** You know that those figures are wrong.

**Mr Muntz:** Can't you quote the other figures—per head of population?

**Mr COMBEN:** How can a State possibly have conservation areas—

**Mr Austin:** What is 2 per cent of Victoria? You can drive across Victoria before breakfast.

**Mr COMBEN:** Mr Speaker, I thought the understanding was that I would speak briefly. If the Leader of the House wishes to have a wide-ranging debate, he has wasted a few minutes to which I am entitled, and I wish the clock to start from now.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! It is up to the honourable member whether he replies or not.

**Mr COMBEN:** I will willingly take on the Leader of the House on conservation matters in this State to reveal the lack of fidelity of his statistics. He refers to per head of population in terms of national parks, which means absolutely nothing.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I remind the honourable member for Windsor that he does not have to take any interjections.

**Mr COMBEN:** No, but in the normal cut and thrust in this place——

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I suggest that the honourable member continue with his speech.

**Mr COMBEN:** Yes, Mr Speaker. As I was saying, in the normal cut and thrust of debate in this place, of which you were so fond in your days as a Minister, you would expect me to take provocative interjections from the other side of the House and to robustly defend myself. That is what I am capable of doing tonight.

When one talks about a revocation such as this, where some 2¼ hectares of national park is being revoked and 634 hectares in the Epping Forest national park is received in exchange, the land-holders are to be commended. If the Minister would allow me to continue with my speech, the evening's business will soon be concluded. As the Minister said, the Epping Forest national park was declared in 1971 as a preservation area for the eastern hairy-nosed wombat. At that time it was believed that there were fewer than 200 hairy-nosed wombats——

**Mr Austin:** What about hairy-chinned?

**Mr COMBEN:** The Leader of the House has referred to hairy-chinned wombats. The members on this side of the House believe that the bald eagle is a species that is worthy of protection. The members of the Liberal Party do not believe this and still have a bounty on bald eagles.

I am pleased to say that a significant number of wombat burrows have been discovered again outside of the park boundaries. I wonder why at the time the extensive surveys were carried out to discover the extensive population of the eastern hairy-nosed wombat those burrows were not found. In order to protect the extra number of burrows and an increased number of eastern hairy-nosed wombats, the Opposition is pleased to join with the Minister and support the revocation before the House tonight. The Opposition applauds the ability of nearby land-holders in the area to provide the land for the national park.

**Mr Austin:** You must believe in the philosophy that people look like their dogs.

**Mr COMBEN:** No, I have a corgi that is not as hairy as I am, but I understand that the Leader of the House has one of those Chinese dogs that do not have a lot of hair but do have a lot of wrinkles. They do not have a long political life, either.

The Opposition supports this revocation and the extension of the Epping Forest national park. I look forward to being able to visit the area and to watch the eastern hairy-nosed wombats. It would be a more pleasant sight than some of the sights seen in this Chamber.

The second revocation under debate tonight covers an area of 22.7 hectares contained in national park 16 in the Parish of Mulindie. My colleague the honourable member for Mourilyan will be speaking next and will make some personal comments about the land-holders who are willing to surrender some 218 hectares of land to join the Forty Mile Scrub national park. This is a very popular national park situated on the Tablelands some 40 miles south of Mount Garnet on the Kennedy Highway. The previous land-holders spent a life-time protecting and preserving that area and the Opposition commends them for their foresight, consideration and conservation values. That area contains vine forest vegetation which is of great scientific importance and will add a great deal to that national park. The members of the Opposition rely on the good offices of the Minister and the acting director of the Queensland National Parks and Wildlife Service in advising us that these areas are in actual fact protecting and in no way affecting the integrity of the national park.

In conclusion, I pay tribute to a couple of people who have helped me substantially and I acknowledge their presence in the gallery tonight. They are the Federal member for Forde, Mrs Mary Crawford, and a member of her staff, Mrs Colleen Forrester. I thank them for their great help in preparing for this debate.

**Mr EATON (Mourilyan) (8.40 p.m.):** I wish to support the Government's motion for the revocation, particularly the second part of it, which relates to Mulindie and the property of Minnamoolka. I know the area well and I also know the people.

**Mr Muntz** interjected.

**Mr EATON:** I always acknowledge fact. I support the Government when it is right. What the Minister cannot understand is that, just because members of the Opposition do not always agree with the Government, it does not mean that sometimes the Government is not right. I have always acknowledged when the Government is right.

In this case, because I know the people involved and I know the area, which is in my electorate, I can compliment the Government. I could go a bit further if I wanted to. I did not want to mention it but, as the Minister seems to want to prolong the debate by interjecting, I will say that a great deal of correspondence has been exchanged. Because both the Lands Department and the National Parks and Wildlife Service are involved in this operation, I wrote to the Minister for Lands. The correspondence has been continuing for quite some considerable time. Because it was one of those interdepartmental exercises in which the mail takes a long time to get from one department to another, the people came to me in an endeavour to find out where the hold-ups were occurring. As this is something for which the people have been waiting for a long time, I am sure that they will be pleased.

For many years Mr Vern Atkinson and his wife, Anne, have been great conservationists in that area. That Forty Mile Scrub is unique. It is the only environment of its type in Queensland and Australia. It is way out in the middle of nowhere. It is about 20 miles long and has diverse types of foliage. As well as the fauna in the area, it has different types of bottle tree and other trees. It is an area that is very difficult to describe. Despite the fact that the area is 40 miles out of Mount Garnett—that is how it got its name—if anybody took the trouble to drive out there, he would be well pleased with his efforts. As I say, it is a unique forestry area with many different types of foliage and vines. Even the soil is of a type different from other areas. However, the area has no water. That is why I can understand their wanting to keep the cattle out.

**Mr Smith:** If it was the Ten Mile, it would be right.

**Mr EATON:** Yes, but it is not the Ten Mile.

In a dry time, if cattle should stray into the area, they would eat much of the foliage for both moisture and food. That area suffers from drought conditions.

The land owned by the Atkinson family has what they call the GW swamp, that is, the Gunnawarra swamp, which has also been made a wildlife reserve. That is a marvellous place to go to see a great variety of birds, particularly water fowl. Over the years those people have put in a lot of time in that area. Their parents settled the area, so they are direct descendents of the original pioneers. It is good to see that the property is staying in the family and that they are working to preserve it. If all Australians were as conservation and preservation minded as the Atkinsons, there would be no need for National Parks and Wildlife Service rangers, because there would be no destruction of any fauna or flora.

I fully support the Minister's motion for the revocation. I am sure that it will be of benefit to all of Queensland.

**Mr BEANLAND (Toowong) (8.44 p.m.):** On behalf of the Liberal Party, I support the motion for revocation for these two areas. I accept that, as the Minister says, it is a tidying-up exercise. It is pleasing that significant areas will in the near future be included in the national park estate. The appreciation of the community to those families

who have leasing arrangements over this land that is to become national park needs to be placed on record. I know that a great deal of negotiation and discussion has taken place to arrive at this conclusion. So often property-owners and lease-holders come in for so much criticism in the community over areas of parkland. In this case areas are being given up in the interests of the community as a whole.

I understand that the Government is considering proposals for Q-parks, which is another name for a type of national park. I was hoping that the Minister could give some indication of what he has in mind for Q-parks. I am very concerned about this matter, because I understand that in the near future the Government will be taking the recreational areas from the Wivenhoe Dam, which is under the control of the Brisbane and Area Water Board, and including them in the Brisbane forest park.

I can only say that that is merely helping to subsidise the State Budget. The water-consumers of the Brisbane and Area Water Board will certainly subsidise the Budget. The people living in the shires in this area will be affected adversely, to the tune of about \$2m a year. Those funds will be spread across the State. It is certainly an innovation. I understand that the Government is looking for new methods of raising revenue to help relieve the stringent budgetary conditions. However, it is clear that the water-consumers will find themselves paying for improvements to recreational areas. In this area alone, in the next three years, an amount of \$2m will be involved.

I am sure that the community generally will be interested to find out what the Government has in store and whether it is planning to subsidise other areas of national park in the same manner.

As I mentioned at the outset, the Liberal Party is pleased to support the motion, which will have a tidying-up effect. In the long run, Queensland will benefit by a considerable addition to the national park area.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 8.48 p.m.