

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**TUESDAY, 12 APRIL 1988**

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Mr SPEAKER (Hon. L. W. Powell, Isis) read prayers and took the chair at 10 a.m.

**ASSENT TO BILLS**

Assent to the following Bills reported by Mr Speaker—

Scartwater Station Trust Extension Act Amendment Bill;  
Roofing Tiles Act Repeal Bill;  
Patriotic Funds Act Repeal Act and Other Acts Amendment Bill;  
Queensland Meat Inspection Agreement Act Repeal Bill;  
Queensland Institute of Medical Research Act and Another Act Amendment Bill;  
Sale of Goods (Vienna Convention) Act Amendment Bill;  
Mining Machinery Advances Act Repeal Bill;  
Marine Parks Act Amendment Bill;  
Liquid Fuel Supply Act Amendment Bill;  
Land Act and Another Act Amendment Bill;  
Land (Fair Dealings) Bill;  
Industry and Commerce Training Act Amendment Bill (No. 2);  
Gas Act Amendment Bill;  
Evidence on Commission Bill;  
District Courts (Venue of Appeals) Bill;  
Disposal of Uncollected Goods Act Amendment Bill;  
Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road Act Amendment Bill;  
Courts of Conciliation Act Amendment Bill;  
Chiropractic Manipulative Therapists Act Amendment Bill;  
Libraries and Archives Bill;  
Motor Vehicles Control Act Amendment Bill;  
Meat Industry Act Amendment Bill;  
Jury Act and Oaths Act Amendment Bill;  
Health Act Amendment Bill;  
Films (Censorship and Review) Acts Amendment Bill;  
Building Units and Group Titles Act Amendment Bill;  
Auctioneers and Agents Act Amendment Bill.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! It would be helpful if honourable members would remain quiet while I read out the list of Bills assented to.

**ELECTORAL DISTRICT OF BARAMBAH****By-election Dates**

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I inform the House that the dates in connection with the issue of the writ for the election of a member to serve in this House for the electoral district of Barambah are as follows—

Issue of writ—25 March 1988;

Date of nomination—31 March 1988;

Polling day—16 April 1988;

Return of writ—16 May 1988.

### PAPERS

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

Report of the Queensland Police Department for the year ended 30 June 1987.

The following papers were laid on the table—

Proclamations under—

Diseases in Plants Act 1929-1972

Forestry Act 1959-1987

Orders in Council under—

Constitution Acts Amendment Act 1971-1987

Workers' Compensation Act 1916-1986

City of Brisbane Market Act 1960-1985 and the Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Act 1982-1984

Fisheries Act 1976-1984

Fishing Industry Organization and Marketing Act 1982-1987

Veterinary Surgeons Act 1936-1986

Forestry Act 1959-1987

Water Act 1926-1987

Water Act 1926-1987 and the Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Act 1982-1984

Harbours Act 1955-1987

Canals Act 1958-1987

Judges' Salaries and Pensions Act 1967-1984

Supreme Court Act of 1921

Regulations under—

Primary Producers' Organisation and Marketing Act 1926-1987

Wheat Pool Act 1920-1986

Disposal of Unexecuted Warrants Act 1985

Building Act 1975-1987

Prisons Act 1958-1974

Ordinances under the City of Brisbane Act 1924-1987

Reports—

Queensland Coal Board for the year ended 30 June 1987

Livestock and Meat Authority of Queensland for the year ended 30 June 1987

Mortgage Secondary Market Board for the year ended 30 June 1987.

### MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

**Achievements of Queensland Police Force; Attack by Queensland Police Union against Minister for Police**

**Hon. W. A. M. GUNN** (Somerset—Deputy Premier, Minister for Public Works, Main Roads and Expo and Minister for Police) (10.10 a.m.), by leave: Mr Speaker—

**Opposition members interjected.**

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The Minister has been given leave by the Parliament to make a ministerial statement. That statement will be heard in silence.

**Mr GUNN:** Earlier this morning I tabled in this House the annual report of the Police Department covering the year to June 1987.

While I will leave honourable members to digest the report for themselves, I believe that some of the force's achievements deserve highlighting because of their beneficial impact on our society.

As the report points out, issues affecting policing are under investigation by the commission of inquiry into possible illegal activities and associated police misconduct. The correct position on specific or overall aspects of areas under scrutiny cannot be ascertained until after the completion of the report by the commission of inquiry.

I acclaim the praiseworthy efforts of each good and honest police officer who has acted in the interests of the people and served our community in such a noble fashion.

In particular, the force achieved its objectives in the areas of increasing the clear-up rate in serious assaults, increasing drink-driver detection, reducing road fatalities and cutting road casualty accidents. Road fatalities were cut by 14 per cent, casualty accidents were reduced by 7 per cent and drink-driving detections rose by 9 per cent. I believe that all three are directly attributable to the success of the RID program, which has been one of the outstanding road safety initiatives of this Government.

The police also succeeded in raising the clear-up rate in serious assaults by 4 per cent to 81 per cent. Although the general crime clear-up rate remained constant at 52 per cent, it is still an excellent result when considered on a national basis. This result was achieved despite a 6 per cent increase in general crime.

Future major developments which the Police Department is examining include upgrading of computer and communications capacities and installation of a computer-assisted dispatch system in the new police headquarters. I inspected such a system in Munich. It will greatly expedite the deployment of police in response to reports of crime or other incidents.

The department is also investigating the use of cellular radio and the installation of computer terminals in police vehicles.

**Mr Burns** interjected.

**Mr GUNN:** I know that members of the Opposition do not like to hear this.

While the annual report is essential reading for those who want a factual account of policing in this State, the main purpose of my statement this morning is to condemn the Queensland Police Union for its totally unwarranted and unfounded attacks on this Government and myself, as Minister for Police. Perhaps the antagonistic stance by union officials towards the Government has been occasioned by their short memories or by their not readily taking to change.

Certainly the police union's action in eliciting some vote on my standing is not new. I understand that some time ago their counterparts in Western Australia passed a motion of no confidence in their Police Minister—to little avail.

To place the matter in perspective, I remind those who have an antagonistic attitude towards me and this Government of my achievements and aims as Minister for Police. Since taking over this portfolio in February 1986, I have overseen the following initiatives—

- Introduction of the RID campaign in August 1986 in conjunction with the Minister for Transport at that time, Mr Don Lane.
- Introduction of a new Drugs Misuse Act, giving Queensland some of the toughest measures in the nation to fight illicit drugs, which was opposed by the Opposition.



- The allocation of 200 extra police in the 1986-87 Budget, compared with previous annual increases of about 100.
- The obtaining of an extra \$10m in capital funding in 1986-87 for new police facilities as well as provision of some \$60m in the special capital works program for a new police headquarters building, which was opposed by the Opposition.
- The introduction of computerised fingerprint retrieval in Queensland in April 1987 as part of a national system. This involved expenditure in excess of \$1.5m.
- In May 1987, this Government instituted the Fitzgerald commission of inquiry, largely at my instigation, which, in the medium to long term, must benefit both our police force and the public it serves.

As I have moved among the police, I have learnt that, despite adverse odds, they will protect the people of this State. These are the men and women who stand for us in the front line of defence against violence and intimidation, injustice and wrong-doing. We may be assured that members of the police force, both uniformed and plain clothes, will not let anarchy take over. Their dedication and commitment to the cause of the people are too great.

I do not intend to allow policemen to be demoralised by improper news reporting and by a distortion of the facts. This Government and I as Police Minister are championing the cause of a true and honest police force to protect and serve the people, and efforts are being made to see that this State returns to national morality. I will not allow attempts to discredit our police or discredit them from doing their job to the best of their ability.

The Acting Commissioner, his commissioned officers and all other members of the police force as they properly carry out their sworn duty have the support of this Government and myself. There should be nothing done to reduce public faith in the police or to decrease effective law enforcement.

Therefore, this Government, with me as the Police Minister, shall not hesitate, for fear of criticism, to improve our police force.

**Mr Burns:** Why didn't you make those statements on Sunday?

**Mr GUNN:** We know who criticises the police!

I believe that it is reasonable to assume that, in the wake of the Fitzgerald inquiry, this Government will be furnished with a report which advocates substantial change to the ways in which the Queensland police force operates and is administered. The Government is going to be presented with an opportunity— a unique opportunity—to overhaul the operations of its police force in a way which not only establishes it on a sound and trusted basis for the future, but in a way which should also command heightened public respect for it. That is my aim and my sole objective for the Police Department.

To this end, Cabinet has recently approved the involvement of consultants to examine police work practices.

Honourable members are aware that I have recently been to the United Kingdom and West Germany to study aspects such as police training, recording of evidence from suspects, equipping of special police units and other factors involved with police administration. What we all must do, and that includes members of the police union and the Opposition, is look to the future. As Police Minister, I believe that this Government will be well placed to oversee the future development of its police force based on the findings of the Fitzgerald inquiry. To augment these, it will have the findings of a review of police work practices as well as advice on the latest in police training and other investigative matters from the British police system—an acknowledged leader in such fields.

What must be achieved is the melding together of all these facets for the good not only of our police force but also of our community generally. I urge the rank-and-file

police to be patient in the face of the current difficulties. This Government appreciates the work and dedication displayed by its police force.

In relation to the *Sunday Mail* report of 10 April, I point out that my remarks to that newspaper have been used out of context and presented, in my view, with excessive journalistic licence. At no time did I cast aspersions on the level of training or fitness of the entire Queensland police force. I did point out that I felt there was scope to improve officer training in the force, and I intend to pursue that. Yesterday I spoke to officers of the police union on that matter, and they agreed with what I said. To the police union, I simply say that there is no money-tree from which additional funds can be plucked.

In the lead-up to the 1988-89 Budget, naturally I will be seeking additional allocations for police to boost manpower and to accommodate at least some of the initiatives that are under consideration. There has to be a stringent application of overtime paid to the police. I remind honourable members that, in 1986-87, \$9m was allocated for overtime and that so far this financial year the amount spent is more than \$10m.

Budget allocations must not be exceeded, and public accountability of the Police Department must be exacted by responsible Government in spite of minority pressures advocating otherwise.

I urge honourable members to read the Police Department's annual report and to take account of what is being planned for the future of our police force. It is a crucial period for our police force and I do not intend to be diverted from my work by irresponsible influences trying to destroy the good that is being done in the interests of all.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### United Tree Farmers Limited; North Queensland Coffee Development

**Hon. N. J. HARPER** (Auburn—Minister for Primary Industries) (10.20 a.m.), by leave: I am concerned over approaches which are being made to the public, allegedly by United Tree Farmers Limited, to invest in a large-scale coffee development enterprise in far-north Queensland, especially in the Mareeba area.

United Tree Farmers Limited is a company incorporated in New South Wales and is under investigation by the Corporate Affairs Commissions in four States.

My inquiries indicate that the company's proposition to potential investors contains major inaccuracies which exaggerate likely coffee bean yields and price. These misrepresent likely future profitability and return on individual investment.

To obtain realistic estimates of profitability, I suggest that potential investors should refer to the bulletin issued by my department entitled *Profitability of Arabica Coffee Production in Far North Queensland*. Copies of the bulletin are available from either my office or my department's Mareeba office.

I remind potential investors of previous propositions which have been promoted in recent years as get-rich-quick schemes, including jojoba and aloe vera, through which many investors lost considerable sums of money. I warn members of the public not to invest in schemes unless they are shown a prospectus registered by the Corporate Affairs Commission. Documents such as that contain independent reports and facts in relation to the profit projections that are used by the promoters and should be carefully read before any decision is made to invest. No such prospectus has been approved by the Queensland Commissioner for Corporate Affairs concerning the United Tree Farmers Limited coffee development.

I also remind potential investors to ensure that sales representatives with whom they are dealing are licensed under securities industry legislation.

I am confident that a significant coffee industry will develop in north Queensland. I am committed to providing adequate resources to research and development programs

that are designed to address the major issues involved. However, the last thing that that fledgling industry wants at this stage of its development is for a commercial venture to be promoted on the basis of wildly exaggerated claims of profitability. Such activities can only lead to disillusionment on the part of investors, which could in turn do permanent damage to the prospects for a coffee industry in north Queensland.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Strike by Prison Officers at Brisbane Prison

**Hon. T. R. COOPER** (Roma—Minister for Corrective Services and Administrative Services) (10.23 a.m.), by leave: The reasons and ramifications of last week's disturbance and subsequent walk-out by prison officers at Brisbane Prison are cause for considerable concern.

The vast majority of prison officers are responsible and reliable people who have my total support. Those people have an onerous and difficult task and are deserving of public support. It is clear to me that their strike last week was precipitated by a small section within the union for reasons best known to themselves and not entirely related to the safety of their fellow-officers.

The original demand from the union last Thursday was for prison riot gear to be issued to staff in order to have maximum-security prisoners locked in their cells after the disturbance earlier that day. Several officers received abrasions and bruising in the disturbance with a small number of prisoners in Two Division—injuries which are of genuine concern to myself as Minister and to this Government. Subsequently, those prisoners involved in the disturbance were locked away.

Prison management took the view—a view which I supported—that, as the complex was back to normal after the incident, the appearance of officers in riot gear was totally unnecessary and would indeed create more trouble.

Because the riot equipment was not issued, and because of management's decision not to have prisoners who were not directly involved in the incident locked in their cells, the union threatened a strike. Negotiations were held between union representatives and management. However, the union demands continually changed.

Finally, after the prisoners were secured in their cells, officers in Two Division walked off the job. The industrial relations unit of Corrective Services had no time to negotiate with the union before the walk-out—a completely unfair and impossible situation.

The following morning the officers from the men's prison met outside the gaol and voted to strike for 24 hours. The ramifications of the industrial action were very serious. A small number of senior management and departmental staff had to deal with 550 prisoners, including 120 maximum-security prisoners. Police patrolled the gaol perimeter. No medication was left prepared. A prisoner with medical knowledge had to assist staff in the distribution of medication to prisoners.

Those in the union who led the strike talk about safety. I ask: what of the safety of those people who were left to run the prison?

On Friday, agreements were reached in the Industrial Commission and a return to work was secured. However, after the officers resumed work and had secured the prison for the evening, the vast majority of officers walked off the job again; a move which defied the ruling of the Industrial Commission. This was brought about by the fact that officers had been misinformed that they were only required to put the prisoners away—little comfort for those who had worked for 36 hours straight and had to stay on following the second walk-out. The men met again on Saturday morning and resumed work.

It is my job to ensure that the public is safe from some of the most dangerous prisoners in this State. This is something which becomes very difficult when officers walk off the job with very little notice. This type of action cannot be tolerated.

Since Friday night, senior departmental and prison staff have been receiving phone calls from officers claiming that they felt pressured into striking and confirming suspicions that the industrial action had very little to do with the issue of security but much to do with the self-interest of a small disruptive element within the officers' union.

Prison officers have one of the most difficult and important tasks in the community. Time and again I have supported these people who carry out their duty in a correct and professional way. Their job is vital.

The disruption and disrespect shown to the courts which prompted adverse comment from Mr Justice Thomas of the Supreme Court are matters for profound regret and simply cannot be condoned.

I will not, this Government will not and the people of Queensland will not stand for any person or group putting this system at risk in a selfish attempt to self-promote for reasons known only to themselves.

## QUESTIONS UPON NOTICE

### 1. Investigation by Former Minister for Justice and Attorney-General of Allegations Contained in Letter from Messrs Skinner and Smith

Mr INNES asked the Minister for Primary Industries—

“With reference to letters tabled in this House on 22 March, namely, a letter from a firm of solicitors, Skinner and Smith, in relation to their client, Mr Jeppesen, addressed to the Deputy Premier, Mr Gunn, to which is attached a response from the present Minister for Primary Industries, in his capacity as Minister for Justice and Attorney-General, as he then was, to the same letter, which is dated 27 August 1986, and which sets out that the client had made allegations of discovering SP betting networks, of taking evidence in the late 1970's or early 1980's to a meeting at Lennons Hotel involving three former National Party Ministers, the then Premier, Mr Camm and Mr Goleby, and of being fearful of speaking to the Commissioner of Police because of his association with Messrs Murphy and Herbert—

Apart from saying that the Government refused to be involved in the legal proceedings between Messrs Saunders, Pitts, Horgan and Jeppesen, did he consult any of his colleagues or did he make any inquiries as a result of the allegations about which he read in that letter?”

**Mr HARPER:** To the best of my recollection I did not consult with other than the Solicitor-General and the Crown Solicitor in this matter. The response given by me to correspondence from Messrs Skinner and Smith related to the question as to whether there was either a legal or moral liability in the Crown in the action the subject of Supreme Court writ No. 2001 of 1978, Saunders v. Pitts, Horgan and Jeppesen.

### 2. Inspection of Hambledon State School Bus Panels

Mr MENZEL asked the Minister for Transport—

“(1) Is he aware that, because of new transport regulations in relation to buses, there are schools that will be without buses in the near future?

(2) Is he aware that the Hambledon State School will lose its bus because the allowance provided by the Education Department is insufficient and also because his department is demanding to inspect bus panels which will cost thousands of dollars to replace?

(3) Is he aware of his department's demand to inspect the panels of the bus and is he further aware that, if a speck of rust appears, his officers insist that that steel be cut out and replaced although it may be clear that there is no structural danger?

(4) If he does not believe that statement in the previous part of this question, will he fly to Cairns so that I am allowed to prove it to him?"

**Mr I. J. GIBBS:** (1 to 4) The honourable member is, I believe, referring to the improved inspection standards instituted by the Commissioner for Transport during 1987. In the administration of the State Transport Act and the Motor Vehicles Safety Act, the Commissioner for Transport has a responsibility towards the public generally to ensure that public passenger vehicles are safe for use on our roads.

An investigation following the Cairns bus crash and other incidents involving buses found that numbers of buses, including school buses, were operating with structural defects likely to cause an accident or contribute to the severity of injuries in an accident. The Commissioner for Transport instituted new inspection procedures directed towards achieving improved safety standards for buses, including those used to transport school-children. Buses 20 years old or older must be presented for compulsory structural inspection. Exceptions to this requirement are made only in cases in which there is documentary evidence that refurbishing to a satisfactory standard has been undertaken in the preceding five years. A subsequent full structural inspection is required every five years.

Vehicles requiring structural repairs are issued with repair notices. Rusted frames are required to be repaired by the replacement of all rusted sections. Repairs must be effected by suitably qualified tradespersons and, on completion, are subjected to inspection by a transport inspector.

In relation to the other points raised by the honourable member, I would advise as follows: I am not aware of any schools that will be without buses in the near future. In fact, my inquiries show that school bus runs are sought-after and frequently attract prices up to twice the annual gross revenue. Presently, all buses throughout the State must undergo twice-yearly structural and mechanical safety inspections. As a general rule, inspections are carried out at six-monthly intervals. However, in cases in which a particular bus is found to be in poor condition, transport inspectors have been directed to carry out inspections at more regular intervals. Particular attention is being paid to buses 15 years old and older, as experience has shown those vehicles have a high incidence of structural corrosion. In cases where there is evidence of cracking or corrosion of a vehicle's subframe or structure, operators are instructed to remove outer panels to allow a thorough inspection of the suspect section. It is difficult to determine the condition of the bus frame by visual inspection of the vehicle with panels in place.

A school bus contractor serving the Hambledon State School recently had discussions with officers of my department and has subsequently indicated that he is negotiating to purchase a replacement vehicle. His present vehicle had a history of poor mechanical condition and, at the last inspection, showed considerable rust in the frame at the front and rear.

It is important that all public passenger buses, including those used to convey our school children, are structurally and mechanically sound. Recent inspections involving the removal of nominated panels to examine the bus frames have revealed many cases of extensive rusting and have shown the actions taken by the Commissioner for Transport to be fully justified.

### 3. **Fitzgerald Commission of Inquiry**

Mr MENZEL asked the Premier and Treasurer and Minister for the Arts—

“With reference to the Fitzgerald inquiry—

(1) What is the total cost to date of the inquiry?

(2) What has been the total amount paid to Commissioner Fitzgerald in fees, expenses, fares and accommodation?

(3) What has been the total cost of legal advisers assisting the commission and how much of that amount is legal fees paid to the advisers?

(4) Has any brothel owner, casino owner or police officer been charged?

(5) What are the terms of reference of the inquiry?

(6) How do the Lewis diaries, released every day for the media, contribute to investigating brothels and illegal casinos?

(7) How many criminals have been given indemnities against prosecution, and how many people have been charged as the result of their mostly hearsay evidence?

(8) Does he agree that the legal community is receiving a great financial boost to its coffers and will he agree that there may be a willingness on the part of many in the legal community to keep the inquiry going at taxpayers' expense with no results?"

**Mr AHERN:** (1) The total known cost up to 22 March 1988 is \$2,976,217.93. Other liabilities, including legal fees, have been incurred but not yet billed and paid.

(2) Mr Fitzgerald, QC, has been paid the sum of \$433,500 in relation to the period to 31 October 1987.

(3) The total amount paid to legal advisers assisting the commission is \$1,049,517.75.

(4) No criminal charges have been laid as the commission is yet to furnish a report. If the commission's report recommends charges, appropriate action will be taken then.

(5) The terms of reference of the inquiry were originally published in the *Government Gazette* of 26 May 1987, pages 758A-758B. Amended terms of reference were subsequently published in the *Government Gazette* on 24 June 1987, pages 1841A-1841B. I hereby table copies of these terms of reference.

(6) The diaries of Police Commissioner Lewis were accepted into evidence by Mr Fitzgerald, QC, after consideration of appropriate submissions from parties appearing before the inquiry.

(7) Eight persons have been given conditional indemnity from prosecution. It is fallacious to state that their evidence is mostly hearsay. Much of it has been direct evidence.

(8) Legal costs inevitably form a substantial part of the cost of any such inquiry, but there is not the slightest basis for a suggestion that it is being extended unnecessarily. On the contrary, Mr Fitzgerald, QC, has actively attempted to find means to complete the inquiry as expeditiously as possible, consistent with the proper performance of the task.

The inquiry being conducted by Mr Fitzgerald, QC, has the full support of the Queensland Government. All necessary expenses to enable the inquiry to successfully complete its investigations will be met by the Government. This is a small price to pay to ensure honesty in all levels of government and the police force. It is quite incorrect to state that the inquiry has produced no results.

*Whereupon the honourable member laid on the table the document referred to.*

#### 4. Expo 88, Cost and Revenue

Mr PALASZCZUK asked the Premier and Treasurer and Minister for the Arts—

“(1) What is the total financial outlay by the Expo authority to date?

(2) What is the estimated return from ticket sales, marketing and all other revenue raising initiatives by the Expo authority?

(3) What is the estimated financial benefit to the State, from all sources, as a result of holding World Expo 88?

(4) What is the anticipated total financial outlay by the Expo authority when Expo closes?

(5) What income has been collected from all sources by the Expo authority to this date?"

**Mr AHERN:** (1) The total gross financial outlay of the Expo Authority to the end of February is \$287m and the net amount is \$194m.

(2) Total estimated return is \$460m, apportioned as follows—

Tickets	\$146m
Land	\$186m
Rentals	\$33m
Other	\$95m

(3) An economic benefit study in 1983 estimated that the benefit for the State was in excess of \$1 billion and this is regarded as being very conservative.

(4) The estimated total financial outlay by the Expo Authority at the close of World Expo 88 is \$460m, offset by the revenue stated in (2) above.

(5) Income collected as at the end of February 1988 is \$93m, apportioned as follows—

Tickets	\$64m
Other	\$29m

For the benefit of honourable members, I would point out that if returns and outlays are as estimated, World Expo 88 will break even, and be the only one in the history of such expositions to do so. This is surely a tribute to the financial management of the Expo Authority and, indeed, the State Government, which was the only Government in Australia prepared to take on the task of staging this magnificent event.

## 5. Criticism of Gold Coast Seaway

**Mr HYND** asked the Minister for Water Resources and Maritime Services—

“With reference to past criticism of the operation of the Gold Coast Seaway on the Broadwater—

Will he explain how the entrance works and how the sand bypass functions?”

**Mr NEAL:** Since August 1982 the authority has had a plan entitled *Strategy Plan for the Long Term Development of the Southport Spit and Adjacent Broadwater*, based on a conceptual master plan approved in principle by the Government in March 1981. Since that time, the development of the area has generally proceeded along the lines of this strategy plan, with minor amendments being made as required by changing circumstances.

In December 1987, the authority commissioned experienced——

**Mr MACKENROTH:** I rise to a point of order. I think that the Minister is giving the answer to a different question.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The Minister has been asked to give the answer to question No. 5.

**Mr NEAL:** I beg your pardon, Mr Speaker. It is the answer to the next question. The wrong number has been put at the top. The answer is as follows—

The Gold Coast Seaway is one of the most significant coastal engineering projects ever undertaken in Australia. A full description of the state-of-the-art theory and technology underlying its relatively simple external appearance is not possible in a brief

reply. Detailed information on the project is, however, available to any member of the House from my Department of Harbours and Marine.

What makes the Gold Coast Seaway different from other trained river entrances, such as the Tweed River entrance at the southern end of the Gold Coast, is that the interference by the training walls with the natural longshore movement of sand northwards along the coastline has been overcome by the provision of a sand by-passing system a few hundred metres south of the southern training wall. This system comprises a jetty accommodating a series of 10 special jet pumps which are located at 30 metre intervals below the seabed across the surf zone where most of the net northward sand transport along the beach occurs. The moving sand is picked up by these pumps, before it reaches the southern breakwater, and pumped through a pipeline under the entrance to discharge on the northern side.

This avoids two main problems. Firstly, the southern training wall does not trap vast quantities of sand, which would cause corresponding erosion north of the entrance, such as has been caused at the southern end of the Gold Coast by the Tweed River training walls. Secondly, the sand moving along the beach does not get the opportunity to move around the end of the southern training wall in sufficient quantities to form a sand bar across the entrance, which would, of course, defeat the aim of the project to provide a safe, navigable entrance. This problem is also very apparent at the Tweed River entrance.

Since its official opening in May 1986, the sand by-passing system has pumped more than 1 million cubic metres of sand across the entrance, and the operational performance of the seaway as a safe, navigable entrance under all but the most severe weather conditions has exceeded expectations.

The project has attracted worldwide interest, and a considerable number of overseas coastal engineering experts have carried out inspections of the seaway in the company of officers of the Department of Harbours and Marine and the Gold Coast Waterways Authority. Based on its performance to date, the Gold Coast Seaway is a project of which all Queenslanders can be proud.

## **6. Gold Coast Waterways Authority, Planning for Future**

Mr HYND asked the Minister for Water Resources and Maritime Services—

“As there has been considerable criticism in the past of the lack of proper and thoughtful planning for the future on the part of the Gold Coast Waterways Authority, what action has been taken to remedy this situation?”

Mr NEAL: Since August 1982, the authority has had a plan entitled *Strategy Plan for the Long Term Development of the Southport Spit and Adjacent Broadwater*, based on a conceptual master plan approved in principle by the Government in March 1981. Since that time, the development of the area has generally proceeded along the lines of this strategy plan, with minor amendments being made as required by changing circumstances.

In December 1987, the authority commissioned experienced urban consultants, Plant Location International Pty Ltd, to prepare a management plan for all of the waterway areas under its control. The plan is to consider future residential and tourist industry demands as well as the means of resolving potential conflicts between recreational and commercial fishermen, tour boat operators, the recreational boating public and other recreational users such as sailboarders, paraflayers, etc. The draft plan is expected to be produced by the end of this financial year. All relevant departments and authorities are being approached to provide detailed input and comments on the plan. As part of the project, the original strategy plan will be reviewed for relevance and appropriateness.

As such, I consider that the development of the Broadwater and Spit areas is being carried out on a responsible and planned basis by the Gold Coast Waterways Authority, and the authority's efforts in this regard are worthy of considerable public support.



**7. State Service Superannuation Scheme**

Mr HAYWARD asked the Premier and Treasurer and Minister for the Arts—

“With reference to the State Service Superannuation Scheme and to media reports, namely, *The Daily Sun* article of 18 January 1988 which stated: ‘The Premier, Mr Ahern, declined to make a detailed comment on the issue, but said he was aware the scheme faced problems similar to those in other States’ and his expressed concern in the *Australian Financial Review* of 14 March 1988 about the high level of early retirements which apparently have led to a drain of the superannuation fund’s resources—

(1) Does he stand by his ministerial statement that the State Service Superannuation Scheme is ‘fully funded’?

(2) Will he detail the ‘problems’ (his expression) faced by the State Service Superannuation Scheme?

(3) Will he arrange for the State Service Superannuation Fund and Additional Benefits Fund to publish a detailed list of individual securities held by these funds and the individual loans made by the funds, indicating the term and interest rates?

(4) Will he arrange for those statements to be audited by the Auditor-General?”

Mr AHERN: (1) Yes.

(2) The Government’s decision to provide for optional retirement for public servants at age 55, and the clear preference of retirees for lump-sum pay-outs rather than pensions, will inevitably result in a substantial increase in expenditure from the funds in the short term. However, as pay-outs for retirees have been calculated on an actuarially neutral basis, the longer-term impact on the funds will be nil.

At the same time, the Government’s commitment to a financially responsible, fully funded scheme has resulted in an escalating employer contribution cost at a time when the State Budget is under severe pressures. These problems will not sway the Government from providing the appropriate long-term funding strategy for its employees’ superannuation scheme.

The State Service Superannuation Scheme is, and will remain, fully funded. The Government will not allow to develop in Queensland the crippling financial position of schemes in other States, where massive obligations remain completely unfunded with very real threats to employee benefits—that is, of course, if the member for Caboolture’s cohorts in Canberra do not get to them first, which at the moment is a very real prospect.

(3) (a) The State Service Superannuation Fund has no specific investments made in its name. The fund is provided with a guaranteed return and its corpus is fully protected, as all investments are made via the Treasury cash balances in gilt-edged, bank-guaranteed commercial bills and letters of credit, Commonwealth and other Government guaranteed securities.

(b) The majority of State Service Superannuation Additional Benefits Fund balances are invested in a manner similar to that of the SSSF. However, as at 31 December 1987, some \$123.7m was outstanding in 977 separate loans from the fund to various councils and other statutory bodies. Full details of the individual loans are published in the various *Government Gazettes* and hence would be available to the honourable member from these sources.

For the benefit of the honourable member, I seek leave to incorporate in *Hansard* a table setting out a broad disaggregation of loans made.

Leave granted.

Type of Statutory Body	No. of Loans	Value (At 31/12/87) \$
City Councils	366	35,248,291.37
Town Councils	22	489,177.12
Shire Councils	381	18,014,415.40
Hospitals Boards	69	6,514,204.22
Port Authorities	28	5,926,781.98
Fire Brigade Boards	3	181,137.78
Commodity Boards	6	570,431.49
Government Departments and Statutory Bodies	52	50,121,275.99
Brisbane and Area Water Board	1	494,301.06
Queensland Livestock and Meat Industry Authority and Abattoir Boards	2	1,168,243.42
Other	47	4,952,687.76

Mr AHERN: I would point out that the majority of these loans were made in the period 1971-72 to 1981-82 at rates significantly higher than those currently prevailing, with the result that the average rate of return on these loans is in excess of 11 per cent.

(4) All accounting operations of both the SSSABF and the SSSF, including lending, are subject to audit by the Auditor-General. In this regard, I refer the honourable member to the relevant sections of the document entitled *Departmental Accounts Subsidiary to the Public Accounts 1986-87*.

## QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

### Statements by Minister for Police about Police Officers

Mr GOSS: In directing a question to the Premier and Treasurer, I refer to the ministerial statement by the Minister for Police, Mr Gunn, this morning in which he did not deny his comments at the week-end that Queensland police officers are fat, lazy, pampered and poorly trained, but rather claimed that those comments were taken out of context and further criticised the police union. In the light of the Queensland Government's underfunding of the Queensland police force, which receives the lowest allocation of any State in Australia, and the difficulties faced by police in attempting to carry out their duties without sufficient funds for proper staffing, overtime, equipment and other resources, I ask: (1) Does he endorse the Minister's statement this morning and dissociate himself from Sunday's comments? (2) Will he remove responsibility for police to another Minister?

Mr AHERN: The Honourable Minister for Police has made a statement to the House this morning, which I support. I support the Minister for Police.

### Alleged Cover-up of Cattle-stealing at Charters Towers

Mr GOSS: In directing a question to the Minister for Police, I refer him to a report in last week-end's *Sunday Sun* and other media that a Queensland Cabinet Minister was implicated in the 1985 cover-up of cattle-stealing in the Charters Towers region, an issue that I raised in 1985, involving retired police superintendent Mervyn Stevenson and a police officer, Sergeant John Milliner, both then members of the National Party. I ask: is this the same Mervyn Stevenson who in the late 1970s investigated serious allegations of police involvement in drug activities in the Mareeba area, and was Sergeant Milliner one of the officers he investigated? Was Milliner at that time a National Party campaign supporter of the present Minister for Mines and Energy, and also a shareholder in the Minister's family company, Tenni Hardware? Is it a fact that, as a result of Stevenson's findings, no charges were laid against Milliner or any other officer and Milliner was moved to Townsville, where Stevenson was in charge, even though Milliner was originally listed for transfer to Brisbane?

In view of the alarming indications of political interference, victimisation of at least two police investigators and a possible criminal cover-up, will the Minister now refer this in its entirety to the Director of Prosecutions so that he can make further inquiries as to whether charges should be laid? Finally, who is the Cabinet Minister allegedly

implicated and will the Minister for Police ensure that the Director of Prosecutions investigates that Minister's role in the affair to decide if a prima facie case exists for a charge of interfering with the course of justice?

**Mr GUNN:** I believe that this is before the Fitzgerald commission of inquiry at present. In due course, there is no doubt that the honourable member will have all of his answers.

One of the main troubles with members of the Opposition is that the ALP geese have turned into swans and they are starting to sing. They are singing all over the countryside. They are groping around at any old thing that they can pick up to try to find something. The Leader of the Opposition read in the paper that the matter was before the commission of inquiry. If he read the paper, he would have seen the article. He will have his answer in due course.

**Mr Goss:** Is it covered by the terms of reference?

**Mr GUNN:** At present it is before the Fitzgerald inquiry and it will be dealt with by that inquiry.

#### **Submarine Construction Contract**

**Mr FITZGERALD:** I direct a question to the Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Affairs. In the light of the current debacle over the submarine construction contract awarded to South Australia, I ask: what is the position in Queensland in relation to this type of work? What action should the Federal Government take to ensure that our defence is not further jeopardised?

**Mr LESTER:** Two years ago the Queensland Government and North Queensland Engineers and Agents successfully built patrol boats, and the work was completed on time. It was a credit to the people of north Queensland. Queensland companies have always supplied well and delivered well for our defence forces.

Recently, submarine construction contracts were awarded to South Australia. The reason given was a supposedly good industrial relations record in South Australia. I point out that it is clear that that contract was awarded to South Australia for political reasons and for no other reasons whatsoever.

Where is that good industrial relations record? In some five weeks since the contract was awarded nothing has happened. There has been a dispute. Three unions are arguing amongst themselves as to who will do the job. In the meantime the defences of our country are weakened.

This very important contract is worth \$4.3 billion. The South Australian Government is unable to do anything about it. The Federal Government does not want to do anything about it. So the strike continues.

When the coastal surveillance contractors were late with the delivery of aircraft it did not take the Federal Government long to cancel that contract.

In the interests of this country and the jobs that could be generated, I make a plea to the Federal Government to cancel the contracts in South Australia and give them back to Queensland. Queensland will do the job; it will do it on time and it will do it well.

#### **Main Roads Minister's Meeting with Liberal Members concerning Route 20**

**Mr BURNS:** I direct a question to the Deputy Premier and Minister for Main Roads. In a question asked on 17 March in relation to Route 20 I asked whether a Liberal member of Parliament arranged for a group to visit the Minister. The Minister replied—

“I have had no dialogue with Liberal Members of Parliament in this matter whatsoever.”

When I interjected, "The Liberal members have not contacted you at all?", the Minister replied—

"I have had letters from Liberal members but no dialogue to any great extent with them."

How does the Minister explain that answer in the Parliament when, in a letter dated 29 January 1988 from Lyle Schuntner, MLA, the member for Mount Coot-tha, to Mr J. Channer, the secretary of the CART committee, Mr Schuntner said—

"I refer to your letter of 28 January about my meeting with Mr Gunn and your request for representations from the committee to be included at that meeting.

The meeting was held yesterday and I would welcome the opportunity to discuss with representatives of the C.A.R.T. committee the points made at that meeting, both by Mr Gunn and myself."

I am sure that the Minister is aware that under the Westminster system Ministers do not have to answer a question but they must not mislead the Parliament. As the Minister has denied in this Parliament that he met with Liberal members, and as Mr Schuntner has written a letter to his constituents saying that the Minister met with him, is it right to say that the Minister did meet with him before he answered that question? If so, under the Westminster system the Minister should resign, and I ask him, as a responsible Minister, to resign.

**Mr GUNN:** I received written requests from Mr Schuntner to meet with the particular organisation the honourable member is talking about. I think it is called CART. I told him that at the appropriate time I would do so. The only Liberal person apart from him whom I met in relation to Route 20 was the Lord Mayor.

**Mr Burns:** Did you meet Mr Schuntner?

**Mr GUNN:** I have met him socially many, many times, but I have never met him by way of a deputation.

**Mr Burns:** He's a liar, then.

**Mr GUNN:** He is not a liar, either. I never met him by way of a deputation. He sought permission to bring CART members along to me. I said that at the appropriate time I would meet them. I never met that deputation.

**Mr Burns:** You never met Mr Schuntner?

**Mr GUNN:** I never met the deputation.

**Mr BURNS:** Later, after question-time, I shall raise a point of privilege on that matter. In the meantime, I place on notice a question about the Minister's overseas trip.

### **Teaching of English in Queensland Schools**

**Mr STEPHAN:** I ask the Minister for Education, Youth and Sport: is he aware of recent statements by tertiary educators and others that many students entering tertiary education are lacking in the areas of comprehension and written expression? I also ask: what is the Queensland Government doing to ensure that the teaching of English in our schools is given high priority?

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** I am aware of the comments referred to by the honourable member. It is true that some students entering tertiary institutions lack the degree of expertise needed to express themselves suitably. What usually happens now with the ASAT testing is that multiple-choice questioning is used. That requires very little original thought or expression in grammatical form. In various faculties at tertiary institutions it has become quite noticeable that although young people who are attending those institutions have great knowledge in subjects such as mathematics and science, they lack the necessary high level of skills to express themselves in a written form. Over the years it was not unusual for the Education Department to adopt corrective measures. Mr

Speaker, when you held the Education portfolio as far back as 1986, you asked for amendments to be made to the syllabuses for Junior and Senior English. I can go back to about 1970 during my teaching career when I became aware that a young Rotary exchange student from the USA had a tremendous ability to express himself orally and that his ability was much greater than that of the children of Queensland. It was not long after that time that the Queensland Education Department placed emphasis on oral expression as well as on written expression. It would seem now that perhaps the pendulum has swung somewhat too far and that stage has been reached at which it is necessary for the pendulum to swing back and for the problem to be readdressed to ensure that young Queenslanders have the ability to express themselves in written form as well as being able to express themselves in oral form.

Honourable members who have attended various speech nights would agree that young Queenslanders have a tremendous ability to project themselves in an oral form in front of the public. To address the present problem, in 1989 the Queensland Government will introduce a written expression test into the ASAT test. I have mentioned before that currently the ASAT test is a series of multiple-choice questions. The new innovation by the Education Department is welcomed by many educators. In the week-end newspapers I read that a vice-chancellor and a director of a college of advanced education stated that the proposal was something that had been sought. Members of the teaching profession have also been pressing for such a test.

Mr Speaker, you would remember that that was one of the recommendations contained in a report that was handed down at the end of last year. The Education Department is in the process of implementing some of those recommendations. The written expression test is just one of those recommendations. It follows hard on the heels of the other decision that was made about TE scores. For a fortnight young Queenslanders will be given a chance to reconsider their preferences for entry into tertiary institutions. This test is part of an ongoing process of making changes to the education system in Queensland. I am sure that the public at large will welcome the new written expression test as part of the ASAT test.

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

## MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

### Government Services; Police Force

**Mr GOSS** (Logan—Leader of the Opposition) (11 a.m.): Today I want to raise particularly the question of Government services. If there are two things that the people of Queensland want from their State Government, it is firm leadership and a fair level of Government services. They are getting neither.

Today I want to present proof of the National Party State Government's neglect and financial persecution of the Queensland police force.

There can be no argument that not only the Minister for Police, Mr Gunn, but also this whole administration have become an albatross around the neck of the Queensland police force.

The problem is twofold: firstly, the specific problem of bumbling, inept—and now insulting when put under pressure—Cabinet representation; and, secondly, a long and consistent record of financial discrimination against the police of this State.

The point that the police and the public must realise is that, although it is absolutely vital that the Minister be removed, that would not solve the problem, because the police are simply not being provided with the resources that they need to do the job. That is why policemen in their hundreds and thousands are signing petitions which criticise this administration and are giving them to the Leader of the Opposition to present to this Parliament. That action is not so much a personal attack on the Minister; it is not a political attack; and it is not a means of asking for better conditions for police officers. By signing these petitions in their hundreds, those police officers are asking for the tools,

the men, the women and the equipment to do the job. Because this Government's administration forces them into that position, police officers in this State are sick and tired of being blamed for the poor level of police services.

Tomorrow, in addition to the petitions containing the 800 or so signatures that have already been presented, I will be presenting to this Parliament a further petition containing 691 signatures. That totals 1 500 signatories. There are more petitions to come from the State's 5 000 police officers, which goes to show their level of concern with this Government and this Minister's administration.

Now, more than ever, the Queensland public and this State's police force need a Minister who can provide competent leadership and competent representation in Cabinet. But what does he do? He responds by abusing and insulting those very police officers who form the front line in serving this State under trying and difficult circumstances. When he rose in this House today to explain his disgraceful remarks of Sunday, what did the Minister do? He did not deny he described our police as fat, lazy, pampered and poorly trained. Instead, he tried to squib it by saying that his remarks were taken out of context; that the journalist who reported his comments is somehow to blame. However, it is significant that he did not deny those remarks.

The longer-term problem is one of inexcusable neglect, which is documented in the latest report of the Commonwealth Grants Commission that was released less than a fortnight ago. That report chronicles the Queensland Government's drastic underfunding of all of those services to the community for which it is primarily responsible, such as police, education and health. That systematic and deliberate underfunding has now reached the stage at which many of those services, such as the police force, are in serious crisis.

For the information of all honourable members I table one of the main summary tables of the 1988 Grants Commission report.

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

**Mr GOSS:** That report shows that the State Government's spending on services during 1986-87 fell short of its revenue—not short of what was needed, let me stress at this stage, but short of its revenue collections—by \$360m. The Queensland Government collected \$4,539m for recurrent purposes but it spent only \$4,179m, which represents a shortfall of \$360m. Quite simply, the question that I put to the Government is: where is the money?

When the Opposition recommends or calls for greater spending on community services, we hear so often from this Government, "Where is the money going to come from?" That is its excuse—where is the money coming from?

The Commonwealth Grants Commission report shows that the question should be: where is the money going to? In terms of what it spends, this Government is diverting funds away from what it collects. The collections for recurrent purposes have been diverted elsewhere. As Premier and Treasurer, Mr Ahern should answer the question: where is the money going to? He is now responsible for that underfunding.

A closer examination of the Grants Commission report reveals that this Government spends the least of any State in such crucial areas as secondary education, child welfare, care for the aged, industrial development—the list goes on.

Specifically, let me refer to the police force. At present, spending on police accounts for 4 per cent of this State's Budget. Four per cent of the \$360m of revenue that this Government has diverted away from recurrent expenditure represents \$15m that has been deliberately held back from the police force. That is not money that is additionally needed; it has already been collected. That deprivation of the police force comes at a time when it cannot make ends meet; when it can afford only 50 new bullet-proof vests for a police strength of more than 5 000—and does so only because Expo has come along—when it cannot afford reflective vests for police on night traffic duty; when it cannot even afford police identification stickers for the sides of police motor vehicles;

when some police vehicles are being plundered, as it were, for spare parts such as fan belts and batteries that are needed to keep other vehicles on the road; when it cannot afford to buy police motor cycles to help to attack the road toll; and when the drug squad is understaffed.

The Government claims to represent country people, yet I have with me letters from the police union and a report from the district officer of the Mareeba district, which I will table. That correspondence points out the lack of facilities being made available to police in rural areas for the stock squad and for the purpose of policing marijuana production in north Queensland. The police are not receiving the resources.

In a report to the Minister dated 28 January 1988, the district officer from Mareeba complained bitterly. I table that report.

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

**Mr GOSS:** The police are simply not receiving the resources that they need. Although Queensland needed to spend that money, it has not. Police investigation and protection of our suburbs and neighbourhoods have come to a standstill. The public know that.

The Grants Commission report provides other interesting comparisons. I table the relevant section of it.

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

**Mr GOSS:** The report shows that the Queensland Government's spending per capita, when compared with that of other States, fell short of the national average by more than \$8. Queensland spent \$81.41 per capita, compared with the national average of \$89.48. Based on Queensland's population of 2.65 million, that \$8 per head represents \$21m in underspending on the Queensland police force when compared with average spending for Australia.

That is not the end of the underfunding story. The Grants Commission report has also to be looked at to see how Federal funds allocated to Queensland on the basis of providing services to an assessed national standard are being diverted. The report shows that Queensland, if it were to provide funding to that assessed national standard, should have spent \$95.79 per person last financial year on police services.

**Mr Austin:** How much were the other States contributing to their superannuation scheme?

**Mr GOSS:** That is a red herring.

**Mr Austin:** It is not a red herring at all.

**Mr GOSS:** If the honourable member looks at the report he will see that Queensland received more money than most other States.

No matter which way it is looked at, Queensland is underfunding the Police Department. The Minister for Finance is also responsible for that. The Government has failed to meet its obligations, not just to the police but more importantly to the people of Queensland. The people want their suburbs and their neighbourhoods protected. They want their cars and their homes protected. They want their lives and their property protected.

**Mr Austin:** How much was spent in capital works?

**Mr GOSS:** All the Minister for Finance can do is make cheap political points. He should be looking after the people. He should be properly accounting for the money he collects. Instead, he diverts that money away from the police force and thereby unfairly discriminates against it.

Do we find that Minister or the Minister for Police going to Cabinet, going in to bat for the police who are struggling to do their job, to get the extra funding which they

need, and which is being diverted? No! Instead, insults are made about police being fat and lazy. Instead, the Minister is pampering himself by jetting off to Paris and London for a couple of weeks. The police in Queensland are sick and tired of this. They do not control the purse-strings. They are not finally responsible for the administration. Mr Gunn and the entire Cabinet are responsible. The police are entitled to a Minister who administers his portfolio and represents the people of Queensland responsibly.

The first step towards getting Queensland the police force it deserves is for Mr Ahern to show some leadership and remove the Police Minister from responsibility. The second step is for Mr Ahern, Mr Austin and the rest of them to give the Police Department the funds it needs to do the job. Police are crying out for the funds they need to do the job, to provide the level of protection that the public want for their homes, their lives, their cars and their neighbourhoods. They are not getting those funds because, in terms of the revenue received, the Government diverts that money.

Time expired.

### **World Heritage Listing of Fraser Island**

**Mr ALISON** (Maryborough) (11.10 a.m.): I rise this morning to refer to a matter which is causing very serious concern in my electorate and which reminds the people of the Maryborough district what happened in 1976 when sand-mining was stopped on Fraser Island by the Fraser Liberal Government. In particular I refer to the activities of the Australian Conservation Foundation, along with the Australian Labor Party in Queensland, in its promotion of World Heritage listing for Fraser Island.

In 1976, the Maryborough district lost 250 jobs directly as a result of sand-mining being stopped by the Fraser Government at the behest of the Fraser Island Defenders Organisation. Quite a number of honourable members opposite who are members of the Australian Labor Party are also members of the Fraser Island Defenders Organisation. The 250 jobs lost were not the total number of jobs lost; they were the jobs lost directly through that action. Probably another 200 jobs were lost indirectly as a result of that action.

The paltry sum of \$10m was paid in compensation, which really adds insult to injury when it is remembered that, as a result of the activities of DM, the economic generation through sand-mining in one year would be more than \$5.5m, made up of subcontract payments, freight paid to the railways, local purchases and wages.

The proposal from the Australian Conservation Foundation that seeks the listing of Fraser Island as a World Heritage area is not needed at all for the benefit of the island. The honourable member for Windsor, Mr Pat Comben, has promoted in this House the idea that Fraser Island should be listed under World Heritage listing proposals. I presume that the honourable member was speaking on behalf of the ALP. Of itself, World Heritage listing is not really a problem; it is what flows from the listing that is the problem. I do not foresee any problem with World Heritage listing alone. In fact, the publicity would assist tourism. However, because of the consequences of the listing, the issue is deeper than that.

Let me turn now to examine some of those consequences. The Federal Government would invoke its powers under the World Heritage Properties Conservation Act, which it has already done in north Queensland with disastrous and unnecessary results. I understand that approximately 800 jobs have been lost in north Queensland—thanks to the Federal Hawke Government and the support of the Queensland Labor Party. The Federal Government showed no regard for employment in the area or management of the area by the Queensland Government. For many years, the Queensland Government has been managing Fraser Island largely through the Forestry Department and, in more recent years, also through the National Parks and Wildlife Service. The results of that management have brought great benefit to the island. The island has been cleaned up and facilities have been built for use by tourists.



It is interesting to note that in a document circulated by the Federal Government, reference is made to management plans. The document states—

“Given the aim of the World Heritage convention to protect worldwide heritage of outstanding universal value, the World Heritage Committee is concerned, when assessing nominations, to ensure that appropriate management plans exist for the proper conservation of potential World Heritage areas.

With regard to management methods and options, there are many alternatives and the best arrangements tend to vary from site to site. In Australia, these arrangements have been determined following appropriate consultation at Federal, State and local levels.”

That statement would have to be a great piece of hypocrisy and a straight-out lie because, as far as north Queensland was concerned, no consultation took place. This is what the people who live in the Maryborough district fear.

Another consequence of World Heritage listing is that the Federal Government could also use its external affairs powers by using the precedent of the Franklin River case. For all practical purposes, the Federal Government could just take over the island, stop logging from taking place on the island—which is what concerns me at present—and also stop tourism if it so desired.

Let me outline some facts about Fraser Island because everyone has heard enough lies, deceit and gross misrepresentation of what is going on. The total area of Fraser Island is 163 000 hectares, which is made up of 105 000 hectares of State forests, 52 400 hectares of national park and 5 600 hectares of vacant and other Crown land and freehold land. The forest types on the island within the State forest total 105 000 hectares. Of that total, only 1 466 hectares contain rainforest, in spite of what has been said by FIDO and certain other organisations.

Also, in spite of what has been said by FIDO and members of other organisations, including members of the Labor Party, no logging is carried out in rainforest areas on Fraser Island; nor is there any intention to do so. The bulk of the 36 550 hectares of commercial forest is made up largely of blackbutt, satinay and brush box emergents, often with an understorey of rainforest species.

In 1958 the volume of merchantable trees over a certain size set by the Forestry Department was estimated to be 48 cubic metres per hectare in the commercial forest area. In 1978 another survey carried out by the Forestry Department estimated that the volume of merchantable trees at that time was of the order of 54 cubic metres per hectare in the commercial forests. Therefore, during that period of 20 years, the volume of timber over a certain size has increased quite substantially. That fact kills the suggestion made by FIDO, the Australian Conservation Foundation and certain members of the Labor Party that the island—particularly the forest areas—is being wrecked and destroyed. In fact, the volume of the forest on the island has obviously grown and, at the same time the quality has improved. This forest area sustains an industry that directly employs 149 workers and probably another 150 workers.

Logging normally covers approximately 500 hectares per year, which is one-seventieth of the commercial forest area on the island. This is a matter which the more radical greenies do not like to talk about. Because of the fact that only 500 hectares per year are logged, there is a 70-year cycle between cuts in any area and the species which are supposed to have been logged out are still well represented. For example, kauri pine makes up more than 18 per cent of the regeneration in four of the eight areas of satinay/box-type forests which were surveyed in the early 1980s.

Clause 12.1 of the ALP's land and environmental policy, which was recently quoted by Mr Hampson, states—

“A Queensland Labor Government would recommend that Fraser Island and Cooloolo National Park, to be known as Great Sandy Region, be nominated for listing on the World Heritage List.”

That is pretty clear. The honourable member for Windsor has promoted this policy and the ALP is committed to it in the event of the election of a Labor Government in this State.

It is my intention to issue a challenge to Mr Goss to state quite clearly in this House, for the benefit of the people in the Maryborough district, exactly where he stands on this issue. Would he go about implementing this policy, if this State were to have a Labor Government? The people who live in the Maryborough district would like to know. I also challenge Mr Innes and the Liberal Party to state where they stand in regard to this proposal to list Fraser Island on the World Heritage List. The members of the Maryborough branches of the ALP have been very quiet. They would prefer that this matter went away. They do not want to speak about it.

I will be making quite a few noises in my electorate and will be challenging the members of the Maryborough branches of the ALP to come clean. Will they work at the State ALP conference—that is if the ALP is game enough to have one this year—towards repudiating this policy? If this policy is implemented it will be a dreadful blow to the Maryborough district. I ask the members of the ALP in Maryborough to have this matter taken out of the ALP's policy. I ask: will they also support this Government in its efforts to stop any proposal by the Hawke Federal Government to list Fraser Island on the World Heritage List?

I know that the statement was made recently by Senator Richardson, the Federal Minister for the Environment, that at this point in time—I believe those were his words—the Hawke Federal Government was not considering listing Fraser Island. One only has to go through the list of broken promises made by the Hawke Federal Government over the last five years—which would probably take several foolscap pages of single-line spacing—to realise that one cannot give too much credence to that statement. The Hawke Federal Government would only have to see enough greenie votes down south and it could easily set about doing to Fraser Island and the Maryborough and Hervey Bay districts what it has done to north Queensland.

Time expired.

#### **Proposed World Heritage Listing of North Queensland Rainforest Areas**

**Mr De LACY (Cairns) (11.20 a.m.):** Today I wish to register the concern of the Opposition about the attitude expressed by the previous speaker on behalf of the State Government in regard to World Heritage listing.

The Opposition is concerned that if the State Government is successful in its opposition to World Heritage listing in north Queensland, north Queensland will be faced with having to accommodate a major wind-down in its timber industry without the benefit of Commonwealth compensation or assistance. If the State Government is not successful—as seems highly likely—the Opposition is concerned that it will be so bloody-minded that it will attempt to frustrate Commonwealth measures that are aimed at minimising personal and economic dislocation.

Since Parliament resumed this year, Ministers have repeatedly made ministerial statements and answered Dorothy Dix questions on World Heritage listing. They have been totally unprepared, however, to respond to Opposition calls for a full debate on the subject. One can conclude only that, for reasons that will soon become obvious, they are frightened of an open debate.

The Queensland Government is double-dealing on conservation. In south Queensland it is conservationist, banning sand-mining on Moreton Island, saving the bats at Mount Etna and so forth. I presume that is part of the vision of excellence. In south Queensland, Government members are really small "l" liberals, but in north Queensland, because there is some short-term perceived political capital to be made, they are still the same old red-necked, anti-conservation, anti-World Heritage greenie-busters. In that they are aided and abetted, of course, by the League of Rights, which is very much involved, despite Sir Robert Sparkes' misgivings.

It is obvious that there are two reasons why Queensland Ministers will not debate World Heritage listing in State Parliament. Firstly, they would destroy their new-found conservation credentials in the south and, secondly, since the release of a scientific report by their own Northern Rainforest Management Authority—NORMA—they are left with no grounds for credible argument.

Let me have a look at this report which, according to Mr Muntz, is a so-called stolen document. I obtained my copy from the CSIRO library in Atherton. It is publicly available to anybody who wants to go in there. It is titled *Land use planning for the rainforest of Far North Queensland*, is dated 23 February 1988 and was compiled by NORMA's scientific committee under the auspices of Mr Earle Saxon of the Queensland Department of Geographic Information. I ask the House to remember that the committee was co-opted by NORMA, that body that was formed expressly to oppose World Heritage listing on behalf of the Queensland Government. The scientific committee has carried out a so-called Delphi study based on information collected from 14 of the nation's most respected scientists, experts in the different relevant areas. Despite plaintive cries to the contrary by those devastated by its message, this is the definitive document.

Let me tell the House what this august body of scientists has come up with. Firstly, the committee found that, out of an area of 167 000 hectares allocated for logging by the Forestry Department, an area of 126 000 hectares, or three-quarters of the total area, was of such high conservation significance that it should not be logged. This would reduce the timber industry to about 30 per cent of its 1987 level. Secondly, the committee could identify only 23 700 hectares, or just 2.5 per cent of the area nominated for World Heritage listing, that could be rated as having low-conservation priority—that is, that probably could not justify inclusion within the boundaries. However, the report goes on to point out that there is an area of 84 000 hectares of rainforest outside the nominated area that has the highest conservation significance. In other words, the State Government's own committee found three times the area outside the World Heritage boundaries that ought to be included than it found inside the boundary that ought not be included. This finding must have struck opponents of World Heritage listing like a mule kick in the head. It was devastating.

The report went on to propose a number of different management options for north Queensland rainforests. The most favourable outcome for the timber industry, the so-called logging-maximised option, concluded that about half the forest currently allocated by the Forestry Department for logging would be lost and would lead to a 50 per cent reduction in the value of timber production. In other words, the proposal that maximises logging at the expense of conservation removes nearly 80 000 hectares from the Forestry Department's logging area of 167 000 hectares, because of its high conservation value. On the other hand, in the conservation-maximised scenario, only 28 300 hectares, or 4 per cent of north Queensland rainforests, would be available for logging. That would leave the industry at little more than 20 per cent of its current size. These findings clearly vindicate the Commonwealth Government's unilateral action in nominating the area, given that the Queensland Government insisted from the outset that its position on logging was non-negotiable. It also, of course, caused great embarrassment to the Queensland Government and to NORMA.

Mr Muntz and others have been trying to destroy the credibility of the report by saying that it contained computer errors. If that is so, why not release the final document in which, presumably, these have been corrected? I understand that it has been completed.

I hereby challenge Mr Muntz to publicly release the final report of NORMA's scientific committee. The State Government's credibility is on the line. It should put up or shut up—release the report or for ever hold its peace.

What the report really means is that the State Government is finally and reluctantly coming around to accepting some realities—home truths—which, if accepted two years ago, would have obviated the necessity for the Commonwealth to take unilateral action on World Heritage listing. Those truths are—

- (1) Virgin forest needs to be completely protected.

- (2) The conservation value of the northern rainforests is such that the logging industry would need to be reduced to at least 30 per cent of present levels.

The great dilemma for the State Government now is that, if it is successful in sabotaging the Commonwealth's bid to have the forests listed, we will still be faced with the inevitable wind-down of the logging industry, and virtually all of the mill closures and retrenchments predicted under World Heritage listing proposals, except that in this instance the people of north Queensland would be forced to carry the whole of the economic burden, as the Commonwealth walked away with the \$60m to \$100m compensation package. This nonsense has gone on long enough. The fact of life is that World Heritage listing is going ahead. All of the State Government posturing and politicking will not make one iota of difference.

I call on the State Government to stop spending tax-payers' money on fruitless and pointless exercises that are nothing more than political stunts—like High Court challenges that are doomed to failure; or international junkets that no-one overseas is interested in; or poor old Reg Lockyer and his international mission to bucket the Australian Government—the Michael Mansell of the rainforests!

He, unelected and uninvited, is to travel overseas and tell everybody that the Australian Government is no good. It is all very sad, except that they are making fools of us all on the world stage.

The Opposition supports World Heritage listing, and accepts it as a fact of life. The only productive course of action now is to ameliorate its affects to ensure that, as much as possible, towns such as Ravenshoe retain their economic viability. The Opposition knows that the Commonwealth shares this goal. We have made a submission to the Commonwealth to this end. We have further asked that the compensation package not take into account the fact that most of the wind-down would have occurred regardless of World Heritage listing.

It only remains for the State Government to also come to the party. Will it support the job-creation programs, or will the Commonwealth have to work directly with the local authorities? Will the State Government make the pine forests available to supply the Ravenshoe mill, if a rescue package can be put together? Will it be part of a management authority? There are many more questions, but it all boils down to this: will the Queensland Government co-operate in the interests of all north Queenslanders, or will it continue to obstruct and confront, for some poorly perceived short-term political gain?

World Heritage listing means that the timber industry—

Time expired.

#### **Effect of Rain on Burnett Area**

**Mr SLACK** (Burnett) (11.30 a.m.): All honourable members are well aware of the adverse effects of too much rain. However, whereas the people of south-east Queensland have been suffering and wishing that the rain would just go away, there are areas of the State that desperately need some of the excess rain that has fallen in the southern region.

Although my area has received rain, it has not been nearly enough to break the ongoing drought. The Shires of Gayndah, Biggenden and Perry have been declared drought stricken. The Shire of Woongarra has asked to be declared drought stricken. The Shires of Gooburrum and Kolan are suffering from drought conditions. Some rain has been received recently, but not nearly enough has been received to break the drought. Those areas have not received anything like the amount of rain that has been received in the southern region. Those areas have received rainfall in the region of 50 millimetres.

Although droughts are not nearly as dramatic or spectacular as floods, and those affected do not receive immediate widespread media attention, they are more worrying

because they are ongoing and in the long term the effects of drought are just as devastating if not more so than those of flood.

Even though too much rain can cause severe damage, most of the farmers who receive the rain smile. Although an area may be declared a disaster area, the farmers in the area know that in the long term the rain will be beneficial. But one does not see smiles on the faces of land-holders who are suffering from the effects of drought. It is even more depressing for a land-holder when rain is falling on a property adjacent to his drought-stricken property.

Some farmers in my area have not had sufficient rain to generate any income in the last five years. I refer in particular to the peanut-growers and those who rely on summer crops for their livelihood. They have had to face failure after failure. A considerable number of livestock-producers will get a small amount of grass growth from the recent rain but they are still completely out of water. Those on the coastal section of my electorate who have the advantage of irrigation have been faced with considerably higher costs and a dwindling water supply, both in quantity and quality.

As I have indicated, where floods have occurred they have been very severe and have wiped out crops for the year. However, in the long term those floods will be beneficial in that they provide for pasture growth; for silting, which is of long-term benefit on flood plains; the replenishing of subsoil moisture; the replenishing of underground water systems; and the filling of water storages for stock and irrigation.

The farmers in the Burnett electorate and adjacent areas do not know when adequate rain is likely to fall or when they will be likely to get an income. For instance, it is only in two out of the last five years that peanut-growers have been able to show a plus over costs, and that is a very minor plus. In excess of 50 families are involved. About three years ago 74 families were engaged in peanut-growing. The number has now dropped to 50 families.

The social impact on families and communities in the long term is frightening. Farmers are very proud and great battlers, but they cannot cope with high costs, low commodity prices and continuing drought. What will happen to them and these communities when they are forced off their properties? And, unless something is done, forced off they surely will be.

It is better to help those farmers now and to keep them on the land, working, maintaining their pride and self-esteem and keeping the country communities viable than to let them go down, with the long-term consequence that they will be dependent on welfare. In the longer term that will cost the Government more than helping them now will. In not helping those people now, we would be party to the destruction of a very valuable, hard-working sector of the community.

Honourable members are witnessing an acceleration of the destruction of the type of people who originally made Australia the great country that it is. I should not need to remind honourable members that it was from these types of families that the Anzacs originally came.

The farmers realise that it is beyond the resources of the State Government to adequately alleviate their financial burdens, but it still behoves this Government to do what it can. However, the Federal Government is the main tax-collector of this nation. These farmers are the type of people who have always paid their taxes and have contributed significantly in the past to Australia's well-being. In recognition of this fact and the magnificent contribution that the farmers have made to Australia's development, surely it is not too much to ask the rest of Australia for a sympathetic hearing of their problems. Surely it is not too much to ask the Federal Government for meaningful financial assistance in the circumstances that the farmers are now facing. They are not asking for massive subsidies such as those that their overseas counterparts receive, which would cost the tax-payers millions and millions of dollars, but they are asking for a fair go.

Australian farmers are recognised as the most efficient in the world and they desperately want to stand on their own two feet, but there are times when, because of

the harsh nature of the Australian climate, floods and drought occur side by side, they do need assistance. When that assistance is needed, it should be forthcoming. It is not asked for often or lightly.

The farmers of my area can do without the type of reaction shown by two Federal Labor Ministers to their calls for help, when the Ministers in question branded the holding of crisis drought meetings as being politically inspired and implied that there was not a serious problem and that the people involved were not genuine.

The Federal Labor member for Hinkler, in whose division we reside, initially attempted to dismiss the meetings and to shift all responsibility to the State Government, as he is so good at doing. Through the press, he attempted to make a big issue out of the State Government's not having declared the affected shires drought stricken until recently, and he asked why if the problem was so bad for the last five years, the farmers had waited until only recently to make such a big outcry. This in itself shows a complete lack of understanding by the member of the problems and the way drought declarations are made and work, despite my attempts, some time ago, to explain to him the significance of individual drought declared properties, and how that declaration gives the same status to a land-holder for relief as does a total shire declaration.

I also explained that, because of Commonwealth requirements, it was simpler for the State and more beneficial to the land-holder for properties to be declared drought stricken on an individual basis, so the State Government had adopted that approach and had departed from the procedure of waiting until a whole shire was drought stricken before making a declaration as it had done in the past. Unfortunately, it appears from his recent press statements that he did not understand, or deliberately chose not to do so.

While his initial dismissal of the severity of the drought was unbelievable, considering that it was in his own division, he is now showing, because of the reaction and outcry that his attitude provoked, a new-found interest in the problems. Hopefully, he will meet with some success when trying to convince the two Ministers who made the statements, and their Cabinet, of the urgent need to provide assistance.

The State Government has introduced the Necessitous Seed Scheme, and through the QIDC is advancing millions of dollars at concessional rates of interest to farmers throughout Queensland. Unfortunately, when an amount equal to the State Government's \$5m for the grain industry was requested from the Commonwealth, it was found wanting. It is time that the Commonwealth stopped looking for excuses and made a positive decision to do something to help.

Farmers do not deserve the type of treatment and the lack of understanding shown when the Prime Minister refused to meet their representatives in Toowoomba. This showed a callous disregard of the desperate plight that his fellow-Australians are facing and an insensitivity that should be abhorred by all Australians.

This is not a case of the bad managers being inefficient. It is a situation in which even the strongest have, because of high costs and successive crop failures, reached the stage of having lost their equity in their properties. They need urgent help.

It is not good enough to say to the farmers, "We hope it rains."

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

**Mr BEANLAND** (Toowong) (11.39 a.m.): On 8 March this year, in this Chamber, the Premier said that the evaluation of the expressions of interest for the redevelopment of the Expo site disregarded those proposals that relied on the issue of a casino licence. However, the Premier also indicated that the Government had taken the decision that the next casino in south-east Queensland would be located at the Expo site.

On 10 March the Premier indicated that the decision to include both a casino and a world trade centre was taken at that meeting of Cabinet at which the preferred developer was chosen. It is interesting to note that the spokesman for the successful consortium,

Sir Frank Moore, has stated quite succinctly that either a casino is included or the developer, River City 2000 consortium, will not proceed.

The Premier has indicated that the Under Treasurer has been requested to investigate all aspects of the site for a casino and to report back to the Government. So much for the Premier's statement about a casino! It is clear: either Sir Frank Moore gets his casino or the River City 2000 consortium will not proceed. What about the other developers who put forward proposals? Not only the four on the short list but all 13 developers should have been given the opportunity to participate on the basis of the inclusion of a casino. What a gigantic windfall for the River City 2000 consortium!

The Premier's answers and statements on this matter lack sincerity and credibility. It is time that the people of this State were told the truth. There has never been a clearer act of cronyism and favouritism. In fact, the question must be asked: why did the Government go to such lengths as calling expressions of interest and evaluating them when it was simply going to throw them out the window? There has been no semblance of fair play in the awarding of that particular contract. The community is aware of the pressure that was applied to obtain support for that particular development during the week-end preceding Cabinet's decision.

I might add that that is not the first Government development in which Sir Frank Moore—the spokesman for the consortium—has been successful. It will be remembered that his company Delta Securities was successful in becoming the preferred developer for the Toowong Railway Station redevelopment, which was so strenuously opposed by local residents, myself and the Brisbane City Council.

Sir Frank Moore's Roma Street development group was awarded the contract for the Roma Street Transit Centre. Once special Acts of Parliament and other approvals were put in place, both the Toowong Railway Station development and the Roma Street Transit Centre were sold off to builders.

Brisbane deserves better than another Toowong Railway Station redevelopment fiasco or Roma Street Transit Centre black box. In very difficult circumstances, the builders in each case were left with a fistful of problems. The people of Brisbane and small-businessmen are fully aware of the problems that are now associated with both developments. Are the people of Queensland, and Brisbane in particular, once again to find Sir Frank Moore opting out of this particular development once everything is in place—taking with him a windfall profit? Who will make up the consortium that develops the site? Will it be substantially changed over the coming months? I challenge the Premier to tell the people of Queensland the answers to those questions.

The tax-payers of this State are clearly financing the developer at a discount rate of 11.8 per cent. The developer is receiving favoured special treatment because the Government is carrying the loan. In the documents that called for expressions of interest in the project, no mention was made of the fact that the tax-payers would finance the particular development. Conveniently, this Government has been deafening in its silence on the issue of financing.

That discount rate of 11.8 per cent may relate to the Federal Government's long-term bond rate. It is certainly not the commercial rate of interest, which would be of the order of 15 or 16 per cent. There is no point in the Government's indicating that the payments of \$50m on 1 January 1989 and \$25m per year on 1 January for the following six years is financially better for Queensland and Queenslanders than would be \$150m on 1 January 1989. With the \$150m up front on 1 January 1989, the Government and the tax-payers of this State would be millions of dollars better off. I challenge the Premier to come clean on the true financial cost of the development to the people of this State.

The Brisbane City Council has more than five hectares of freehold land included in the site. Again, I challenge the Premier to state unequivocally that the council will be a signatory to the heads of agreement. It is outrageous that this Government is refusing to have the council as party to the heads of agreement between the Government



and the developer when a significant percentage of the land—and certainly the most valuable piece of land, which comprises the land along the riverfront—belongs to the council and was purchased by the rate-payers of Brisbane. Could it be that, because the Expo '88 Act allows the Government to proceed with the development without council approval or participation, if the Government becomes unhappy about or discontented with council requirements, it will refuse to allow the council to be party to the heads of agreement? If that happens, it will become clear that another world's tallest building fiasco will be in the making.

Both the Premier and the developer have said that the three heritage buildings on the site are to be moved, although the council has indicated that they will not be shifted. What will the Government and the developer do? Will they ride roughshod over the council and the people as they did with the Toowong redevelopment and the Roma Street Transit Centre?

Who is to be the architect for the development? I understand that Mr Mal Wyeth was the architect for the Roma Street Transit Centre. The public know of its shortcomings and what a black blot it is on the landscape of this city, even though the builders tried as they might to construct a building of some note. Mr Wyeth is also involved in the long talked of development at the mouth of the Pioneer River, which development the Minister for Tourism, Mr Muntz, is so fond of promoting.

I raise the aspect of the architect for the post-Expo development because it is so important to the end product—the development—that will occur on the site. It must be remembered that at the moment this is the largest single private-enterprise development in Australia. The outcome could be a casino and a 58-storey building. This site is to be handed over to the developers on 1 January 1989, which is only eight months away. Despite that, the Brisbane City Council is unable to get the developer to enter into discussions to resolve the overall development and the plan. Could it be that the developer is stalling in the hope that time will run out?

Further, a glance at the model shows that it is conceptual and therefore it could be misleading, particularly as the council wants many aspects changed. I challenge the Premier to give an unequivocal guarantee that the Government will not override the Brisbane City Council and impose this development on the city and on the State of Queensland. The Government must support the council. In view of the Premier's undertakings, I call on him to give that unequivocal guarantee. The developer also indicates that the canal is an essential ingredient for the success of the development, yet no study has been undertaken to ensure that that canal, which is so important to the development, does not become a nightmare.

The intensity of the type of development that is proposed is clearly unacceptable to all Queenslanders. This once in a hundred years, once in a life-time—perhaps once in a thousand years—opportunity may never be repeated. It certainly deserves more than a casino and a 58-storey building. The opportunity must be taken to give to the people of Queensland a justifiable development of which we all can be proud. There is time to stop this development. The clock on this development should be stopped, and a new start should be made with the community having a genuine input into any development proposal. Should the Government need to meet a shortfall in funding, then so be it. After all, the Government has found fit to finance this post-Expo development. Through the tax-payers of this State the Government is in fact funding the development on that site, whether the tax-payers like it or not. The people of Brisbane, as well as all Queenslanders, deserve something better than just another Toowong Railway Station development or a Roma Street Transit Centre.

#### **Sale of Properties by Mr G. J. Woods**

**Mrs McCAULEY** (Callide) (11.49 a.m.): I draw the attention of the House to the matter of sale by tender, whereby a private citizen can decide to sell his property by the tendering method. This system has been shown to be open to grave abuses of justice,



and I believe changes should be made to it so that events such as the one that I am about to outline do not happen again.

Apparently no laws prevent the vendor from using private sale by tender as a method merely to test the market. The vendor will be given a good idea of the value of his property by the bids which are offered under the tender system. This may be helpful for the vendor, but it is often less than fair for the hopeful purchaser, as will be demonstrated.

The story I am about to relate concerns two properties in the Crawford district near Kingaroy. I raise this matter because at present Barambah has no representative in this House. However, I am quite confident that after next Saturday the very capable Warren Truss will represent Barambah.

On 25 March last year in the *South Burnett Times* two properties were advertised for sale by tender. This is obviously a popular method of sale, as at least two other properties were advertised for sale in the same manner in the same issue. They were not stated in the advertisement, but apparently the conditions of sale by tender in this case included a clause which stated that the vendor had the right to refuse the highest or any tender. If no tender was accepted by the vendor, it would then have been open to him to negotiate a sale by further tender, auction or any other method that he chose.

The properties were owned by Mr G. J. Woods. One of the blocks of approximately 80 acres adjoined the properties of Mr and Mrs L. N. Corbet. Now, everyone knows that properties for sale are always worth more to the next-door neighbour—at least, that is the case in the country. Mr Corbet was very eager to acquire Mr Woods' land. He obviously did not want to be surrounded by hobby farmers. Everyone knows about the problems that they bring. That is fair enough.

The selling agent was Mr Peter Freeman of Ray White and Co. in Kingaroy. I wish to state here quite categorically that no blame can attach to this most reputable firm. Peter Freeman is no longer with that company. He maintains that he acted in accordance with the law in all aspects of this case. Indeed, an investigation conducted by an officer of the Auctioneers and Agents Registrar could find no proof of any wrong-doing. However, honourable members can judge the merits of the case for themselves. What is legally right is not always morally right.

Mr Corbet, being keen on purchasing the land, checked with the agent on the correct procedure. He was told to collect a contract for tender, have it completed by his solicitor and deliver it to the agent's office with \$1,000 deposit before the tender closing date. Mr Corbet queried Mr Freeman on the clause about the highest tender not necessarily being accepted and asked about the implications. He was told that the clause was to help protect the vendor from people who could be a financial risk; but Mr Freeman added that he knew that Mr Corbet would be financially okay. Just before the tenders were opened on 7 April 1987, Mr Corbet asked the agent to reveal the vendor's reserve price, which Freeman stated to be \$500 to \$700 an acre and said, "he must sell".

The lowest tender was for approximately \$42,000 and made by Bell Corporation, the company of a land development duo called Stephen King and Peter Chapple. The next tender was approximately \$47,000 and Mr Corbet's tender, which was for \$50,000, or \$625 an acre, was the highest. After speaking to the agent, Corbet went home reasonably confident that the land was his. He may have even had a beer with his wife to celebrate.

**Mr Davis:** Or champagne.

**Mrs McCauley:** Or champagne.

The next morning the agent, Freeman, phoned Mr Corbet to say that two other people had put in bids of \$55,000 on the block of land. As tenders had closed, Mr Corbet contacted his solicitor to check the legality of this action, and found out that one \$55,000 bid had come from King and Chapple of Bell Corporation—the people who

had put in the lowest tender originally! There is some doubt that there were ever two offers of this amount.

This conversation was remarkable for what Freeman did not say. He did not say that the vendor did not accept Corbet's tender; nor did he say that the vendor had a final reserve price; nor did he say that the person bidding against Corbet was Bell Corporation. The Real Estate Institute of Queensland later advised Mr Corbet that, at the vendor's refusal to accept any of the tenders, all persons tendering should be notified in writing, and the property should be retendered or auctioned and a date advised.

This point is worth emphasising. The Real Estate Institute recommends that all persons tendering should be advised in writing, but that was not done. Because he had submitted the highest tender, Mr Corbet should have been advised of the vendor's decision. He feels that he also should have had the first right of refusal of the final reserve price. Because Mr Corbet did not accept these goings-on quietly, he was finally advised by the parent company that he could bid against the Bell Corporation for the property, which he did. He eventually secured the property for approximately \$62,000, which was approximately \$12,000 more than his original highest bid.

The point I wish to make with this story is this: when properties are offered for sale by tender, careful consideration should be given by prospective purchasers before they become involved in this method. The tendering for a property involves the selling agent, the prospective buyer and the buyer's solicitor. The buyer and his solicitor fill out the contract and lodge it and a deposit with the agent. When the tenders are closed, the highest tender does not automatically get the property. Sometimes the lowest original tender could end up as the successful purchaser. This is perfectly legal; but, as in the case of Mr Corbet, it does not seem to be a fair way of doing business.

This story exposes an anomaly in the sale-by-tender system which in some cases allows individuals to be unwittingly manipulated to the advantage of unscrupulous people in the property-transaction business. It would seem to be a case of, "Pick a price—any price—and tender that." After the tenders close, the tenderer can get down to the nitty-gritty with the decided advantage of knowing what the original tenders were so that the next offer can be much more informed.

As recommended by the Real Estate Institute, I believe that strict procedures should be followed in a case where no tender is accepted. It should be mandatory that the highest tenderer have the first chance to make another offer if the vendor is not happy with the original tenders. Only after that procedure has been followed should other offers be considered. If an agent is found to have not notified all tenderers in writing of the vendor's refusal to accept any tenders, he should be charged with a breach and fined accordingly.

Because of this fact, I intend making representations to the Minister for Justice so that innocent people such as the Corbets are protected from such tactics in the future. Questions will always be asked whilst such goings-on continue, and action by the State Government hopefully will prevent such cases as the one to which I have just referred.

### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr SCHUNTNER (Mount Coot-tha) (11.57 a.m.), by leave: My personal explanation refers to the answer made today by the Deputy Premier to the question from the honourable member for Lytton and the interjection by the honourable member for Lytton that someone was lying. I inform this House that by previous arrangement I met the Deputy Premier, the Honourable William Gunn, at about 5.40 p.m. on Thursday, 28 January, in the Executive Building for the purpose of discussing traffic Route 20. That discussion was of approximately 30 minutes' duration.

## PRIVILEGE

### Misleading of Parliament by Deputy Premier

Mr BURNS (Lytton—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (11.58 a.m.): I rise on a matter of privilege. Pages 5330 and 5331 of *Hansard* No. 18 report the proceedings in this House resulting from a question from me about the construction of Route 20 at Ithaca Creek.

I was trying to ascertain whether or not a Liberal member of Parliament had met the Minister on the issue. During the exchange, *Hansard* reports Mr Gunn as stating—

“I have had no dialogue with Liberal members of Parliament in this matter whatsoever.”

He went on to say that he had one meeting with the Lord Mayor.

This morning I repeated the question to the Minister and asked if he had met Mr Schuntner. I quoted from Mr Schuntner's letter. Again this morning the Minister denied that he had met Mr Schuntner. Mr Schuntner has now advised this House in a personal explanation that he met the Minister.

I withdraw any accusation against Mr Schuntner that he was a liar. It is a grave matter for a Minister to deliberately mislead the Parliament and, as it is a basic tenet of the Westminster system that Ministers who mislead Parliament should be stood down from their position, and in the face of Mr Gunn's refusal to stand down and his denial again this morning, I ask that you, Mr Speaker, consider the evidence that I have presented in this matter and report your findings to this Parliament.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I ask the honourable member to ensure that he has given me all the documents that he has in his possession in regard to this matter.

## MR DEPUTY SPEAKER'S RULING

### Motion of Dissent

Mr BURNS (Lytton—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (11.59 a.m.): I move—

“That Mr Deputy Speaker's ruling made on March 22, 1988, under Standing Order 120 on a point of order raised by the Minister for Finance demanding that the Member for Lytton withdraw comments made in relation to other ministers be dissented from.”

I realise that I have no chance of having this motion carried because Mr Deputy Speaker will be backed by the Government, which has the numbers in this House. Nevertheless, I cannot let inconsistent and deliberate use of the Chair to protect Government Ministers go unchallenged. Standing Order No. 120 states—

“A Member shall not digress from the subject-matter under discussion, or comment upon expressions used by another Member in a previous Debate of the same Session; and all imputations of improper motives, and all personal reflections, shall be deemed highly disorderly.”

I was speaking about ministerial decisions of the Bjelke-Petersen National Party Government and pointing to the fact that most members of the Ahern Ministry were party to those shonky decisions. I said—

“Most of the Ministers opposite, including the Premier, do not even know how to honestly award a contract according to proper procedures.”

Mr Austin took a point of order and said—

“Although I accept that the member for Lytton said ‘most Ministers opposite’, I find that statement offensive and untrue. I ask him to withdraw.”

Accepting that a member has a right to demand a withdrawal, even though I still held I was right, I withdrew, as is the parliamentary custom. After withdrawing, I went on to say—

“Every Minister, except the Minister for Finance, does not know how to honestly award a contract according to proper procedures. Their whole history in Government is brutal evidence of that.”

Mr Austin took another point of order. He said—

“I believe that there are certain terms that, when used in this place, are unparliamentary.”

He went on to claim that I was reflecting on his colleagues, and asked me to withdraw. Mr Deputy Speaker ruled that I had contravened Standing Order 120. Such a ruling, if continued, will end all debates in this place where a member is critical of the honest performance of the Ministry. Mr Booth's ruling is absurd in the extreme. He upheld Mr Austin's point of order taken on behalf of his colleagues.

Even though such a proposition has been rejected out of hand in the past, let me quote a ruling given on 24 October 1984 as it appears on page 1725 of *Hansard*. In this passage the Temporary Chairman, Mr Booth, ruled on a point of order taken by an Opposition member, the member for Ipswich West. Mr Booth said—

“Order! A point of order can be taken only if the remarks used are personally offensive to an honourable member. I cannot see that the Minister's comments are offensive to the honourable member for Ipswich West.

. . .

Order! There is no point of order.”

I now refer to *Hansard* of 1981, page 2680, where Mr Wharton said—

“On behalf of the honourable member for Isis, I must rise to a point of order. I must object to the honourable member saying that the honourable member for Isis told a lie. He did not tell a lie in this Assembly.”

I am sorry that the honourable member for Isis is not now listening.

The Temporary Chairman said—

“Order! The honourable member for Isis can take a point of order on his own behalf; the Minister cannot take one for him.”

There was no resort by the Chair to Standing Order 120, just the consistent ruling of all good Chairmen in the past that a point of order cannot be taken on behalf of somebody else.

On 27 August 1981 Mr Ahern was giving the honourable member for Lytton a bucket—I do not know why he was doing that—and Mr Casey took a point of order saying—

“A perusal of ‘Hansard’ will clearly show that the honourable member for Lytton—”

He got no further. Mr Speaker called for order and ruled—

“I ask the Leader of the Opposition to resume his seat. There is no provision in the Standing Orders that allows him to take a point of order to defend the member for Lytton.”

When members of the Opposition have taken points of order, the ruling has been that that cannot be done on behalf of a colleague, but Mr Austin took a point of order on behalf of his ministerial colleagues and Mr Deputy Speaker ruled in his favour. Mr Deputy Speaker will no doubt claim that my words were unparliamentary because they imputed improper motives or were a personal reflection. I claim that they did not and were not.

I will quote an exchange between the former Premier and the then Mr Deputy Speaker in 1981, as they appear in *Hansard* at page 592. The then Mr Bjelke-Petersen said—

“I rise to a point of order. In the next room, where I am receiving a deputation, I happened to overhear the honourable member saying the Kerns and all the rest of them can buy favours. I want to say to the honourable member that that is completely and utterly untrue. I am surprised that he makes that statement. I request that the honourable member withdraw that statement immediately, and I will let him off by not having to apologise on this occasion.”

The then Mr Deputy Speaker was a Liberal member, and I might say that from my memory he was a pretty good Deputy Speaker. He said—

“Mr Premier, there is no point of order. The honourable member has not referred to any member by name, other than the honourable member who took the point of order prior to yours. There is no point of order about any statement that I can have the honourable member withdraw.”

Later in that interchange Mr Wright said—

“It was also reported—and Mr Litchfield said this—that if they did not fork out the money, they would go to the bottom of the list in Government contracts.”

The former Premier said—

“Mr Deputy Speaker, how long are you going to allow a member to make statements, quoting somebody outside Parliament, that are completely untrue?”

Mr Deputy Speaker said—

“Order! There is no provision in Standing Orders for the Speaker of this House to take any action on the points that have been raised by the honourable member for Rockhampton. They can be denied by further speakers who wish to defend the Government, but the honourable member has a perfect right to make them.”

I agree with that. Allegations of graft and stand-over tactics were made about the Government in relation to contracts and Mr Deputy Speaker, a member of the Government, ruled that he could not uphold the then Premier's point of order.

I have watched the running of this Chamber deteriorate as National Party Chairmen use their position to rule to protect their own. I have heard of the Government's fears that, with our current Speaker showing an independent line, it will have to use the Deputy Speaker and Chairman to enforce party protection. We all know of the Temporary Chairman whose first question of the table officers, when he took the chair, was, “How do I throw someone out?”

I have watched Mr Booth, with the rule book open at Standing Order 120, use it in this session to restrict debate and legitimate criticism of the Government. I have watched Government members and Ministers call other members liars in this place and say that they live with fairies. When the member for Windsor made an attack on a public servant, a remarkable attack was made on that member, in defiance of Standing Order 120, for what he had said. Yet Mr Booth made no ruling under Standing Order 120. There was no protection from the Chair for an honourable member in this place.

Standing Order 120 is designed to protect members in this place from imputations against them. If that is not to be the case, the honourable member for Wolston would never have been able to raise his complaints about and attacks on Kitchens by Kathy. As a result of the ruling by Mr Deputy Speaker, honourable members are not allowed to make any imputations or criticise anything unfairly or unjustly. Rubbish! This Parliament lives and breathes on the opportunity to use this place to raise matters under the privilege of this Parliament.

Standing Orders state that I cannot make imputations against my colleagues in this place. However, they are entitled to stand up and protect themselves, and I am forced to withdraw if I am making an accusation against an honourable member. Every time

that I make an accusation, when I am ordered to, I withdraw. On a couple of occasions when I did not, I was thrown out of the Chamber.

The point I make is that Mr Deputy Speaker has the right to ask me to withdraw. If Mr Booth, or any person in the chair, continues to maintain that a Government member can say, "I take a point of order on behalf of my colleagues", how far does one extend that? Does that mean his ministerial colleagues, his National Party colleagues, his bowls club colleagues, or merely his colleagues? When a Government member takes a point of order on behalf of his colleagues, I am told to withdraw. The Standing Orders are in place to ensure that members of this House are given protection. I will abide by them. I disagree completely with Mr Booth's ruling.

**Mr HAMILL (Ipswich) (12.08 p.m.):** I second the motion moved by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition dissenting from Mr Deputy Speaker's ruling on Standing Order 120.

**Mr Simpson:** This will be another joke.

**Mr HAMILL:** Contrary to the views of the member for Cooroora, who does not really understand what Parliament is all about, clearly the ruling made by Mr Deputy Speaker makes a total sham of the notion of Parliament and the capacity of Parliament to debate matters of great public interest.

**Mr Davis** interjected.

**Mr HAMILL:** As the Opposition Whip pointed out, the member for Cooroora, reflecting on his days as a Minister of the Government, would not like to see debate ensue upon the administration of his short-lived departmental responsibilities.

The point is that the ruling given by Mr Booth detracts markedly from the ability of members of Parliament to fulfil their responsibilities not only to the Parliament but also to the public of Queensland. To uphold Mr Deputy Speaker's ruling under Standing Order 120 totally undermines the prestige and the powers of this Parliament. It is important that honourable members reflect a little on what this Parliament is supposed to do and what it is charged to do by the public of Queensland. Obviously, it is charged to legislate in the interests of the public. Although we, as members, may disagree as to the value of the legislation that comes from the Government, nevertheless, Parliament has a responsibility to legislate. It has a responsibility also to ensure that the public funds of this State are spent both legally and consistently with the good government of this State. But absolutely essential to its role as a Parliament is the responsibility that rests upon all members of this Parliament to keep an eye on the administration of Government in this State; to keep an eye on the way Ministers conduct their affairs as Ministers; to keep an eye on the way that Ministers run their departments; and to keep an eye on the way those departments run the affairs of State in Queensland. The fundamental tenet of responsible government is that the Minister—the political head of the department—is answerable in this place for the running of his department.

How can members of Parliament properly scrutinise the performance of a Minister if they cannot probe and call into question decisions that have been made by that Minister in the running of his department? If calling into question the administration of a department means that some reflection is cast upon the Minister concerned and that that then transgresses Standing Order 120, quite frankly the Government is saying that members of Parliament have no right to question Ministers in the administration of their portfolios because such questioning reflects upon the character of that Minister. That is a total departure from the role of Parliament as any Westminster Parliament would know it.

Furthermore, the Opposition has a responsibility to the members of the public to take up matters on their behalf, to pursue grievances that people may have about the handling of their affairs by a Minister and a department. If members of the Opposition are not allowed to question the manner in which Ministers handle matters that have been put before them for fear of transgressing a Standing Order which states that no

reflection should be cast upon a Minister, once again it is being found that Parliament in this State simply cannot and will not exist as an open forum for discussion of public affairs.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition cited numerous precedents to justify the contention of the Opposition that the Deputy Speaker was in error when he interpreted Standing Order 120 in the manner in which he did on that day. Despite the claim by the new Premier that his Government would return the Queensland Parliament to "a place where the best traditions of Westminster parliamentary procedure would be adhered to at all times", by upholding a Deputy Speaker's ruling which undermines that very statement the Government gives little credence to the claim that the worm has turned in relation to the National Party of this State.

I remind all honourable members that if Parliament is to be a forum in which there can be debate and discussion, the Government certainly did not get off to a good start when the first debate under the administration of the new Premier, which would have enabled members to talk about elements of administration in this State, was in fact gagged.

In addition, there are some 36 notices of motion on the business paper relating to matters of significant public interest. They are not being debated. Again, they involve the administration of government in this State and the activities of Ministers in this State. If honourable members are not able to debate those sorts of notices of motion, if they are not able to question Ministers in the administration of their departments, what sort of Parliament does Queensland have?

It is important to refresh the memories of all honourable members in relation to just what Standing Order 120 states. It states—

"A Member shall not digress from the subject-matter under discussion, or comment upon expressions used by another Member in a previous Debate of the same Session;"—

and the following words are the words in question in this debate—

"and all imputations of improper motives, and all personal reflections, shall be deemed highly disorderly."

As the Deputy Leader of the Opposition has asked—personal reflections on whom? Obviously, if they are personal reflections on other members of Parliament, those honourable members have the right to stand up in this place and defend themselves at the appropriate time. They can rise on a matter of privilege or ask that words be withdrawn. However, it has been the practice in this place that only the member who has been personally affected by words has the right to ask that those words be withdrawn. That is the ruling under which this Parliament has operated in the past. To extend that principle to all and sundry makes a mockery of the debate. Certainly, if words have been expressed in terms of a member's activities and if that member is concerned, let it be that member who rises in this place to defend himself or herself. Surely that is the proper way in which to interpret that Standing Order.

Standing Order 120 is obviously in place to protect honourable members and other people from members of Parliament who would irresponsibly infringe upon parliamentary privilege or act in such a way and in such bad faith that they would use this place as a venue for some form of character assassination.

Quite rightly, this Parliament has a Privileges Committee that can deal with members who seek to abuse parliamentary privilege in that way; but to interpret that Standing Order as one that would inhibit reasonable debate upon the administration of portfolios and the administration of government in this State—that would be the logical interpretation of the Deputy Speaker's ruling on that occasion—totally undermines this place as a place of public debate. If the House in its determination of this matter today endorses a ruling that inhibits public discussion and the questioning and probing of ministerial responsibility, this House will have made a very poor decision that will be a very poor precedent for the conduct of affairs of this Parliament in future.

Today we have a choice. On the one hand, we can uphold the rights of members of Parliament to discuss freely matters of public interest, to probe and scrutinise affairs of the Government and to fulfil their responsibilities to the public; on the other hand, we can endorse a decision that will leave members hamstrung in fulfilling their responsibilities. They will be unable to fulfil their responsibilities as members of Parliament who are responsible for scrutinising Ministers' performances and unable to scrutinise the affairs of the Government.

I trust that all honourable members will consider those points when they vote on this matter. I trust also that the interests of good government and of good Parliament will be paramount over any individual party interest in relation to this matter.

**Hon. B. D. AUSTIN** (Nicklin—Leader of the House) (12.17 p.m.): The Deputy Leader of the Opposition not only breached the rules of this Parliament, but he breached them twice in the one breath; yet he has had the hide to stand in this place today and to deny it. Let there be no doubt about it: the Deputy Leader of the Opposition has a long history of trying to manipulate the rules of this Parliament to suit himself. That is what this debate is all about today. He breached the rules, he was caught out, and now he is trying to exploit the rules to his own advantage. He tried to pull the same stunt as he tried to pull before in this Chamber and outside this place. Cabinet is taking him to court over that. Members of Cabinet are prepared to seek justice in this place as well.

It is typical of the grandstanding and bluster employed by the honourable member. It is the stuntmanship of a man who performs to be thrown out of this Chamber repeatedly for abusing the privileges of the Parliament. In fact, in his speech earlier he admitted that he misbehaves regularly and deliberately just as a stunt. He knows that that is the only way in which he can gain publicity outside. If he does not get that publicity, no-one is interested.

This debate on his motion is another example of his time-wasting tactics. The honourable member knows the rules very well and he knows how to abide by them. He also knows how to exploit the rules. That is what he did two weeks ago in this Chamber. He knows the rules. Yet in one sentence not only did he cast personal reflections on myself and my Cabinet colleagues, but he also tried to suggest that we have improper motives. Both of those actions are rightly banned under our rules as highly disorderly conduct, and the honourable member knows that. However, in a prepared speech he not only said it once, but he repeated it, in defiance of Mr Deputy Speaker, and he again deliberately abused the privileges of this House.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition has a long record of abusing the privileges of this House. Mr Deputy Speaker was quite right in his ruling. The dissent motion of the honourable member for Lytton is a farce and another political stunt.

Let us look at his motives. Are they the tactics of a bored and frustrated factional hack? He will never serve in a Labor Government. He was planning to retire at public expense to the Greek islands as Ambassador to Greece—another job for the boys. Is he going to join Mick Young—one of the Labor's old boys—on a tax-payer funded fishing trip? He got caught out in a factional party pay-off from his big brothers in Canberra. Now he has to serve out his time in this place waiting for Errol Hodder and Ian McLean to say, "It's time, Tommy; you've got to make way for someone young, some suburban lawyer such as Peter Beattie." After what happened on television last night, I doubt that that will be so at this stage.

This motion is nothing more than an example of frustration from an Old Guard hack waiting for the evil empire of the socialist Left and the AWU to call to him, "Your time is up."

In a prepared speech to this House, the honourable member said "most" and then he said "every Minister"—

**Mr De LACY:** I rise to a point of order. The Minister is reflecting on the honourable member for Lytton. I find that offensive and ask that it be withdrawn.



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

**Mr AUSTIN:** The honourable member said “most”, and then he said “every” Minister except me did not know how to honestly award a contract according to the proper procedure.

**Mr WELLS:** I rise to a point of order. The honourable the Minister is not speaking to the motion.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! It is I who will decide that.

**Mr WELLS:** I am asking you to decide, Mr Speaker.

**Mr AUSTIN:** As if the honourable member would know! Standing Order No. 120 clearly and strongly states, “all imputations of improper motives, and all personal reflections, shall be deemed highly disorderly.” That is, all imputations and all personal reflections shall be deemed to be highly disorderly.

Let me look at the parliamentary Bible, Erskine May. Dealing with allegations against members, Erskine May says—

“Good temper and moderation are the characteristics of parliamentary language. Parliamentary language is never more desirable than when a Member is canvassing the opinions and conduct of his opponents in debate.”

Erskine May goes on to say—

“Expressions which are unparliamentary and call for prompt interference include: the imputation of false or unavowed motives.”

Erskine May lists the expressions that have been ruled abusive or insulting and which are likely to cause disorder. Those expressions include the word “dishonest”. Erskine May clearly states that it is the right of any member to raise with the Speaker any matter that the member believes is a breach of order.

Clearly, the honourable member for Lytton breached not only the Standing Orders of this Parliament but also the established rules of every Parliament in the Westminster system. He suggested improper motives, cast personal reflections, used abusive and unparliamentary language, and was properly called to account. If that is not explicit enough, if we consider Standing Order No. 333 and look to the House of Commons for further clarification, it will be seen clearly that the ruling was correct and that the honourable member for Lytton was wrong.

Pettifer's *House of Representatives Practice* uses House of Commons practice to state that a member cannot direct a charge on another member or reflect on his character or conduct unless he does so on a substantive motion. The rules of proper parliamentary conduct state quite clearly that, if a member wishes to allege dishonesty, he should do so in a motion to the Parliament and not in a cheap and easy aside.

There are plenty of precedents to prevent members from casting unparliamentary reflections on clearly identifiable groups of parliamentarians and, in this case, making an attempted attack on Cabinet, which is a group of people with a collective responsibility and an individual existence in law. Although it has been the practice that members must be in the Chamber to defend themselves, there is now substantial precedent on which to defend a group—a form of parliamentary class action, if you like.

Pettifer's book quotes a House of Commons practice, namely—

“Remarks which may be offensive when applied to an identifiable member may not be regarded as un-parliamentary when applied to a group where members cannot be identified.”

However, Speaker Aston in the House of Representatives has stated—

“... exception could be taken to certain charges, the more obvious of which were sedition, treason, corruption or deliberate dishonesty.”

In the House of Representatives, Sir Billy Snedden ruled out accusations against a group of MPs if those accusations are unparliamentary or offensive to one member, otherwise every member of the group might have to stand up and deny the accusation.

In 1981 in this Parliament, Col Miller as Chairman of Committees ruled that the House of Commons procedure should apply, namely, that "no member of Parliament can refer to a group of persons in Parliament as being corrupt or dishonest."

Not only has the Deputy Leader of the Opposition no grounds for his accusation, but also he was trying once again to cheat the system by making the accusation. That is typical. He bleats about fair play. Honourable members have heard him speak about fair play often enough in this House. However, he defies the umpire when a ruling goes against him. It is time that he and his colleagues realised that the public is tired of this Parliament's being used as a coward's castle. Many honourable members would have hoped that, in this new Parliament, with new leaders all round and with a new Speaker, some of the old ways of personal abuse, overstated and unproven smears might have been set aside. Apparently, they should be set aside like the retired Old Guard hacks.

**Mr Davis** interjected.

**Mr AUSTIN:** I am delighted that the honourable member for Brisbane Central has responded. He has recognised his calling.

This case proves that you cannot teach an old dog new tricks. People such as the Deputy Leader of the Opposition have learnt only to overstate their case for television; to exaggerate and smear, with the only requirement being that it is a good act for 20 seconds on television. The honourable member has tried to get around the laws of defamation and the laws of this Parliament by being very vague indeed. I must say that, at times, he has been very nasty and very vague. That is not good enough for this Parliament. If someone wants to claim dishonesty, let him put up or shut up. Where are the facts?

The Government opposes the motion.

**Mr Burns:** I will see you in court. We will put the facts up.

**Mr AUSTIN:** The honourable member will, too.

**Hon. W. D. LICKISS (Moggill) (12.26 p.m.):** The motion before the Chair is a very serious matter because it goes right to the inner workings of the parliamentary system, the respect that members of Parliament should have for that system and, by virtue of that, the respect that they should have for the Chair of this Parliament.

The position of Speaker or, in this case, Deputy Speaker, is not an easy one. During the thrust and parry of the debate the occupant of the chair has to determine whether in fact the Standing Orders and thus the rights of individual members and members collectively are protected. The Liberal Party believes that in view of the circumstances presenting themselves before him on that day of sitting, the Deputy Speaker acted correctly. He had to determine whether or not the words of the member for Lytton breached the provisions of Standing Order 120. I think that the whole of Standing Order 120 should be read into *Hansard*. That order relates to digressions, reference to previous debate, personal reflections, etc., and it states—

"A Member shall not digress from the subject-matter under discussion, or comment upon expressions used by another Member in a previous Debate of the same Session; and all imputations of improper motives, and all personal reflections, shall be deemed highly disorderly."

It then followed that the Deputy Speaker had to determine whether in fact the words used by the honourable member for Lytton breached the provisions of Standing Order 120.

The provisions of Standing Order No. 119 should also be considered. It states—

“A Member shall not use unbecoming or offensive words in reference to another Member of the House.”

The question, of course, is whether the Deputy Speaker felt that the words that were used by the honourable member, which in fact did reflect on some person's dishonesty or want of honesty, referred to an identifiable member or an identifiable group of members. For the record, it should be noted that the words which were used by the member for Lytton referred to the contemporary Cabinet and not a previous Cabinet. In his own determination in explaining why he had used the words, the honourable member made that quite clear to the House. He said—

“Perhaps Queenslanders were surprised at the great chasm of hypocrisy between the Premier's gushy statement and his Government's actual conduct. Well, if so, they should not have been. Most of the Ministers opposite, including the Premier, do not even know how to honestly award a contract according to proper procedures.”

Following that, the Leader of the House rose to a point of order. When called to order, the member for Lytton excluded the Leader of the House but referred to all the other Ministers. They are an identifiable group and identifiable by name when referred to as all the Ministers of the House. I believe that the Deputy Speaker acted correctly in asking the member for Lytton to withdraw the statement.

We can go beyond our own Standing Orders and reflect on what happens in the House of Commons. Under the Standing Orders of this House, if they do not provide any direction or detailed direction, then the practice in the House of Commons can be considered. As far as the House of Commons is concerned, the Bible is Erskine May. In the twentieth edition of Erskine May at page 442, under the heading, “Disciplinary powers of Speaker under ancient usage” the following statement appears—

“The chief features of the ancient practice were:

- (1) the duty of the Chair to call a Member to order and require the withdrawal of offensive words, etc., coupled with the right of any Member to draw the attention of the Chair to breaches of order;”.

That was certainly complied with.

That section states further—

“When a Member infringed usage of the rules it was the duty of the Speaker to call him to order”—

and that was done—

“and, if he had made use of any language which the Chair deemed unparliamentary, to require him to explain or retract the words and apologize to the House for having used them. It was also the right of any Member who conceived that a breach of order had been committed, if the Speaker did not intervene, either because he had not perceived the breach of order or for any other reason, to rise to order and direct the attention of the Chair to the matter.”

All those matters were complied with.

The crux of the matter is whether in fact the words used were deemed, in the opinion of Mr Deputy Speaker, to be unparliamentary. In view of the fact that an identifiable group was accused of dishonesty and, more specifically, that the matter was clarified to exclude the Minister who was present in the House but to include all others who were directly involved and could be identified by name, I believe that Mr Deputy Speaker acted correctly in this matter.

The Liberal Party supports Mr Deputy Speaker.

**Mr FITZGERALD** (Lockyer) (12.32 p.m.): I join in this debate to oppose the motion of dissent that was moved by the honourable member for Lytton. I agree with previous speakers who implied that the honourable member for Lytton actually put on a stunt during the heat of the debate to try to improve his political position, perhaps

even within his own party. I do not know the motive behind the honourable member's action, but there is no doubt in my mind that it was a stunt.

The honourable member was making a speech and was making accusations, which it is right and proper for him to do. He can make accusations and allegations. I was in the Chamber at that time but I wish to refer to notes to remind myself of what happened that day. The honourable member said—

“Most of the Ministers opposite, including the Premier, do not even know how to honestly award a contract . . .”

The implication attached to “honestly” was deemed to be unparliamentary. When the Leader of the House drew the attention of Mr Deputy Speaker to the use of that term Mr Deputy Speaker made a ruling under Standing Order 120—which has been referred to by previous speakers in this debate—and asked the honourable member to withdraw certain words. The honourable member withdrew those words but tried another method of getting the same message across. The honourable member referred to all Ministers but excepted the Minister who rose to take the point of order. I believe that he did that deliberately.

The honourable member for Lytton knows that he used words to try to skilfully manoeuvre around a problem that Mr Deputy Speaker and the Leader of the House had put in his way. The imputations he made in the second attempt were exactly the same as those contained in the first. All honourable members know about the principle of Cabinet solidarity and would know the reason why a Minister who is a member of Cabinet would take exception to the words used, which resulted in the honourable member for Lytton's having to withdraw those words. The honourable member accepted the ruling made by Mr Deputy Speaker but then tried to manoeuvre around the problem that had been presented. He had a little dispute with the Chair and was questioning the ruling made by the Chair. That is the honourable member's nature. You generally put a smile on your face when you question the Chair. You quite clearly know what happened, but you just wanted to try to engage the Chair in conversation to get an exchange going. That is a method that you use often when you are challenged and a point of order is taken. If you look at the record, you will see that that is what happens.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The honourable member will address his remarks through the Chair.

**Mr FITZGERALD:** Yes, Mr Speaker.

When exception was taken on the second occasion, Mr Deputy Speaker made a ruling on that matter. The honourable member for Lytton then moved a motion of dissent. I believe that when the honourable member moved that motion there was not one gleam of support in the eyes of members opposite. Not one of them called “Hear, hear!”; not one of them seemed to support him in any way whatsoever. In fact, I think that the honourable member was disappointed in himself in having moved the motion of dissent off the cuff and on the spur of the moment. However, the motion appears in the business paper, which is why honourable members are debating it today.

Other honourable members have referred to Standing Orders, particularly Standing Order 120, which is the relevant one. Some previous speakers also referred to comments in *Erskine May's Parliamentary Practice*. That text has been referred to on a number of occasions in this Parliament. This Parliament not merely has its Standing Orders; it also has a Standing Orders Committee. Mr Speaker is a member of that committee and all parties are represented on that committee. If honourable members are not happy with the provisions of Standing Order 120, the matter should be referred to that committee. The committee can refer to Standing Order 120 to assess how it affects the working of the Parliament and decide whether or not its provisions should be amended. The committee can make a recommendation to this Parliament, which can determine whether or not it will accept any changes proposed by the committee. That is a procedure that the members of this Parliament wish to see continued. The honourable members

in this House accept the Standing Orders and it is up to the Speaker to administer them as determined by this Parliament.

Apart from the Standing Orders, this Parliament also takes into consideration the past practice of the Westminster system as determined by Erskine May, and the Speaker makes the determination on parliamentary procedure according to past practice. In the twentieth edition of *Erskine May's Parliamentary Practice*, under the heading "Powers of the Chair to Enforce Order", it states—

"In so large and active an assembly as the House of Commons, it is absolutely necessary that the Speaker should be invested with authority to repress disorder and to give effect promptly and decisively to the rules and orders of the House. The ultimate authority on all these matters is the House itself; but the Speaker is the executive officer by whom its rules are enforced.

In most cases the breach of order is obvious and is immediately checked by the Speaker. In other cases if his attention is directed to a breach of order at the proper time, namely, the moment when it occurs, he at once gives his decision and if he fails to secure the compliance of the Member at fault directs him to withdraw or names him and leaves it to the House to inflict the appropriate penalty."

This House is proceeding along those lines. At the time the Leader of the House drew the attention of the Deputy Speaker to the problem that had arisen and, as I said before, the member withdrew the first remark and then tried to circumvent the Deputy Speaker's ruling. The member was ruled out of order and was peeved about it.

This Parliament is a forum where people can question the Government and Government policy can be debated. This Parliament must never descend into muck-throwing or the mire of a cesspool by permitting these comments. People believe that Parliament could descend into this cesspool if it adopts the practice of allowing members to refer to each other in this way and make accusations against each other under parliamentary privilege in this House. This is an honourable place and I am proud to be here. I want to see this House uphold the dignity of Parliament. I do not want to see its dignity gradually decay and be eroded away. This House is responsible for its own actions and it determines the standard of the debate. Any lowering of this standard will reflect on all honourable members, whether they be on the Government side of the House or the other side of the House.

I take exception to the comment of the honourable member for Ipswich that Ministers cannot be questioned and that it is up to all and sundry to defend themselves. Ministers can be questioned, and every day, during question-time in this House, Ministers are asked questions and policies are debated. However, when a statement is made that an honourable member is dishonest, the stage has been reached where unsubstantiated allegations are being made. If these allegations are allowed to continue, muck will be thrown and this House will descend into the mire of a cesspool. Thank goodness that Mr Deputy Speaker was able to rule accordingly and the House is now determining the matter.

I oppose this motion of dissent as moved by the honourable member for Lytton. By the look in his eye when he moved the motion, I believe that he probably regrets his action. He knows that other honourable members in this House will not support him and I hope that the motion is soundly defeated.

Question—That the motion be agreed to—put; and the House divided—

AYES, 27

Ardill  
Braddy  
Burns  
Campbell  
Comben  
D'Arcy  
De Lacy  
Eaton  
Gibbs, R. J.  
Goss  
Hamill  
Hayward  
McElligott  
Mackenroth  
McLean  
Milliner  
Palaszczuk  
Smith  
Smyth  
Underwood  
Vaughan  
Warburton  
Warner  
Wells  
Yewdale

*Tellers:*  
Davis  
Prest

Scott

NOES, 56

Ahern  
Alison  
Austin  
Beanland  
Beard  
Berghofer  
Booth  
Borbidge  
Burreket  
Chapman  
Clauson  
Cooper  
Elliott  
Fraser  
Gately  
Gibbs, I. J.  
Gilmore  
Glasson  
Gunn  
Gygar  
Harper  
Harvey  
Henderson  
Hinton  
Hinze  
Hobbs  
Innes  
Katter  
Knox  
Lane  
Lee  
Lester  
Lickiss  
Lingard  
Littleproud  
McCauley  
McKechnie  
McPhie  
Menzel  
Muntz  
Neal  
Nelson  
Newton  
Randell  
Row  
Schuntner  
Sherlock  
Sherrin  
Simpson  
Slack  
Stoneman  
Tenni  
Veivers  
White

*Tellers:*  
FitzGerald  
Stephan

PAIR

Hynd

Resolved in the negative.

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT GRANTS COMMISSION ACT AMENDMENT BILL

### Second Reading

Debate resumed from 16 March (see p. 5236).

**Mr De LACY (Cairns) (12.51 p.m.):** The amendments proposed in the Bill are of a mechanical nature only and bring the State legislation into line with requirements of the Commonwealth Local Government Financial Assistance Act of 1986, which is the new Commonwealth arrangement for providing general revenue assistance to local government in all States. The Opposition therefore supports the legislation and will not propose any amendments.

One of the effects of the recently introduced Commonwealth legislation is to ensure a greater consistency of treatment in the distribution of Commonwealth funds for local authorities right throughout Australia. This has been particularly important in respect of Queensland because in effect it does away with what is commonly referred to as the Queensland system. Everyone knows what the Queensland system is: pork-barrelling, patronage, cronyism, confrontation and non-co-operation.

I must say that the Local Government Grants Commission in Queensland has not attracted a lot of respect—in some circles, anyway—either within Queensland or without. I understand that the outgoing Under Treasurer, Sir Leo Hielscher, almost had a heart attack when he examined the basis on which the commission worked.

The material contained in the 1987 annual report of the Queensland Local Government Grants Commission makes very interesting reading. Instead of reporting the commission's objectives and achievements and providing statistical details of the year's operations, as is customary, this report attempts to further prosecute the argument that has obviously existed between the Commonwealth Department of Local Government and the Queensland Government. It is a sort of lame post facto justification for the

position argued unsuccessfully by the Queensland Government. I say "lame" because it rather looks like a case of defending the indefensible. It certainly is not very convincing.

In chapter 2 of its report, the Local Government Grants Commission gives its version of the history of negotiations between the Commonwealth and the State. It points out the following—

"... each State was required to formulate principles for the purpose of distributing grants to local governing bodies in that State, and to consult with relevant bodies representative of local government in formulating such principles."

It goes on to say that the Queensland Local Government Grants Commission did consult the Local Government Association. The report states—

"In consultation with the Local Government Association of Queensland, the Commission developed a set of general principles which were forwarded to the Commonwealth Government on 12th May, 1987. However, the Commonwealth Government did not accept these principles, or a revised set of principles submitted on 19th August, 1987."

The fact is that all States—including Queensland—submitted their principles within the required time. Those submitted by Tasmania and Western Australia were approved. However, in the case of four States—Victoria, Queensland, New South Wales and South Australia—the Commonwealth Minister found the principles submitted to be unsatisfactory and sought further discussions on matters of concern to the Commonwealth. Victoria, New South Wales and South Australia agreed to such discussions, and revised principles were submitted and subsequently approved. Would honourable members believe that once again Queensland was the odd man out? Queensland took nearly seven weeks to respond to Mr Uren's invitation of 3 June for further discussions. It then advised that it considered that the principles that it had submitted were adequate. It did not respond to the request for further discussions.

A further letter was sent to the Queensland Government informing it that, because of the difficulties that had arisen, the Commonwealth had no alternative to developing a set of principles to apply to Queensland. The Queensland Government was asked for its views on the principles proposed by the Commonwealth. The Queensland Government did respond on 19 August, submitting a revised set of principles and suggesting discussions between officials after that great passage of time and after it had refused to have discussions in the first place.

The Commonwealth's view was that the revised principles would not achieve equalisation amongst councils as required by the Act. Furthermore, the Commonwealth considered that negotiations with Queensland on its revised proposal would result in delaying payments to Queensland local governments and might not necessarily result in resolving the difficulties.

The annual report states—

"Accordingly, it is proposed not to comment further this year on principles and methods."

The members of the commission then proceeded to do just that by showing the principle formulated by the Commonwealth Government in ordinary type and the principles formulated by the State in italic type. Obviously, they are trying to tell the readers that something is self-evident. One matter that is self-evident to me is that the Commonwealth's principles appear to be sound, sensible and based on the principles of equity and justice. The only other matter that is self-evident is that there is a significant discrepancy between the local government grants as calculated by the Commonwealth and those calculated by the State.

On page 7 of the annual report, the second column in the table shows the amount of Commonwealth funds that would have been payable to each local authority in Queensland based on the State Government's calculation. The third column in that table shows the amount due as calculated by the Commonwealth. A comparison of how those

grants would be distributed, authority by authority, makes very interesting reading, but I am still at a loss to understand why the Local Government Grants Commission bothered to print both sets of tables—unless the members were appealing to those councils that superficially did worse under the Commonwealth allocation than they would have done had the State calculation been accepted. But, of course, for every winner there is a loser.

Some local authorities in Queensland could be justified in feeling that they were getting a very raw deal under the State Government's distributive system. Some of the poorer councils or those with greater social problems and emerging populations, such as Logan, were receiving a very raw deal from the State Government. Under its system, the State Government had offered Logan \$1.84m. Under the revised formula now being used by the Commonwealth, Logan will receive \$2.237m. In other words, under the Commonwealth system Logan will receive almost \$400,000 more. The electors in Logan might well ask what system was in place that allowed them to be short-changed to the extent of almost \$400,000. Of course, Logan is an emerging area and largely a working-class area. One may say that the State Government, as has very often been the case, discriminated against the electors on the basis of their political or voting allegiance.

Not only Labor areas have been discriminated against. The first local authority on the list is Albert. Under the Commonwealth calculation, the recommended grant for Albert is \$2.147m.

Sitting suspended from 1 to 2.30 p.m.

**Mr De LACY:** Before the luncheon adjournment I was comparing the proposed allocations by the State Government with the actual allocations that are recommended by the Commonwealth Government and contained in the eleventh annual report of the Local Government Grants Commission. I pointed out that working-class areas such as Logan would have been treated very badly indeed if the State Government allocations had proceeded. Working-class or battling areas such as Logan would not have been the only areas that would have had reason to complain very bitterly if the State Government allocations had proceeded. Albert, which is not a well-known Labor area, was offered \$1.874m by the State Government and \$2.147m by the Commonwealth. That means that the Commonwealth offered and will be paying to the Albert Shire \$273,000 or 14½ per cent more than the State would have paid.

I turn now to the Gold Coast. The proposed State Government allocation was \$2.517m and the Commonwealth recommended grant was \$2.724m, representing a total increase of \$207,000.

Toowoomba was short-changed by \$230,000. The State allocation was \$1.759m compared with the Commonwealth recommended grant of \$1.988m.

Even Kingaroy was duded to the tune of \$50,000. One may well ask why Kingaroy should be picked upon by the Queensland Local Government Grants Commission. Perhaps there is a message in that. It must not be forgotten that this is 1988, not 1986 or even earlier. Perhaps the peanut republic of Kingaroy has reached the end of its halcyon era. The present State Government has no great love for Kingaroy. However, on the eve of the Barambah by-election, I wonder whether the residents of Kingaroy are aware that the State Government was proposing to allocate to them out of Commonwealth grants funds \$583,000 although the Commonwealth is offering them \$632,000.

In summary, many discrepancies exist between the allocations calculated under the Commonwealth's formula and those calculated under the old State Government formula. The Commonwealth Government's system is based on the notions of equity, justice and fairness. Local authorities in Queensland will be much better served by having a more predictable and testable method of calculating their grants from the Commonwealth or by way of disbursement of Commonwealth grants to local authorities.

When one considers the way in which the State Government has misused Grants Commission funds, one matter warrants special attention, namely, the grants that are recommended for Aboriginal and Islander councils in Queensland. It is bad enough that



Grants Commission funds are distributed not according to need but according to blatant political tinkering. It is much worse, however, when grants funds from the Commonwealth are choked off by the Commonwealth Government by what can only be described as blatant racist manipulation. Every member of this House, regardless of party, must condemn a situation in which funds are allocated on what can only be described as racist grounds.

The annual report of the Local Government Grants Commission shows clearly that the State Government intended to allocate \$168,000 to the 31 Aboriginal and Islander councils in Queensland, as opposed to a recommendation of \$1.172m which was granted to them under the Commonwealth formula. In other words, the State Government intended to short-change the Aboriginal and Islander people by approximately 86 per cent.

**Mr FitzGerald:** Did the Federals recognise the extra expenditure for that commitment when they distributed the grants to the other shires?

**Mr De LACY:** Whether that was done or not, the solution to the problem is not to short-change the Aboriginal people, the Aboriginal councils or those councils which are least able to look after themselves.

The State Government intended that only 14 per cent of Commonwealth grant funds would have ultimately found its way to the Aboriginal and Islander councils for which it was intended and earmarked. That is the reality of the State Government's political deal for the Aboriginal and Islander people of this State. That is the reality when State Government Ministers talk about Aboriginal self-management—give them nothing, take them nowhere. Let me repeat those figures: the Commonwealth Government set aside specifically for Aboriginal and Islander councils \$1.172m in 1987-88.

**Mr FitzGerald:** Took it straight out of the bin.

**Mr De LACY:** No, it did not. It made an allocation for local authorities in Queensland, of which \$1.172m was earmarked for Aboriginal and Islander communities. When the Local Government Grants Commission made allocations it did not give those local authorities \$1.172m, it gave them \$168,000. I think that is quite clear.

The National Party Government argued that a minimal \$80 per capita grant to the Aboriginal and Islander councils should be reduced to a paltry \$12 per head. That is the reality of the Government's self-management policy for Aboriginal and Islander communities. That is the Government's approach to Aboriginal problems in our bicentennial year. It is no wonder that the Aborigines and Islanders cannot see much to celebrate about. Out of the \$106m allocated by the Commonwealth Government to local authorities in Queensland and out of the \$1.172m earmarked for the Aboriginal and Islander councils—all 31 of them—the State Government was prepared to pass on the rare sum of \$168,000. This is Mr Ahern's vision of excellence for Aboriginal Queenslanders.

The simple fact is that the State Government never really wanted this legislation. It complained about the Commonwealth's setting an objective basis for allocating funds to local authorities that would work for all States and all local authorities throughout Australia. The Government has attempted to frustrate all efforts to arrive at a co-operative, considered and cordial resolution. Alone amongst the States—and how often have we heard that—Queensland refused to accept the basis or meet for discussions to resolve differences about principles and methods. The Commonwealth approach is based upon testable conclusions that can be applied to every local authority to come up with a tolerably objective measure of needs for that local authority. I am sure that in the long run all local authorities in Queensland will be thankful for that. This is the pattern of confrontation, obfuscation and non-co-operation that came to be expected under the previous Bjelke-Petersen regime. It was then par for the course.

Is it not strange how the Commonwealth could always negotiate a solution with the other States no matter what their political allegiance, but never with Queensland? Eventually the Commonwealth was forced to impose a set of principles which Queensland

was forced to accept because if it had not local authorities would not have received grants from the Commonwealth. It seems that the only language the National Party Government in Queensland understands is that of force. Has the situation changed much under the new regime? Not very much.

The Queensland Government refused to allow the involvement of the Federal Department of Aboriginal Affairs in negotiations, particularly negotiations on grants to Aboriginal communities. Was this a constructive approach or yet again belligerence, intransigence and ignorance regardless of the needs of the individuals and communities involved? Regrettably, the same process has been continuing this year. Senator Margaret Reynolds has had a number of discussions with Ministers Austin and Randell with a view to resolving the situation. However, not very much progress at all has been made. The same pattern that characterised State Government relations with the Commonwealth continues under Premier Ahern. Despite a new figurehead on the National Party ship of State the boat seems to be just as warped under the waterline and just as reliable as it ever was. The Queensland Government has had to be dragged kicking and screaming to comply with the Commonwealth legislation to overturn the principle of grants distribution characterised by inconsistency, injustice and ineptitude. Queensland continues to be out of step with every other State in Australia. The Commonwealth Government has had to accept the responsibility of forcing Queensland to comply with an objective basis for the allocation of Commonwealth grants to local authorities.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I support the Bill, which represents a positive step forward. But how much better it would be if the National Party Government were to accept the thrust of the Commonwealth legislation and the administrative co-operation that is being offered in order that all Queenslanders, especially those who live in Aboriginal and Islander communities, could derive benefit from the just and equal distribution of Commonwealth grants, which at present is being hindered by the intransigence of the Queensland Government.

**Mr BEANLAND (Toowong)** (2.41 p.m.): On behalf of the Liberal Party, I support the Bill. At the outset I want to congratulate those responsible for the work carried out by the Local Government Grants Commission. The commission has an unenviable task. It is fair to say that, in performing its task, the commission cannot win, because there will always be some local authorities in this State that will be unhappy. However, I believe that the Local Government Grants Commission goes out of its way to ensure that among local authorities in Queensland, a fair deal is offered to each of them. Since its formation in 1977, the Local Government Grants Commission has demonstrated a great deal of credibility and sincerity in its dealings with local authorities.

The establishment of the Local Government Grants Commission followed a decision by the Federal Liberal Government under Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser. The Local Government Grants Commission Act 1976 was enacted to assist local authorities throughout the nation. The purpose of that Act was to allow local authorities to become part of Fraser's federalism policy. Through that mechanism, local authorities were given access to a proportion of personal income tax revenue. In 1976-77, 1.52 per cent of personal income tax revenue that was collected in 1975-76 was allocated to local authorities. That amounted to approximately \$140m. That sum rose as a percentage of personal income tax to 2 per cent in 1980-81. It was the Liberal Government's goal to increase that figure to a level of 2 per cent. The idea of tying that percentage to personal income tax was to ensure that local authorities had access to a growth tax. What better form of growth tax could there be than personal income tax?

The concept was that assistance to local government would be tied to a percentage of personal income tax as a growth tax. That policy continued and the level remained at 2 per cent until the Labor Government was elected. In 1984-85, one of the first actions of the Labor Government was to reduce what local authorities had been receiving. The Labor Government changed the system so that in 1986-87, the level of funds allocated to local authorities decreased from 2 per cent of personal income tax to 1.79 per cent. In 1987-88, it decreased further to 1.69 per cent of personal income tax revenue.

I listened intently to what the honourable member for Cairns had to say. However, all local authorities throughout this nation have fared badly under the Federal Labor Government. I say that because the gross amount that was shared among local authorities throughout Australia was considerably reduced, which is still the position. The reduction in funds in some cases has led to local authorities having to increase rates substantially. Others that were more prudent have had to look very closely at the use of their resources in order to keep down the spiralling effect of costs on rates.

By the introduction of the Local Government Financial Assistance Act 1986, the Commonwealth Government set out to formulate new principles for the distribution of funds to local authorities. This financial year, the Commonwealth Government changed the guide-lines used by the Queensland Local Government Grants Commission. I am sure that all honourable members would be aware of the fight that has gone on over the last 12 months in relation to the change to those guide-lines.

The decision has caused a great deal of shock throughout the State and a great deal of heartburn for local authorities, wherever they might be. Under these guide-lines, and because of the formula which the Commonwealth Government foisted upon this State this financial year, more than half of the local authorities will receive less funding over the next five-year period up to and including the 1992-93 financial year.

In the past these grants were determined by an independent Local Authority Grants Commission in this State which was attached to the State Treasury. I have already congratulated that commission on the work that it has done. That commission did not sit in Canberra or Brisbane; the members of the commission went out into the local authority areas and had a close look at the kinds of development that were occurring in those areas and the type of infrastructure required to ensure that those local authority areas developed at a certain rate. They also looked at the condition of the roads, water supplies, sewerage and so on. I will come to the matter of roads very shortly.

This financial year the Federal Government totally by-passed the State Local Authority Grants Commission and established a list of likely grants for the next five years. This move follows a great deal of fighting with the State Government, but regardless of who is to blame in this exercise—and some of the blame rests with both levels of Government—without doubt the great losers are the local authorities in this State. This has already occurred. In recent times negotiations have been held and one set of negotiations was held back in February with the Minister for Finance and the Minister for Local Government. I understand that more negotiations have occurred since that time. When the Minister speaks later in this debate I would like to have an indication from him as to the progress of those negotiations. I know that all local authorities want to have the formula settled and do not want to advance down the track into the next financial year only to find themselves in the same predicament as the one that they are in this financial year.

For example, under the Federal Labor Government estimates, for last year, 1987-88, the Brisbane City Council was to receive \$16,231,053. Instead it received \$16,073,691. If one looks at the figures, over the next five years up to 1992-93 it is clear that in real terms Brisbane will receive a cut of 20 per cent in the funds that it will receive from the Commonwealth Government. In 1992-93 the Brisbane City Council will receive something like \$17.2m, which will represent a considerable reduction. The shortfall will have to be made up by the council itself from its internal resources or from rate increases, increased loans or other avenues. Over the last three years, under a Liberal administration, the Brisbane City Council has looked more and more towards its own resources and asset base in order to prevent rate rises. The same thing has happened with a number of other local authorities, and I will return to some of them very shortly.

All local authorities have noted the miserable, miserly and penny-pinching way in which the "world's greatest Treasurer"—sometimes known as the "undertaker"—has cut back on local authority grants. For example, no longer do local authorities receive a lump-sum amount. The grant is paid out on a quarterly basis on the 15th of August, November, February and May of each year. The purpose of this is to allow the Federal

Government to make use of those funds to gain the interest that the local authorities would otherwise have been able to gain on the short-term money market. There have been huge revenue losses to local authorities and they will lose further because the Government is now paying them on a quarterly basis.

Labor's political colleagues in Canberra are proposing over the ensuing five years to cut further in real terms these general purpose grants to local authorities.

**Mr De Lacy:** There was an increase in real terms in the allocations to the States.

**Mr BEANLAND:** I will cover that point more fully in a moment, but I have already made the point that in fact the current Federal Labor Government has cut back considerably the sums of money going to local authorities and how they have been cut back from what was proposed by the Fraser Liberal Government. In fact, the figures have been cut back from 2 per cent to 1.69 per cent of personal income tax revenue.

Even the Labor Party members in this Chamber would appreciate and understand those significant cuts, especially when the huge hike in personal income tax revenue under the Labor Government over that time is taken into account. Labor has sold out the people; Labor has sold out local authorities; Labor has sent them down the tube, but in recent times we have not heard anything from Labor members about this.

Now Labor wants to prune further the road-funding that comes to local authorities so that local government will have to increase rates or look to its own resources even further. Over recent times discussions have been held about additional cuts in Federal grants for road-funding. Already in the last three years cuts of the order of 25 per cent of funds for local roads have taken place.

All councils throughout the State have real concerns that the May mini-Budget may contain cuts over and above those that local authorities have already witnessed—with disastrous results, I might add. But the politicians in Canberra do not see votes in local roads. How wrong they are. When the time comes, they will find out how wrong they are. The feelings out there in the community about funding for local roads are running high. Local government—aldermen and councillors—will ensure that the message about the real cause of the funding problem is passed on to tax-payers.

Although additional funds have been made available through the Australian Bicentennial Road Development Program, over a period the Federal Government has received a huge increase in funds from the fuel levy, which is now used purely to balance the Federal Budget. Little concern is given to returning much of those funds to government to construct better roads, whether it be the State Government, which is suffering badly from this problem, or local government, for which the consequences have been even more disastrous. Even though additional funds may go to the improvement of the national highways, if local roads are allowed to deteriorate, the road system will be only as good as its weakest link. That is what is now being found in local authorities. In this country local government is always perceived as the poor relation. I can understand why the Labor Government keeps talking about giving local government a position in the Constitution. That is a good way to mislead local authorities and to get them off the important matter of getting some additional funding so that they can improve the infrastructure and the services that they provide to the people at large.

Queensland was probably fortunate that in 1976-77, under the initial Fraser Liberal Federal Government allocations, Queensland received 17.3 per cent of the total amount of available funding, even though it had only 15.1 per cent of the population. The reasons for that were quite simple; firstly, the tyranny of distance; secondly, decentralisation; and, thirdly, through the lower income per head of population. The Federal Government, through the local authorities, ensured that Queensland received additional funds to make up for those factors that would have caused a shortfall. In recent times, particularly in Brisbane, much has been heard from the Labor Party about rates. An important relationship exists between what local authorities received by way of local government grants, road-funding and the rate revenue system. Local authorities throughout the State are very much aware of that.

It is interesting to note that under the Liberal council over the last three years rates in Brisbane have been kept down to half the rate of inflation. During the last nine years of Labor rule in Brisbane, at a time when additional funding was being made available to local authorities from a Federal Liberal/National Party Government in Canberra, rates increased by two and a half times the rate of inflation.

The amount of revenue that is received by local authorities through rates is tremendously important. The annual report of the Local Government Department shows that Brisbane's rates and charges are just about the lowest of any city or town in Queensland. Brisbane's rate-payers pay an average of \$682 a year in rates, which is \$254 cheaper than those in Ipswich. No wonder the people of Ipswich went a long way towards showing their disgust with the Labor council in Ipswich at the recent local authority elections. Ipswich has an average rates bill of \$936 a year; Bundaberg, \$807; Gladstone, \$717; Townsville—another place at which the Labor Party received a great shock—\$898; and Mount Isa, \$970.

Local authorities cannot simply sit back and put up rates. They are very much aware that they must examine their own resources. Their only two resources are the people whom they employ and the funds that they receive. Although they might ensure their staff are properly trained, that they have motivation and incentive and that they are aware of the challenges that are faced by local authorities today, on the financial side local authorities must ensure that they make better use of funds and assets. No longer is it good enough for local authorities to have huge land banks from which no rate revenue is being received and without ensuring that land is being developed and people are being brought into the area and encouraged to bring industry and investment into the area. Local authorities must now ensure that surplus lands that are not used and are not zoned and set aside for parkland at present or in the future, or for other community services, will be sold. Local authorities must ensure that the facilities that they operate are managed in an efficient and an effective manner. They can no longer sit back and rely on the Federal Government or any other level of Government, because the Federal Labor Government is striking out at local authorities and cutting back the revenue funds that they receive. All buildings and assets need to be put to the greatest use. They need to be carefully examined to ensure that they are used to the optimum.

The State Government's alteration of the City of Brisbane Act to ensure that costs can now be awarded in third party appeals affected all local authorities, because suddenly they were faced with considerable legal bills which they had not been faced with in the past. Previously, they only had to worry about bearing their own costs. Now, if a local authority fails to win a court case, it can be confronted with huge legal bills from developers who might be prepared to spend \$250,000, \$300,000 or \$500,000 on a Local Government Court case by the time the expenses of town-planners, Queen's Counsel and traffic engineers are taken into account.

It is more important than ever that local authorities look to their own resources to ensure that they make optimum use of those resources. There is a saying in local government that is probably more appropriate today than it has ever been. That saying is: the Commonwealth has got the money and it is keeping it; the State has got the power and it is using it; local government has got the problem and it cannot do much about it.

**Mr CAMPBELL (Bundaberg)** (3 p.m.): I rise to put right some of the things that the Liberal member for Toowong had to say about the Commonwealth funding provided under both Liberal and Labor Governments. In addition, I believe that I should put right some of the misleading statements made about the Labor administration that held power in Brisbane.

Great play was made of the fact that the Federal Government has supposedly cut back drastically the amount that is paid to local governments in Queensland. I will examine the exact amounts that were given last year and that will be given this year. The Local Government Grants Commission's tenth report, for the 1986 year, reveals

that the Commonwealth grant as recommended for that year was \$98.7m. For this year the amount has been increased to \$106,187,000. That is an increase of 8.6 per cent.

People are saying that there has been a drastic reduction in the grants paid to local government authorities and that it has been due to the Federal Government. I will show that over many years it has been the Queensland Government that has eroded the grants paid to the local authorities of this State. I believe I was correct in saying that the Commonwealth grant has increased by 8.6 per cent over the previous year. That comes from no less an authority than the Local Government Grants Commission and its reports.

The member for Toowong also spoke about the way in which in 1977 the Labor administration in Brisbane supposedly increased rates. He said that the new administration has not done the same. The reason why rates had to go up so much in 1977 was that the Brisbane City Council was robbed of electricity distribution. It was robbed of that service, but it had to provide the same services to the citizens of Brisbane on lower revenue. It had to increase rates by 20 per cent.

When members of the Liberal Party say that the Liberal council is really looking after the people of Brisbane, they are misleading the House. It was the Liberals and members of the National Party who took away the electricity distribution which led to the massive increase in rates at that time.

It is very interesting that the member for Toowong is prepared to compare the Fraser Government and the Hawke Labor Government. I will go back before that. I will go back to the days when the local authorities got nothing from the Federal Government. The Gortons, the McMahons, the Holts—the Liberal/National coalition Governments—gave very little, or nothing. It was not until the Whitlam Government and its foresight that there was any real recognition of local government. That is where it all started.

Erroneous statements have been made not only about the total amount of grants provided but also about the way in which they are shared. The member for Toowong says that there have been some increases for Aboriginal communities. I am glad that the Federal Government has put that funding right. However, before the recommendations for change were made by the Federal Government, many local authorities were missing out. Bundaberg was one such local authority.

It is interesting to note that, on the calculation used by the State Government, the allocation to the Bundaberg local authority was \$885,592. Based on the Commonwealth's calculation, the amount of the recommended grant was \$1,045,028, which represented an increase of 18 per cent or \$159,000. For many years the residents of Bundaberg have had to shoulder a greater burden for rates. The rating position is so anomalous that people on one side of a road pay rates of \$300 a year to one authority, yet across the road the residents who receive basically the same services must pay \$800 a year. Because of a misallocation of grants, one local authority had to ask its rate-payers to make a greater contribution for the services that they receive.

I seek leave to have incorporated in *Hansard* a table titled *Grants to Queensland Local Government Authorities by Commonwealth and State Governments 1980-1987*.

Leave granted.

GRANTS TO QUEENSLAND LOCAL GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES BY  
COMMONWEALTH AND STATE GOVERNMENTS 1980-1987

Type of Grant	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987
	\$m	\$m	\$m	\$m	\$m	\$m	\$m	\$m
1. By Commonwealth Government								
(a) General purpose (income tax sharing)	37.4	50.7	59.2	71.6	77.4	82.0	90.4	98.6
(b) Specific purpose (excluding roads)								
(i) Direct to L.A.	1.9	2.1	4.0	4.6	6.0	11.6	14.9	11.5
(ii) to State for on passing to L.A. (partly at State's discretion)	1.4	0.7	1.3	3.7	50.3	36.0	23.0	12.7
(c) Road grants to State for on-passing to L.A. (at State's discretion)	15.3	19.9	24.1	21.6	25.7	29.9	29.8	30.8
Total Commonwealth	56.0	73.4	88.6	101.5	159.5	159.5	158.1	153.6
2. By State Government	79.05	58.2	56.1	56.8	58.8	68.0	51.0	
Total grants	135.5	131.6	144.7	158.3	218.2	227.5	209.1	
Total L.A. Revenue	418.8	509.9	592.1	669.6	805.5	888.9	958.9	
Grants as percentage of total revenue	32.4	25.8	24.4	23.6	27.1	25.6	21.8	

## PROPORTION OF TOTAL GRANTS %

Type of Grant	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Total Commonwealth	41.3	55.8	61.2	64.1	73.0	70.1	75.6	
Total State	58.6	44.2	38.8	35.9	27.0	29.9	24.4	

Source: Commonwealth Budget Papers 85/86 & 86/87; Aust. Bureau of Statistics Ct No. 55040; Dept. of Main Roads Annual Reports, & Local Government Grants Commission Queensland Eleventh Report

**Mr CAMPBELL:** The document illustrates the second major point that I wish to make during this debate. Over a period of time the contribution made by the State Government as a proportion of the total grants provided to local authorities has been reduced in real terms. While Government members may ask, "What has the Commonwealth been doing?", for decades the State Government has been taking money out of the pockets of local authorities.

The document shows that, in 1980, Commonwealth grants totalled \$56m, comprising general purpose grants, \$37.4m; specific purpose grants, \$3.3m; and road grants to the State for onpassing to local authorities at the State's discretion, \$15.3m. In the same year the State Government provided \$79.05m. The total grants received by local authorities represented 32.4 per cent of the total revenue of local authorities. The State Government provided 58.6 per cent of the total grants and the Commonwealth provided 41.3 per cent. In that year the State Government provided the majority of combined State/Commonwealth grants to local authorities. That is no longer the trend.

In 1981, the Commonwealth increased its grants to local authorities, whereas the State Government reduced its grants. In 1981, the Commonwealth provided \$50.7m in general purpose grants and \$22.7m in other grants, making a total of \$73.4m. However, the State Government provided only \$58.2m. In one year the percentage of Commonwealth payments as a proportion of total grants increased from 41.3 per cent to 55.8 per cent, while the proportion of total grants provided by the State Government decreased from 58.6 per cent to 44.2 per cent. Government members should not blame the Federal Government for the problems with funding provided to local governments. National/Liberal State Governments have reduced the proportion of total grants paid to local authorities. That trend has continued for a long time. 1986 is the last year for which comparative figures for both Commonwealth and State grants can be obtained. In that year, the Commonwealth provided \$158.1m in total grants, whereas at the start of this decade it provided \$56m. Since 1980, general purpose or income tax sharing grants have increased from \$37.4m to \$90.4m.

Let us see what the State Government has done. The State Government is supposedly the great benefactor of local authorities. Members of the National Party say, "Look at how much we do for local authorities." However, this Government has been starving local authorities. In that very same year, the State Government provided to local authorities grants of only \$51m, which were made up of different subsidies on expenditure capital and operating expenses. It is very interesting to note that, between 1980 and 1986, the lowest ever grant that was paid by this State Government was \$51m which was paid in 1986. I invite the Government to refute that; however, it cannot. The official statistics show that this National Party State Government is starving local authorities and expecting the Federal Government to pick up the tab.

In 1986, 75.6 per cent of the total grants that were received by local authorities came from the Commonwealth Government, whereas the State provided only 24.4 per cent. The basic role in providing grants has now changed. The Federal Government provides the majority of the funding. The State Government provides a minor amount. Commonwealth grants to local authorities have increased drastically, whereas State Government grants have decreased. However, the total proportion of those combined grants to local authorities as a percentage of total revenue has remained fairly constant. During the period that I have mentioned, that proportion has moved from 32 per cent to 21.8 per cent.

During the past decade, the Commonwealth Government has increased grants to local authorities by a massive amount. Between 1980 and 1986, general purpose grants increased from \$37.4m to \$90.4m. However, the State Government reduced the total grants and subsidies that it provided to local authorities from \$79m to \$51m. What is the State Government going to do?

When I was researching information on local authority expenditure and fund-raising, I found a lack of information in the State Budget. The 1986-87 State Budget contained summary tables relating to public accounts. In that year and in all previous years the State Government was prepared to provide figures that set out the total approved programs for fund-raising of State, semi-Government and local authorities. However, that information was dropped from last year's Budget. I believe that, because it showed how the State Government had been dependent upon local authorities to provide many of the services and facilities that this Government has refused to provide for the citizens of Queensland, that information was not provided.

In 1986-87, the approved programs and loan raisings for semi-Government and local authorities per head of population in Queensland was \$530.67. That represented the debt that Queensland's local authorities entered into in order to provide those services, and it compared with an Australian average of \$402.06. Local authorities had to borrow large sums of money to make up for the shortfall in the grants that the State Government was providing.

Members of this Government and of the Liberal Party are bleating about the way in which local authorities are supposedly being treated by the Federal Government. Let



me point out the facts. On a continuous basis general purpose grants under the Federal Government, whether it be Liberal or Labor, have been increasing. Last year the grant increased by 8.6 per cent. Over that same period the State Government has been reducing grants and subsidies to local authorities. It is very important that that is put into proper perspective. It has to be ensured that when this matter is debated in this House the facts are put and that the burden of responsibility for anything that has occurred in relation to the lack of funding for local authorities is placed in its proper perspective, that is, that the erosion of any grants has been due to the very tight purse-strings of and the lackeys in the National Party State Government.

**Mr HOBBS (Warrego) (3.16 p.m.):** I rise to speak to the amendment to the Local Government Grants Commission Act. Actually, I speak reluctantly to this amendment.

**Mr Davis:** Why?

**Mr HOBBS:** If the honourable member sits back and listens, I will tell him shortly.

I will refer firstly to a couple of the points raised by the member for Bundaberg. He tried to tell us that everything is okay and that the State has not received any less funding from the Commonwealth. I would like him to try to tell the people in my electorate that they should not worry; that it is only a misprint; that they are receiving plenty of money to keep going; and that the grants are tied to the inflation rate. If the honourable member checks his figures he will see that the areas to which I refer have received dramatic and drastic reductions in grants. The time has come when consideration should be given to the way in which funding for local authorities throughout Queensland is determined.

The amendments contained in the Bill deal mainly with the administrative and procedural provisions of the Act. The Bill contains two main provisions, one of which ensures that State legislation is consistent with that of the Commonwealth Government. It is a case of the Commonwealth Government saying that Queensland has to do what it is told, otherwise it will receive no money. That is the Federal Government's attitude. If that is not done, Queensland will miss out on its funding.

The second provision defines local government bodies to include Aboriginal and Islander councils. I will deal with that matter later. First of all, I shall speak about the roughshod manner in which local authorities are treated. Because of the Federal Government's incompetence in its handling of local authority funding, it rides roughshod over the local authorities, particularly those in western Queensland, including the one that I represent. Some consideration should be given to investigating its distribution practices to see what can be done.

I certainly do not agree with the member for Cairns, who said that the Grants Commission was not working well. I certainly agree with the member for Toowong who said that it was working well. It has been working very, very well. Perhaps those who could not understand the principles of the operations of the previous Grants Commission did not want to. Perhaps they were incompetent in their own local government field and they felt they had to try to blame somebody else for not being able to fund their local authority properly. The Grants Commission worked very well. It understood Queensland conditions. It was a very, very approachable commission, which travelled very widely. It was able to call in and discuss with councils any problems they had. I found the commission particularly helpful. One could always talk to its members about problems. Charlie Palmer or any other of the members could be contacted for assistance. In some instances the Grants Commission visited biannually, which indicated that it had the situation under control. However, that Grants Commission, which had the support of a vast number of local authorities in Queensland, has now been undermined. It has projected figures for the next five years. I ask: what type of role can the Local Government Grants Commission play in Queensland when the figures that it has to work on have already been projected? The Federal Government's action certainly places the Queensland Local Government Grants Commission in a very difficult position, which should be addressed as soon as possible.

Senator Margaret Reynolds said that people should not take any notice of those figures and should note those projections with reservations. I wonder what she really meant by that. I think that she does not know how the system operates and that, in that respect, she is virtually incompetent.

**Mr De Lacy:** Did you do worse or better under Margaret Reynolds?

**Mr HOBBS:** Every shire was worse off. Shires in the western Queensland division are going down more than they were before. Under Margaret Reynolds' administration, the western district is going down even further.

**Mr De Lacy:** Which council are you talking about?

**Mr HOBBS:** I am talking about a number of councils and I will come to that matter shortly.

I draw attention to the reduction in funds that has occurred throughout the years since 1979-80. In that year, the western division that I referred to earlier received 5.96 per cent of the total Queensland grant. In 1986-87, it received 4.69 per cent of the total Queensland grant; in 1987-88, it received 4.2 per cent. Under Margaret Reynolds' administration, the projections for the years 1992-93 indicate that the level will be 3.3 per cent. The funds allocated to the western districts are slowly going down and are going down the proverbial tube at a faster rate now than before.

A decreased level of funding is not the only problem, because local authorities now have to deal with quarterly payments. All honourable members would appreciate that local authorities are hard pushed as it is to find funds. However, those local authorities that were wise and astute enough to put a few dollars away to earn interest are finding that the Federal Government is spoon-feeding them. I doubt whether the honourable member for Bundaberg would have taken that factor into consideration when he spoke about the 8 per cent increase in funding that was granted. I turn now to why the present situation came about. The Federal Government set up a national inquiry into local Government finance. It seems to me that in the first instance either the Federal Government should have been advised by a more qualified man or wider guide-lines should have been set. Alternatively, if the Federal Government had not bothered with the inquiry but had allocated the funding to the most populated shires instead, a good deal of money would have been saved.

Rural shires have suffered serious declines in road-funding and in Local Government Grants Commission funding. In addition, very serious declines are proposed in CALAR funding for Queensland roads. Perhaps a decrease in funding would be acceptable to some people, but it would be acceptable provided that it was applied across the board and provided also that all Government authorities, including those at Federal and State levels, copped it on the chin. If someone were to say, "Come on fellows, we have all got to cut back", I think that most honourable members in this Parliament would go along with the idea. However, when the Federal Government devises an inequitable arrangement that benefits some local authorities and disadvantages others, that is not a very satisfactory arrangement. I certainly cannot accept in any way a redistribution of funds under the present system. The Federal Government is spending far more——

**Mr Beanland:** Queensland is missing out on \$30m. The Federal Government has short-changed Queensland by \$30m this year.

**Mr HOBBS:** That is right—\$30m—which is a lot of money.

The graph indicating income tax revenue distribution shows that from 1983 to 1988, the funding received by Queensland changed very little. Queensland's position has not improved at all, whereas the graph indicates that the Federal Government has spent much more than the State Governments spent. As a matter of fact, the Federal Government spent more than the revenue it obtained.

It can be seen from this graph that revenue and spending are coming closer together. If the Federal Government put the same spending restraints on itself as it has on the

States, this country would be in a better economic position today. The figures indicate that if that had been the case there would have been a Budget surplus. The State's taxation revenue has been reduced. It is terrible that the Federal Government is putting so much restriction on the States whilst it is happy to keep on spending and sell the farms.

Some councils will have a great deal of financial worry over the next few years in order to carry on. In order to reach the 1986-87 level of funding, quite a few of the shire councils in my electorate will have to operate for a number of years after 1987-88 before they can break even with their previous funding. The Aramac Shire will have to operate for 10.3 years before it returns to line ball; the Barcoo Shire is facing 12 years; Boulia Shire, 7.9 years; Bulloo Shire, 9.6 years; Diamantina Shire, 11.5 years; Isisford Shire, 14.3 years; Jericho Shire, 7.1 years; and Paroo Shire, 5.1 years. These shires are only a few of many shires in those areas which are suffering as a result of this legislation. The honourable member for Bundaberg has said, "It is okay. We should not worry, because we are getting more money." This is rather amazing.

Insufficient account has been taken of a few factors, one of which is isolation. Another is the effect of drought. Although there is a great deal of rain in the south-east corner of Queensland at present and cyclone Charlie has brought rain up the coast and in towards central Queensland, many shires did not get any rain at all. There are large areas which are still drought stricken. That has to be taken into consideration.

Another ongoing problem is the lack of permanent roadworks. This is due to a lack of funding of the roadwork system, whether it be through CALAR funding or bicentennial works. In the past reference has been made to the lack of funding or the money that has been taken out through petrol excise tax and how very little of this money is coming back to the shires for roadworks. This is a very serious matter. The Federal Government is using that tax as a milking cow and is not prepared to bite the bullet and return some of this money back to local authorities where it rightfully belongs. The local authorities are the ones who have to repair the roads and provide back-up services in these areas. This applies not only to shire councils in western Queensland, but also to shires on the coast and the semi-metropolitan areas who have a large responsibility for roads. These shires' activities are limited because of the lack of funding.

When considering the problems that were on the horizon, the councils were asked to consider their three main sources of income. These three sources are: firstly, general rating; secondly, CALAR funding; and, thirdly, the grants commission allocation. Those local authorities were asked: if the second and third are severely reduced, to what extent will the first have to be increased? The answer from a lot of the local authorities of which I am talking was: by not less than 50 per cent. That will mean vast increases in rates.

The annoying part about it is that not a lot of money is involved. Out in those areas virtually a few million dollars would top up many of those local authorities with enough funds to keep them going. The biggest problem is that the Federal Government has no comprehension at all of the system. All it wants to do is put money into the populated areas and forget about the rest of the country. It is about time that the Federal Government woke up to that fact. If Federal members had a good look around, they would certainly see for themselves what is going on.

I wish to deal with the part of the Bill that provides for Aboriginal and Islander councils to be included in this funding. The number of local authorities in the State has increased from 134 to 165 but, when inflation is taken into consideration, the amount of money provided has virtually not increased at all. I wonder how the member for Bundaberg, Mr Campbell, added up the figures that enabled him to claim that local authorities will not be worse off.

Now that the legislation defines local government bodies as including Aboriginal and Islander councils, I wonder how it will work, because some local authorities will be within the boundaries of other local authorities. That will be very, very difficult. Local authorities that were funding roadworks within other council areas will have to consider

that and look to a change in the funding. Perhaps what some authorities pick up on the swings they will lose on the roundabouts. However, local authorities will have to live with that. The Commonwealth Government has told the Queensland Government quite clearly that it has to enact this legislation and that, if that is not done, the State will not get any money. I do not intend to go on any longer; I will accept reluctantly this proposition and support the Bill accordingly.

**Mr McELLIGOTT (Thuringowa) (3.33 p.m.):** I join with the Opposition spokesman in supporting the Bill. I am somewhat disappointed and surprised that the member for Warrego indicated only reluctant acceptance of the Bill, as indeed did the Minister when he introduced it.

I support the Bill strongly because it indicates at last that we are headed towards some sort of co-operation between the Commonwealth and State Governments in this area of local government. Throughout Australia there is a crying need for some form of uniformity in the way that local government is administered. I see this agreement between the Commonwealth and the State as at least the starting point of a forward move in that direction which, I hope, will ultimately lead to constitutional recognition of local government. I was amazed at the attitude of the member for Toowong, a former Deputy Mayor of Brisbane, who apparently is strongly opposed to constitutional recognition of local government. It appears that he prefers that local government remain the poor relation of the Australian government system.

Whenever finances and financial administration are debated in this place, I find it amusing that speakers on the Government side always put the blame for any problem on the Commonwealth Government. If Queensland is doing so badly from the Commonwealth, it is time that we consider the messenger and the performance of the Ministers of this Government who go to Canberra, make the submissions and apparently are continually short-changed. All of the other States, both Labor and conservative, seem to be able to win from the Commonwealth Government reasonable financial arrangements.

**Mr Austin:** What about the statement you made over Medicare?

**Mr McELLIGOTT:** It is interesting that the Minister for Finance, who is a former Minister for Health, is the one Minister who seems to have great difficulty in negotiating financial arrangements with the Commonwealth. What about the local authorities that the member for Warrego was talking about? Surely, if a local authority is being short-changed, it has a responsibility to put forward decent submissions to the Commonwealth. In that instance, I am certain that they would receive appropriate recognition.

In recent times, the hardest hit that has been made at local government in Queensland occurred in 1981, when the Liberal Minister, Dr Llew Edwards, was the Treasurer of this State and the Liberal Party was in coalition. The Government of the day took away the old State grant that used to be made to local authorities. It also substantially decreased the subsidies that were paid to local authorities, particularly on water and sewerage projects. When members talk about giving local authorities a fair go, they should be concerned about the past record of the Liberal Party.

The member for Cairns was interjecting on the member for Warrego. It is amusing again to hear Government members criticise the present Federal Government when one considers the types of deals that local authorities and, indeed, the community generally could expect from a future coalition Government at Federal level. John Stone says that he would balance the books by substantial cuts in Government expenditure. I assume from that comment that local authorities would have their financial resources severely cut. On the other hand, the Liberal Party is committed to a consumption tax. Again, the impact on local authorities' services would be enormous.

I believe that the local authorities in Queensland have done well out of this reallocation of financial arrangements.

**Mr Hobbs:** What rubbish!

**Mr McELLIGOTT:** Had the Queensland Government negotiated proper arrangements, it would be obvious to the honourable member as well.

When I speak about recognition of local government, I suggest that one of the most enthusiastic and successful Federal Ministers for Local Government was the Labor Minister for Local Government, Tom Uren. I doubt very much whether members in the Chamber could tell me who the last Liberal Federal Minister for Local Government was. The reason they cannot do so is that that person had no concern for local government and certainly made no impact on the local government scene. However, Tom Uren was a very successful Federal Minister, as is the current Federal Minister, Senator Margaret Reynolds. I know that one of her priorities is to see local government recognised in the Constitution of this country. And well it should be. I repeat that I am disappointed that the member for Toowong, Denver Beanland, does not agree with that and prefers that it remain the poor relation.

As the member for Warrego was speaking, I perused the annual report of the grants commission in an endeavour to find some of the local authorities that he might have been talking about when he said that they were being short-changed. The ones that I could come up with have all had fairly substantial increases. I do not know what he is talking about when he says that they have been short-changed.

I refer also to the fact that the amendments to the legislation are to include in the Commonwealth definition of "local governing bodies" the Aboriginal and Islander councils. The council of Palm Island is in my electorate. I personally applaud the move that is being made. From my visits to Palm Island, it seems to me that the crying need on the island is for an infusion of reasonable sums of money to that council. It is deplorable that the only source of income that the council had previously was from the wet canteen. I am sure that members would agree that what the Aboriginal communities need is access to meaningful work opportunities. It is not that there is no work to be done; there is substantial work to be done on Palm Island in the local authority area. The island still has dirt roads, lack of sewerage and lack of kerbing and channelling—all of those things that constitute a severe hazard to health and are taken for granted in white communities of the same size. The council finds it impossible to finance those works. It is a two-edged sword. Not only is the work not being done, but the unemployment rate on the island is extraordinarily high. I applaud that provision in the Bill and I hope that it indicates a growing status and improved opportunities for community councils to carry out meaningful works in their areas.

I return to the report of the Local Government Grants Commission. It is interesting to look at the appendix, which indicates the changes in net expenditure, by function, of local authorities over the past 8 or 10 years. The figures confirm my impression of the change in priorities that local authorities have undergone during that time.

The most obvious function, of course, is that covering health, recreation, culture and libraries. In 1976-77, 18.6 per cent of expenditure was devoted to that heading. In 1985-86, it had risen to 30.5 per cent. That indicates that there has been a substantial shift of priorities by local authorities into that area. It would be obvious to all who travel around the State that councils are doing that. Very few major provincial cities do not have fairly reasonable cultural facilities, parks and recreational facilities, libraries and so on. That is certainly a change of priorities that I would applaud.

The amount spent on roads and parking has increased, but certainly by a lesser amount. It increased from 37.5 per cent in 1976-77 to 44.3 per cent in 1985-86. Again, that is a recognition of community concern about roads and the demand for better standards of roads. Obviously, local authorities have reacted accordingly.

The rate percentages are also interesting. In 1976-77, rates as a percentage of total receipts were 41.98. In 1985-86 that increased to 51.95. I presume that that indicates a move by local authorities away from other fund-raising activities that were previously engaged in. Going back even further than that, I remember when the Townsville City Council was involved in a whole host of fund-raising activities that are not undertaken

by the council these days. There is a greater dependency by councils on rate income and allocations of funds from the Federal Government.

The final and interesting figure that is quoted is the percentage of rates that is spent on debt-servicing. In 1976-77 it was 28.41 per cent. By 1985-86 it had increased to 32.99 per cent. Again, in keeping with the policies of most levels of government, there has been an increase in borrowings by local authorities. No doubt that is impacting fairly severely on their ability to balance their budgets.

I want to argue very strongly that it is time that the Queensland Government, through its new Minister for Local Government, initiated a total review of local government administration in Queensland. It seems to me that very severe anomalies exist, particularly in regard to voting. Those anomalies were made most obvious during the recent local government elections. Not only are there anomalies within Queensland but also very substantial differences in local government administration and local government structure right across the country.

I repeat what I started by saying, that is, that any move that leads to greater uniformity and co-operation between the State and the Commonwealth ought to be applauded and not rejected, as the Queensland Government is apparently doing.

As I said, the substantial variations in Queensland were made very obvious during the recent local government elections. They are so obvious that in fact the editorial-writer of the *Townsville Bulletin* was moved to write a very substantial editorial on the subject on Monday, 28 March, which was the Monday after the elections. The tone of the editorial is set in the first paragraph. It states—

“The Queensland Government fiddled local government electoral systems in the State in 1982 to try to increase the chances of conservatives being elected to councils.”

It goes on to state—

“The former Minister for Local Government, Mr Hinze, had a way of giving very little pretence that his government’s more outrageous bludgeonings of the rights of those who failed to vote National were anything other than manipulation for political power. One had to admire his honesty in such matters, if not the lack of scruples of a government which acted as if the ends of maintaining and expanding power justified the means, even if these included trampling on democratic rights and processes.

His successor, Mr Randell, has inherited the gerrymander. When it was detailed and very reasonably criticised late last week by the Mayor of Townsville, Alderman Reynolds, he could have chosen to recognise it for what it is and undertake to change it. He certainly would have done this if his government was living up to the promises of justice, honesty and sincerity which Mr Ahern brought to the Premiership. Instead, his official spokesman attempted to defend the indefensible, and trapped himself in his excuses.

The reason that Townsville had preferential voting while Cairns and Mackay had first-past-the-post voting, he said, was because Cairns and Mackay were so much smaller than Townsville. He failed to mention Maryborough, which was given preferential voting at the same time as Townsville, yet is a village compared with the size of Cairns.”

He further stated that there are arguments both for and against preferential voting, as indeed there are arguments for and against first-past-the-post voting. He continued—

“But there is no good democratic argument for a State Government imposing different systems on different cities according to how the population of those cities vote. There is no good democratic argument for a State Government to draw up boundaries for wards in some cities on a basis which gives reasonable suspicion of political manipulation, and then not having a ward system at all in other cities. There is no good democratic argument for the council of Townsville (preferential voting, single-member wards, 11 aldermen) to be elected on a different basis than

the council in Thuringowa (first-past-the-post, multi-member wards, 12 aldermen), or Cairns (first-past-the-post, no wards) or any other city.

There is a compelling argument for council elections to be on the same basis in every city in the State. The case for boundaries between wards to be drawn up by an independent and apolitical commission rather than the State Government is even more compelling."

I make the point that local government structure and administration in Queensland need to be reviewed as a matter of urgency. The editorial made the point that it is now three years before the next State election, and that certainly gives the new Minister time to undertake what I acknowledge would be a major undertaking. Quite frankly, local government administration in Queensland is a joke. In my own city of Thuringowa, the township of Giru has 525 voters, who elect two representatives to the Thuringowa City Council, whereas in division 4 approximately 22 000 voters elect four aldermen to the same city council. In Queensland, some people are being elected as aldermen or shire councillors with fewer than 100 votes. It is obvious that local government needs a giant review. The sorts of excuses for democracy that were highlighted in the editorial are certainly grounds for questioning, as are the other inconsistencies to which I referred.

I join with the Opposition spokesman in applauding the move that seeks to bring Queensland into line with the Commonwealth and the other States. I recall that the previous Premier and Treasurer received a fairly hostile reception at the local government State conference because of his intransigent attitude to negotiations. The people at the conference quite rightly said that they were not interested in his party political stance and that they simply wanted agreement so that the money could be paid and local government left to get on with its business.

**Hon. B. D. AUSTIN** (Nicklin—Minister for Finance and Minister Assisting the Premier and Treasurer) (3.48 p.m.), in reply: I thank all honourable members for their contributions to the debate and for their support for the legislation. The relationship between the Commonwealth and the State Governments on this particular matter was raised by a number of speakers. It is true that that relationship in relation to grants to local authorities has been strained.

There is no point in hiding the fact that significant policy differences exist between the Queensland Government and the Commonwealth Government regarding the principles to be applied to the distribution of the Commonwealth general purpose funds for local authorities in Queensland and the role of the Queensland Local Government Grants Commission in determining that process. As a result of those differences, last year the Commonwealth Government intervened in the process, unilaterally formulating principles that are to be applied to the commission and by making its own determinations and distribution of grants to local government bodies in Queensland in 1987-88.

Furthermore, the Commonwealth also advised bodies of their projected grants for the next five years, that is to 1992-93, based on their own calculations. The projected grants will involve reductions in funding in real terms for 81 out of 134 local authorities in Queensland over that five-year period. Indeed, 27 authorities will actually suffer a decline in money terms. The Commonwealth's actions in this instance have placed the Queensland commission in a very difficult position. In particular, there is an unrealistic expectation amongst bodies, especially those bodies that stand to receive substantial increases in grants, as to the level of their future grants. Moreover, the capacity of the commission to make its own independent assessment as to the distribution of grants has been severely undermined. It has placed the Government and the commission in an almost impossible situation.

As one honourable member quite correctly stated, negotiations have recommenced with the Federal Government. The Minister for Local Government and I met with Senator Reynolds in Brisbane and Canberra in an attempt to resolve the impasse that has existed between both Governments in relation to those grants.



If an agreement is reached basically along Federal Government lines without any real input from the State grants commission, I am concerned that the commission will be realistically and properly seen by the public and local authorities as being a rubber stamp for the Federal Government. My colleague the Minister for Local Government and I are determined to try to outline some guide-lines for the Federal Minister in relation to these matters.

**Mr Davis:** They play you off a break when you go down there.

**Mr AUSTIN:** The honourable member for Brisbane Central says that they play me off a break when I go down there. I remind the honourable member that he has made statements in this House about Medicare. The honourable member for Thuringowa has made statements about it, too. On many occasions those honourable members have said how wonderful the Federal Government is. However, the fair and unbiased report of the Commonwealth Grants Commission indicates that there was an anomaly in funding for Medicare, which I, as Minister for Health, had been pointing out for many years. It took an independent body to examine that aspect without any political interference.

The State grants commission is the right and appropriate body to examine the grants. It can consider all of the circumstances that need to be taken into account, some of which were mentioned by the honourable member for Toowong. It is important that the commission is retained and that it operates effectively and is never seen to be a rubber stamp for the Federal Government.

I hope that these matters can be resolved. To that end, I will be writing to Senator Reynolds with some suggestions that I do not intend to relay to this House at present.

**Mr Davis:** You should have it in your head.

**Mr AUSTIN:** I have not yet sent the letter to Senator Reynolds. I do not believe that it would be reasonable or appropriate to reveal its contents at this stage. In fact, I have a copy of the letter in my possession, but I do not believe that it is either appropriate or reasonable to read out that letter to this House prior to her receiving it. I do not intend to do so.

The letter is a genuine attempt to resolve some of the differences between the State and Commonwealth Governments. This Government is determined to make every effort to resolve some of those problems. However, it does not intend to end up as a rubber stamp for the Federal Government and carry the flak that has been caused by the five-year program that has been circulated and which remains as one of the significant problems. I suspect that those local authorities that have had their grants enhanced will expect that five-year program to remain in place and that those that have had their grants reduced will expect that funding to increase.

The only way in which the position will be resolved amicably and politically—not by fighting with this Government—will be by a further injection of funds by the Federal Government in order to resolve some of the difficulties that it has caused.

**Mr Beanland:** \$180m.

**Mr AUSTIN:** Yes.

**Mr McElligott:** What role does the Commonwealth propose for the grants commission?

**Mr AUSTIN:** It has not really said at this stage. However, by reading between the lines in certain letters, it appears that the Commonwealth would like the Commonwealth Grants Commission to remain but would like the Commission to accept its recommendations. In other words, it appears that the Commonwealth wants the Commonwealth Grants Commission to be a rubber stamp.

It would be stupid of my Government to bear the expense of a grants commission if it is only going to rubber stamp the proposals that are put forward. It is important



that some of the ground rules as to the terms of reference and the operations of the grants commission are ironed out with the Federal Minister. I will do my best to see that that happens. It may not eventuate but I will try, because I believe that it is important to local authorities.

The honourable member for Cairns and, I think, the honourable member for Bundaberg raised questions regarding the amounts of money that are distributed by the grants commission. The honourable member for Cairns referred particularly to Aborigines. There was no suggestion from my point of view or the Government's point of view that Aborigines ought to be disadvantaged. I believe that the honourable member very cleverly avoided the fact that no extra funding was put into the pool to account for the 31 local councils that were added, which really meant that money had to be taken from all of the local authorities in the existing pool and put into those extra councils. In my view, it is totally irrelevant whether they are Aboriginal, black, white or whatever, or new local authorities. In all fairness and reasonableness, 31 additional councils cannot be added to the pool, to share in the pool, and at the same time a correct amount of funding given to all local authorities irrespective of their political persuasion. In my view, the Federal Government had a way out of it. I do not know whether this is correct or not, but knowing my Federal counterpart, Senator Walsh, I will suggest that, when it was decided that Aboriginal communities were to receive funding through the Local Government Grants Commission, Senator Walsh took that money from the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and said, "These are now savings." I do not know whether that is correct or not.

**Mr McElligott** interjected.

**Mr AUSTIN:** That is right. They were getting it before throughout the Federal department. If it is not true, a group of people are probably double dipping.

**Mr Hamill:** Are you just making this up?

**Mr AUSTIN:** No. I am not making it up.

The Federal Government said to the Queensland Government that it had to pay the Aboriginal communities \$80 per person. One would ask how the Federal Government calculated that figure. I will inform the House how it was done. The Northern Territory was paying its communities \$80 per person and the Federal Government said that that would do. What a preposterous way to work out a grant to an Aboriginal community! Simply, the conditions are not the same. The purpose of the grants commission is to look at local authorities to see what problems they have and to see if they can be resolved. In fact, the State's grants commission would have done that. I am told—and I was not the responsible Minister at the time—that it simply did not have time to do that. As honourable members know, it does take a long time to examine each local authority. The grants commission simply did not have the time to appropriate the moneys in the way in which it should have. I believe that it would have been irresponsible of the commission to do anything other than what it did at that time.

All I can say is that the Queensland Government is making a genuine attempt to try to resolve this problem. I commend the Bill to the House.

Motion agreed to.

#### Committee

Clauses 1 to 14, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

#### Third Reading

Bill, on motion of Mr Austin, by leave, read a third time.

#### PARLIAMENTARY MEMBERS' SALARIES BILL

**Hon. B. D. AUSTIN** (Nicklin—Minister for Finance and Minister Assisting the Premier and Treasurer) (4 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

"That leave be granted to bring in a Bill to provide for salaries and additional salaries of members of the Legislative Assembly and of officers of the Crown who

are members of the Legislative Assembly and for the future adjustment thereof, to amend the Parliamentary Contributory Superannuation Act 1970-1987 in certain particulars and for related purposes."

Motion agreed to.

### **First Reading**

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

### **Second Reading**

**Hon. B. D. AUSTIN** (Nicklin—Minister for Finance and Minister Assisting the Premier and Treasurer) (4.01 p.m.): I move—

"That the Bill be now read a second time."

This Bill introduces a new basis for adjusting the salaries of members of this House. It also adjusts the Parliamentary Superannuation Scheme to increase the retirement benefits of members and to proportionately adjust the benefits for spouses of deceased members. These changes follow concern at the steady erosion of the capacity of members to properly perform their duties in an increasingly complex and demanding environment, and they follow a subsequent and extensive review of the salaries and allowances paid to Queensland parliamentarians and to other parliamentarians throughout Australia.

Despite our critics, this Bill and the changes it proposes reflect the Government's wish to set an example of restraint in the current difficult economic climate. However, the role of parliamentarians is unique and comparable only to that of other parliamentarians. Accordingly, this Bill provides a mechanism for an independent and cost-effective review of the salaries of our State parliamentarians.

Since 1982, the salaries of members have been tied to those of the Queensland public service. Relativity was established at the time with positions which were considered of similar job worth. However, parliamentarians have continually lost ground. To merely re-establish this relativity at the 1982 level would now require an increase in salary of about six per cent. The actual increase in base salary provided initially in this Bill is only 3.5 per cent.

The Government has decided that future salary determinations for members should be based on the recommendations of an independent tribunal. A separate State tribunal was considered but rejected, mainly because of the cost and the unnecessary duplication of work already done elsewhere. The Government decided that the Commonwealth tribunal, which recommends the salaries of Federal members, was a more reasonable way of determining the work value of parliamentarians. In common with Victoria, future parliamentary salaries in Queensland will be \$500 a year less than the salary recommended by the independent Commonwealth Remuneration Tribunal. The new base salary of a Queensland parliamentarian would be \$47,315. This will be ranked equal second in the nation, compared with the current fourth ranking.

Turning now to the holders of parliamentary offices and to Ministers—I point out that a work-value determination has been made relative to the duties and responsibilities of a private member. This was the first comprehensive review for many years and a number of anomalies were identified. The increasing responsibilities of many of these positions had not been recognised. Accordingly, additional salaries have been determined which reflect current parliamentary and Government duties and responsibilities. Among the most significant adjustments are those for the positions of Leader and Deputy Leader of the Opposition, the Leader of the Liberal Party and the Speaker. It should be noted that the relativities between office-holders and private members are similar to those of other States.

The new salary packages will still generally be below those of the Commonwealth, New South Wales and Victoria. As well, the salary packages of Ministers will still be less than those of the permanent heads of major Government departments. Allowances have already been adjusted by regulation, and take into account the increasing cost to

members of their parliamentary duties and of servicing their electorates. The adverse effects on their disposable income through Commonwealth tax changes, including the fringe benefits tax, were important considerations.

The Bill also introduces amendments to the Parliamentary Superannuation Scheme. Commitment to a parliamentary career often involves the sacrifice of other opportunities and often of a career that it may be difficult or impossible to re-enter. It is the Government's view that people should not be unduly discouraged from entering Parliament by the risk to them and their families of such sacrifices and the risks of political life itself. The Parliamentary Superannuation Scheme is one of the ways this risk can be cushioned to provide some security for members and their families. Changes to the superannuation scheme have been considered with these issues in mind.

The changes in the Bill need careful study. I propose to table a brief summary to assist members and the public which, when read together with the Bill, will be as valuable as my detailing them now. Accordingly, I move—

“That my explanatory notes to the Bill be tabled under Standing Order No. 241 (c).”

Motion agreed to.

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

#### EXPLANATORY NOTES TO PARLIAMENTARY MEMBERS' SALARIES BILL

Adjustments to the Parliamentary Superannuation Scheme will:

- Increase benefits on retirement to Members who are entitled to a pension or lump sum payment.
- Increase the amounts payable on retirement to Members who have not sufficient Parliamentary service to qualify for a pension or lump sum payment.
- Increase benefits payable to spouses of deceased Members in proportion to the increased retirement benefits proposed for Members.

#### RETIREMENT AFTER THE QUALIFYING PERIOD

Three aspects of the present provisions for retirement benefits for Members after an initial qualifying period have been proposed for amendment:

- the level of benefit available after the initial qualifying period
- the rate of benefit accumulation
- the level of maximum benefit which will be available after 20 years service.

The minimum qualifying periods for a pension or lump sum benefit will remain at 8 years for involuntary retirement and 11 years for voluntary retirement.

For a private member, the new level of pension benefit after the minimum 8 years service will be increased from 41.2% per cent of current base salary to 50% of base salary.

For a private member, the new level of pension benefit after 20 years service will increase from a maximum of 70% of current base salary to a maximum of 80% of current base salary.

For between 8 years and 20 years service, an increase in the benefit accumulation rate from 24% per annum of current base salary to 25% per annum will apply.

This will provide a similar level of benefit to that available under the scheme for New South Wales Parliamentarians.

The commutation factor to a lump sum will remain at 10 for Members under 66 on retirement and will decrease, as at present, for retiring ages of 66 years and over.

#### RETIREMENT BEFORE QUALIFYING FOR PENSION OR LUMP SUM

For Members who retire voluntarily, or involuntarily through loss of an election, loss of endorsement, or similar circumstances, before qualifying for a pension or lump sum benefit, the present provisions of the Scheme offer only a refund of contributions plus a very small interest premium.

It is the Government's view that these provisions should be enhanced. Similar provisions to those available under the Schemes for Parliamentarians in the Commonwealth and Victoria and New South Wales have been adopted—that is, a lump sum payment to Members,

- In the case of involuntary retirement prior to 8 years service:  
— the Members contributions plus a supplement of 2-1/3 times X contributions
- In the case of voluntary retirement prior to 11 years service:  
— the Members contributions plus a supplement of 1-1/6 times contributions.

**SPOUSE'S BENEFITS**

Provisions have been made in the Bill to provide increased benefits for spouses of deceased Members in proportion to the increased retirement benefits proposed for Members.

**Mr AUSTIN:** The Government accepts that adjustments to parliamentarians' salaries and benefits are never a popular issue with the public. The Government is aware that the nation has endured a long period of restraint, and has not been immune from this. It is the Government's view that, when this restraint reaches the point at which it threatens our capacity to do the work for which we are elected, we should show leadership, however unpopular our decision may be. This is such a case.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Burns, adjourned.

**LEAVE TO MOVE MOTION WITHOUT NOTICE**

**Mr BURNS** (Lytton—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (4.07 p.m.): I seek leave to move a motion without notice to allow an immediate and urgent debate on Notice of Motion No. 27 standing in my name that refers to the incompetent management of the police force.

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

AYES, 27		NOES, 50	
Ardill		Ahern	Lester
Braddy		Alison	Lickiss
Burns		Austin	Lingard
Campbell		Beanland	Littleproud
Comben		Beard	McCauley
D'Arcy		Berghofer	McKechnie
De Lacy		Borbidge	McPhie
Eaton		Burreket	Menzel
Gibbs, R. J.		Chapman	Muntz
Goss		Clauson	Neal
Hamill		Cooper	Nelson
Hayward		Elliott	Newton
McElligott		Fraser	Randell
Mackenroth		Gately	Schuntner
McLean		Gibbs, I. J.	Sherlock
Milliner		Gilmore	Sherrin
Palaszcuk		Glasson	Simpson
Shaw		Gygar	Slack
Smith		Harper	Stoneman
Smyth		Harvey	Tenni
Underwood		Henderson	Veivers
Vaughan		Hinton	White
Warner		Hobbs	
Wells	<i>Tellers:</i>	Innes	<i>Tellers:</i>
Yewdale	Davis	Katter	FitzGerald
	Prest	Knox	Stephan
PAIR			
Scott		Hynd	

Resolved in the negative.

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

Debate resumed from 17 March (see p. 5364).

**Mr De LACY** (Cairns) (4.20 p.m.): The Labor Party supports the amendments. The Labor Party actually introduced land tax—

Government members interjected.

**Mr De LACY:** If the Government did not keep calling divisions just before I am due to speak, I would have my notes ready.

The Labor Party supports the amendments. The Labor Party introduced the notion of a land tax in 1915 on the basis that it was believed to be a broadly based tax—an equitable tax—and would encourage the productive use of land by making it unprofitable to hold large aggregations of unused and little-used land for speculative purposes.

Land tax was also considered to be equitable because it fell on those who had the greatest ability to pay and any speculation gain was taxed. That has continued to be the basis for land tax not only in Queensland but also in most other States of Australia.

Honourable members might recall that Henry George, who was an American philosopher and economist in the last century, always advocated land tax, using the argument that I have just outlined and the fact that land really should not belong to an individual. It belongs to the State. It belongs to the community at large and therefore the State ought to receive some rent for that land. This has become a bipartisan approach to taxing land in Queensland and generally in Australia.

These amendments have been introduced, I understand, on the basis of a review that was carried out last year because of rising land values. I am sure that I speak on behalf of many members of this Parliament who have been receiving deputations from constituents and others about the fact that their land—in some cases, their residential block—has risen in value to a sufficient extent to begin to attack land tax. As honourable members will be aware, the general deduction previously was \$60,000. In this legislation that has been increased to \$120,000. A variety of other changes are contained in this legislation, all of which are supported by the Opposition.

I might say that the *Queensland Government Gazette* which lists Consolidated Revenue Fund receipts for the first half of this financial year shows that the State Government is in a position to make concessions on land tax and to increase the allowable deduction. The receipts for the six months to 31 December total \$16,508,000. For the same period in 1986 the receipts were \$8,958,000. In other words, receipts for land tax for the first six months of this financial year have increased by 100 per cent.

I am reluctant to draw too many conclusions from that. It is obvious that the Government is receiving almost windfall taxes because of the rapid increase in valuations of land in the State. However, I note that the estimated receipts from land tax for the whole of this year are in the vicinity of \$56m—up from \$47m last year.

All honourable members know that most land tax receipts occur in the second half of the year, so it may be that we are premature in reading too much into the 100 per cent increase in the first six months. Perhaps the Minister would care to comment on that in his reply.

Other figures which are interesting and which the Government no doubt points to with pride are those that show that of all the States Queensland receives by far the lowest per capita revenue from land tax. The average for the six States is \$46.90 per capita, whereas Queensland receives \$19.31 per capita. The figures are misleading in part because Queensland receives a lot of money from mining revenue. The figures in the Commonwealth Grants Commission report show that all non-urban revenue from mining leases has been treated as mining revenue. In other words, it has not been treated as land tax. Nevertheless, the fact remains that Queensland receives less per capita from land tax than other States receive. In one sense, that is good; it is good to a low-tax State. The reasons for Queensland's receiving less per capita from land tax are numerous. One reason is that Queensland's land tax is not as broadly based as it is in most other States. I am not advocating a more broadly based tax or that it necessarily be extended to all residential owners.

I would like to use this opportunity to float a couple of ideas that the Government ought to examine in order to increase its receipts from land tax. One tax that has been mentioned and could be introduced on an equity basis without impairing the revenue-raising potential of the Government is a windfall tax on gains in land value that result

from rezoning decisions. As all members of this Assembly know, sometimes when a local authority or the Local Government Minister makes a rezoning decision, some people in possession of land suddenly find that the value of their land has increased enormously.

**Mr Simpson:** Their valuation goes up and you get that tax.

**Mr De LACY:** But only in a small way. I accept that. Those people have made their profits without any effort on their part, without any investment on their part and perhaps even without any entrepreneurial initiative.

**Mr Simpson:** You are suggesting a super tax, over and above the normal?

**Mr De LACY:** Exactly—on windfall gains from the increase in the value of land that occurs only from changes as a result of rezonings, because they have nothing to do with the individual himself.

That practice exists in some parts of the world and it is something that the Government ought to examine. It may even have a desirable outcome in the sense that speculation would be quashed, thereby enabling an orderly approach to town-planning and encouraging people to use their land productively rather than for speculation.

Another type of land tax that might be examined is a tax on absentee owners, particularly owners who do not reside in Australia. Many Australians, particularly Queenslanders, are concerned about foreigners buying up freehold land in Queensland. I do not know why the State Government does not consider introducing an extra tax on land that is owned by absentee land-owners or persons who do not reside in Australia. I think that it would be a popular tax and a means by which the State Government could obtain some revenue from that great trade in freehold land in Queensland, much of which is only speculative. It would also appease those many people who are uneasy or uncomfortable because our land is being sold to purchasers who do not live in Australia.

I turn now to the way in which leasehold land is being traded in a speculative way, which is doing great damage to the State Government's philosophy in relation to industrial estates. Through the Departments of Lands and Industry Development, the State Government has a system of Crown industrial estates that are located at various regional centres throughout the State. The reason for Government involvement in that essentially socialist exercise seems to be threefold: to attract businesses from other States, to assist decentralisation and to assist industry to develop by saving the significant front-end cost of land purchase.

As an example of the Government's objectives in relation to industrial estates, Mr Campbell—who was the Minister for Industrial Development as long ago as 1967—was quoted in the *Courier-Mail* as saying that cheap land is an attraction to industry. He is reported in the following way—

“The only way Queensland could compete with other States in attracting industry was to offer Crown land cheaply . . .”

The report states—

“Queensland did not have the financial resources to offer concessions similar to those of New South Wales.”

Mr Campbell lauded the system of cheap Crown industrial estates that were available to attract businesses to Queensland from New South Wales and other States.

In relation to Crown industrial estates, the Department of Industry Development's annual report of 1984-85 states—

“The thrust of the Department's Crown Industrial Estate programme is to provide fully serviced industrial land appropriately zoned for leasing to manufacturing industry.

Provision of these sites on long-term leases, at very cheap concessional rents during the first five years, enables the 'front end' cost of land purchase, to be saved, so that all capital resources can be channelled into buildings, plant and stock."

The Labor Opposition supports wholeheartedly the concept of industrial estates. A whole range of statistics points to the fact that the Queensland economy is in trouble because of a declining revenue base that has been caused essentially by an overdependence on the primary sector. Any initiative that is aimed at stimulating the secondary sector must be supported. The only problem is that it is not working, because in Queensland it is being rorted. In common with so much else in Queensland, what starts off as a reasonable idea ends up being another vehicle for cronyism or making some people rich at the expense of everyone else.

In Cairns, certain people are trading and speculating in special leases on the industrial estate. Some people are making heaps of money out of it, but they are not carrying out any industry; they are not employing any people; they are not even developing the estate or the area. They are pushing up the price of land and keeping out those businessmen who wish to start genuine businesses. What worries me is that they are doing that with the connivance of highly placed people, if not members of the Government itself.

**Mr McPhie:** Come off it.

**Mr De LACY:** I ask the honourable member to listen to this.

People who are genuinely trying to establish an industry in Cairns are being told that there is no leasehold industrial land available. Therefore, they are being forced into the prohibitive freehold market in land-short Cairns. Of course, the front-end costs to which I referred earlier usually beat them.

What is happening in Cairns is a scandal of significant proportions. It is certainly stifling the industrial development of the far-northern region. If it is indicative of what is happening in the rest of Queensland, is it any wonder that our economic base is contracting?

I want to refer to a block on the Portsmouth Industrial Estate in Cairns, which is special lease 44547, 63 Aumuller Street, Portion 625, Parish of Cairns, County of Nares, being an area of 6 644 square metres. On 1 April 1982 the block was leased to A1 Engineering for 30 years. I table the lease document, which shows that it was leased to A1 Engineering on that date.

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

**Mr De LACY:** It was leased to A1 Engineering on a concessional lease rental of \$299 per annum for the first five years. I understand that in 1987 A1 Engineering went into liquidation without fulfilling the terms of the lease. For example, special conditions—I will table a copy of these in a moment—provided that the lessee shall expend the sum of not less than \$100,000 in the first two years and \$250,000 within the first 10 years, and the lessee shall establish an approved industry on the leased land and shall maintain such industry during the balance of the said term, etc.

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

**Mr De LACY:** The allotment has an open steel shed of 800 square metres without even a concrete floor, which is substantially less than that required under the lease conditions. In fact, I have an estimate that it would cost over \$800,000 to produce a building that would meet the 10-year lease requirements. Special conditions also provide that land must be made usable to local authority requirements. This has not happened. I now table a letter from the Cairns City Council dated 10 March 1988 wherein the city engineer specifies that the development of that leasehold land has not reached the specifications set by the Cairns City Council.

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

**Mr De LACY:** On 10 July 1987 the said lease was sold to Arumpin Pty Ltd for \$200,000. A copy of the contract of sale from A1 Engineering to Arumpin Pty Ltd is held in the DID office in Cairns. That contract of sale is dated 10 July 1987. On 12 January 1988 the transfer was registered with the Lands Department. That needs to be done so that land tax can be paid. Incidentally, a copy of the lease is not available at the Lands Department in Cairns nor at the Department of Industry Development office in Cairns.

A company search, a copy of which I will table, shows that Arumpin Pty Ltd was incorporated on 24 June 1987, just two weeks prior to the purchase as per the contract of sale on 10 July 1987.

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

**Mr De LACY:** The nominal capital is 100 000 shares of \$1 each, of which four shares have been issued. Directors are Ian and Caroline Hopkins of Cairns and, wait for it, George and Margaret Raptis of Cairns. Remember that fishy business about the sale of the Brisbane Fish Markets?

**Mr Elliott:** You don't like anyone who does any development, do you?

**Mr De LACY:** If Mr Raptis was carrying out development there, I would not mind. If he was purchasing this land and was prepared to honour the terms and conditions of the special lease, I would support it and I would congratulate him.

The other two share-holders are Malcolm Skipworth and Reginald Lillywhite, solicitors from Macdonnells, solicitors, Cairns. The search shows that the directors "have the power to lease, sell, subdivide, develop and borrow". In other words, it is the standard shelf company created for property development.

It should be noted that the transfer was finally registered with the Lands Department in Cairns on 12 January 1988. Seven days later—just four working days—on 19 January 1988, the lease was listed for sale with Les Freeman Real Estate Agents and Auctioneers, Cairns. I table a copy of that listing.

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

**Mr De LACY:** The lease was listed for sale at a price of \$400,000, that is, an increase of \$200,000, or 100 per cent, on the purchase price registered just one week before. The member for Cunningham may call that a productive use of the State Government's industrial estate land. He may call that development. I certainly do not. I believe that is in complete contravention of the objectives of Crown industrial estates.

**Mr Elliott:** That is not what I am saying.

**Mr De LACY:** The honourable member made some sort of a comment. He tried to belittle the point that I was making.

As I said before, the State Government makes available Crown land in the form of industrial estates in order to provide land at affordable rates to approved industries, the long-term objective being to encourage industrial development in various centres throughout the State. This is a laudable objective. This purchase of an industrial lease in Cairns in the Portsmouth Industrial Estate by Arumpin, however, was obviously pure speculation.

Section 286 of the Land Act 1962-1984 states that leases may, upon application by or on behalf of the lessee, "be transferred to qualified persons with the permission in writing of the Minister. It shall be the absolute discretion of the minister whether he will grant or refuse to grant such permission", and so on. My question is: was this transfer approved by the Minister; and if not, why not? And if not, by whom was it approved, and under what criteria?

**Mr Austin:** Which Minister are you referring to?

**Mr De LACY:** In that case, I presume it was the Minister for Lands.



What proposal was presented to DID by Arumpin in order to have the lease transferred to them? Did it comply with the conditions laid down in the original lease document? How was Al Engineering able to sell the lease to a third party, even though conditions of the lease had not been complied with, at a value much higher than the improvements contained thereon? Why has neither the Lands Department nor DID in Cairns been able to produce a certified copy of the lease document, although this has been requested by a member of the public since 14 March 1988?

People wishing to establish businesses in Cairns are being told that there is no land available for lease on the State Government industrial estate. However, half of the industrial estate in Cairns is not being used.

Upon making inquiries, one person was firstly advised that no land was available. Mr Deputy Speaker, I table three Cairns City Council rates searches that prove conclusively that Crown land is available on the industrial estate.

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

**Mr De LACY:** Why are prospective businesses being informed that no land is available? After pointing out that there was plenty of vacant land on the estate, this same person was told that it was reserved for "special types of industries". On pursuing this a bit further, he was told it was not reserved for specific industries, but reserved "for certain individuals or companies".

Millions of dollars worth of land in Cairns is locked up on the industrial estate—land which is producing nothing. The productivity, the real wealth, as opposed to speculative profits, is nil. It is not even recouping interest on development costs. Is it any wonder that Queensland's economic and industrial base is declining?

In the meantime, the going rate for freehold industrial land in Cairns is approximately \$60 per square metre—about the same as industrial land in Melbourne. However, on closer investigation, it transpires that special lease land on the industrial estate is being traded quite openly and at approximately the same rate. In fact, special lease land in the industrial estate in Cairns is a speculator's paradise. It might not be doing very much to attract industrial development into Cairns, but it certainly seems to be making some individuals wealthy.

I know that this Government—and the honourable member for Cunningham broached this subject—will defend to the death the right of people to make profits, but the fundamental question is: does the State Government create industrial estates to attract business and industrial development to an area, or is it just another way of allowing friends of the Government to get rich trading in special leases? What is the Government achieving in terms of industrial development if prospective business people have to pay the going market freehold rate to secure special leases? What is the point if half of the industrial estate in Cairns is not being used for the purposes for which it is leased?

**Mr Elliott:** If the Government is not achieving anything, how is it that so many companies are coming from Victoria and New South Wales and are setting up on Queensland's DID estates? You do not think that is an achievement in terms of employment and so on?

**Mr De LACY:** If people are coming to Queensland, and to Cairns in particular, and are setting up businesses on the industrial estate, they are doing so in spite of, not because of, any policy adopted by the State Government, which is evidenced by the point I have been making. I understand that the Minister cannot answer all of those questions, because many of them fall outside his portfolio.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Booth):** Order! I remind the honourable member that he is speaking about the Land Tax Act and Another Act Amendment Bill. He has admitted that these questions do not come within the ambit of the Minister's portfolio, and I suggest that the honourable member return to debating the Bill.

**Mr De LACY:** I conclude by stating that the Opposition supports the changes that the Bill makes to the Land Tax Act and Another Act. These changes will prevent the average house-holder from having to pay land tax, and on that basis the Opposition supports the Bill.

**Mr McPHIE** (Toowoomba North) (4.46 p.m.): I was very interested to hear that the honourable member for Cairns supports this Bill. He gave a fair summary of the land tax system. I intend to speak mainly about land tax and other State taxes, but will not be referring to anything to do with industrial estates. That is another matter altogether.

I compliment the Minister and his staff on the timely introduction of these changes, because they are quite significant and will be of great assistance to land-holders. The general deductions have doubled, increasing to \$120,000—

**Mr Davis** interjected.

**Mr McPHIE:** This is freehold country and a great deal of the honourable member's country on the downs is freehold country. This Bill will help the people who live in the country, where the honourable member comes from.

Under this Bill, company, trustee and absentee exemption levels have been increased by a factor of three, to \$30,000, and deductions for qualifying proprietary companies and trustees have been increased by a factor of 1.5 to \$45,000. Also there will be a reduction in tax rates for land with a taxable value below \$750,000 and further special rebates in certain instances. There is a move to progressively adopt annual value as taxable value, which I believe is a move in the right direction. In addition, there are certain concessions contained in this Bill which clear up some anomalies regarding primary producer trusts.

This legislation will be a big help in a number of areas because the exemptions and reductions in rates are necessary. Owing to inflation, they are definitely overdue. To a certain extent the move towards an annual valuation system will help overcome the lag in rate-fixing. The primary producer trusts contained an anomaly, and the Bill ensures that tiered trusts can be coped with and that natural people will be the final beneficiaries of the trusts. This anomaly needed correcting from the outset, and I am very pleased to see that this time the Minister has been able to do so.

I question whether or not the Government should be doing more in this and other tax areas. Land tax is not a very big earner for this Government. One way in which businesses or individuals are required to contribute to the State revenue is through pay-roll tax. It is necessary that income be provided to the State to meet a great many needs. In fact if only one of the two revenues that I have mentioned were deleted, either the shortfall would have to be made up by other means or the Government's program would have to be reduced significantly.

This Government frequently tells the Federal Government in Canberra that it should be reducing its spending and thereby reducing its taxes. At times I wonder whether the Queensland Government should not be doing more in that field than it is at present. This Government, of which I am proud to be a part, has achieved a great deal through the implementation of many of the Savage report recommendations, and later I will touch on the results of that. I believe that there should be more work done—and there is more scope—to reduce taxes on people and businesses in the private sector.

Recently there has been talk of extra taxes being introduced in this State to make up for the shortfall in Federal funding to Queensland. There has been a suggestion that fuel, beer and cigarette taxes be introduced before the end of this financial year. This Government is hearing consistent objections from the community about that matter.

As I will mention shortly, because of some of the very stringent measures that the Queensland Government has taken, I do not think that there is any longer the possibility of the introduction of fuel, beer or tobacco taxes. From recent press articles on these proposed taxes, it is obvious that a fuel tax would mean straight-out rises across the board that would affect every facet of daily life and every person. I am one who is

strongly against that and I will oppose it to the absolute limit until there is absolutely no other alternative.

If one has a look at what has happened in the hotel industry since the Bond/Elliott shake-out, one wonders if people in the hotel industry could withstand the effect of any extra taxes. As a result of that Bond/Elliott shake-out, today more than 100 Queensland hotels are in receivership. The Federal excise duty is adjusted on the basis of increases in the CPI. That takes a great deal of the spending power of hotel customers. The State Government receives money from an 8 per cent licensing fee. The important point is that costs have become so high that hotel turn-over is beginning to diminish significantly.

Many of the bankruptcies in this State can be traced to the economic climate in the country. We on this side of the House are very happy to blame the Federal Government, and our opponents say that it is not their Federal compatriots who are to blame but that we are to blame. I do not think that we should be attaching blame in that way. The difficulties with Commonwealth/State grants were mentioned in an earlier debate today. In that debate I listened to the contribution from the member for Bundaberg and wondered if he understood the interface there.

Even if the Federal Government in its wisdom increases taxes—they have been increasing steadily since the present Federal Government came to power in 1983—I do not see any reason why the State Government should make the position worse by imposing higher taxation. The onus is on the Government of this State to ensure that there is a benign environment in which business can prosper. One way of doing that is to ensure that, wherever possible, State Government charges and taxes are kept to a minimum and, if possible, eliminated. To me, the concept that these taxes and charges have to be increased periodically in line with cost-of-living increases is not valid. A good example of where the State Government has addressed that is the electricity charges in Queensland, which, over the last few years, have increased at a rate significantly less than those in the other States and consistently less than increases in the Australian CPI figure.

In other taxation areas the State Government is on the right line. It is closing loopholes for avoidance and adjusting charge levels wherever it can. That is what has happened with this Bill. These adjustments will be a tremendous help to the community and will be to the overall good of the State. However, only last Saturday the press carried an article about Federal taxation loopholes that stated that 59 of the 100 top companies in Australia have been found to be using tax-avoidance systems that are not acceptable and were not intended. The overall net loss—it is a creaming-off—to the Australian Government's income is \$7 billion. That is a very large amount of money. No wonder the country's economy is in difficulties. If the Federal Government is trying to maintain or increase its programs and if it is doing nothing to plug these loopholes that allow big companies to cream off \$7 billion in Federal revenue, no wonder it has to increase taxes.

That is the thrust of what I want to talk about. The Bill is just one facet of the State's tax-gathering efforts. I agree with it, as did the member for Cairns. It is a reasonable and equitable tax, but it is one that in the overall system adds up to a picture in Queensland and in Australia as a whole of a private sector that is being taxed right out of existence.

I am pleased to say that earlier this month the Premier announced that Queensland will be balancing its books for 1987-88. He and the Minister for Finance and the staff of their departments should be congratulated on this. They have done some very tough work and introduced some very stringent measures that have paid off. However, we should not be stopping and congratulating ourselves there; we should be looking to see what further things can be done.

In 1987-88, despite Federal cuts of \$173m due to Queensland on the operating Budget for the financial year and \$226m in capital works assistance to Queensland, the Queensland Government balanced its Budget. When attempting to balance the Budget, a cut of that size is a pretty large pill to swallow. However, the Queensland Government

must look ahead to the next Budget and keep the costs down. The ordinary people and the business people of Queensland are having a tough job coping at the moment.

**Mr Ardill:** Hasn't the Federal Treasurer got to do the same?

**Mr McPHIE:** The Federal Treasurer has never said a true word or a word that has stood up to criticism. He stands up and postures and talks about his cuts and his assistance. However, the assistance never goes back to the ordinary people. He tells us what a great job he is doing and how the economy is improving, yet the national debt is increasing at the greatest rate in history. The honourable member should not talk to me about the Federal Treasurer. He is a failure. If he is ever made Prime Minister, he will be a bigger failure.

The Federal and the State Governments must keep costs down. In the next two years, further cuts will be made by the Federal Government. I do not see that that is any excuse for the State Government to increase charges or introduce new taxes. It has to pare its programs to the bone, if necessary. Although the Queensland Government has a record of balancing its Budget, I believe that, if it continues to receive massive cuts in its allocation from Federal sources, it is acceptable to create a Budget deficit. That is what a business would do, and then it would trade its way out of trouble. The Queensland Government has to reduce its operation, not increase taxes. Quite honestly, the people of Queensland are fed up with the taxes—Federal, State and local government—that they are being lumbered with.

**Mr Yewdale:** You're always whinging.

**Mr McPHIE:** The honourable member can pay them. He is quite welcome to pay them. But he should not hook the Government in with them. I am fed up with them. I am paying taxes, just as Opposition members are. Government taxes and charges should not be increased. In fact, now is a good time to start decreasing them.

In 1984-85, land tax collections were \$36m; in 1985-86, they were up \$1m to \$37m; in 1986-87, they were up \$10 to \$47m. It is estimated that for 1987-88 the collection will be \$56m, which is up another \$9m. Those collections account for only 1.8 per cent of the State's revenue. However, I ask whether it is a revenue-collecting exercise.

In 1984-85, pay-roll tax collections were \$442m; in 1986-87, they were \$511m. In 1987-88 they are estimated to be \$538m, which is 17.1 per cent of the State's revenue.

**Mr Davis:** How much?

**Mr McPHIE:** If the honourable member for Brisbane Central had been doing his sums quickly, he would see that those pay-roll tax increases annually are tapering off, whereas increases in land tax have been accelerating. I am not happy with that. At the beginning of his speech, the member for Cairns gave a good indication of why the system was introduced. He gave a fair outline of the system. He also introduced a couple of interesting suggestions about windfall gains and foreign ownership in connection with land tax. If this were a revenue-gathering exercise, that is where we should be looking. We should not be looking at ways to increase the amount of land tax that the ordinary freehold land-owner in Queensland pays. We should be looking at further ways to reduce it, especially for the small land-holders.

Another interesting comparison is that on a per capita basis in 1986-87 Queensland is well below the other States. I would like to see it go even further. That is no reason why we should be congratulating ourselves. We should be looking at ways in which we can improve the position in the future.

There is a very real problem with ever-increasing costs, be they in the State or the Federal scene. So many of them are excused as being part of a perceived need in the eyes of the public, the Government departments or the Governments of the day. However, I just wonder how much we are kidding ourselves as members of Parliament and members of Government as to what this perceived need amounts to.

Even members of Parliament talk out in the electorates about their own jobs and this perceived need. We try to kid ourselves that we have a tremendous job to do out there and that more money is needed because there are increased expenses. I just wonder how fair dinkum people are.

This State and this country have too many public servants and too much involvement by Government, including local government. There are too many Government regulations of all descriptions in this country and this State. The operations and the programs of Government are too big. It is time that they were reduced.

I will examine the figures regarding public servants. In January 1970 there were 32 300 Commonwealth public servants in Queensland. In September 1987, on the latest figures available, there were 50 000 of them. That is an increase of 54.8 per cent, whereas the overall increase throughout the Federal scene was 34.1 per cent.

I turn to the number of Queensland public servants. Of course, it must be borne in mind that Queensland public servants have a bigger job to do than their Commonwealth counterparts. In January 1970 there were 91 500 Queensland public servants. In September 1987 there were a whopping 178 700. That is an increase of 95.3 per cent. In the other State Governments throughout Australia the increase was 84.2 per cent. That is no cause for congratulations.

**Mr Elliott:** Some of those would be police and nurses, though.

**Mr McPHIE:** Yes, some of those would be police and nurses. I was coming to that.

I am a great believer in having operational people out in the field. The operational people do not make up nearly as big a percentage as they should of these State public servants. There are far too many minnows and fellows pushing pens.

I turn to local authorities. In January 1970 there were 19 500 people employed in local authorities in Queensland. In September 1987 there were 26 600. That is an increase of 36.4 per cent. Overall, the number of employees of local authorities in Australia increased by 50.5 per cent. On those figures it is the Queensland local authorities that have got out of hand and it is the Queensland local authorities that should be making reductions. That is one way in which costs can be cut.

Surely the message is clear. It is borne out in the Savage report and in so many other ways. The recommendations in that report are being implemented, but they are not being implemented fast enough or strongly enough. The number of employees of government must be reduced. Government operations and Government involvement have to be reduced so that taxes can be lowered. There is a need for a lowering of taxes and charges, which this Bill attempts to start doing. The Bill is making adjustments that are consistent with the inflation rate and not very much more than that.

Another area in which Governments can be taken to task concerns the number of members of Parliament. In this area, too, government is getting too big. In May 1960 there were 78 members in the Queensland Parliament. In May 1972 the number was increased to 82. In November 1987 the number was increased to 89. Why are these increases necessary? Why cannot 78 people do the job? I do not believe that these extra members are necessary.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr McPHIE:** The noisy members on the other side probably want more members of Parliament. They want to increase the charges and costs of government and increase the size of government. They are probably the people who go out and try to sell this perceived need rubbish.

I am for lower costs, lower government, lower involvement, lower taxes. The Government is meant to be a facilitator. Its job is to provide services, to keep a check on standards and, above all, to keep out of it when private enterprise can provide the services better or do the job better.

Operational people are needed. The member for Cunningham mentioned nurses, schoolteachers, police and those people out in the field. Operational people are what is needed. They are the very crux of what the Government is doing. It is this other lot, the drones one might call them, the deadheads, the non-operationals, who are not needed. "Deadheads" is probably the wrong term, because they are doing excellent work within the guide-lines that they have been set.

I question whether the jobs are necessary. Would we not survive just as well if the jobs of many of those administrative people—those pen-pushers—were ruled out as being unnecessary? Then we would be able to put them out in the field and meet the needs for extra police, extra nurses and extra schoolteachers, whom we have not been able to provide at the time. That is the whole secret. That has been done quite effectively in the services. There is no doubt that it needs to be done again in the services, because they have become completely top heavy, as have so many Federal and State Government departments. Above all, the Government must keep out of the private sector. If it does, it reduces the need for taxes. So easily will those reductions in charges follow. There would be no more big government. If anyone is going to do that, the Government must have the will to do it.

I think that the Queensland Government has already demonstrated that it has the will to do that. I congratulate the Minister for Finance on the steps that he has taken already. I hope that he continues with the reductions. As I said earlier, I look forward to further amendments being made to the Land Tax Act so that charges that are applicable to the small freehold land-owner can be reduced further.

**Mr INNES** (Sherwood—Leader of the Liberal Party) (5.06 p.m.): We have just seen a classic illustration of the new "Groom" that sweeps clean. For years we have not seen a charge such as that under the tail of the member for Toowoomba North. In fact, he even descended to common sense on a large number of occasions in the contribution that he made. I suppose that one could say that the Liberal Party got the sailor in Groom and left the other two parties all at sea. On today's performance, despite the fact that, like Mr McPhie, I am also in the Royal Australian Air Force Reserve, we can see why Mr Taylor's service is called the senior service.

On the matter of hypocrisy—on every occasion on which Mr McPhie has had a chance to vote in favour of an increase in the number of members of Parliament or members of local authorities, he has taken it. On every occasion his party has taken the opportunity to vote in favour of it. There is only one party in this Chamber that has consistently voted—on two occasions; one in the local government area and the other in the State Government area—against an increase in the number of members of Parliament and members of local authorities. The honourable member's party once again broke the agreement and voted in favour of a massive increase in the size of the Federal House, because it thought that it looked after the local areas. If we are to look at the subject of taxation, let us descend to a little bit of consistency, because it is consistency that will win elections, not hypocrisy.

I am talking about the contribution that land tax makes to the total taxation system and the amendments to the land tax legislation. Firstly, we can certainly agree that land tax is taking an increasing bite. Of course, the bite increases with revaluation, unless some concession that raises the threshold is made to the Act from time to time.

I go back to the comments of Sir Thomas Hiley, a Liberal Treasurer in the early sixties or the late fifties. During a debate on an amendment to the Land Tax Act, he said—

"I point out that when I first took over this responsibility"—  
he was inheriting a Labor land tax system—

"the number of taxpayers exceeded 25,000. It has been my constant aim, which the Government has been pleased to accept, to keep the number of taxpayers at what it was and, every time a rise in valuations tended to lift the number unduly, and

the product of the tax unduly, by the device of lifting exemptions we tended to keep the collections in check."

If 25 000 tax-payers are inherited, 25 000 tax-payers is the target that is kept, as well as the total take. Sir Thomas Hiley continued—

"... although it may be logical to expect a slight rise in a State with an increasing population and with growing industrial demands, each pushing up land values. We have tried to keep it down to the point where, more than ever, the tax tends to be a discouragement to the aggregation of land rather than a blanket tax on every person owning land, no matter how tiny an area it may be."

**Mr Lickiss:** That was the purpose of aggregation.

**Mr INNES:** That was the purpose; it was a tax to provide a disincentive to the aggregation of land to maximise the number of people on the land and to maximise the differential or individual units of use of land. The philosophy underlying much of the land policy—certainly with regard to rural lands—has changed. Because of the rigours of the economy, there has been a tendency—in many ways a demand—to get bigger; to get a viable economic unit in a competitive world, or get out.

The honourable member for Warwick would understand more than most other honourable members in this House that the industry with which he is connected became the subject of a scheme to allow rational aggregation, which seems to have been plundered a little bit of late by the various machinations that have involved dairy quotas. Nevertheless, at one stage before rampant ad-hockery took over, there was a philosophy that Government impositions and financial schemes could tend to encourage the bigger or smaller holding of land as was seen to be in the public interest.

Nowadays, the brakes—the limitations on the aggregation of land—have been taken off; although it starts to bite at the other end. The dubious young farmers' scheme has been created, which is an enormous exercise in tokenism and of benefit to very few. On the one hand pressures have been created by the aggregation of land, and, on the other hand, now that aggregations of land exist, land tax has not been removed.

I ask the Minister to tell me the number of persons who at present are liable to pay land tax. I will guarantee that it is more than 25 000, which was the target and consistent bench-mark of performance that was established by Sir Thomas Hiley so long ago. I would like to know what that figure was a year ago and a year before then. I suspect that, despite the increase in threshold, the extent of the increase in valuations has been such that, in fact, the number of people who are now paying land tax is far greater than it ever was.

The honourable member for Toowoomba North was quite right in making some bipartisan comments during the course of his speech. We talk about bracket creep under the Federal Government's taxation policy, the way in which people whose individual situations do not change greatly but whose tax situations change enormously with inflation. I guarantee that the situation is exactly the same in relation to land tax in Queensland—that revaluations of land tax occur far less frequently than changes in the value of land. Valuations in land are done annually, whereas revaluations take place far less frequently. I guarantee that a far greater number of people would be paying land tax now than has ever been the case. There is no inherent target. I have not heard this Government enunciate a policy such as the one that Sir Thomas Hiley adopted, namely, that our aims and ambitions should be to keep the number of tax-payers constant and the threshold of tax constant. The underlying rationale of the tax, which was a social purpose or public purpose attempt to stop the aggregation of large areas of land, has been lost.

**Mr Elliott:** Are you against aggregation?

**Mr INNES:** As I have said, I accept that, in a changed and more competitive world, aggregations have had to take place to allow for economic efficiency and competitiveness on the land. I am sure that that has had to take place in the grain industry.

People in that industry have had to get more out of large capital investments in plant and they have had to produce more tonnes per man employed on the land. The very same situation exists in the dairy industry and other industries. The Liberal Party is not against aggregation. However, although the reason for the tax has been removed, the tax still remains and more people are paying it.

I turn now to an estimate of a freehold land tax for the year. Although the half-yearly figures are running significantly ahead of the figures for the previous half-year, one must go to the end of the tax period in order to obtain a true picture. It is estimated that, this year, \$56m will be taken in freehold land tax, compared with \$47.5m last year. That tax on freehold land will be paid by people who have paid the full dollar for their land.

The total take from people who rent Crown land, that is pastoral selections, is \$9m. It is less than a fifth. That is an interesting figure to look at. People still have to pay for the improvements on their land. The owner of freehold land has to pay for the improvements that he puts on it. They are tax deductions as well.

For pastoral or leasehold selections, or other forms of leasehold such as industrial, homestead and agricultural, an equivalent situation exists. Sure, the lease might require that certain improvements be established on the land, but they are no more improvements than those that would be put on freehold land. Yet, although a person does not put up the capital to buy the land, and although far more land is subject to rental, it is found that people who buy freehold land in the first place pay five times as much money by way of taxation as do people who pay rental. No land tax is paid on leasehold land. That is an extraordinary situation when one stops to think that all of the other things are really equivalent.

**Mr McPhie:** If you understood it, it wouldn't be extraordinary.

**Mr INNES:** Comprehension or understanding is a pretty dangerous phrase to come from the member for Toowoomba North. He does not show too much of it when his total speech, as opposed to part of it, is considered.

It is interesting to reflect on taxation. There is no philosophy behind taxation. When the philosophy behind land tax has gone, the Government is left with a take from people who buy land that is five times higher than that from people who do not put up capital but who have exactly the same obligations when it comes to running land for agricultural or any other purposes. In other words, there is an enormous benefit there. That does not mean that I am calling for higher leasehold payments or rentals, but it says something about land tax. It says something about the taxation system under which somebody who pays the full dollar for his land, who exhausts both his capital as well as his other money on improvements—he does not receive Crown land or anything else—pays five times as much as is paid by a person who has vast tracts of Crown land on a leasehold basis and who is thereby exempted from paying land tax. I ask the Minister to make some comments on that fundamental comparison of the two situations. Is there any rationale left as to why some people should pay a tax after they have paid capital costs, as well, and other people should pay so little, comparatively, by way of the right, shall I say, not to have capital tied up and when all inputs would seem to be the same?

In many cases today we are not dealing with crude, raw land that requires massive capital investment on improvement—clearing, etc. In fact, in many cases a lesson has been learnt and perhaps clearing is not the in thing. However, the majority of Crown land today would not require vast amounts of clearing work to be carried out on it, and it would not be in the public interest to do so.

**Mr Veivers:** What about the people who have replied to expressions of interest in Crown land, say, down the coast and who pay \$30m to \$40m for the land?

**Mr INNES:** The member for Southport asked a question which sets off another set of arguments. It is not a nonsensical question, but if I started down that track it might take me a little too long to answer it. All sorts of other issues would have to be addressed.



I return to what I wanted to say about the taxation picture. It is hoped that the State Budget will be balanced. If the half-yearly figures for land tax and other taxes—especially those figures that are capable, shall I say, of projection for the rest of the year—are considered, it can be seen that the Queensland Budget should be balanced.

Two startling figures emerge from the State Budget. A little more than \$1 billion is the estimate of the take from State-based taxes. Receipts from the Commonwealth amount to approximately \$1 billion. Queensland-based taxation amounts to approximately \$1 billion. In addition, a variety of other income is derived from charges and regulatory fees, revenues and royalties. The biggest area of revenue, however, is from State taxes. Overwhelmingly, the most important of the State taxes, which are represented in hundreds of millions of dollars rather than in amounts between \$10m and \$20m, are pay-roll tax and stamp duty.

I make the following comments because they relate to land transactions. When figures relating to stamp duty are projected this year, it should be remembered that stamp duty is a tax that is levied throughout the year and that it is not a tax that depends on an annual valuation or on annual payments. Stamp duty is paid whenever a transaction is carried out that involves conveyance of property, shares or bank cheques. The figure indicating the take for the first half of the year in stamp duty is staggering. It represents three-quarters of the estimate for the year, which was \$436m. A simple calculation of projection will show that the figure for stamp duty for this year will be \$631m, which will be 75 per cent more than the estimate for the year. For the first time ever, the figure for stamp duty will project beyond pay-roll tax and will be the biggest revenue source. As I have said, pay-roll tax is running at approximately 51 per cent of budget. Stamp duty is running at between 70 and 75 per cent of budget and is likely to provide the State with \$190m to \$200m in additional revenue.

I have looked through all other comparative figures. It is certainly true that there is the odd figure that might be down perhaps \$1m or \$2m throughout the year, but in almost every case the figures are running either on budget or above budget. The honourable member for Toowoomba North, Mr McPhie, mentioned the liquor industry. Receipts from the poor old liquor industry for the quarter ending 31 December amounted to \$38m, compared with \$2m a year ago. The take for the whole half-year was \$39m, compared with \$3m a year ago. I am making this comparison because I am looking into the basis on which land tax continues to be justified. The increased take from the liquor industry represents a massive increase for the half-year. Perhaps rationalising figures on an annual basis is a factor that is involved in calculating liquor tax, but the projection still appears to be above budget. Sixty-one per cent of the take for the year has been received to date.

The massive increase in stamp duty represents one-fifth of the State's taxation budget for the year. The reason for the massive increase is the increased conveyancing of property brought about by the land boom that has occurred in Queensland. Perhaps that is why the Government does not want to establish a land register. It might find that "Made in Japan" applies to Queensland's dominant tax base as well as to so many other means by which people live in Queensland. Massive increases in land sales and land conveyancing transactions have generated the increase in stamp duty. In one sense, perhaps it is unfortunate that pay-roll tax—which is the other major tax providing almost half of the State's taxation revenue in a normal year—is not increasing because that might indicate that more people are being employed. Pay-roll tax amounts to \$538m and represents approximately half of the State's entire taxation base, which returns \$1.2 billion in revenue. It is still running on budget. If pay-roll tax were to increase as a result of increased employment, a call for a reduction in pay-roll tax would obviously follow. If stamp duty continues to run at its present level, it is clear what tax should be reduced.

I have said that land tax has probably outlived its usefulness and that it should be reduced as values increase. However, if there is one pernicious tax in this State and in other States in Australia, it would have to be pay-roll tax. In a State that consistently

runs the second highest unemployment rate of any State in Australia, pay-roll tax is a taxation which militates against an increase in employment. It is an unequal tax because it does not apply to someone who pays \$20m in capital, but does apply to a person who pays \$20m in wages. It is an absolute deterrent to employment and, in this State in particular, if any opportunity occurs to reduce that taxation, it should be taken. If stamp duty is heading in that direction then it should offset pay-roll tax and pay-roll tax should be reduced.

The other interesting thing about stamp duty and about the fact that stamp duty involves conveyancing and property transactions is that, in a State and from a party that has tried to split the coalition on issues such as flat tax, conveyancing duty, which will now give this Government more than half of its yearly taxation budget, is a progressive tax. The bigger the transaction, the more one pays. This involves the maintenance of some sort of double standard. Perhaps I have used the word "hypocrisy" too much and it is not listened to. Therefore I will use the term "double standards".

**Mr McPhie:** That is what you've got.

**Mr INNES:** No, I do not. This afternoon I have not said anything at all that involves double standards.

I am arguing for some consistency and am saying that if a Federal Government is condemned for such things as bracket creep, then the same exercise should be applied to this Government. A rationale for taxation should be established and, if that rationale changes—in the same way that this Government condemns the Federal Government for maintaining or changing certain taxes—this State's taxes should be examined on the same basis. In deference to certain parts of the speech made by the honourable member for Toowoomba North, that is what he was arguing. It was refreshing to hear him arguing early in his speech for a rigorous, consistent view and an examination of the purposes of State taxation.

**Mr Elliott:** Why did you take him to task?

**Mr INNES:** I took him to task because although he railed against the increase in the number of parliamentarians, he voted in favour of it. If the honourable member for Cunningham wants to go back to any arguments or debates about stamp duty, alterations to the Stamp Act or any Budget debates, he will find that my contribution in this regard has been precisely consistent and exactly the same. I have been trying to tell this House and this Government that conveyancing duty is progressive and that if this Government does not believe in progressive tax, it must eliminate stamp duty. This tax is taking enormous amounts of money. I have suggested that pay-roll tax is pernicious and land tax shows the same elements.

**Mr Palaszczuk:** What about consumption tax?

**Mr INNES:** I am almost out of time. I am happy to deal with consumption tax.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The Chair has been remarkably patient with the honourable member. I ask that he return to debate the Bill that is before the House.

**Mr INNES:** In short, an examination of the other bases and volumes of taxation will remain relevant to this amendment because, whether the Government increases its take from other areas of taxation depends on whether it can review the take through land tax and whether in fact it should be looking at increasing the threshold, as Sir Thomas Hiley would have done. I made that point long ago during the debate on land tax in this State. An increase in the threshold would ensure that the number of payers of land tax remains at 20 000. If this Government is looking at any one item of the Budget, and if it is saying that there is a reason to re-examine the basis of land taxation and the amount of money it takes, it has to look at the total take in its Budget. That is all I am doing. I am looking at other items of State taxation and I will leave the debate on consumption tax to another day. That is a Federal tax. There is a consumption tax; it is sales tax. Every farmer knows that sales tax exists because he is exempt from

it. The State Government knows all about it because it does not pay sales tax, and that is why it can sell its cars and make a profit.

**Government members interjected.**

**Mr INNES:** Mr Speaker, they are leading me down a track that you do not want me to take. They are talking about Federal taxes.

In the end result, I ask the Minister if he would come back to the old philosophies and ideas that govern the imposition of this tax. Would he tell us how many people currently are levied for land tax? Would he tell us how many people were levied a year ago and the year before that? That would indicate to us whether the old self-restraint of trying to keep it down to 20 000 people still operates.

**Mr Simpson:** And how many are expected next year.

**Mr INNES:** Yes, and how many are expected next year. I will guarantee that it is onwards, ever onwards and upwards.

**Mr Simpson:** I hope it is not with this increase in the threshold.

**Mr INNES:** No doubt the Minister will be in a position to tell the House whether in fact the threshold will lead to a ceiling or a plateauing of the tax. The acid question is whether it will lead to an increase in the number of people who pay the tax.

**Mr Simpson:** You want to index it to the average increase in the valuation per year.

**Mr INNES:** But obviously if the revaluations are done intermittently——

**Mr Simpson:** No, they are every 12 months.

**Mr INNES:** The member is talking about the new system, yes.

**Mr Elliott:** You have to wind up.

**Mr INNES:** I am winding up, but I want those questions answered.

**Mr ELLIOTT (Cunningham) (5.32 p.m.):** I am delighted to be able to take part in this debate. I have been looking forward to it for almost three years.

**Mr De Lacy:** Don't you like paying land tax?

**Mr ELLIOTT:** It is not a case of whether or not I like to do anything. That is not the point.

What is important is that I believe a large part of the Bill before the House is a triumph for small people and for persistence at the grassroots, particularly through some of the councillors of the Queensland Graingrowers Association, who have continued to chip away at this issue over a long period. The various members of Parliament who represent rural electorates have for a long time had great problems in connection with the trusts mentioned in the Bill. The member for Condamine and I were members of a committee that had discussions with Treasury and other people. For much of that time we were virtually told that we would get nowhere. It is a great triumph that we succeeded. We did not crash through; a more rational attitude was adopted and the Minister looked at it in a little more detail and more thought was given to it. Finally the Government has come up with something that will overcome the present problems. I thank the Minister and all of those officers who met with us to try to assist to get around the problem.

The 1985 amendment created a problem for people who were not meant to be caught up in this tax. They simply became pawns in the game; they were innocent bystanders who, through the way in which their trusts were set up, were caught by the 1985 amendments. Purely and simply, they were paying land tax when the philosophy behind the 1985 amendments was to assist them. What it almost amounts to is that we

made a mess of it. That might be an unkind thing to say, but that is about the crux of it.

So I am delighted to be able to talk on this subject today. I pay particular tribute to George Houen of the Queensland Graingrowers Association, who spent an incredible amount of time and effort and the money of his members on this. The member for Lockyer, Tony FitzGerald, the member for Toowoomba North and many other members were involved in it with me.

The member for Burnett gave my colleague Mr Littleproud and me much background information about people in other parts of Queensland who had problems with other trusts. It is important to realise that this legislation is an important step forward. It is not only a step forward in knocking out an anomaly which was a problem, but it is also equitable. The previous speaker and other speakers have touched on the need to keep tax-bracket creep under control. It creates a problem with all types of taxation and it needs to be addressed on a continuing basis.

It is important that the people in the country understand what the Government is doing. A considerable number of them are under the misapprehension that the Government has not got its act together. I believe that it has.

The only question that I have relates to the time provision. Basically, it says that if a person had a trust prior to the amendment in 1985 and was caught by the amendment in 1985, his problem will be addressed. However, it appears that we are saying that people who set up a trust on 1 July 1985, after the amendment came into effect, may have consulted their solicitors who had not received the amendment in time, and they may have been given advice based on the old law.

**Mr Austin:** That cannot be the Government's fault.

**Mr ELLIOTT:** No, it is not the Government's fault. However, if it happened to land-holders, it is not their fault either.

**Mr Austin:** They should see their solicitor.

**Mr ELLIOTT:** The Minister should look at that situation. I do not know of that happening to anyone in my electorate. I hope that all of the solicitors were aware of the ongoing problem. My solicitor certainly was. Not only does he do work for me; unfortunately, he gets bounced on for free information on Government problems. I bounce many problems off him at night over the phone and he responds. He was well aware of the problem. In fact, he brought it to my attention, as did other people. I hope that people do not have those problems; however, if they do, they should be treated sympathetically, particularly if it is not their fault.

I will not repeat the amounts that apply, but it would be desirable to have the information incorporated in a press article so that people understand fully what the position is. It is important to understand that under the old legislation, for the concession to apply in trust situations, all of the beneficiaries of the trust owning the land must be natural persons. As well, the land must be worked by the owner or a natural person.

Two problems emerged with the implementation of the 1985 trust amendments. The situation was created in which a small number of primary producers who previously did not pay tax became subject to it. The problems emerged when the land was owned by individuals and worked by a trustee, or when the trust owning the land had other trusts as beneficiaries; for example, the land was held in tiers of trusts.

It is proposed that the Act be amended with effect from 30 June 1987—it will be retrospective—so that the concession will also apply in situations in which it does not apply at present, such as where the land is owned by an individual and is not worked by the owner or another natural person but is worked by a natural person or an exempt proprietary company as trustee.

There are a few other concessions. I wonder whether it is feasible for me to have this incorporated in *Hansard*? The Minister wants to reply. I wonder whether I could

show this to you, Mr Speaker, and have it incorporated in *Hansard*? All I want to do is get this in—

**Mr Vaughan:** Tough cheese.

**Mr ELLIOTT:** All right, I will read it into the record.

The concession will apply—

“... where the land is owned by a natural person as trustee and is worked by another person or an exempt proprietary company as trustee;

Where the land is owned by an exempt proprietary company as trustee and is worked by another exempt proprietary company or a natural person as trustee.

In addition, it is proposed that where a trust which owns the land has further trusts as beneficiaries (that is it is a tiered trust) this will no longer disqualify it from the concession provided all the ultimate beneficiaries are natural persons.”

There are a few others that probably are not as important. I will try to ensure that they are incorporated in an article in a local newspaper because it is important that people understand exactly what the Government has done.

I thank honourable members for the opportunity to speak on this Bill. I thank the Minister and his department for the work that has been done on it and I thank the grain-growers and all of those people who have been involved in helping to try to alleviate the problem.

**Mr EATON (Mourilyan)** (5.41 p.m.): My contribution will be brief. The Bill allows for concessions. Although the Opposition supports concessions being granted to the smaller companies and the smaller land-holders, it believes that it is the Government's responsibility to ensure that all taxes and charges are based on the payee's capacity.

I want to read into *Hansard* parts of an article in the *Sydney Morning Herald* regarding the distribution of private wealth in Australia. That is what this Bill is all about. It is an endeavour to help those people who need help. However, it also gives a lot of help to people whom I do not believe deserve as much help as they are getting. The article in the *Sydney Morning Herald* states—

“In the latest estimate, Australia's private wealth was set at about \$793 billion at June 1985. This represents about \$50,000 for every person in the nation; or about \$75,000 for every person over the age of 15; or about \$110,000 for each household.”

That is based on statistical population figures. If that was broken down to land-holders, it would be found that a similar situation exists. This is the area that concerns me.

Although the Government's policy of freeholding land will bring in more income in the form of stamp duty, it will also raise the fee on leasehold land. I cite the instance of miner's homestead leases or special leases, which have jumped from \$60 and \$80 to \$660. The land valuation has been increased. The fee is based on the percentage of the land valuation. This results in a very steep increase to a lot of the poorer working-class families that have chosen to settle on such leases because they can afford to live there.

I know that leasehold land does not come under this Bill. However, I am considering the overall balance of Government revenue. The responsibility of all Governments is to get fair and equitable taxation from the people. The Opposition agrees that there have to be taxes. The honourable member for Cairns, Mr De Lacy, raised an important issue early in his speech when he talked about taxing absentee landlords. That is done in other States such as Victoria.

I have in my possession a document which states as follows—

“A further substantial component comes from ‘absentee owners’, i.e. owners of land who do not reside in Australia. They are taxed at a rate 20 per cent greater than other owners. The higher rate presumably reflects government policy on foreign

ownership of land, and the Committee offers no specific recommendation on this provision."

The *Australian Financial Review* reveals that \$8 billion—that is eight thousand million—is just a down payment when it comes to Japanese investment in land in Australia. A big percentage of that is coming to Queensland. Undoubtedly, they are paying stamp duty.

I do not doubt for a minute that they pay stamp duty. However, the matter that concerns me is that the Government is trying to do away with an income from rents and it is decreasing the stamp duty on the ownership of freehold land. The Government is not trying to balance the books in a way that is in the best long-term interests of the State and the nation as a whole.

I return to the article in the *Sydney Morning Herald* that dealt with private wealth. The majority of millionaires in Australia today started off with nothing and became millionaires through land development.

The major development of land has taken place with freehold property. Earlier I said that the State Government's policy is to try to get rid of leasehold land that is the asset of all Queenslanders. The Government is only the custodian of the assets of the Queensland people. The Government is putting up for sale land at upset prices and freeholding land in fee simple. While the Government may receive some revenue from land tax, it is losing the income from that land. Stamp duty and land tax are the Government's only income from land once it has allowed it to be freeholded.

The Government is encouraging overseas investment in land. The Opposition does not object to overseas people coming to this country if they want to live here, work the land and pay their just taxes and charges as Australians do. The Opposition will support those people. However, as I mentioned earlier, I find some conflict in the Government's stated policy of looking after the long-term interests of all Queenslanders. I ask the Minister to take those comments on board.

Members of the community have a general feeling against the take-over and purchase of Australian land by overseas companies and individuals. In the *Cairns Post*, under the headline "Appeal to halt foreign sell-off", the comments of Mr De Lacy were reported. The matter received wide acceptance in the region. Another article, headed "Gordonvale deal awaits Government OK", states—

"A multi-million dollar property purchase in the Gordonvale area by overseas interests is awaiting Foreign Investment Review Board (FIRB) approval.

The managing director of PRD Realty (Cairns) Pty Ltd, Mr Tony Roberts, said in Cairns yesterday his company was acting as the sole agent for the purchase of three cane farms totalling 256 ha at the junction of the Bruce and Gillies highways at Gordonvale. The sum being paid for the properties has not been disclosed."

That sale will bring in a certain amount of stamp duty to the Government. However, once again the Government is bending over backwards to help foreign-owned companies that are coming into Queensland and stopping Queenslanders and other Australians from being given the incentive and the opportunity to become land-holders.

As I said earlier, there is a conflict between the Government's policy of decreasing land tax and of increasing the amount that it levies on leasehold land. What government is all about is balancing the books. I would ask the Minister to reply to the matters that I have raised.

**Hon. B. D. AUSTIN** (Nicklin—Minister for Finance and Minister Assisting the Premier and Treasurer) (5.48 p.m.), in reply: I thank all honourable members for their contributions to the debate. I must admit that the debate was wide-ranging. I do not think that it should ever be said in this Chamber that members of the Opposition, particularly the honourable member for Cairns, is inhibited in any way in the speeches that he makes.

It was pleasing to see by the form of the debate that members other than those members who had a particular interest in certain provisions of the Bill sought not to discuss it. One can only assume from that that it is all good news; and indeed it is.

For what it is worth, I think that I should reiterate some of the matters in the Bill so that somebody reading *Hansard* will be aware that the Government intends to increase the general deduction for individuals from \$60,000 to \$120,000 and to increase the level below which companies, trustees and absentees are exempt from \$10,000 to \$30,000. It is proposed that there be an increase from \$30,000 to \$45,000 in the deduction for qualifying exempt proprietary companies and trustees undertaking prescribed activities.

There will be a reduction in tax rates of about 20 per cent in the taxable value range from zero to \$399,999 and an average reduction of about 10 per cent in the taxable value range from \$400,000 to \$749,999, ranging from about 16 per cent at \$500,000 to about 2.7 per cent at \$740,000.

A further special rebate of tax of 25 per cent on taxable values up to \$120,000 for companies and trusts is proposed. It is proposed also to implement arrangements to progressively adopt the annual value as the taxable value. For 1987 assessments the status quo will prevail; that is, the existing phasing-in arrangements will apply.

For 1988 and subsequent years, the taxable value will be the sum of the value according to the existing phasing formula and the amount of annual value increase since the general valuation. This basis facilitates movement up to the full annual value in the time that the general valuation would be phased in under the existing formula—a maximum of five years. Where actual annual value is less than the formula value in any year, such lower actual value will apply. Once full annual value is reached, actual Valuer-General values will thenceforth always apply.

The honourable member for Cunningham raised the question of concessions for primary producers where trusts are involved. I believe that the honourable member adequately covered that aspect. However, if he wishes, for the benefit of his constituents and because it will appear in *Hansard*, I reiterate that, in relation to the owning and working of trusts that were created before 19 April 1985, the Act will be amended with effect from 30 June 1987 so that the concession will apply in the following additional situations in which it does not apply at present—

- (1) where the land is owned by an individual and is worked by a natural person or an exempt proprietary company as a trustee;
- (2) where the land is owned by a natural person as a trustee and is worked by another person or an exempt proprietary company as a trustee;
- (3) where the land is owned by an exempt proprietary company as a trustee and is worked by another exempt proprietary company or a natural person as a trustee;
- (4) where a trust which owns or works the land has further trusts as beneficiaries, provided that the ultimate beneficiaries are all natural persons;
- (5) in the case where the land is owned by an individual or individuals, the owner or at least one of the joint owners must be a beneficiary of the trust working it; and
- (6) in the case where the land is owned by a trust and used by a person or exempt proprietary company as a trustee, substantially all of the beneficiaries of the trust which owns the land must be persons who are or may be beneficiaries of the trust under which the land is used.

I believe that covers most of the problems that were raised by the honourable members for Cunningham, Cooroorra, Toowoomba North, Burnett and Roma, and the Minister for Education in his days as a back-bencher. In fact, the problems were raised by most members of the National Party who represent electorates outside Brisbane. I believe that most of those problems have been resolved.

In relation to the specific question that was asked by the honourable member for Sherwood about the number of tax-payers who are currently paying land tax—the honourable member stated that Sir Thomas Hiley's aim was for 25 000 people to be paying land tax at a certain level. It is estimated that, during 1987-88, only 17 875 people will be paying land tax.

**Mr Simpson:** And the population of Queensland has doubled.

**Mr AUSTIN:** The population of Queensland has increased substantially.

**Mr De Lacy:** The member for Sherwood is not here.

**Mr AUSTIN:** I hope that on the next occasion when the honourable member for Sherwood speaks in this House he will acknowledge the splendid work that has been done by this National Party Government in reducing the number of persons from Sir Thomas Hiley's suggested threshold level.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Motion agreed to.

### **Committee**

Clauses 1 to 21, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

### **Third Reading**

Bill, on motion of Mr Austin, by leave, read a third time.

Sitting suspended from 5.55 to 7.30 p.m.

## **EMPLOYMENT, VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING BILL**

### **Second Reading**

Debate resumed from 16 March (see p. 5238).

**Mr VAUGHAN (Nudgee) (7.30 p.m.):** This legislation is necessary to formalise the establishment in December last year of the new Department of Employment, Vocational Education and Training. This new department incorporates the Division of Employment Planning and Training, which was previously part of the Department of Employment and Industrial Affairs, the division of TAFE, senior colleges and rural training schools, which were all formerly part of the Education Department.

As the Minister has indicated, employment, vocational education and training are closely related and their incorporation under one department is timely having regard to the estimated future requirements associated with the economic development of the State. Of course, the establishment of this new department follows the creation by the Federal Labor Government of a new portfolio to co-ordinate all Commonwealth policies in the fields of employment, education and training. The Federal Government has recognised the role that education and training has to play in responding to the major economic challenges facing our nation.

As the Minister has also indicated, there is to be further legislation to consolidate under the one Act the necessary authority and the objectives required to develop and manage a vocational education and training system directed towards creating a highly skilled and qualified Queensland work-force.

The contents of the Bill are straightforward and will be supported by the Opposition because, like the Government, Opposition members too are concerned about the future economic development of this State. We too fully realise that no longer can we rely on our rich natural resources to sustain us into the future as we have done in the past. We also appreciate that if we are to maintain our standard of living we have to compete



with the rest of the world and develop new industries. In conjunction with this we must have a work-force that is highly skilled and trained for the jobs that have to be performed.

The new department established by this Bill will certainly have the wherewithal to undertake the task of producing such a work-force. Of course, we already have in this State an efficient and well-established training system. We have the Industry and Commerce Training Commission which is a tripartite body made up of 18 employer, employee and Government representatives and the Division of Technical and Further Education.

According to the 1986 annual report of the Minister for Education, in 1986 the Division of Technical and Further Education offered services through a network of 26 colleges and a number of centres throughout Queensland. More than 80 per cent of the State's population had access to TAFE facilities. During 1986 TAFE institutions conducted 760 vocational courses involving around 106 000 students—15 per cent more than in 1985.

According to the 1986-87 annual report of the Department of Employment and Industrial Affairs, as at June 1987, 18 301 apprentices were in training in the State. In 1986-87 5 090 apprentices and 948 trainees were allotted to employers. Unfortunately, however, the number of apprentices in training in 1986-87 was the lowest for the last 10 years, but according to a statement by the Minister on 16 March, apprenticeship starts this year are up by 20 per cent on last year. I sincerely hope that that trend continues because of the need to find jobs for the 24 300-odd young people in this State currently looking for full-time employment.

In his introductory speech the Minister spoke in enthusiastic terms about the aims and objectives of this new department. If it functions as intended, hopefully the high level of unemployment in this State will be significantly reduced. However, it is one thing to be enthusiastic and optimistic about what the new department can achieve and another thing to face reality.

In this regard I would like to refer to page 5 of the Department of Employment and Industrial Affairs 1986-87 annual report. Under the heading "Employment" it states—

"The 1986-87 year saw an acceleration in the rate of structural change in Queensland and Australian industries. This can be attributed to the unfavourable balance of payments experienced by the nation and the substantial depreciation of the Australian dollar. These factors resulted in significant changes in the industry structure of the national labour force. In Queensland, following more than a decade of exceptionally strong growth in employment, the 1986-87 period saw some reduction in this rate of growth. Since the 1976 Census employment in Queensland increased by 32.6 per cent while the State's labour force increased by 39.9 per cent. During 1986-87 employment in Queensland increased by 1.2 per cent and the labour force increased by 1.8 per cent."

So we see that since 1976 the number of people available for work increased at a greater rate than the number of people in employment. The same trend was evident in 1986-87. The fact is that there is only a certain number of jobs, but that there are more people looking for those jobs.

In February 1985, during the Rockhampton by-election, the Government set up a task force to—

1. examine the trends in employment in Queensland and identify particular areas of concern;
2. assess the prospects for future growth;
3. examine employment-generating initiatives implemented by the Commonwealth and other States; and
4. report to Cabinet on possible new initiatives in the area—
  - (a) industry and development policies;

- (b) labour market policies; and
- (c) other policy options.

That task force comprised representatives of the Department of Commercial and Industrial Development, the Department of Employment and Industrial Affairs, the Treasury and the Premier's Department.

In April 1985, the task force brought down its report. The findings and recommendations of the task force are too detailed to refer to in this debate. However, last month the Government announced another inquiry.

This inquiry will investigate why the State's unemployment rate is so high compared with that for the rest of Australia. While I am on this subject, I want to take the Minister to task for the answer—or should I say the non-answer—he gave to my question without notice on Thursday, 17 March when I sought information about that inquiry. Regrettably, the Minister did not answer my question. Instead, he waffled on, as so many Ministers who do not know the answer to questions often do, and talked about everything other than the inquiry about which I was seeking information. Perhaps the Minister may care to answer my question in his reply.

The new Department of Employment, Vocational Education and Training has a difficult job ahead of it if it is to achieve the goals that have been set for it. The difficulties that confront the department have been compounded to some extent by the policies of the Government. In this regard I refer to the Government's policy of encouraging contract work. As all honourable members are aware, the Government has encouraged contract work in the State's electricity industry—the South East Queensland Electricity Board in particular.

The end result is that there are fewer permanent employees in the South East Queensland Electricity Board and, as a result, fewer opportunities to train young people in a trade or calling. As at 30 June 1984, the South East Queensland Electricity Board employed 4 267 people including 2 287 supervisors, tradesmen and field personnel and 281 apprentices.

Seven months after he was engaged as general manager of the South East Queensland Electricity Board, Mr Wayne Gilbert in a message to all SEQEB staff indicated one of the activities of SEQEB that he was going to “hive off” was apprenticeship. As all honourable members are aware, in the latter part of 1984 he moved to “hive off” certain work performed by permanent SEQEB tradesmen to private contractors. This resulted in the SEQEB dispute early in 1985 and the eventual sacking of over 1 000 employees.

As at 30 June 1985, there were 3 560 people employed by the South East Queensland Electricity Board, including 1 654 supervisors, tradesmen and field personnel and 260 apprentices. As at 30 June last year, there were 3 066 people employed by the South East Queensland Electricity Board, including 1 447 supervisors, tradesmen and field personnel and 217 apprentices. I will be interested to see the figures as at the end of June this year. Contractors who now perform much of the work previously performed by a permanent work-force have to compete for work and there is no security or continuity of employment; thus there is not the same foundation for the engagement or training of apprentices.

An area of employment in which facts speak for themselves is the building industry, in which contract and subcontract work has been rife for a considerable time. According to the Queensland Master Builders Association and the Building Workers Union, the building industry faces an acute shortage of tradesmen due to a dangerously low intake of apprentices. Although the executive director of the Queensland Master Builders Association has blamed the high costs associated with apprentice training and the volatility of the building industry for the situation that exists, the State secretary of the Building Workers Union contends the emergence of subcontractors and employer's short-sightedness were threatening to destroy the industry's structure.

Mr Deputy Speaker, an analysis of apprenticeship intake statistics shows that in 1981 the number of apprentice brick-layers, carpenters, painters and plumbers indentured

totalled 1 537 compared with only 635 in 1987. While it may be argued that 1981 was a peak year, the fact is that the 1987 figures are the lowest for the last 10 years. If this State is to continue to prosper the Government will have no alternative but to develop and maintain a highly skilled and trained work-force.

The Government has to reverse the trend of the last few years. It is no good the Government's holding an inquiry into the State's employment, as was done in 1985, and then announcing another inquiry into the State's unemployment in 1988.

According to the latest unemployment statistics, there are 113 400 people unemployed in this State—9 per cent of the State's work-force—the worst unemployment level of any mainland State. The Australian average is 7.4 per cent unemployed, therefore, Queensland is well behind the rest of Australia, except Tasmania, in coming to grips with unemployment. In the 15 to 19 year age group there are 24 300 unemployed—26.6 per cent compared to the Australian average of 19.8 per cent.

Yet the situation exists in the State's building industry, which is booming, where there is an acute shortage of skilled tradesmen because, over the last five years, the number of apprentices being trained in the industry has fallen dramatically. Brick-layers in particular are as scarce as hen's teeth, because last year only 40 apprentice brick-layers were indentured compared with 167 in 1981. In 1987 more migrant brick-layers were imported into the State than were trained in the State. Forty-two brick-layers migrated to Queensland, but only 39 apprentice brick-layers completed their apprenticeships. Whilst the building industry is shirking its responsibilities to train future tradesmen, the master builders are advocating an increase in migration to help overcome the problem that exists. What hope is there for the 24 300 15 to 19 year olds looking for a job, when a leading building industry employer organisation is advocating that the shortage of building tradesmen be solved by bringing in migrant building-workers to fill the jobs? I am aware that the Minister has taken the building industry to task for its attitude; but that is not good enough.

There has been talk for a long time about a levy/grant system whereby all employers contribute to a fund, with those who train apprentices being subsidised from that fund. In this way those contractors and subcontractors who do not want to participate directly in the training of apprentices would be sharing the cost of those who are prepared to do so. In view of the situation that exists, I believe that it is time that such a scheme was given some consideration.

Hopefully, with the co-operation of industry, the trade unions and the public at large, the establishment of this new Department of Employment, Vocational Education and Training will bring about a substantial reduction in the number of people unemployed in the State, particularly those young people who are so eagerly seeking apprenticeships.

The Opposition supports the Bill.

**Mr STEPHAN (Gympie) (7.43 p.m.):** It gives me pleasure to join in this debate this evening and support the Minister in his introduction of this piece of legislation.

This Bill establishes a new department entitled the Department of Employment, Vocational Education and Training. All honourable members look forward to the establishment of this department with a great deal of enthusiasm. I agree with the comment of the Opposition spokesman, Mr Vaughan, that the new department has a difficult problem ahead of it. This is correct, but this department is facing this problem realistically by utilising the expertise and skill that is available to it.

What is needed is not only a highly skilled and trained work-force, but also a work-force with a great deal of enthusiasm and pride in what it does. The requirements of the work-force are changing, and at the present time young people are required to acquire skills at a much earlier age than in the past. The young people in today's work-force are trained in the practical areas after they have finished their schooling, rather than receiving theoretical training in the schools.

Bearing these things in mind, it is quite encouraging indeed that there has been a combination of what were previously two separate services. This will bring together under one umbrella the responsibilities for the administration of technical and further education and training and employment planning.

The technical and further education organisation and the Industry and Commerce Training Commission have had a distinguished association over a number of years in providing vocational education and training services to Queensland employers. That close association of the past and the part that each organisation has played in the delivery of these programs and services is recognised by industry as a key provision by Government in the battle for economic competitiveness and confidence in this State.

To bring together these two organisations under one umbrella is a most laudable action taken by this Government on behalf of the future of Queensland and Queenslanders. I say this bearing in mind my opening comments about the more practical aspects of training and the availability of this training to an increasing number of young people. It is for this reason that a great number of TAFE colleges are being built and opened right throughout the State. I cannot help mentioning the decision to construct a TAFE college in my electorate. I can assure the House that these colleges will be appreciated and utilised, as has been the case in the past, with great pride and enthusiasm and also with the knowledge that these colleges meet the demand by both young people and older people for practical educational training.

I suppose there is nothing worse than having young students returning to school trying to be educated and trained in something in which they are not interested, especially when they know that, at the end of that education, because of the comparatively limited number of tertiary places that are available to students, they will not be able to go on to that level.

The Honourable the Premier has made clear to Queenslanders his vision of excellence. This is an example of that. It is certainly a great vision. Whether that vision of excellence is attained is up to each and every one of us. Whether we are able to contribute to this vision is also up to each and every one of us.

**Mr Hamill:** The mirage shimmering in the distance.

**Mr STEPHAN:** It is not a mirage. It is only a mirage if people consider that it is a mirage. As I said, it is up to each and every one of us. If we are not to accept this challenge to aim and plan for something a little better than we have now, it will be a mirage, something that will not be attained. It is up to the member for Ipswich and to each and every one of us to decide whether it becomes a mirage or reality.

A competitive edge for Queensland industry will see all Queenslanders benefiting through the creation of additional long-term jobs for our younger and older people alike. The improvements in the quality of life that will flow naturally to us all as benefits from a sustained and improved economic performance are incontestably part of that vision.

No Government can achieve its dream—its vision—without the co-operation and support of the major players in the business community and the community generally. This is particularly so when that vision is economically sound. If the applause I hear from the industrial and commercial community—I do not hear too much applause from the Opposition benches—as a result of the initiative taken in creating the Department of Employment, Vocational Education and Training as a fusion of the functions of the technical and further education organisation and of the Industry and Commerce Training Commission is any indication, the crucial players from business are ready and willing to participate. That has been shown through the various consultative committees that are being used in provincial centres in the State. It is important that their skills and training be utilised and that they be able to contribute to the welfare and the future of the training programs. The various committees are offering sound support, and that is an indication of the practical aspect of what can be and is being achieved.

The streamlining of the operation and the further focusing of the energies and activities of these two organisations, both highly credible in their own right, is a significant component of the strategy embarked upon by the Government to achieve a better life for Queenslanders through economic improvement.

Economic improvement can, in part, be nurtured by the provision of a responsive, effective and efficient education and training system within this State—one that is capable of reacting quickly to provide appropriately prepared and trained people for the work-force. In an era when economic trends and commercial opportunities are subject to the inexorable pressures of change, the speed with which training-providers can react to emergent needs is critical in the maintenance of a competitive edge in the market-place.

For vocational education and training to be effective, it must be based on real needs—needs as identified by business-leaders as being important. By forging closer links between these industrial and commercial leaders and the major providers of vocational education and training—TAFE and the ICTC—training ought to be more effective.

This Bill—the Employment, Vocational Education and Training Bill—provides an appropriate legislative framework within which vocational education and training in this State can be made relevant, responsive, effective, efficient—in short, more in tune with the Government's agenda for economic improvement.

This Bill is visionary in both content and intent. It is rightfully a centrepiece in the Government's thrust towards economic improvement in this State. Notwithstanding the importance of the establishment of a "corporation sole" and all that that can be construed to mean in terms of operational flexibility, the impact of this Bill is contained within the focus and intent of clause 6, which is titled "Functions of the Minister". The clear intention in this clause and elsewhere is to forge close formal links with industry, commerce and the broader community in, in the words of the Bill itself, "matters relating to employment, vocational education and training". As I hear it, this is welcomed enthusiastically by leaders in the industrial and commercial world. The establishment of the Queensland Employment, Vocational Education and Training Board under the auspices of this legislation is tangible proof to the Queensland community of the Government's commitment to consultation and community involvement. Others are applauding the recognition given to the need for a future work-force to be both highly skilled and adaptable, which are essential companion qualities, they claim, to a sustained economic improvement in a time of accelerating change.

The importance of personal skills enrichment, of adult education and of lifelong learning—areas long strong as educational provisions by TAFE—are given rightful and prominent recognition in a formal way in this Bill.

The passage of the Employment, Vocational Education and Training Bill will provide a suitable springboard for the provision of quality vocational education and training in this State in the decades to come.

It is with great enthusiasm that I, along with other people in Queensland, join in supporting the Bill in its progress through this House. I know that every other member of the House will do exactly the same.

**Mr SHERLOCK (Ashgrove) (7.54 p.m.):** This is a Bill to promote employment, vocational education and training in Queensland. I welcome this opportunity to speak about one aspect of that vocational education and training. I refer to medical school training, training of doctors and the follow-on training of health-care workers.

The Australian Medical Council has recently recommended that the Queensland University Medical School be accredited for a period of five years rather than the standard 10 years. A primary reason for that limited accreditation is the problem of recruitment and retention of clinical academic staff. The problem presents to the Medical School that, if it fails to retain on board its existing staff and to recruit additional staff to fill the 20 per cent vacancy that exists——

**Mr R. J. Gibbs:** Why don't you throw your brief away and talk off the cuff about this? They have given you a brief and you know nothing about it.

**Mr SHERLOCK:** Maybe if the honourable member listened, he would learn something.

In that scenario, the Medical School in Queensland will close unless the Government takes some action. The State Government is receiving clinical support from clinical academics working in the Medical School at the Queensland University, which is propping up our public health system, for which they receive no remuneration; neither does the university.

There is a large discrepancy in the salary package of senior academic staff working in the public hospital system in Queensland compared with full-time and visiting staff on the public hospital pay-roll. The situation has recently reached crisis point and I fear that unless some action is taken there will be a large exodus of academic staff from the Medical School in Queensland. That has already happened. It has been happening over a long period. This is not a new problem. It will adversely affect the training of doctors and interns in this State, in a system that provides 200 doctors a year and 200 interns a year for the public hospital system in Queensland.

In addition, that will have a flow-on into the training of nurses. The stage has now been reached at which nurse-training is developing into a diploma course and further into a degree course. That, of course, is well known. There is a very strong lobby indeed to move nursing education into college-based education. It flows on into paramedical training, the type of courses that are conducted by TAFE, the first-aid courses and so on.

The object of TAFE courses is to teach tertiary courses that are industry related. I do not believe that there is a better example of industry-related courses than that conducted by the Medical School at Queensland University. However, I take this opportunity to draw attention to its very survival.

**Mr R. J. Gibbs:** What's that got to do with the TAFE Bill before the House?

**Mr SHERLOCK:** It has a lot to do with medical training and paramedical training in this State.

It is quite clear that, if the problem is not addressed, there will be a move by clinical academic staff from Queensland to greener fields such as New South Wales and into private practice. It has been going on for 10 or 20 years and it has been ignored.

The facilities at the Medical School are provided by the university with Commonwealth funds. The university scheme is funded by the Commonwealth Government. The State Government provides nothing for teaching facilities at the Medical School at Queensland University.

There are problems regarding interrelationships between the university and the Health Department. As I said, the Australian Medical Council, when it accredited the Medical School, accredited it for a period limited to only five years. It did that for three major reasons, one of which is that the school is having problems with the retention and the recruitment of clinical academic staff. There is a huge problem in the relationship between the university and the hospital and its concern about the research output of that school.

This is not a new problem. The Queensland University and the Health Department—the State Government—are well aware of the serious problems faced by the Medical School in Queensland. It has been the subject of a number of studies and reviews over the years. In 1973, in a report that he presented in relation to remuneration for academic salaries at the Medical School, Sir Walter Campbell, then Mr Justice Campbell, stated that patient care is a responsibility unique in the university world. He said—

“It is the factor which distinguishes the work of Clinicians from that of all other academics. In taking charge of a patient, the Clinician assumes a heavy personal responsibility which he cannot abrogate. His accountability to the patient

can be distinguished from the responsibility of another academic who engages in outside consultative practice because the latter is a task voluntarily performed and forms no part of a person's University employment."

Sir Walter's recommendation for at least maintaining parity of salaries of doctors in the public hospital system with those of visiting and full-time specialists has been ignored by the Government.

Mr Justice Ludeke, in his 1981 review, said—

"University conditions of service fall too far short of those obtainable in the Hospital. Good people will not enter the University and some within will leave. The consequence is a decline in teaching and research standards in the hospital and a deterioration in the quality of patient care."

The Health Department must be aware of the current concerns being expressed from many different quarters—certainly by clinical academics at the Medical School. I remind the House that it is our Medical School—it is Queensland's Medical School. More than 70 per cent of the doctors practising in Queensland were trained at the University of Queensland Medical School. Each year, 200 interns move out into the system and finish up in Queensland's public hospitals. Many of them practise in country areas. If the Medical School in this State is run down, Queensland has a run-down health system.

As I have said, these concerns are not recent; they have been around for more than 20 years. Since 1967 repeated attempts have been made to reach parity in salaries for doctors working in the university and for those working in the public hospital system.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row):** Order! I would like to canvass a matter with the honourable member for Ashgrove. Having looked at the Bill, I noted that it refers to vocational education and training. I think that the honourable member has gone into an academic field that I doubt is provided for in the Bill. I draw his attention to the fact that he is somewhat outside the provisions of the Bill.

**Mr SHERLOCK:** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. I accept your ruling. I merely make the point that this is a Bill about promoting employment. It is a Bill about vocational education and training. I put to you that there is not a better example of industry-based training at a tertiary level anywhere in Queensland than at the Queensland Medical School. I believe that it deserves our support.

**Mr SHERRIN (Mansfield) (8.03 p.m.):** It is with a great degree of pleasure that I rise to participate in this debate on what I view as landmark legislation for the education and training of Queenslanders.

Honourable members will recall that on 14 December the Ahern Government established a new department of State, namely, the Department of Employment, Vocational Education and Training. I totally endorse that initiative, as it brings together in a very meaningful way the responsibilities of employment, vocational education and training. I believe it will ensure a much greater relevance of vocational education and training to commerce and industry. I believe that that is the underlying premise of the legislation and the move by the Government to create this new department of State.

Honourable members will be aware that this legislation is only the first stage of legislation in the Government's program to express its philosophy through legislation. Further legislation will be introduced at a later stage.

I would like to address briefly some of the remarkable achievements undertaken by TAFE that will provide a very firm foundation on which the new department can build in the future. They will allow this new department to meet some of the exciting challenges that lie ahead. Those matters were referred to by the Minister in his second-reading speech. They were referred to briefly this evening by the Opposition's spokesman. Having had the privilege of visiting the majority of the TAFE colleges over the last five or six years, I believe that one of the remarkable consistencies that I have noticed as I have moved from TAFE college to TAFE college is the entrepreneurial spirit of the staff

members in those colleges. It is an outstanding characteristic. It is present not only in the leaders but also in the staff at the workplace in those colleges.

With that impression in mind, I believe that the greatest resource that the old department of TAFE brings to the new department is its people. One of the things that set the TAFE system apart from other sectors of the education system is the entrepreneurial flair that one finds in many of its people, which is a result of their very close association with industry. That is reflected in the improved recruitment procedures that TAFE has utilised over the years.

In many instances, TAFE has tended to draw from industry those people who have had very successful working careers and who have a yen to put their experience back into the workplace, particularly the vocational education sector. The education sector as a whole could very well learn from that experience of taking people such as that from industry and putting them for a time into the education sector and perhaps allowing an interchange with industry. I am aware that TAFE facilitates that process. I urge the Minister to allow a freer exchange of teachers between the TAFE sector and industry. That would certainly not go astray in the traditional skill sector, too.

**Mr Hamill:** What about senior colleges?

**Mr SHERRIN:** It would not go astray in the senior colleges as well—most definitely. It could also be useful in high schools and science and technology fields.

**Mr Hamill:** What about late entrants?

**Mr SHERRIN:** My own experience is that some of the most successful teachers with whom I have rubbed shoulders are teachers who were late entrants into the system; people with experience in industry who did not go through the education system, through university and straight back into the class room. They took the opportunity to enter the work-force and get dirt under their fingernails, and then they entered the class room. One of the reasons why the TAFE system has been so successful is that its recruitment procedures encourage that type of entry into the teaching profession.

I do not wish to become anecdotal about my experiences with TAFE. However, one particular TAFE college comes to mind. It is a pity that the honourable member for Bundaberg is not present in the House, because that college is situated in the heart of his electorate. I refer to the Bundaberg TAFE. If I were asked to nominate a TAFE college that epitomised all that was good about the entrepreneurial flair in TAFE, I would have to nominate the Bundaberg TAFE and its principal, Bill Reedman.

TAFE owns so many buildings in the city of Bundaberg and provides vocational training to industry. All honourable members are aware of the problems that industry in Bundaberg has faced during the past five years. Through the college council that Bill Reedman has established in Bundaberg, he has created a mechanism by which industry in that city can have a direct input into the TAFE college so that it can be as responsive as possible to the changing industry and commerce needs of Bundaberg. He has tried to come to grips with that city's economic problems. The Bundaberg TAFE college could be used as a model for the successful operation of TAFE colleges in other areas of the State. Because it would be an educational experience for them, I urge honourable members to take the opportunity to visit the Bundaberg TAFE college.

The second achievement that TAFE will take into the new department is the leadership that it provides to industry. In these difficult economic times, many new technological practices and pieces of equipment are often beyond the measure and scope of small businesses and other medium-sized industries to invest in and experiment with. I am pleased that, in many instances, TAFE has been able to provide that leadership to industry and to look down the track at where world developments are going in particular fields. Through Cadcam, management practices, office skills and Wang computers, TAFE has been able to provide a leadership to industry. In that way, industry can experience some of the new forms of technology and management practices. TAFE



has facilitated the use of those new forms of technology in Queensland industry and commerce.

Nowhere is that more apparent than at the Kangaroo Point TAFE college. The printing industry is undergoing rapid technological change in which equipment is being made redundant after months instead of years. That college has invested many hundreds of thousands of dollars on new printing technology and the provisions of a close association with industry so that it can utilise those resources.

The other TAFE college that comes to mind is closer to home and is situated in the electorate of my colleague the member for Chatsworth. I refer to the Mount Gravatt TAFE college, which is excellent in providing expertise to the community in the form of machining technology with the Cadcam facilities that it provides for industry. Having been associated with that college for a couple of years now, I know for a fact that when Cadcam was just a word in the industry, that college had set up a very good Cadcam facility and industry was encouraged to come and experiment to see if such a system could be utilised in their own resources. That college provided that leadership. Spin-offs from that work have occurred in the area of dress, material and fabric design.

I certainly strongly support the Minister in his expressed desire to explore alternative means of funding state-of-the-art technology. One of the benefits of the move of TAFE from the Education Department into the new portfolio will be that there will be a different attitude and greater flexibility in financing some of the expensive pieces of equipment that nowadays cost many millions of dollars. A different way of funding may be considered. There may be mechanisms by which industry and TAFE get together and work things through on a cost-sharing basis. An opportunity exists for some very flexible procedures to be used.

Some of the other achievements of TAFE will certainly be built on. One is TAFE's record in employment. This is represented in no greater fashion than by the success that COTAH, the College of Tourism and Hospitality, has had. A recent survey of 53 graduates who undertook the course at that college showed that, at the time that the survey was conducted, 88.7 per cent of them had found jobs. That compared with an average unemployment rate of 15.3 per cent for that age group. That is one of the success stories of TAFE in that it is training people very specifically for industry. People find ready acceptability in industry after they have been trained by TAFE. TAFE also provides people with a greater chance and opportunity to gain employment.

Because of my background, I would strongly encourage the maintenance of those close links that have been developed over the past few years between TAFE and secondary schools. That is particularly important in some of the more remote country communities in which a free-standing TAFE college and a secondary school cannot be justified. That allows an opportunity to pool TAFE resources and put them into the secondary school. The operation of limited TAFE courses would then allow access by secondary school students to state-of-the-art vocational training. I certainly urge and encourage the Minister to continue those close links with secondary schools.

One successful recent initiative by TAFE has been the use of the Q-Net satellite system. I would be hard pressed to think of another Government instrumentality that has accepted the challenge as readily as TAFE, which has picked up the ball and run with it very, very successfully. One only has to look at the programs that are beamed by TAFE to realise that they are really of world standard. I am pretty sure that most of the TAFE colleges now have satellite earth dishes which enable the provision of professional and vocational education to a wide cross-section of the community in the most remote centres. Also, the creation of the TAFE production unit for the use of the satellite is second to none. I do not think that it could be bettered by any other Queensland Government department.

Finally, one of the exciting initiatives that TAFE has been associated with is the additional utilisation of TAFE facilities, particularly in country areas such as Cairns and Mackay, for the offering of tertiary education courses. That is very cost effective and should be encouraged. It is great to see that TAFE and some of the other components

of higher education are getting together and utilising those excellent TAFE resources to allow a much greater access to tertiary education courses.

I believe that this legislation will greatly improve the provision of vocational education and training in Queensland and will facilitate a closer interaction between industry, commerce, vocational education and training. I strongly commend the Bill to the House.

**Mr HAMILL (Ipswich) (8.15 p.m.):** The Opposition welcomes the introduction of this Bill to establish a new department that has an emphasis on vocational training. I trust that this legislation represents a new recognition on the part of this Government of the importance that the link between training and employment holds for the whole community.

The Queensland Government's track record in relation to vocational training is not a good one. In fact, the Queensland Government has constantly ignored the plight of a large number of adults and young people who have faced long-term unemployment in this State, in an environment in which their predicament has been callously disregarded by this Government.

The most recent statistics on unemployment in this State show that in seasonally adjusted terms, the unemployment rate in Queensland for March 1988 was 9 per cent, compared with an Australian average of 7.4 per cent—a result which was worse only in Tasmania. In other words, Queensland had the highest rate of unemployment of any mainland State in Australia, which is not a position that Queensland has been unaccustomed to filling over the last three or four years. The unemployment rate for young people in Queensland—those in the 15 to 19-year-old age group—was 26.4 per cent in March 1988. More than one in four of Queensland's 15 to 19-year-old young people have faced the problem of unemployment. Queensland's figures compare most unfavourably with the position of youth unemployment in Australia as a whole, which was 19.8 per cent for the same month. When comparing Queensland with Victoria, which has a youth unemployment rate of 16.1 per cent for that particular age group, it is obvious that Queensland's policy-makers have not addressed the problem of youth unemployment with the same degree of vigour as their counterparts in other States.

**Mr Sherrin:** Do you think that it has something to do with the underfunding by the Commonwealth Government of tertiary education?

**Mr HAMILL:** The honourable member for Mansfield raises the question of Commonwealth funding for tertiary education.

**Mr Sherrin:** Underfunding.

**Mr HAMILL:** I am pleased that he has raised the matter of funding, because it is a point that I intend to address in the context of this most important Bill.

Over the last six years, Queensland has experienced a decrease in the number of apprentices. I am only too pleased to see that, in this current year, some arrest in that continual decline in the number of apprentices has been achieved. However, in this context, the Queensland Government has been very long on words and very short on real action to alleviate the serious unemployment problems that exist in this State. The Government has adopted a similar attitude to the associated loss of vocational skills, which will be needed to obtain secure and productive employment, being suffered by the young people of this State.

Early last year, it was revealed that Mr McKechnie and the Minister for Employment took a submission to Cabinet that sought additional funding for vocational training in this State. I commend the Minister for Employment for his initiatives. What disappoints me is that that Minister does not seem to carry any weight in Cabinet. I say that because a period of more than 12 months has elapsed since the submission was made. Indeed, during that time there has been a change of Government; but the submission seeking \$18m to enhance vocational and employment opportunities in this State is still gathering

dust. As it gathers dust, so the hopes of many thousands of young Queenslanders are dashed simply because the Queensland Government does not give a jot about the employment prospects of young people.

It was intriguing that Ministers McKechnie and Lester proposed in the submission that \$18m ought to be allocated in the Queensland Government's Budget towards enhancing vocational training and employment opportunities, because the Australian Labor Party advocated the very same amount during its campaign prior to the last State election. It advocated the expenditure of \$18m as part of a comprehensive package to address youth unemployment and youth education needs and social needs of young people in this State. Yet this Government, which is often free-wheeling in its expenditures, could not find the paltry sum of \$18m to enhance the vocational and employment opportunities of young people in Queensland.

**Mr Austin:** Obviously they did not believe you, either.

**Mr HAMILL:** The Minister suggests that the Australian Labor Party was not believed, either.

It is very sad that the Queensland Government postures its concern about unemployment, but that when it comes to taking decisive action, it casts aside submissions of the type that were taken to Cabinet by the Ministers I have referred to. Obviously the Queensland Government considers that there are far more important priorities, such as the Kingaroy airstrip, which are far more deserving of the public dollar than the employment future of young Queenslanders.

**Mr Austin:** How did Priority One go?

**Mr HAMILL:** As Minister for Finance, the Minister stands indicted in the eyes of the young people of this State and the members of this House.

It is indicative of this Government's priorities that under the Bjelke-Petersen administration there was no definitive youth policy in this State. Despite the claim that there has been a change of Government and that this is a more sympathetic Government that sees some sort of vision of excellence, nothing has changed. The priorities have not changed, the personnel have not changed and likewise the plight of young Queenslanders has not changed under the aegis of this Government and this Minister for Employment.

The Opposition has long recognised the nexus between training and employment and it also recognises that the role of education is critical in this regard. It is in this area that this Bill is deficient. The Bill addresses the nexus between vocational training and employment, and that is the name of the new department which will be headed by this Minister. The education component is absent. I will refer to the *Queensland Government Gazette* dated 9 December 1987, which states on page 1363—

“The administration and control of Colleges of Technical and Further Education, the Industry and Commerce Training Commission and Senior Colleges be vested in the Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Affairs.”

Furthermore when one consults the *Queensland Government Gazette* dated 14 December 1987, one finds that this position has been confirmed in the reallocation of the portfolio responsibilities, with not only the Division of Technical and Further Education in the Department of Education being referred to in the new deal which is established by this legislation, but also the Roma Senior School, the Hervey Bay Senior College, the Alexandra Hills Senior College and the College of the South West—which are all institutions that are quite properly components of secondary education in this State—are transferred to the new department. Indeed, the senior colleges, as established by the former Minister for Education, were to be a new departure in the delivery of secondary education in this State; a new departure that was in many respects framed around the proposals contained in the *Education 2000* discussion paper which argued quite convincingly that there should be greater recognition of the Senior level of high school, the post-compulsory sector of the secondary schools, and a nexus with technical and further education. That seems to me to be a sensible response towards increasing

retention rates and the aspirations of many students, who are completing secondary education today in an environment in which many employers who are desirous of employing apprentices are insisting on Senior qualifications. Many young people remain at school because of poor employment opportunities which currently exist for school-leavers after Year 10.

To take those senior colleges—an integral part of secondary education—away from the Education Department and place them in the hands of the Minister for Employment breaks the nexus which this Government was keen to establish between secondary education and technical and further education. Furthermore, this departure has highlighted the recognition amongst members of the public of the importance of adequate funding for education in this State. I do not believe that the transferral of technical and further education and the inappropriate transferral of the senior colleges will in any way enhance the funding capacity and expectation of those important sectors of what I consider to be the education system in this State.

I make the point that technical and further education encompasses much more than vocational training. In the area of technical and further education there has developed not only the traditional vocational training—the training which is afforded to apprentices whilst taking time off the job to do their training—but also, as the honourable member for Mansfield correctly stated, a new avenue for students who are desirous of obtaining qualifications through higher education by using the resources of technical and further education. I support that concept. I support it in terms of my own electorate through the Bundamba College of Technical and Further Education, which offers courses in conjunction with the Queensland Agricultural College. I saw that as enabling greater community access to higher education in this State. It is commendable; it ought to be enhanced; it ought to be encouraged.

However, technical and further education encompasses adult extension courses, an equivalent of secondary education for those people who want to engage in traditional night school, and what many people call hobby courses. The ambit of TAFE has expanded greatly from the notion of a traditional vocational training school and, therefore, it more appropriately belongs within the aegis of the Minister for Education. That is the contention that I stress to the House this evening.

**Sir William Knox:** What are you going to do about it?

**Mr HAMILL:** I will continue to advocate the return of technical and further education—I stress “education”—to the aegis of the Minister for Education.

I believe there is greater merit in having a department for technical and further education covering the ambit of vocational training and indeed the State’s legitimate interest in higher education as well as a department that is concerned about the school system. That was the policy that the Australian Labor Party enunciated at the last State election.

In the position of funding there lies an important point that ought to be raised in the context of this debate this evening. All honourable members should recognise that primarily TAFE funding is the responsibility of the Queensland Government. The Commonwealth might provide two-thirds of the capital requirements to TAFE in general and 20 per cent of the recurrent funding requirements to TAFE, but the overwhelming responsibility for the funding of technical and further education—80 per cent of recurrent expenditure and one-third of the capital—rests with the State Government.

Yet, for a Queensland Government that constantly rails about the unavailability of places in post-compulsory education in this State, it will not take stock of its own situation. Queensland, which has 16.5 per cent of Australia’s population, makes provision for only 14 per cent of TAFE places in Australia. In 1985, the most recent figures available through the Education Commission, the youth participation rate in technical and further education in Queensland for those aged between 17 and 24 years was 150 per thousand of population, yet the figure for Australia as a whole was 207 per thousand. That demonstrates a callous disregard by this Queensland Government for the vocational

opportunities of young people, yet TAFE supposedly is to this Queensland Government an important component of vocational training.

As I said, we have heard Queensland Ministers complain about the shortfalls in tertiary places in this State. Of course, when Ministers talk about tertiary places, they are all-encompassing figures because tertiary education encompasses technical and further education, advanced education and university education, but I suggest that it is the poor performance of the Queensland Government in the funding of technical and further education that draws the poor performance of this State in tertiary education participation into greater focus.

**Mr Sherrin:** Oh, come on!

**Mr HAMILL:** Even a poor mathematician such as the member for Mansfield should recognise that in 1985 the participation rate in tertiary education for that same age group, 17 to 24 year-olds, was 101 per thousand compared to 124 per thousand for the total population of Australia and that that was caused by the dramatic shortfall in the availability of technical and further education. That is the cause of this crisis.

**Mr Sherrin:** Oh, rubbish!

**Mr HAMILL:** I will demonstrate the figures for the honourable member for Mansfield. The university participation rate in 1985 for Queensland was 15 per thousand population; for Australia as a whole it was 18 per thousand population. Queensland had a shortfall. In 1986, the figure for Queensland was 16 per thousand population. In 1985, for CAEs the participation rate for Queensland was 19 per thousand; for Australia, it was 20 per thousand. In 1986, the position in Queensland had improved to 20 per thousand compared with the Australian participation rate figure of 21 per thousand. In 1985, the higher education participation rate for Queensland was 34 per thousand; for Australia it was 37 per thousand. In 1986, the Queensland participation rate was 36 per thousand; for Australia it was 39 per thousand.

I reiterate that, when one considers the TAFE participation rate for the same year in Queensland for the 17 to 24-year-olds of 150 per thousand compared to the Australian figure of 207 per thousand, the case is well made that the Queensland Government ought to get its own house in order and try at least to emulate the great advances that have been made by the Commonwealth's increasing tertiary places in the last four years in this State by 12 200. Of course, the job is not finished, but it is about time that the Queensland Government put its own house in order. The poor provision of places in technical and further education in this State is a great disadvantage to the enhancement of vocational training in Queensland.

It is about time that the Queensland Government managed to lift its eyes south of the Tweed. Instead of considering that anything that is south of the Tweed is in some way pernicious, an example which ought not to be followed——

**Mr Beard:** It's south of the Murray now, mate. The Tweed's all right.

**Mr HAMILL:** The honourable member might kid himself. If he thinks that this mob will consider that the position south of the Tweed will in any way be enhanced by a pseudo trendy Liberal Government in Sydney, then he has another think coming.

The position in Victoria in relation to vocational training is most instructive. Victoria has a State Labor Government committed to enhancing the educational and vocational employment prospects of young people in that State. During the time of the youth guarantee in Victoria, between May 1985 and May 1987, the record was commendable. There were 7 800 additional apprentices in training, a 22 per cent increase; 1 900 additional public sector traineeships; 1 600 traineeships set up under the Australian traineeship system; 6 new group training schemes and 1 000 new apprentices; and, most interestingly, 2 640 new places in tertiary education funded in addition to that which had been provided by the Commonwealth.

In the same context, the Victorian State Government has lifted school retention rates, lowered unemployment and given young Victorians a future armed with vocational employment skills that they can take into the labour market and with which they can find employment.

In the same time, we have seen in Queensland, thankfully at last—not because of any deliberate Government policy—a small increase in the number of apprenticeship commencements. For this year, there will be some 5 888 new apprenticeship commencements.

**Mr Sherrin:** Tell us what it was last year.

**Mr HAMILL:** I will tell the honourable member what it was in 1980, which was the best figure in almost 10 years in this State. At the same time, Queensland has had a significant population increase.

Members of the Government have been sprouting on ad nauseam about the alleged influx of population into this State; yet in that context it has taken eight years to get the number of apprenticeship commencements in this State to approximate the figure of 1980. The figure of 5 888 is significantly below the figure in 1982. We have had, by no credit to this Government, a small arrest of what had been a consistent downturn in apprenticeship training in this State.

I turn briefly to the funding aspect of technical and further education. In the last State Budget, TAFE received a cut, as did the whole education system in this State. Honourable members will have heard me speak on the subject of the \$85m real cut to the school system in Queensland contained in the last Budget. If it had not been for the 19 per cent increase in Commonwealth funding to technical and further education in Queensland for this year, TAFE would also be screaming about the real cuts perpetrated to its budget by the Queensland Government—the same Government that talks about the importance of vocational training and the enhancement of technical and further education in this State.

The Government cannot have it both ways. It cannot be withdrawing funding at the same time as it is claiming that it is going to enhance technical and further education and vocational employment opportunities in this State.

It is about time that the Queensland Government grasped the nettle. A youth policy geared to providing employment and training opportunities for young Queenslanders is long overdue. The Government owes it to the 26 per cent of teenagers in this State who are currently unemployed. This year thousands of young Queenslanders will leave school with no prospect of employment in Queensland. The State Government fiddles Nero-like while their futures go up in smoke. There is a need for a youth policy that addresses the important aspect of vocational training. There is a need for a youth policy which, utilising the Queensland Government's own funds, will ensure that more young Queenslanders have access to technical, further and higher education. Indeed, the Queensland Government has set up a committee, I think under the chairmanship of the member for Mansfield——

**Mr Sherrin:** A very high-powered committee, too.

**Mr HAMILL:** High powered? I suggest that next year no young Queenslanders will obtain a tertiary place thanks to any initiative that comes from the Queensland Government via that committee. That is an indictment——

**Mr Sherrin:** You can't say that.

**Mr HAMILL:** I can say it, and I have said it.

I will be delighted if the member for Mansfield can demonstrate to me that through its own resources the Queensland Government will open up the doors to higher education for more young Queenslanders. I will welcome such an initiative. The Victorian Government has done so. It has put its own dollars into higher education to enhance

opportunities for young Victorians. Let us see the Queensland Government show the same commitment for young Queenslanders.

**Mr Austin:** Let's see the Federal Government have the same commitment.

**Mr HAMILL:** The Federal Government has created 12 200 additional places in higher education in this State while the Queensland Government has created none. For my money, I will go with 12 200 additional places. I note that the Minister for Finance is now retiring hurt from the Chamber.

A youth policy needs to address education needs and vocational and employment needs. In addition, I suggest that a proper youth policy ought to address the social needs, the housing needs and the income support needs of young people who make the decision to go back to college to upgrade their skills to make themselves more competitive in what is a very difficult labour market in this State.

When the Queensland Government addresses those sorts of issues, then maybe Queensland can emulate the position that has been arrived at in other States which, in their own context, have grasped the nettle. The initiative is long overdue.

Honourable members are still waiting for the vision of excellence. As I suggested to another honourable member in the debate this evening, to the young people who are facing unemployment when they leave school this year, the so-called vision of excellence is very much like a mirage. As they advance through the year and come closer to the time when they will enter the labour-force, the vision of excellence seems ever further away. It is a mirage; it is a myth.

Unless the Queensland Government acts decisively upon the sort of report that the Minister for Employment took before Cabinet last year, then the Opposition can have no confidence in the Queensland Government's commitment to vocational training, the public of Queensland can have no confidence in it and the young people of Queensland will continue to feel sold out by this National Party Government.

**Mr FRASER (Springwood) (8.40 p.m.):** I support the Bill. I believe strongly that increasing vocational education and training opportunities for Queenslanders will be crucial to the economic growth of this State. We have seen in Europe, Japan and America how clearly the relationship exists between training and a skilled work-force and the capacity of industry to become more competitive and to capture export opportunities. In Queensland and indeed in the rest of Australia initiatives such as those proposed by the Bill are needed to link the public provision of vocational education and training in a way that suits industry and maximises the opportunity industry has to have an input into the sorts of skill training and skill formation processes that occur.

As the cost of machinery and training becomes more and more expensive, industry input is needed not only in the more practical day-to-day courses, which are needed to run increasingly sophisticated machinery, but also in the general planning and thrust of our policy areas in the areas of joint ventures with TAFE. The thrust of Division 1 of the Bill is to allow the Minister to undertake those types of initiatives through the establishment of the Employment, Vocational Education and Training Corporation.

**Mr Davis:** You got this speech from the Minister.

**Mr FRASER:** Some of it.

All of these areas are very, very important. Australia needs to move to increase quickly its efficiency in industry as well as its public service.

**Mr Davis:** You're reading the Minister's speech.

**Mr FRASER:** They are copious notes.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row):** Order! I point out to the honourable member for Brisbane Central that I would like the honourable member who is on his feet to continue with his speech.

**Mr FRASER:** Technology is developing at such a rapid rate that, unless we have a long-term goal to develop in Australia vocational education and training that can cope, we will simply be left behind. One only has to look at the achievements of Japan, Hong Kong, Korea, Taiwan, and, more recently, Malaysia and Indonesia in those areas.

Consequently, integrating TAFE, which is the deliverer of vocational education, and the Industry and Commerce Training Commission, which administers, accredits and oversees the delivery of vocational education and training in Queensland is an obvious step towards this long-term goal of the Government.

In all those initiatives it must be remembered that financial and personnel resources are limited. No longer can we anticipate greater and greater expenditure or increased staff numbers. We have to rely on a range of innovative and progressive arrangements. Some of those innovative arrangements will need to be joint ventures between TAFE and the private sector in the supply of equipment, the running of courses, etc. Another option would be the formation of skill centres organised jointly with industry. This is considered most important as technology is changing so rapidly now, and it is therefore important that machinery and teaching can be upgraded rapidly in a very flexible manner. Once again, this is allowed for under Divisions 1 and 2 of the proposed Act.

Recently there has been criticism in the press about employment opportunities in Queensland. Clearly the Government does not want to retreat from acknowledging that there are real issues and problems to be dealt with. However, many positive sides need to be considered. I would like to deal with some of the initiatives that are being undertaken.

Each year, about 150 unemployed Queenslanders are assisted to start their own self-employment venture. Research shows that an additional service job is created for each 1.5 ventures so helped. Recently the Minister opened one such venture in my electorate for a couple who manufacture hand-made chocolates for sale to stores in this and other States, thus generating employment and income that otherwise would not have been generated.

**Mr Comben:** Are these Mr Gately's chocolates?

**Mr FRASER:** No, they are not Mr Gately's chocolates; they are Monique's chocolates.

New apprenticeships in the building, horticulture and recreation areas have been introduced. Although full-time opportunities for young people have declined substantially throughout Australia over the last 20 years, apprentice employment has increased. In 1966, apprenticeship employment represented about 12.5 per cent of total full-time youth jobs, whereas it now represents approximately 25 per cent of all full-time job opportunities for young people. In the same period, the intake of tradesmen from overseas has declined substantially. The apprenticeship intake for the 12 months ended February 1988 was 5 888. For the corresponding previous 12-month period the intake was 4 977, which was a substantial increase.

In addition, the Government has, in co-operation with the Commonwealth, introduced the Australian traineeship system, which has started over 2 000 trainees throughout Queensland with 25 per cent of them being in the private sector. This is the highest percentage of trainees in the private sector of any Australian State. The traineeship system is expected to grow rapidly over the next few years and it is anticipated that this will make a positive contribution in dealing with the employment situation. Once again, initiatives in apprenticeships and traineeships remain the Minister's responsibility.

Employment growth in the tertiary sector, especially in tourism, remains an important force in the Queensland economy, with expectations of another record year boosted by Expo 88. In addition to the tremendous domestic and international interest in Expo 88, it is expected that 200 000 delegates will be attending conventions in Brisbane and on the Gold Coast during the six-month period of Expo.

There has been much criticism by some members of the Opposition regarding Queensland's performance in respect of apprenticeships and traineeships. As I have



indicated, apprenticeship intake this year will be substantially up; in fact, some 20 per cent up on what it was a year ago. This intake is above the average of the last 12 years.

Apprenticeship intake fluctuates with economic activity in the community. Consequently, it is wrong to compare the number in training at the height of the resources boom—as Mr Hamill did in his speech—with the number after a few years of reduced intakes.

In Queensland, the number of apprentices in training is also affected by TAFE pre-vocational courses. For the past several years Queensland has been the leading State in full-time pre-vocational training. Graduates who obtain an apprenticeship undertake a 3-year or 3½-year apprenticeship as opposed to the normal 4 years. As a result, over time the number of apprentices in training automatically reduces even if the intake remains the same.

In summary, apprenticeship has, in the main, retained its attractiveness to employers. It meets the economy's needs, it is cost effective and remains attractive to young people.

These facts demonstrate the Government's commitment to address the training and employment needs of young Queenslanders through initiatives such as this Bill. I support it.

**Mr SMITH (Townsville East) (8.48 p.m.):** I too support the Bill. I wish to touch upon a few additional points and perhaps reinforce some that have already been made.

Undoubtedly, there is a shared responsibility between the Federal Government, the State Government, local government and the private sector to achieve maximum employment within the community and to plan for that employment. It is also appropriate that maximum co-operation be achieved by the alignment of both the State and Federal departments, as occurred recently.

The fact that the Queensland department has now separated from its parent Education Department has some merit. However, I have some concern about that. It is time to examine projected outcomes—where the department is heading—and to consider what has been achieved in recent years.

In terms of the separation, since 1983 it has certainly been the policy on this side of the House to give more autonomy to TAFE. In 1983 a separate directorate was proposed. That proposal was advanced further down the line to 1986. The action that this Government has taken does not contrast markedly to what the Opposition has advocated.

It is certainly appropriate that training should reflect the community's requirements. However, the problem there is that at any given point that could lead to a certain narrowness. The counter, of course, is that at present TAFE graduates are seen in the community as being more quickly absorbed into the work-force and therefore employers see them as a proportionately better investment than people who are coming out of other tertiary sectors.

I said that I had some concerns about the move to the new department. My concern is that to some extent it may impinge on what has been seen in recent years as a need for broadness in education. That broadness can be achieved only if there is some flexibility. What can happen is that too quick a response can be made to a particular situation. I am very well aware that at present TAFE is attracting credit to itself and the community is demanding that the training ought to be more relevant. However, the view of the tactician has to be compared with that of the strategist. The tactician is answering the criticism of the moment and he is looking to try to meet that expectation that might occur over the next few years, whereas the strategist, the person who is looking at the future of the country, tries to look further than that and would, I believe, try to have appropriate training in place for the sorts of things that might happen. In other words, I am suggesting that, as well as providing the training that is needed immediately, institutions need to take some lead and need to perhaps project to the future. It may even be necessary for the departments to be looking at training for

industries that do not presently exist and that are not even presently known in industry in general in Australia. As educationalists—and I think educationalists must remain within that department—they have to lead.

It seems to me that in every situation I have looked at it has been the case of the dog chasing its tail and never quite catching up. Because of that I think there is a great need for men of vision within the department to see where it is heading. That means that at times the Minister may have to bear criticism of what the department is doing at a particular time. Frankly, that will need courage in Government.

I echo the comments that a previous speaker made about the Minister's pronouncements. I have had little room to fault them but unfortunately, in terms of the Government's actions, the Government has not always followed through. That can only suggest that the Government is perhaps not giving the overall commitment or level of support to the TAFE concept which it ought to.

I would also like to touch on the fact that some colleges certainly do better than others. A previous speaker, Mr Sherrin, mentioned Mr Reedman of Bundaberg. I agree with his remarks. I think he is a very capable man and he has done much to put the TAFE college on the map in Bundaberg. It is certainly a very well known institution in that area. As the Minister knows, I take a very keen interest in TAFE and in the fact that in my own area I had what I thought was the biggest TAFE college in Queensland. However, recently the director told me that it is now the third largest, which is an indication of the rate of growth of TAFE.

**Mr Lester:** We have a good man in Townsville, too.

**Mr SMITH:** I am pleased that the Minister recognises that. I certainly support him at every opportunity.

Even if that college is not the largest in Queensland in terms of numbers, I do believe that it represents the largest single commitment of the Federal Government in recent times with respect to a capital project. It is quite a landmark.

In his introductory speech the Minister spoke of a philosophy on the close relationship—I must admit that I found that term a bit fascinating—between vocational education and training. I point out that industry, in its own interest, makes available its people to ensure the appropriateness of training.

Some years ago in South Australia I had the opportunity of looking at such a scheme and I was quite impressed by the fact that industry supported TAFE to a large extent. In some instances industry supported the machines that went into TAFE and in some instances it even undertook specialised work.

Unless lecturers, be they in universities, in colleges of advanced education or in TAFE are very conscientious, there is a risk that they may fall behind in the approach they take to training, especially if the Government does not provide opportunities for them to upgrade and update their skills. The Government can make the situation worse by allowing equipment to become outdated. Tonight I wish to refer to an example that is contained in *Hansard*. The example I wish to cite does not reflect on the Minister because the question was directed to the former Minister for Education, but the Minister has inherited the problem. In 1986, the member for Lytton asked the following question—

“(1) Why did the Education Department purchase 1 400 personal computers for over \$2,000 each when local manufacturers have an equivalent item for under \$1,000 . . . ?”

Because I know a little bit about the subject, I wish to take this issue a step further. In 1967 the first computer I worked with was one I wheeled around on a trolley. It was actually a programmable calculator. By the time I left the industry, each and every one of my staff had a calculator on his desk that was approximately the size of a couple of matchboxes but with approximately 10 times the capacity of the machine that I had in 1967. That example illustrates the improvements that have taken place in technology.

The point I make is that the type of equipment mentioned in 1986 went into the TAFE colleges and, indeed, into all the schools. At that time, I pointed out to Mr Ahern that I thought that that action was inappropriate. The fact was that the Sperry computers were not made in Australia but were imported. Sperry was not interested in that level of equipment. The Minister for Finance, who is presently in the Chamber, might be interested in following up this information because I can assure him that it is correct and that I know what I am talking about.

The mother boards from the Sperry organisation that are now needed to upgrade the equipment, to enable it to accommodate some of the present usage of technology, cost \$2,500 each whereas the equivalent equipment is available through IBM clone organisations for approximately \$150. The price difference is not a bad sort of mark up. Not only did Sperry do pretty well in the first instance but it will also receive a pretty good profit currently. However, that is not what I am concerned about. I am concerned that the Government will not be prepared to spend \$2,500 to upgrade those personal computers. If that kind of attitude continues, at some time in the future education will fall behind. That is a problem that those who are interested in education and training ought to look at.

Unemployment is one of the social evils of our times. The Opposition's Education spokesman mentioned unemployment, especially as it related to youth. However, it is no less a problem for a person in his thirties or forties or, indeed, for the unfortunate person who is over fifty and becomes unemployed. That may happen to some honourable members of this Parliament.

**Mr McElligott:** Especially on the Government side.

**Mr SMITH:** That is pretty right. Unless a person in his fifties has a remarkable level of skill, it is likely that he will be virtually unemployable if he loses his job.

The Opposition's Education spokesman also quoted the March figure for young unemployed people as being 27.9 per cent. That represents an increase of 20 per cent in a year. In practical terms, that figure means that approximately one young person in three is out of work.

I wish to cite an example from the 1986 statistical return. In Bundaberg, which was mentioned by a previous speaker, the unemployment level in 1984 was 25.3 per cent. That percentage represents 872 young people out of a total potential work-force of 3 438. In real terms, that figure of 872 has probably risen now to 1 000, which is a pretty serious problem. Other examples contained in the return indicate that unemployment levels are much the same in other areas. The examples are there for anyone who is interested.

This Government has been in power for more than 30 years. I was surprised when the Premier, Mr Ahern—who was once a Minister for Industry and Technology—undertook as one of his first tasks a trip to the United States to try to find out what could be done about unemployment. My understanding was that all along this Government had been arguing that policies and strategies had been put in place. I think that the Premier's trip to the United States was a very frank admission that there was nothing in place. Although I do not for one moment doubt the Premier's goodwill, I point out that the 100 days that people refer to have passed, but that there is no sign of any great initiative being taken since the delegation returned. I think I might have to wait a long time for it.

The real problem, which has already been touched on in this debate, is that Australia has failed to develop an adequate industrial base. At the present time tourism is all the go and it may be all the go for the next 20 years. I hope that it is, because presently on this side of the House I have responsibility for tourism. I have never argued any other way. I have always said that the real strength of the economy of any State or country is based on its industrial capacity, and tourism, for all that it is worth, can really be considered only as the icing on the cake. The real wealth of the community will come from processing, manufacturing, refining, etc. A previous speaker quoted the examples

of Japan, Singapore and Korea. Other nations, with very little in the way of natural resources, but through a good industrial base and by adopting an educated, enlightened program towards technology and training, have managed to achieve a great level of wealth.

I have already quoted from this document. It gives an insight into what an industrial base means in the Queensland community. For instance, this document talks about the median income of Queenslanders in the various local authority areas throughout Queensland. Most honourable members would understand the significant difference between median and average incomes. Median incomes are very meaningful figures to work with, and I will quote a few. In Mount Isa, which is a mining and industrial area, the median income was \$13,186. In Gladstone, which has another good industrial base, the median income was \$10,060. Honourable members must remember that this figure includes the income of wives and children. I am not suggesting that this is the net income, but the relativity is important. In Brisbane the figure was \$9,781 and in Townsville it was \$9,631. It goes on down the scale to Rockhampton, which is a little less. However, the real crunch comes when one looks at some of the places which do not have an industrial base and where the people are absolutely dependent upon their primary products. In Murgon the figure is \$6,900, which is approximately \$3,000 less than the figure in Brisbane. The figure for Gympie is \$6,600, and this House heard the honourable member for Gympie speak a moment ago.

**Mr Stephan:** That was good, wasn't it?

**Mr SMITH:** It is well known. This figure represents the median income, which is \$3,000 less than the figure in Brisbane.

**Mr McElligott:** Very poor representation.

**Mr SMITH:** I am not reflecting on the honourable member's representation; I am simply trying to get the message across that no matter how good things may be in the primary production area, the real wealth of the community will be achieved only when that community has a strong industrial manufacturing or secondary base. It is an ongoing thing. All the best primary industries in the world, including wool and sugar, have peaks and troughs, and unfortunately there are more troughs than peaks. Outside of the lucky few who hold all the land, it would be true to say that people in a large section of the community in country areas are probably as poor as church mice. That is not an exaggeration.

A wealthy industry-based country will always be able to afford to buy all it needs from the exploited countries which supply the primary products. That has been seen over and over again, and the alarming thing is that this is increasingly the case. The industrialised countries of this world are doing better and countries such as Australia, which have been over dependent on primary production, are going backwards. This is a result of the long period of Liberal Government in Canberra under the Menzies' regime when Australia's industries were allowed to decline without any intervention. If anyone wanted to give the present Federal Government credit, it would have to be in respect of its attempt to restructure industry in this country. I certainly believe that the Queensland Government has failed its people, particularly its young people.

One of the stark contrasts I have found is that, while other Ministers have continually bucketed the Federal Government—this Minister has not done so much of that—at the professional level there has been very good co-operation between the Queensland and Federal departments. I concur with the figure that was given before that the highest level of traineeships in Australia in the private area has occurred in Queensland. I do not walk away from that.

I guess the Federal Government can stick up for itself, but what I find a little bit galling is that the Queensland Government has taken the Federal Government for a ride. All through the departments people have been employed under PEP and other people have been employed through subsidies provided at Commonwealth expense to

do all sorts of work for the Queensland Government. In fact, most of the mapping program for the former Department of Mapping and Surveying was carried out by people brought in under that sort of a scheme. I do not know whether that should be seen as the Queensland Government being terribly dishonest or the Federal Government being terribly naive. I would have thought that the Queensland Government had more of an obligation to put in the subsidy itself to create the employment and not seize upon the opportunity to rip it off the Federal Government and perhaps not do much itself.

Before someone was speaking, quite correctly, about apprenticeships. There is no doubt that the level of apprenticeships has declined. I will hark back to those traineeships. I am not certain that I go along with the fact that 75 per cent of traineeships occur within the Government and semi-Government sectors. I would like to see it the other way round, with 75 per cent in the private sector and 25 per cent in the Government and semi-Government sectors. I guess that is something for the Federal and State Governments to sort out, but it seems to me to run counter to the original intent of that scheme.

Comments have already been made about the level of commitment to TAFE. They were very relevant comments. I cannot recall the figures used by a previous speaker, but figures used in a very authoritative debate in 1986 show an extremely low participation rate in higher education in Queensland, which had 81 per 1 000 compared with 113 per 1 000 for Australia. I know that arguments can be advanced about the numbers in university and all the rest of it, but the fact is that, in technical and further education, Queensland had 50 per 1 000 compared with the Australian figure of 79 per 1 000. That really does not gel with an overall commitment to TAFE. I suggest that the Government has paid only a certain amount of lip-service to TAFE.

I will quote some particular examples because I think they are important and ought to be given an airing. The TAFE sector has employed a lot of skilled people on a part-time basis. I certainly go along with that. I have said before that I believe it is necessary to keep those sorts of people in the system because they are working in industry and in the field and they probably have a more up-to-date knowledge and awareness of the state of the art, if I can use that term. However, the enthusiasm of those people can be severely dented when, particularly at the end of the financial year, they are not paid for months. People who are being paid now may not see a further pay cheque until the beginning of the new financial year. There is no good saying that this does not go on, because it has gone on for the last five years. What the Government is doing is dragging the chain, so to speak, and down the track someone has to suffer. When the Estimates are done for the next year, the fact that people have to be paid for the previous financial year has to be taken into account. That reduces the amount of money available for courses. Another member has already mentioned this. I am not saying that there actually has been a cut in the number of courses, but there were cuts in student numbers within the courses. I have done a fair bit of study on this. With the reduction of numbers, a tremendous number of people who want to enter the TAFE area are not able to do so.

As well as being concerned for the young people, I am very concerned for those a little older, particularly those in their twenties. Some of them may be quite bright, and may have skipped school early, and suddenly realised that they have the capacity to make a better future for themselves. They try to enter TAFE to upgrade their skills. However, that is a difficult thing to do, because the courses are only run in the major centres. Unless they get in quickly, they miss out because of the restriction on student numbers.

There are all sorts of inhibiting factors which do not allow people who have the skills to get into TAFE and generally equip themselves to proceed to the next stage. Because those people are not school-leavers, it is difficult to obtain statistics and it is hard to identify them. Members who move around their electorates and listen to the problems would be aware that what I am talking about is correct. I am sure that on both sides of the House there would be general agreement that the problem exists.

Another point was made on the fact that the State has to pick up 80 per cent of the recurrent funding. So it ought to. More ought to be made of the tremendous input that the Federal Government has made in recent years to TAFE. In Queensland TAFE has done remarkably well out of the Federal Government in terms of putting the wherewithal in place. It has probably done better than most other States. When I hear Ministers bucketing the Federal Government about those matters, I find it very galling. There is not much point in erecting a large building and then not staffing it properly and not funding the courses, or having equipment which is not state of the art.

I will close shortly, but I leave the Minister with one thought. I assure him that it is from someone who knows something about the matter. The big problem in technical education is that the technical education invariably lags behind the particular industry.

Over the years, I have been on electricity industry training panels and I can say with a fair bit of authority that that has gone on and on. A person completes a course and believes that he is right up with the state-of-the-art techniques. Unless that person is lucky enough to get a placement in an industry that is using the latest technology, that qualification tends to be quite useless. It applies in many fields, but in the technical area it is highly dangerous. Once a person leaves an industry—it can cover a whole range of industries—he finds that, unless he has had the opportunity to continually upgrade himself, within two or three years he is virtually unemployable at the level at which he may have been employed previously in that industry. That would apply to someone like me. If I had to return to the electrical industry, there is no way in the world that I would have the skills to go back to the type of job that I occupied. Therefore the Government has a tremendous obligation to ensure that the training equipment is modern so that people can be trained on a state-of-the-art basis. It has a great responsibility to ensure that the teachers have the opportunity to upgrade themselves and are in a position to present to students what the real state of the art is. That is something that is very easily concealed. Any honest analysis of the TAFE system at present would, unfortunately, show that many people in positions of responsibility are well and truly behind the eight ball as far as their actual needs in the industry today are concerned, and that is generally not the fault of the individual.

**Mr HINTON (Broadsound) (9.14 p.m.):** It gives me great pleasure to support the Bill. I do so because technical education courses are vital to the relief of unemployment and the improvement of employment opportunities in Queensland, in particular central Queensland.

I am the product of a technical course, being a graduate of an agricultural college. I have a Diploma of Agriculture. So I have had personal experience in this matter. My course has certainly stood me in good stead over the years, and I know that such courses stand people in good stead, particularly in regard to obtaining employment. And that is what this new department is all about—getting jobs.

I welcome the opportunity to support the Employment, Vocational Education and Training Bill. Although largely administrative in its content and structure, the Bill is certainly positive proof of the Government's commitment to promoting employment and employment-oriented education and training in this State. It is also proof of the Government's commitment to working closely with all sections of industry.

That is what I particularly like about the Bill. It integrates all sections of industry, trade unions and Government to ensure that the vocational education and training opportunities provided in this State are industry relevant and industry endorsed.

For that reason, I was somewhat disappointed to hear some of the comments made by the member for Ipswich. He said that the Government was not taking initiatives in regard to unemployment. I point out that that is just what this Bill is all about—taking initiatives in regard to employment. In particular, the Bill will ensure that technical education does relate to industry, that it is integrated with industry and that it is advised by industry. That is what this Bill is all about.

I was quite horrified to hear the member for Ipswich say that he wanted to isolate technical education from industry. He wants to go back to the old system rather than take it out of the educational field and tie it to industry, which is supported by all industry.

**Mr Sherrin:** He is out of step with all of his Labor colleagues in the other States, the Federal Government and industry.

**Mr HINTON:** I was very pleased to hear that he was totally out of step with the member for Townsville East, who followed him, and who said that he supports the concept of tying technical education to industry. As the member for Mansfield said, the honourable member for Ipswich was quite out of step with most of the previous speakers and certainly with everyone in industry who has advised the Government. The Government has consulted industry at great length to ensure that this Bill is just what industry wants. I commend the Minister for that. The member for Ipswich is certainly very much out of step in that regard.

**Mr Sherrin:** He is the Neanderthal of the Queensland ALP.

**Mr HINTON:** What a strange word. I thank the honourable member.

The Government is so deeply committed to achieving its objective in regard to technical education that it has established a free-standing Department of Employment, Vocational Education and Training to administer these vital activities. Of course, the Government is deeply committed to combating unemployment. That is a major objective of the Minister's parliamentary committee, of which I am very proud and pleased to be a part.

It has been recognised that there are structural problems of unemployment in this State, just as there are the same problems throughout Australia. In my own electorate, which takes in the Capricorn Coast, there is a 10 per cent unemployment problem. When I go amongst those people I find that most of them are involved in the building industry. That unemployment, of course, is being caused by the slump in the building industry that has occurred during the period of the Hawke Government when there were excessive interest rates which reduced the building industry in Queensland virtually to tatters. That is why so many people are out of work in my electorate.

I am pleased that the honourable member for Bowen is in the Chamber. He will know that what I am saying is correct. In the mining towns there is a tremendous problem with youth unemployment. The apprenticeships are not available in the mining industry because of the financial difficulties that it faces and there are not the alternative opportunities for young people. It is very, very important that the Government provide the training, the tertiary education opportunities for these people to get an education and training in areas other than the particular industry in which their families are employed. The TAFE college at Rockhampton does a very good job in that regard.

From the Minister's second-reading speech I noted that the Bill is to be followed by more expansive legislation. Of course, a feature of that will be the constitution of a Queensland Employment, Vocational Education and Training Board. The board will comprise people from across the spectrum of industry. It will be most useful in keeping Queensland's educational requirements lined up with the needs of industry. The Minister should be congratulated on having moved, in advance of that legislation, to establish an interim board, as a ministerial advisory committee, to ensure from the outset that he and, through him, his new department receive the best possible advice on the vocational education and training needs in this State.

I understand that the interim board is tripartite, with its members being drawn from industry, trade unions and Government. Unlike the member for Ipswich, members of the Opposition should not be reticent in their support for the Minister's initiative, as he has even provided a place on this particular board for a nominee of the Employment, Education and Training Minister in the Hawke Government. In other words, we have recognised the need to have all tiers of Government involved in the expertise that is

provided to those boards, including the Federal Government, as we recognise from where the funds—or, to a very large extent and so often, the lack of funds—come.

I note with immense satisfaction that the Bill devotes an entire clause to specifying the functions of the Minister under the proposed Act. The Bill specifies functions such as—

“(a) to promote the creation of employment opportunities within the State”—  
certainly the Government is doing that—

“(b) to work in co-operation with other Government bodies and industry”——

**Mr Vaughan:** What! You are closing down businesses.

**Mr HINTON:** I would like to refer the honourable member to some of the statements made in the House tonight by the member for Ipswich. He said that the number of apprenticeships was falling. I was very pleased to hear the figures quoted by the member for Springwood. They show that in the 12 months ended February the number of apprenticeships had increased from 4 977 to 5 888, which represents an increase of 20 per cent in the last 12 months. That is what the honourable member on the opposite side of the Chamber said was a fraud. In fact, of the total full-time jobs created——

**Mr Vaughan:** How many in the building trade?

**Mr HINTON:** I have told the honourable member where the problem in the building trade lies. The situation is improving now because interest rates are falling in this country. The high interest rates of the Hawke Government have been the problem for the building industry. If the honourable member does not know that, he should not be in this House. As far as apprenticeships are concerned—in 1966 only 12.5 per cent of full-time jobs created were filled by apprentices, whereas today the figure is 25 per cent or double the 1966 figure. That gives honourable members some idea of the impact of tertiary education in this State under the influence of the Queensland Government. The Queensland Government has a lot to be proud of in that particular area.

To return to the areas of the Bill with which I was dealing before I was so rudely distracted by the honourable member on the other side of the Chamber—the department will work in co-operation with other Government bodies and industry, commerce and community groups and persons on matters relating to employment, vocational education and training; and will develop, provide and promote the development and provision by others of vocational education and training programs with a view to meeting the State's need for a highly skilled and adaptable work-force. The Government is certainly doing that.

I think that there is no better example of the TAFE colleges than the one in Rockhampton. I was very pleased to visit that college with the Minister, to look at its facilities, to have discussions with the staff and to meet the advisory board that advises the staff in that particular area. Tonight I was pleased to hear the member for Mansfield say that those people have an entrepreneurial flair. I certainly found that the people at the institution at Rockhampton had considerable entrepreneurial flair, considerable understanding of the needs of industry and the capacity to impart to the people at that college those particular skills.

**Mr Lester:** They have got courses in the Yeppoon/Emu Park area.

**Mr HINTON:** Yes, and they will have a lot more. They have wide-ranging courses in technical skills. Many of them are geared to the tourist industry, which is a growth industry in central Queensland. They are concentrating on the culinary arts, tourism and hospitality.

I am pleased that the Minister mentioned the Capricorn Coast. A very urgent need exists for a fine arts course on the Capricorn Coast. The establishment of a new fine arts centre that would house such a course would be of great assistance to the Capricorn Coast and would endear the Minister to the residents of that area.



The Capricorn Coast has a very large retired population. Personal enhancement courses do much to assist retired people to occupy themselves constructively and to find great interest in their retirement years. This Government will be striving for the establishment of a fine arts course, and I am pleased to note the Minister's enthusiasm for that particular concept.

The new board demonstrates in the clearest possible way the intention of the legislation and the charter to be accepted by the Minister, with vital support from his department. By specifying the Minister's functions in that way, the Bill emphasises also the important role that the private sector has played already—and must continue to play—in determining and meeting the vocational, educational and training needs of the State.

As I said, when I visited the college in Rockhampton with the Minister and met the people on the board, I discovered that they had a wide range of skills. One of the board's members is the Mayor of Rockhampton, who has many local government skills. I take my hat off to him, because he is doing quite a good job in Rockhampton.

**Mr Beard:** Is he a Labor Mayor?

**Mr HINTON:** I do not mind saying that he is a Labor Mayor, who is doing a good job in Rockhampton.

The people from private industry who give their time to the board are doing a good job with that college. This Government cannot and should not seek to be the sole provider of these services. The role of Government should in many instances be to encourage and facilitate the provision of vocational education and training opportunities in the private sector. After all, the private sector provides the main employment opportunities for the people of Queensland. It also contains the great majority of resources and expertise that are needed for effective vocational education and training.

Statements in the clauses dealing with the Minister's functions, such as "work in co-operation with", "promote the development and provision by others" and "provide encouragement and opportunities for" are clear examples of this Government's recognition of the vital role that the private sector providers of vocational education and training have to play.

In the period since this Bill was introduced, I have taken the opportunity to discuss its implications with business people in my own electorate of Broomsound. I have already mentioned the particular needs of that electorate and Rockhampton, which is the major service centre for central Queensland. The support for this Government's initiative in establishing the new Department of Employment, Vocational Education and Training and the introduction of legislation aimed specifically at enhancing employment, vocational education and training opportunities in this State was unanimous.

I congratulate the Minister on his role in bringing this initiative to fruition. It is certainly driving at the problem of unemployment in Queensland. That is what we are all about. The Government is to be commended on the introduction of this legislation.

**Mr CAMPBELL (Bundaberg) (9.30 p.m.):** I have much pleasure in joining in this debate tonight because this legislation provides for what is probably the greatest change to have occurred in the field of TAFE and vocational education in Queensland in decades. I also thank the honourable members for Townsville East and Mansfield for the kind comments that they made about the Bundaberg College of TAFE. I, too, wish to acknowledge not only its dynamic principal but also the great community aspect of the Bundaberg TAFE college.

**Mr Lester:** It goes well.

**Mr CAMPBELL:** I thank the Minister very much. I know that the community is very proud of that college.

However, I do have one concern about the college. I will refer to some statistics, which, I inform the Minister, will be the only ones that I will use tonight. I would like

to refer to what I said in this House on 25 August last year when the Industry and Commerce Training Act Amendment Bill was being debated. I spoke about the alarming reduction in apprentice numbers and I said—

“This grim situation—it is a crisis situation—is reflected in the training programs provided at the Bundaberg College of TAFE. In 1983 in the building, electrical and metal trades, Bundaberg TAFE conducted a total of 30 courses for block release apprentices. There were four in carpentry and joinery, seven in boiler-making, six in fitting and machining, five in motor mechanics, three in plumbing and five in electrical. In 1983, 382 apprentices underwent training in those courses at the Bundaberg TAFE.”

Last year—1987—only 64 apprentices underwent training in block release at the Bundaberg College of TAFE. It is a shame that that has occurred to such a great college, and one that has been acknowledged as such. It is a shame that the number of apprentices undergoing training has dropped by such a massive amount. This Bill is very important. The situation that I have just outlined has to be changed. It has to be ensured that apprentices undertake training in those trades.

I would like to reflect on the Bill itself. Because the Minister has such a grave and great responsibility, he has to ensure that funding is available for vocational education. At present, Government spending on TAFE in Queensland is running at only two-thirds of the Australian average. Regardless of whether TAFE comes under the Education Department or the new Department of Employment, Vocational Education and Training, it will not succeed if it does not receive the proper resources. Firstly, it must be ensured that the right funding priorities are given to this new department.

My second concern directly related to the Bill is the TAFE/Education Department relationship that will be needed now that senior colleges, TAFE colleges and rural training colleges are outside the Education Department and in the new Department of Employment, Vocational Education and Training. It is very important that a close relationship be maintained. I am concerned about that because I do not think that that relationship will exist on the interim board.

**Mr Lester:** We do have a representative of their choice at the Education Department and we have worked terribly, terribly closely with Education. I believe that we are going together well.

**Mr CAMPBELL:** The only thing is that of the board members that I see on the interim Queensland Employment Vocational Education and Training Board there is not one person representing the Education Department. The board consists of people from the manufacturing field, the unions and the Minister's department, but no-one from the Education Department. I might be wrong, but I would like to ensure that one Education Department representative is on the board.

**Mr Lester:** There is a nominee of the Minister for Education. His name is Mr Young. He is from the CAE in Rockhampton.

**Mr CAMPBELL:** Mr Young is the deputy director of the Capricornia Institute of Advanced Education. He is not within the Education Department. I believe that someone within the Education Department, directly related to secondary schools, should be on the board. The Minister will be looking after senior colleges that teach Years 11 and 12. That is an aspect of secondary education. I make the point that one representative directly from secondary education, if that is required, should be on that interim board to maintain a proper relationship. I make that point.

I wish to mention my concern that senior colleges should maintain a close relationship with secondary boards because, although students will receive their TE scores under a system administered by the Education Department, in reality the control of those colleges will be under the Minister's department. I believe that those problems have to be ironed out to ensure that a practical working relationship exists.

Another aspect of this legislation comes down to the power of the Minister to be a member of corporations and a corporation sole. I wonder whether TAFE colleges will be able to undertake applied research and joint ventures in developing and commercialising that research in much the same way as the University of Queensland and the Queensland Institute of Technology are able to. The University of Queensland has UniQuest, and for the QIT, Q-Search is also available. I wonder whether similar organisations will be associated with TAFE colleges. If they are able to be developed within TAFE colleges, will they be developed on an individual college basis or will all the colleges be lumped together?

My view is that it would be better to keep joint ventures in commercialising and developing research and technology within the individual colleges. If that were to occur, I believe that the Bundaberg TAFE college could really go ahead by engaging in joint ventures with local industry to undertake a great deal of good research and development. I hope that provision has been made for that kind of arrangement in this legislation.

I believe that I have expressed the major concerns I have about the Bill. In conclusion, I express the hope that this legislation is a success because the livelihood and future of Queensland's young people rely heavily on the provisions of the Bill that will be passed by Parliament tonight. I hope that the legislation is a success.

**Hon. Sir WILLIAM KNOX** (Nundah) (9.37 p.m.): The Liberal Party supports the legislation and agrees that the move to transfer vocational training from the Department of Education to the Department of Employment, Vocational Education and Training is a worthy step to take. It is a move that has been advocated by industry and by trade unions for many years. I am pleased that legislation of this type is to be enacted. I am surprised, however, to hear the different views taken by members of the Australian Labor Party. Whereas one member of the Opposition rises to oppose the legislation, other members have spoken in support of the Bill.

Approximately 167 000 students in colleges will come under the control of the Department of Employment, Vocational Education and Training. The new arrangement will also control approximately 2 500 teachers, 1 450 different courses and 26 TAFE colleges. Altogether, 53 institutions and affiliated centres will be involved. Among those institutions and training centres are four rural training schools. Vocational education and training is an extremely vast area of education which will now be happily married with industry and commerce. Employer organisations and trade unions support it.

There may be people in the education field who believe that this kind of education and training should come under the control of the Department of Education. On previous occasions I have stressed that not all education in the community belongs to the Department of Education. The idea is absurd that wherever the word "education" appears it means that the function it relates to automatically should come under the control of the Department of Education. Quite a number of training organisations, both private and public, have very little to do with the Department of Education. I remember that not so long ago the department was known as the Department of Public Instruction, which concerned itself with the basics of education. However, by virtue of this legislation, honourable members are dealing with training and educating people to apply their talents to become skilled in special areas. As I mentioned previously, there are many specialised areas and training is provided by 1 450 courses, some of which are duplicated in different parts of the State. All these courses are oriented towards the special needs of the community and the special aspirations of the students, who, for various reasons, range in age from quite young to quite mature students.

The Liberal Party also supports the creation of the new department, which will be headed by Mr Barry Read as its chief executive. I am delighted that this is the case and I congratulate Mr Read on his appointment. He is a very competent and worthy officer and he now holds the responsibility for this new department.

TAFE is a very large part of the training of Queensland's community and at any one time 167 000 students are involved in it. It is interesting to note that the majority

of those students are females. There are 87 000 female students and 80 000 male students. It is interesting to see that the vast majority of teachers in TAFE are males. No doubt more female teachers will appear in due course. In case the Minister does not know, the colleges which he is taking over pay approximately \$5m a year in pay-roll tax to the Treasury. It is about time that the Minister saw this payment abolished, because the TAFE colleges get the money to pay the pay-roll tax from the Treasury itself. This is merely a recycling of the money and the cost of administration of the payment of pay-roll tax by this department could easily be of the order of half a million dollars a year. If the Minister could save himself the administration costs involved in looking after pay-roll tax, as well as having it abolished for TAFE colleges, he would be rendering a great service.

**Mr Davis** interjected.

**Sir WILLIAM KNOX:** We are well on the way, but that has been stopped. What I started as Treasurer in 1976 concerning pay-roll tax has now been stopped. There were no benefits extended in pay-roll tax during this financial year over and above those that existed before. The great reforms of pay-roll tax in this State have come to a dead halt.

As I mentioned earlier, the advantages of this move are to marry industry and commerce objectives with the aspirations of students and effect a close liaison between industry and commerce and the suppliers of training in this area. I am referring not only to apprentices but also to trainees and a host of people who undertake special courses for special purposes. This legislation also homes in on very special needs, because Australia lags behind North America and the Western World generally. Currently the whole of Australia lags behind Japan and several other Asian countries in technical education. Australia is a long way behind these countries in its level of participation in technical education, and Queensland is no exception to the general position. There will be an opportunity to bring together all those objectives under one umbrella and the dichotomy that existed with the Education Department, which lives in a purist education world as distinct from the requirements of industry and commerce, will cease.

This is a wonderful opportunity for the Minister to reduce youth unemployment in this State. There is no reason why Australia should adopt northern hemisphere practices and graduate its students from technical education at the worst time of the year in which to seek employment. The United States of America has broken away from European and English traditions when it comes to graduating its students into the work-force. Students in the United States of America do not go out into the labour market during the traditional times which still exist in Europe and the United Kingdom. Yet we have slavishly adopted in this country the practices of the northern hemisphere.

It is time that this was changed so that people who do qualify have their qualifying examinations and know the results of those examinations well before the end of the calendar year, so that they can enter the work-force at a time when there is the optimum demand for their services instead of doing so in December, January and February, which is the worst time of the year in Australia generally, and especially the worst time of the year in Queensland, which at that time has high seasonal unemployment.

So I say to the Minister: please reorganise the syllabuses, the terms and all the things that go on in the training and the service of these programs so that students can graduate, know the results and go into the work-force at the right time of the year. That would reduce considerably the level of youth unemployment in our community.

Further, as has already been mentioned, there is the opportunity for technical research. I would hope that in the reorganisation of the department a body will be set up to look after technical research so that all TAFE institutions and their associated bodies can work together in supplying the brain power, the intelligence and the resources to provide that research, which, of itself, can make a contribution to our community and maybe the world.

Those are the advantages, and there are plenty more that I could list. This legislation deals only with part of the reorganisation of the department. More is yet to come in further legislation. The Bill before the House deals specifically with the powers and functions of the Minister. Obviously there is some urgency that this should be attended to in order that administrative arrangements and commitments can be made for the future.

I want to make it quite clear that the Liberal Party does not support the Minister's having the title of corporation sole. That is what this piece of legislation is all about: the establishment of the Minister as a corporation sole, which is an imitation of the Education Act, which provides for the Minister for Education to be a corporation sole.

There is no particular virtue in having the Minister as the corporation sole. In fact, there is a disadvantage in that, because, to begin with, the Minister is not an accountable officer. For some time now it has been the practice in this State that, where legislation provides for a Minister to be the corporation sole, that position be abolished and the permanent head made the corporation sole. That is so for the Commissioner for Railways, the Commissioner of Main Roads, the individual administrators of hospitals, the Harbours Corporation of Queensland—that used to be the Treasurer of Queensland as corporation sole—the Co-ordinator General, the Electricity Commissioner and the Commissioner of Water Resources. All of these people have been designated as a corporation sole.

The only Ministers who now exist as a corporation sole—I presume that, as has been done in other cases, these will be repealed in the course of time—are the Minister for Industry, the Minister for Education—it is an anachronism to have him as a corporation sole—and the Minister for Racing only in regard to the racing development corporation. None of those Ministers is an accountable officer, yet their under secretaries and permanent heads are accountable officers.

It is strange indeed to have a Minister as a corporation sole when he is not the accountable officer and the accountable officer is a person who is subject to the Minister's policy control. So it is dangerous to extend the list of Ministers who are a corporation sole. It is very much in the interests of checks and balances that the permanent head, the accountable officer, should be the corporation sole. The Liberal Party will be recommending an amendment to the legislation along those lines and in accord with Government policy of recent years of abolishing Ministers as a corporation sole and making sure that the permanent heads, the accountable officers, hold such positions.

There is good reason for the Minister or an officer to be the corporation sole. However, believe it or not, the Works Minister is not a corporation sole, yet of all Ministers he has the greatest amount of work to do on behalf of client departments and he exercises control over work worth tens of millions of dollars. Believe it or not, the permanent head of the Works Department is not a corporation sole, so every decision made by the Works Department has to go to the Governor in Council. Every Minister, by virtue of his office as a member of Executive Council, is an agent of the corporation of the State. Subject to the Governor in Council's approval, every Minister has the opportunity to enter into contracts and to make decisions as if he were a corporation sole. So there is no need for legislation to specifically make a Minister a corporation sole. I can only assume that in this legislation the Government has merely copied the provisions of the Education Act and transferred the powers to the new Minister. Nothing will be lost and much will be gained by having the permanent head as a corporation sole.

It is important that such a person should also be the accountable officer, which puts the Minister at arm's length to the operations of the head of his department in regard to these matters. The checks and balances are there. The Financial Administration and Audit Act clearly sets out the responsibilities of the accountable officer. All corporations, including ones in which the Minister exists as corporation sole, are subject to accountability to the permanent head or the person nominated by the Treasurer as the accountable officer. The legislation creates the situation in which the Minister is appointed as

corporation sole and yet he is accountable to his permanent head. That is a ridiculous situation.

The Minster may not accept the amendment that will be moved, but I suggest that he re-examine it on a future occasion. They are the suggestions that I make. The Liberal Party proposes to move an amendment to the legislation.

**Mr De LACY (Cairns) (9.53 p.m.):** Firstly, I place on record my appreciation and the appreciation of the people of Cairns of the role played by the Cairns College of TAFE. It is a significant institution in Cairns and in north Queensland. It is a large institution. I understand that approximately 160 teachers work there. Many thousands of students attend the college.

The school of further education has been an outstanding success in training people in many life skills and many career-oriented topics. Further education is self-funding, in the sense that the students in the classes pay a sufficient fee to cover the cost of employing the instructors. This year, they pay more, in that they have to make a contribution to the class rooms and the facilities that are provided at the TAFE college. At the beginning of this year, that resulted in my office receiving a number of telephone calls from people complaining about the large increase in fees at the TAFE college. The fees increased by between 30 and 50 per cent.

In these days when funding is becoming tighter and tighter all the time, I suppose I can see some justification for those fees. However, these students who are launching themselves on paths of self-improvement have always been paying for the cost of their teachers. To insist that they also share in the cost of providing facilities and to lumber them with such large increases in a single year could be unfair.

I know that many people are not happy about it. If, for instance, a Federal Government increased fees in a particular area by up to 50 per cent, I can imagine the howls of outrage that would be heard from the National Party Government. I place on record my opinion that the fees have been increased by an exorbitant amount. In percentage terms, it is certainly not justified.

I turn to the new Department of Employment, Vocational Education and Training, or DEVET. It has been called "Deviate". It is certainly being called "Deviate" in far-north Queensland.

I wonder at the justification for the creation of that department. I understand that it is the result of a power struggle that has been continuing for some time within the Education Department. Some people who belong to the TAFE sector believe that they ought to cut the umbilical cord with the Education Department and go their own way.

I have my doubts whether the creation of the new department is based on a solid philosophy. It is probably no more than a simple power struggle conflict within the department. I am not certain that it has achieved anything worth while. It certainly has not achieved anything worth while at this stage. I am not even certain that it will achieve something worth while in time to come.

I note in Cairns a lack of morale amongst staff. I attribute that lack of morale to two factors. One factor is the confusion that exists in the department. People are not quite sure who is calling the shots; who is making the policy decisions. There seem to be policy changes every couple of weeks. It depends on who is at the top of the pile.

Another criticism I have heard is that the new department is top heavy. It has had to absorb all of the regional directors of TAFE. It always strikes me as strange that the public service will go to great lengths to absorb people at the top of the career tree but, when it has to cut costs, it will sack janitors, storemen and cleaners. If it is necessary to sack staff, no thought is given to sacking regional directors or other people who have outlived their usefulness. Of course, it is very expensive to sack those people and usually, because they hold positions of influence, it is not so easy to sack them. However, it is easy for people at the top of the tree to sack the janitors, the groundsmen and the storemen.

I know that lower-level staff of the Cairns College of TAFE are very concerned about their future. They are also concerned about changes proposed to the public service, under which it will be much easier for heads of department to retrench their staff. They could make those decisions. They will not have to abide by the checks and balances of the Public Service Board. This all adds up to a decrease in morale within the service. That is not good. It does not matter what the service is. Many members of society are eager and keen to criticise public servants——

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Booth):** Order! There is too much audible conversation.

**Mr De LACY:** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. It was getting hard to hear myself.

We are all very quick to criticise public servants. However, public servants are human beings. Unless they are given incentives and unless they feel that they are part of an organisation that cares about them, of course they will not perform in an efficient and enthusiastic way. I still cannot quite see the logic of breaking TAFE away from the Education Department. I will return to that. There is probably some logic in it. However, the rural training schools, TAFE and senior colleges are grouped together. I cannot see what groups them together. I think that what we have are arbitrary boundaries and magical lines drawn for some sort of bureaucratic convenience. However, I still cannot see the overall logic in this major change to the department. I will have to be convinced that it is for the overall good of vocational training in Queensland.

Rural training schools have been caught up in this major reorganisation. They were never advised that it was even being considered that they would be taken away from the Education Department. They were consulted post-event. I must say that I think that they were alarmed about the changes. They were very suspicious about what was going on. They suspected that there might be some sort of a take-over made. They have always been very protective about their own autonomy. They have been run by rural training boards and they set their own curriculums. All they really want is to have sufficient resources and funding made available to them and to be allowed to get on with their job.

When I spoke to some of the principals early in the piece, they told me that they were concerned about what was going on and the changes that were being made at the top without consultation with them or with their senior boards. Having spoken with them on a more recent occasion, I found that some of their fears have been assuaged. They feel that they have been allowed to get on with their job. As long as they continue to receive their funding and are allowed to do their job, I guess that they will be happy enough. I still cannot see how rural training schools fit easily into——

**Mr Lee:** Why?

**Mr De LACY:** Is the honourable member asking an intelligent question or just making a noise?

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! If the honourable member wishes to interject, I suggest that he return to his correct place.

**Mr De LACY:** I am sorry. Mr Deputy Speaker, I would not have brought it to your attention if I thought that he would get into trouble.

I cannot see how rural training schools fit easily into the Department of Employment, Vocational Education and Training. They are not really technical educational institutions; they are farmer-training institutions. They have a different approach to training from that of vocational training schools. If we were to cut them adrift from the Education Department, it seems logical to me that we should have attached them to the Department of Primary Industries—to the department of agriculture—because they are training farmers.

**Mr Lester:** They are happy. I have met their councils, their principals and their chairman, and they are delighted.

**Mr De LACY:** I know that the Minister has done that. However, he did not do that before the event. Those people felt a little bit put out, if not insulted, by the fact that the Minister could make such substantial changes to the umbrella organisation without even consulting them or advising them before the event. I do not care what the Minister says, that is a fact.

**Mr Lester** interjected.

**Mr De LACY:** All right, they are happy. Provided that the Minister is prepared to leave them alone, they will be happy.

I am arguing on the philosophical plane that if the Minister is going to cut them adrift from the Education Department, they ought to go to the department of agriculture, because they are more closely aligned with the department of agriculture than they are with the Department of Employment, Vocational Education and Training. These people are being trained for careers in agriculture.

**Mr Stephan:** You are not arguing that it is not a vocation, are you?

**Mr De LACY:** I am not arguing that. The honourable member has made a silly interjection. I would not argue that. I am saying that their vocation is very much closer to the department of agriculture and the skills that exist within the department of agriculture than it is to the technical training department.

The way in which they constitute their courses is altogether different from the way in which vocational training is constituted. I do not know fully what happens in every other State and every other country in the world, but I would go so far as to say that it is probably the only rural training school that is linked with technical education rather than the mainstream education or agriculture.

I suggest that in every other State of Australia schools of that type are linked to the department of agriculture. Most of the instructors, teachers and lecturers in those schools have had careers either in agriculture or in departments of agriculture. If they were going to be cut adrift from education, they should have gone to the department of agriculture. Instead, the Government said, "They did not belong anywhere. Bring them over here." It is one of those convenient, bureaucratic exercises that has no basic philosophical justification.

**Mr Stephan:** Where would you put the college at Lawes, or Gatton?

**Mr De LACY:** The Queensland Agricultural College was always associated with the Department of Education. It is now an independent college of advanced education. It is self-funding.

**Mr Stephan:** I have asked you where you would put it.

**Mr De LACY:** I am not putting it anywhere. It does not have to be put anywhere, because it is fully autonomous.

**Mr Simpson** interjected.

**Mr De LACY:** The honourable member is probably trying to get me to say where I think it would have been better located in the old days before it became incorporated as a college of advanced education. Yes, I think that it would have been better if it had been linked with the department of agriculture rather than the Department of Education.

The honourable member is asking me questions. I am trying to answer them and reply to his interjections. However, he makes stupid statements that mean nothing. If the honourable member wishes to ask questions, I am prepared to answer them; but if he is going to make inane comments that do not mean anything, I am afraid that I cannot accept them any more.

I turn now to vocational or TAFE education. I do not think that it is all bad that we have got away from the Department of Education. However, I need to be convinced



that it is all good. Many people in industry and business—for example, members of the ICTC—are very practically oriented. They believe that young people should learn practical training. That is easy for them to say. They are the very same people who say that young people of today are not as good as they used to be. When they get out into the wide world, young people cannot be as good as those people who have had a lot of experience. People can become too task oriented, too practical and too narrow in educational outcomes. That is my genuine concern. Probably half of the tradesmen in Queensland are self-employed. Whether they become successfully self-employed or not depends as much on a variety of life skills as it does on their technical skills.

**Mr Lester:** I take your point, and we are working to give them a better base for their needs for management skills and so on, so that they can go on and not only just be trained persons but go into the management side at a later stage.

**Mr De LACY:** I accept that. That is my concern, and I am pleased that the Minister recognises that need.

If too much power is given to the ICTC, its educational objectives will become narrower and narrower. A welder who goes into business needs to know as much about book-keeping as he needs to know about welding. I mention that point for what it is worth.

I turn now to resources, which the honourable member for Bundaberg mentioned. Resources are necessary to provide good training institutions and successful training for our young people. The number of available resources will always be a matter for debate.

I have been told that a directive stating that they had to cut down on ancillary staff, was circulated to TAFE colleges. As a result, storemen were sacked and teachers ended up working in the stores. Is that an efficient allocation of resources? Is that achieving the types of efficiencies that we are looking for? I do not think so. For many years it has been stated that well-paid and well-trained police should not spend all day at typewriters typing up drivers' licences and things of that nature. That situation may be occurring in TAFE colleges also.

There are quite a number of other reasons for inefficiencies. One complaint that I have heard mentioned often is that the department cannot get its financial allocations in order. One of the most common gripes from principals is that, if they are running a course, they cannot always be guaranteed that they will receive the funds. They get the funds after the event rather than before it. Because of that, they are always manipulating the funds from the last course for this one, and that sort of thing. That does not lead to an efficient allocation of resources and efficient management of TAFE colleges.

One of the reasons for the low morale and complaints about lack of resources and lack of efficiencies within the colleges is the impression that money is being wasted with one hand and the belt is being tightened with the other hand. When this change of departments was mooted or first announced, the Minister—and I can understand why—decided to launch a public relations campaign to get to know the different colleges and so forth. Although the objectives may have been good, I do not think he achieved them. I am speaking from my knowledge of what happened in Cairns, but what happened there is not really any different from what happened at all of the other TAFE colleges in Queensland.

The first matter relates to the Q-Net breakfast, when all TAFE colleges throughout Queensland had to assemble all their staff for a breakfast. The Minister was at COTAH here in Brisbane. The menu was sent out to all the TAFE colleges. They were even told that buffalo steak had to be cooked. I am pleased to say that the college in Cairns rejected that and did not cook buffalo steak; instead steak and eggs was cooked.

After that was the Q-Net link-up. People were subjected to the *Dad and Dave* show, which was Roy Wallace, who at that stage was the person instrumental in the power play, introducing the Minister, Mr Lester. Many sources have advised me that that went down like a lead balloon. I do not like to be too critical, but when Roy Wallace spent

such a long time in front of bored staff throughout Queensland saying what a good fellow the Minister was and how good he would be for the department, everybody was yawning and eating buffalo steak. It really did not work, believe me.

**Mr McElligott** interjected.

**Mr De LACY:** The buffalo steak was not even any good. It was tough.

The second matter relates to the barbecue on 1 March. Again all staff and dignitaries throughout Cairns were invited. Even I was invited, so the department went a fair way down the dignitary list. However, because I was coming to Brisbane, I could not attend. Actually, I have come up a bit in the dignitary list lately in Cairns.

**Mr McLean:** You suffer with that up there, too?

**Mr De LACY:** Since the last local authority election I have jumped up a bit.

The TAFE colleges have jumped down a bit. The Minister has lost the head of the school of further education, Mr Keith Goodwin, who is now the Mayor of Cairns. I guess that it is the Minister's loss and Cairns' gain.

**Mr Beard:** When he left that lot and went to the Cairns Council, it improved the average IQ of both parties.

**Mr De LACY:** No, I will not accept that.

**A Government member:** You are too late.

**Mr De LACY:** I did not hear the honourable member properly. I am sorry. It is not that I am slow; I could not hear him properly.

As I was saying, everybody and his dog was invited to that barbecue on 1 March. The sum of \$1,050 was spent preparing food, and the barbecue was cancelled at 1 o'clock. I know that that is at the time when cyclone Charlie was ravaging its way down the Queensland coast and the Minister was unable to attend. That was the second part of this trifecta of public relations exercises, and it did not go down so well either.

**Mr Lester:** I don't believe that's a fair comment. You know the position with cyclone Charlie and you know that I am going back now. I think that's most unfair.

**Mr De LACY:** Yes, but the \$1,050 worth of food could not be kept until the Minister returns.

**Mr Lester:** They knew before 1 o'clock—well before 1 o'clock.

**Mr De LACY:** No. It was 1 o'clock. When it filtered down to the people who counted, it was 1 o'clock.

The third matter relates to the big Q-Net link-up at 10 a.m. I do not know the date of that. All staff were invited. The Cairns College of TAFE has about 160 staff. All classes were suspended for 1½ hours, and again everybody had to turn up and go through a public relations exercise.

I wonder what was achieved; however, I do know what was not achieved. All of the classes normally attended by those students were suspended for that period. A total of 160 staff were suspended for an hour and a half, which amounts to a couple of hundred man-hours. It may be all right to do that because public relations is part of the game; but when we are putting the clamps on at the bottom end by cutting resources, sacking janitors, telling teachers that there will be no more acetate sheets for overhead projectors and no more gardeners to mow lawns, at the top end extravagant public relations exercises are counter-productive. I thought I ought to mention that for what it is worth.

**Mr Lee:** Why do you say "we"? Why don't you say "them"? Why say "we"?

**Mr De LACY:** I do not mind taking interjections, because sometimes good, intelligent interjections create a good exchange across the Chamber. However, I must confess that it is really very difficult to respond to some of them. I do not know whether it is my fault or the fault of the honourable member, but I cannot think of a good answer to his interjection.

**Mr McLEAN (Bulimba) (10.16 p.m.):** I join in the debate to support the argument presented by the Opposition spokesman, the honourable member for Nudgee, Mr Vaughan, and also to highlight a number of points that emerge from the debate that has been carried on so far. This debate is extremely important because it covers an area of utmost significance. I wish to refer to the Minister's second-reading speech, in which he refers to the new department that has been formed to cater for employment, vocational education and training needs. The Minister said that the new department represents the bringing together of responsibilities for administration of technical and further education, training and employment-planning. He went on to state as follows—

“This is a major Queensland Government initiative and demonstrates in the clearest possible way the Government's philosophy on the close relationship between employment, vocational education and training. The Government has the strongest commitment to ensuring that vocational education and training are relevant to both employment and industry and therefore beneficial to the economic development of this State.”

The point I make is that the Minister said that the department represents “a major Queensland Government initiative”. I disagree with the Minister's statement. I believe he was being quite misleading in referring to the new department as a “Queensland Government initiative”. When the last Federal Budget was brought down, the Federal Minister for Education and Training, Mr Dawkins, made statements that are worth referring to because they indicate that the State Minister is being more than misleading, in my opinion. Mr Dawkins stated—

“Australia's economic potential has been held back by an inadequate commitment to skills formation and deficiencies in training arrangements.”

The Federal Minister went on to state as follows—

“The Government's determination on this front is reflected in the formation of the new portfolio of Employment, Education and Training”—

which is very similar to what is proposed for Queensland. I do not disagree with the Queensland Government on that issue, because I think it is a sensible move. Employment, vocational education and training is an area that needs the utmost co-operation among all levels of government, unions and employers. Most previous speakers in this debate have identified the aims of the legislation as meeting those needs, and I fully agree with them.

It is worth pointing out to the House some of the steps taken by the Federal Government in this area of education and training. The Federal Minister went on to state that presentation of the Federal Budget was the first time that a statement on the Skills for Australia scheme had been included in Budget documentation. The Federal Minister went on to outline the Government's overall strategy that focused on a number of points, which included the following—

- increasing participation in education and training;
- improving the quality and structure of courses and training arrangements;
- seeking more efficient use of resources in education and training, better reflecting the economy's needs;
- raising industry's commitment and contribution to training;
- providing employment and training opportunities for the unemployed and other disadvantaged groups.”

The point that I wish to stress is that the Federal Government made such a priority of this important area that the sum of \$6,260m was allocated to this portfolio in the

Budget. That indicated the strength of the Federal Government's commitment. For Mr Lester to say that this is primarily a major State Government initiative is rather misleading. In the national arena at that time Mr Dawkins stated—

“The Federal Government is but one of many participants in the skills formation process and State and Territory Governments, as well as employers and unions, must play their part.”

I do not think that that can be stressed strongly enough.

**Mr Lee:** Why?

**Mr McLEAN:** It is terribly important that the problem of unemployment in Australia today, and the creation of training schemes that keep up with the modern trends in training and apprenticeships are addressed at all levels. It is important that this occurs right across the board with the support of Government, the union movement and employers.

I support the contribution made by the Opposition spokesman to this debate and I share his concerns. I refer to the sincerity of this Government and its commitment to the provision of training, particularly apprenticeships within Government areas. I am concerned about the line that this Government is taking in regard to Government services and its move towards contract labour and the privatisation of many of those services.

This brings me to an article in the *Courier-Mail* on 25 February of this year that is headed “Services may be privatised: leaked paper”. The article stated—

“A Queensland Government razor gang is examining proposals to operate many Government services on a user-pay basis.”

The article went on to say that some of the areas that they were looking at were electricity and water supplies and hospitals. The article further stated, that harbour operations, the metropolitan abattoir and the Government garage were possible inclusions and also mining inspectors, industrial inspectors and marine surveyors would come into this category.

In this morning's *Courier-Mail* I was interested to read another article on the same subject that is headed “‘Go private’ plans start with State print office”. This article stated—

“Cabinet yesterday took the first step towards allocating work done by specialists departments to private enterprise.

The Premier, Mr Ahern, announced that some functions of the Government Printing Office and the Wacol convenience food manufacturing plant and delivery service would be ‘commercialised’.

He said that the Government would be looking at taking similar steps with the Government garage . . .”

I will touch on that aspect in a moment.

I ask the Minister: do State Governments and ministries, such as the one that he is responsible for, have a responsibility to provide the lead in apprenticeships? Every day of the week one hears of areas of Government responsibility which do not employ apprentices any more. I will cite the relevant figures later on. I do not believe that the private sector can be expected to act if the Government does not give some kind of a lead.

I turn now to look at the annual report of the Government Motor Garage for the year ended June 1987. In the foreword the Under Secretary, Mr Peter Jones, states—

“The Government Garage has completed another year of excellent service to Government Departments. In the current economic conditions it is essential that the Government motor fleet be maintained in the most cost effective manner. The Government Motor Garage contributes substantially to this requirement.

The Manager and his dedicated staff are ever on the alert to even further increase the cost effectiveness of the Garage's operations. This policy will be continued."

I have read in the press that the Government intends to get rid of the Government Motor Garage, which is an ideal venue for the Government to show a lead in apprenticeship training because it covers a wide range of expertise such as mechanical repairs to motor vehicles including trucks, agricultural and allied equipment; electrical expertise, such as full auto-electrical repairs and diagnostic engine-tuning; panel-beating, including smash repairs, replacement of windscreens, body modifications and the fitting of accessories; spray painting, including all types of automotive finishes, wax spraying and pinstriping; a break-down service; inspection of new vehicles—in the 1986-87 financial year 1 640 new vehicles were received; preparation of used vehicles for auction—in the same financial year 1 442 vehicles were prepared for sale by public auction, generating a gross revenue of \$12,189,565; professional and technical services, including mechanical engineering consultation, performance comparisons of various vehicles and fuel consumption testing; and the preparation of Government motor vehicle contracts.

So the garage offers wide opportunities for the training of apprentices, yet the State Government intends to get rid of it. I might add that the garage is a competitive organisation which, if handed out to private enterprise, will not be able to provide the same service for the people of Queensland at any cheaper rate. For the 1986-87 financial year the total Government vehicle fleet was 15 996. For the same year the garage's budget was \$4,952,550. With the fleet of vehicles and other mechanical equipment that the Government has, I do not believe that the same service could be provided for less than that figure of nearly \$5m. In addition to that, the garage provides an opportunity to set a standard of training for young apprentices that perhaps would not be able to be matched out in small workshops spread all over Brisbane or Queensland.

The annual report of the Government Motor Garage for the year ended 30 June 1987 states, under the photograph of a Mr Ken Gardner—

"The Garage is heavily committed to apprentice training, and Ken has been the Apprentice Master at the Garage for approximately five (5) years."

So the garage has a foreman who looks after apprentices and, according to the report, it has a heavy commitment to apprentice-training, yet the Government wants to privatise the garage. On the one hand the Government wants to do that and, on the other hand, the Minister says that the Government has a commitment to provide training and a lead to private industry. That is certainly not true.

Up till this financial year the Government Motor Garage was employing 10 apprentices per year. My information is that no apprentices have been employed in the last 12 months. If that is the case, that is a failure of the Government, and the Minister should consider that. If he was doing his job correctly, he would be up to date with those sorts of activities.

In his speech the member for Nudgee mentioned the employment of apprentices by SEQEB. The number of apprentices employed by that body fell from 260 in 1985 to 217 in 1987. That is not hard to understand, especially when one knows about one Wayne L. Gilbert. I am sure I do not have to spend too much time explaining his background, because all honourable members would know that he was the industrial mercenary whom the Government set free into SEQEB to do a particular job. That is most certainly what he did, and the State has seen the results of that.

Mr Gilbert is one of the stars of the New Right, of which we have not heard much lately. In the letter of 29 August 1984 that he sent to all SEQEB employees, he set out the principles for the future direction of SEQEB. In that letter, he made it quite clear exactly where he was going in regard to apprenticeships. In a paragraph headed "Activities to be Hived-off", he stated—

"The adoption of a narrower interpretation of SEQEB's objectives leads to a questioning of a number of activities.

Some of these activities have an industry focus and as such would be better located under the control of the Queensland Electricity Commission.

Other activities duplicate services already offered by other organisations and businesses: for SEQEB to continue to perform them is an unnecessary cost."

On top of that list under the heading "Activities to be Hived-off" were apprenticeships. One of the largest electrical organisations in Queensland is not prepared to put on apprentices, according to the manager of the electricity board. If the Government will not give a lead in taking responsibility for creating apprenticeships and training, how can it expect private enterprise to do the same thing? It must set an example.

I could go further and examine the public works labour-force in this State. Over the years, that former large Government body has been reduced to a non-existent work-force. In workshops in Brisbane there are instances of three or four apprentices standing around with one carpenter looking after their interests. They cannot be receiving the proper training. That is an area that the Government has sadly neglected for a long period.

Although I agree completely with the concept of the legislation, many other areas should be looked at within the Government's responsibility. Apprentices and training should be treated with the utmost importance. I feel that more can be done. However, I have no opposition to the Bill, because it is a step in the right direction. If the Government can narrow the channel towards attaining that end and if there is co-operation between the various Federal and State departments, it can only be a step in the right direction.

**Mr SCHUNTNER** (Mount Coot-tha) (10.33 p.m.): The Bill provides for the rearrangement of the administration of education, and in particular for transferring the administration of vocational education from one Ministry to another. However, it is impossible to look at the administration of one part of education without considering it in relation to the whole range of education. TAFE courses and, in more recent times, senior colleges have been integrated for quite a long time within the Education portfolio. Moreover, this Bill, in clause 4 (2), refers to expressions that are not defined in this Bill being defined as they are in the Education Act, and expressions that are not defined in this Bill or in the Education Act being defined as they are in the Industry and Commerce Training Act. The point that I make initially is that it is not appropriate for this Bill to be seen in isolation but to be seen within the context of education and training and employment generally.

The Bill makes provision for there to be closer links between industry and vocational education. The Liberal Party supports that move and recognises that those links are highly desirable, particularly in relation to vocational education. Those close links are more important with vocational education than with any other section of education. However, I point out that it is important to have links between education and industry even in general education, although not to the same degree. The composition of the Board of Secondary School Studies would be improved if there were representation from parents and from industry on that board, although it is dealing more specifically with academic-type courses than some of the controlling bodies within TAFE.

I make a plea to the Government to ensure that the links with industry are genuine and productive. Representation on boards and other controlling bodies is important. I wonder whether it is possible to consider ways in which the private sector could help in the financing of some of these courses. When one considers an organisation like the Bond University and what is being attempted in Victoria, one wonders whether it might not be possible for industry and the public sector to work together to their mutual benefit.

I have mentioned the importance of the overall framework. One thing that is missing from this legislation is some statement of the overall framework that the Government has in mind in introducing this Bill. This Bill seems to me to illustrate a

feature of education decision-making that has been all too apparent in the last year or so——

**Mr Lester:** This is purely an interim Bill till the more major Bill is drafted.

**Mr SCHUNTNER:** That is true.

I think that the other Bill to which the Minister refers will deal specifically with vocational education and training. I would like to see some kind of broad policy statement that encompasses not just vocational education but broader education and links with employment and training.

In recent months I have observed that education decision-making lurches inconsistently from side to side rather than making steadfast progress towards clear and well-established goals. A number of examples illustrate that point, for example, the Education Act amendments that occupied a lot of time last year; the whole procedure involving Education 2000, the P-10 curriculum and senior colleges; distance education; and some tertiary entrance scores changes. Some of those decisions may—probably by chance—turn out to be correct. However, it is a very unsatisfactory process of decision-making.

I will refer to a couple of those examples in greater detail. First of all I will deal with the changes to the Education Act. Some amendments were proposed on 1 April last year. After considerable dissent amongst the whole community about those changes, the Bill was withdrawn and subsequently another Bill was introduced. That Bill was passed in November and assent was given to it. The present Minister for Education spoke in favour of that Bill. However, the Act was not proclaimed and the new Education Minister, along with the new Premier, found it desirable to put that Act on hold. What greater inconsistency and lurching could one get than that?

I turn to distance education. I refer to a statement made by the Minister for Education about a new school of distance education. I applaud the decision by the Minister to establish a school of distance education which, in his press release of 7 April, he indicated will incorporate the present pre-school, primary and secondary correspondence schools, the isolated children's special education unit, the schools of the air and associated services. Shortly I will inquire about technical correspondence services.

The point that I want to make in relation to the announcement about the establishment of a school of distance education is that it again displays the inconsistent way in which decision-making in education has occurred in recent times. I have a copy of the report of the ministerial advisory committee on distance education, which was presented to the Minister in 1985. That report recommended by a majority—all but one—two schools of distance education. It recommended a school of distance education for students up to Year 10 and a college of distance education for post-compulsory education. That proposal was in vogue at that time, as the Government was trying to push through its P-10, senior colleges and two schools of distance education. I point out that there was a minority report and that I, in fact, was the author of the minority report, being the one member of that committee who dissented from the majority report. I said that two schools of distance education divided the bureaucracy, created unnecessary duplication and bureaucracies and was very wasteful. I am delighted that the Minister for Education has now seen the wisdom of the minority report that I wrote back in 1985.

In recent times some changes have been made to the tertiary entrance score. I welcome those changes. Again it illustrates that they are made in a vacuum. I think that it is important that we have an overall framework. In passing, I mentioned earlier the subject of technical correspondence services. I ask the Minister in his reply to indicate whether technical correspondence services come within the school of distance education, which presumably is under the Ministry of Education, or whether it is picked up within the Ministry of Employment, Training and Industrial Affairs. I could not find any reference to it under the various functions that were listed.

I turn now to the policy framework that is needed. What in fact are schools in Queensland trying to achieve? Where is education going? Many people ask those questions.

I do not think that the Queensland Government could answer those questions, beyond providing a bit of rhetoric, at any given time. If one goes back to the select committee of inquiry in 1978-79, the chairman of that committee, who is now the Premier, reported on the desirability of having a statement of aims for Queensland education. Aims were in fact proposed in the select committee report. It is a bit of a shame that those aims were largely plagiarised from a British Green Paper on education that was distributed about a year or two before the committee's report. The point remains that aims were suggested.

The Scott committee, which resulted in the adoption of the Review of School Based Assessment in 1976-77, also suggested that the Government adopt a set of aims. When Education 2000 was being promoted by the Government and there was again a huge outcry from the public, submissions were called from the public and 987 were received. There was a very strong consensus through those submissions which was reflected in Professor Bassett's report that there should be a statement of aims. I referred to that myself—that is, the need for a statement of aims—in my maiden speech in this House in February last year. I do not think it is necessary to have aims incorporated in legislation. A policy statement may well do the task quite satisfactorily. Legislation, of course, has the disadvantage in some respects of being a little too permanent if after four or five years the statement might need to be changed to reflect changing societal viewpoints. However, without some statement of that kind, we are rather aimless. I feel that this Bill has been introduced without a proper framework—a proper set of anchor points—to know what the totality of the background is against which it has been introduced.

The Liberal Party is very clear about various goals in education. I will indicate a couple that could be taken into account in developing the framework against which a Bill of this kind could and should be introduced. There is a desperate need for more tertiary places in Queensland. The Liberal Party has been saying that for a long time. These tertiary places are needed not only in universities and colleges of advanced education but also in technical colleges. I think that that Government has not shown enough urgency about this when, of course, we heard this year about the establishment of yet another committee. It is action that we want, not the establishment of yet another committee to look into the problem that for years has been manifest to anybody who wanted to see it.

I turn now to basic standards of literacy and numeracy. At the outset, one thing that should be spelt out is what is meant by basic standards of literacy and numeracy. In a media release of 7 April of this year, the Minister for Education stated—

“Within the profession interstate and by parents who move here, our standard of education is regarded highly; in many areas we are well ahead just as, for example, our secondary textbook allowance is more than double that in New South Wales.”

That has nothing to do with standards. The level of textbook allowances throughout the nation, whether it be in New South Wales, Queensland or wherever, has nothing to do with what people in the community mean by basic standards of literacy and numeracy.

In due course I would welcome a statement by this Government about the basic needs in education. That statement could provide a framework that would indicate the appropriate legislation that could be introduced.

When speaking about standards of literacy and numeracy, most people refer to anecdotes and, from those anecdotes, make generalisations. If I were to do that on the basis of my experiences as a parent, I would say that I am very happy with the standards of education that my three children have received and, in the case of my third child, is still receiving. Other people may well have had different experiences from mine and would tend to generalise from those experiences. Both generalisations would be inappropriate and quite unsound.

I welcomed a recent statement by the Minister for Education in relation to science tests. On the basis of some reasonably objective tests that were conducted by an international organisation, the Minister made the statement that Queensland students



performed very well in the science test. In fact, in the 14-year-old division, Queensland students performed better than students in all other States and were second only to the ACT students.

It should be possible to provide more information about education standards and to improve those standards. A sound, comprehensive plan to monitor standards periodically and to improve them is being sought by many people within the community. Decisive and wise leadership could develop such a plan without the imposition of an inappropriate external examination to distort and dominate education.

Another aspect of standards is important. Again, I ask the question: what in this Bill does anything for standards, be they in vocational education or any other forms of education? Aspects such as that must be addressed more seriously.

One of the unfortunate results of having a large pool of unemployed teachers is that school-leavers are frightened away from applying for teacher-training positions. This year, the entrance level for teacher-training courses was significantly lower than it has been on many previous occasions. That does not help the standards for the future of education one iota. In fact, it is severely detrimental to it.

I disagree with the viewpoint that was put forward by the Minister for Education, namely, that when one considers the selection of teachers, the attitudes of those teachers who are applying for positions is of paramount importance. Of course, it is important that those teachers have the right attitudes; that they are dedicated to furthering the interests and welfare of children. However, that is not enough. I would not be prepared to say that that is paramount. It is important that the school-leavers who enter teacher-training courses be academically sound. In fact, I would go further and say that it is important that the teachers who graduate from our teacher-training institutions have a sound knowledge of the syllabuses that they are going to teach in schools. I do not believe that that occurs in all cases at present.

Another aspect that should be incorporated into a broad framework—again, whether it applies to vocational education or other aspects—is our attitude towards the integration of handicapped children into mainstream schools. In recent times there has been a policy of having mildly intellectually handicapped children not receive their education in special education schools and units but for them to be integrated into ordinary classes in ordinary schools as much as possible. While that ideal is excellent and I support it, I would have to put a major qualifier to it, that is, that that can only be done successfully if the resources are available. This Government is fooling itself if it thinks that the integration system in the wide world out there is working satisfactorily. The Government ought to listen carefully and look carefully and it would find out that the schools are not well enough resourced for this integration process to occur properly.

I would like to refer further to that matter. When such youngsters attend primary school, in many cases they attend a special education unit that is attached to or adjacent to that particular school. What happens when those youngsters move on to secondary education? In many cases no special education unit is available.

**Mr Innes:** In most cases.

**Mr SCHUNTNER:** In most cases. That would no doubt be true.

At the same time, no additional resources of any significance are available in the high schools that those youngsters attend. Only in the last couple of days I have spoken to yet another typical parent who has been concerned by this problem. She is not just concerned, she is very worried by what will happen to her youngster, who is now about 12 but really of about Year 4 academic level, when that youngster moves into high school next year. Likewise, what happens if that mildly intellectually handicapped student wants to move into the vocational educational area? Those matters are not addressed by this legislation. I hope that they will be when the Bill that follows it up is introduced.

Having made the point that an overall framework is really needed, I would like to touch on another two points before I conclude my remarks. The penultimate point that

I would like to refer to concerns State Government efforts to fund education at the present time. I reiterate a point that another speaker made earlier in this debate and say that it does not matter how vocational education or any other area of education is organised or reorganised; if the resources are not adequate the quality of education will not be adequate either. If one looks at the history of events over the last few months, one will see that the Government's funding performance is abysmal.

The *Queensland Government Gazette* of 2 April 1988 indicates that the Commonwealth's payments to the State in fact went up \$42m from the December quarter 1986 to the December quarter 1987. For the item "Primary and Secondary Education" there is a drop of \$5m. However, the item "Financial Assistance Grant" shows an increase of \$59m. An overall rise of \$42m occurred for the year.

Through its own taxation and regulatory fees, over that same period the State Government collected an extra \$130m. What happened to all those extra dollars that were collected by the Government from December 1986 to December 1987? They certainly did not go to education. Over that same period education expenditure declined by about \$7m. If inflation over that time is taken into account it will be seen that that decline of \$7m in real terms becomes significantly more.

Over the same period the allocations in several other areas went up very significantly. The biggest increase was in special allocations within the Treasury Department, where in a 12-month period there was almost a trebling of the figure that was spent. So education obviously rates a low priority with this Government. This Bill will not succeed unless education, including vocational education, rates a much higher priority.

Finally, I wish to refer to a media release issued by the Minister on 23 December in which he announced various new appointments to six senior positions as a result of the transfer of technical education into his Ministry. I want to know whether that is an example of the new style of open government that has been practised since early December. As I understand it, the positions were not advertised. These were very senior positions, and one would have expected that advertisements calling for applications would have been circulated nationally.

I ask the Minister to indicate in his response why those positions were not advertised and whether that is an indication of the style of government that will be adopted in the filling of senior positions in that particular department?

**Mr Innes:** Who are those people

**Mr SCHUNTNER:** Those named in the media release, the Director-General, Mr Wallace, and Mr Swan, Mr McGaw, Mr Tait, Mr Henneken and Mr Burroughs. Some are in attendance at Parliament tonight. I make it clear also that I am not casting any aspersions on the individuals concerned at all. However, a very important principle is involved and I would like the Minister to indicate in his reply his response to the point I have made about the failure to advertise positions.

**Mr BEARD** (Mount Isa—Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party) (10.57 p.m.): As the last speaker in a very long debate, I need not canvass again all of the matters that have been examined. Some of the notes I have made about what is happening in Queensland will not be used by me to bore honourable members. Nevertheless, a couple of points need to be made, and I will take this opportunity to make them.

The legislation indicates that the Government is responding to a change in the outside environment by changing the set-up in vocational education, which is as it should be. A classical example occurred 20 years ago when generations of Swiss education went by the board because Japanese digital watches took over. Generations of Swiss children who had been trained to make other types of watches suddenly had to change their whole vocational outlook. With typical acumen and flexibility, the Swiss were able to do exactly that, and were able to get back into the watch-making business. Henry Ford made farriers obsolete. Education had to react, and it did. The same thing is taking place in Queensland now.

There has always existed a part of education that has centred around vocation. The vocational aspect has always been a part of the curriculum. It has only been in more

recent times that many of what might be called soft options have emerged, such as education for culture, for life and for values. Unfortunately, many thoughtful people nowadays have the idea that the tail is wagging the dog because there is no compulsion to take hard subjects. Students do not have to study a foreign language to matriculate and gain entry into the arts faculty. Maths is not compulsory if students do not like it, and so on.

Those moves have been accompanied by a phasing out of external examinations that has led many people to ask how measures of quality control are applied. Some people ask how Queensland's education system compares with those of other States, other countries and other times. Beyond that, the ultimate horror is the multiple choice test because a student no longer needs to be able to express himself or herself effectively, either in writing or orally. Simply by ticking a box, he can get by.

**Mr Innes:** They can take a punt.

**Mr BEARD:** They can take a punt and, by the law of averages, they might get 50 per cent of the answers right.

For many years I was engaged in the hiring of graduates for an industrial organisation in this State. I have hired honours graduates in various technical disciplines as well as the humanities who have been hard put in their first couple of years with the organisation to present a decent, readable, legible report or make a verbal submission. Many were also inarticulate in their social interaction and compared most unfavourably with, for example, Americans who seem, on the whole, to be quite articulate.

Those observations lead one to ask what are the legitimate, valid aims of education in this State and to acknowledge the need for a good balance between what might be called the basics of literacy and numeracy with the vocational content of education. The only concern I have in hiving-off the vocational content of education into a different department—indeed, a different portfolio—is that there may be an overconcentration on the vocational aspects to the detriment of other parts of what must be a well-grounded education.

I hope that the Department of Employment, Vocational Education and Training, when it concentrates on the vocational aims of education, will not neglect literacy and numeracy, so that our craftsmen and other people, such as technologists, will at least be able to speak, read, write and communicate effectively. There is very little use in being a consummate craftsman if one cannot communicate with one's workmates, superiors and subordinates. These matters should be looked after properly within the TAFE system.

I will make my other point briefly. At the present time in Australia there is no genuine equality of educational opportunity. This is because students who live in the rural parts of this State, away from the major educational centres—this also includes centres where there are large TAFE colleges, as well as colleges of advanced education, universities, teachers' colleges, etc.—have no equality of educational opportunity, because, after they meet whatever criteria are required to be met to allow them to enter the college or university of their choice, they have to start the very hard business of finding a place to live—a place that is safe, affordable and offers the minimum facilities for sleeping and eating in minimal comfort. Even when they find such accommodation—which is far more difficult than many people realise—their parents are faced with an outlay of several thousand dollars a year. These are problems that students who live in the major educational centres do not have to face. All they have to learn is how to catch a different bus.

In order to overcome the problems, various ways have to be looked at of providing hostel, college or some other kind of residential accommodation that is near to all of Queensland's centres of further study, whether they be TAFE colleges, colleges of advanced education or universities. Through its outback services, the Uniting Church in Australia has a system whereby it finds people who are willing to billet students. The church takes the names of students who do not have accommodation and tries to match them through

their interest in sport or cultural activities with people who are prepared to billet them. This can be taken much further through other churches, old boys' and girls' associations and service clubs which should be able to get in and help. Above all, Governments, both State and Federal, must realise that the provision of reasonable residential accommodation for country students in centres of study is as necessary as the provision of lecture theatres and laboratories.

The cost of education is high, and we cannot duck it. I am not the first speaker tonight, and I will not be the last this year, to demand that much more money be allocated to education. I know that money is tight and that it cannot be created out of nothing. It is a matter of priorities and taking money from places where it is not needed as much.

**Sir William Knox:** They pay \$40m a year in pay-roll tax.

**Mr BEARD:** Yes, in pay-roll tax, and I believe that this is included in part of the expenditure for education, which is false.

I urge the Minister for Education and the Minister for Employment to get all the muscle they can, get in amongst the other cowboys in the Cabinet and ensure that they get increased allocations for what they are trying to do, because there is no better investment of this State's money than in education, whether it be for life under Mr Littleproud or for vocation under Mr Lester.

**Hon. V. P. LESTER** (Peak Downs—Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Affairs) (11.04 p.m.), in reply: I sincerely thank all honourable members for taking part in this debate tonight. Generally speaking, I believe that everyone tried to be constructive, which is good, because this Bill involves an attempt to make more education of a better quality available to more people.

The honourable member for Nudgee raised the issue of apprenticeship intakes. The intake for the last 12 months was 5 970, which is an increase on the previous figure of 5 251 for the same period 12 months ago. This is the fourth-highest intake over the last 12 years. In addition he raised the issue of the 1985 committee on employment. One of the outcomes of this committee was the provision of four new TAFE facilities for training in the hospitality industry, which has generated employment. Another outcome of this committee concerned the Queensland Industry Development Corporation and support for traineeships in the private sector in Queensland, which is better than in the rest of Australia. In addition 2 200 traineeships have been created and the number created in the private sector, which is 1 500, is the highest per capita in any State.

The honourable member for Nudgee also raised the intake of apprentices in the building industry. In the last 12 months 562 apprenticeships were entered into for carpenters and joiners. In 1987 the intake was 370 and in 1986 the intake was 479. The current intake is the highest since 1982. The member for Nudgee obviously supported the Bill. I thank him for what I believe were the constructive comments he made during his contribution. He quoted a number of statistics on employment. Not all of those figures are as good as we would like them to be, and that is one of the reasons why the Government has moved to establish the new department, which will take into consideration the various suggestions that many people have made.

The member for Ashgrove, Mr Sherlock, spoke about medical schools and all sorts of other things. The university is funded by the Commonwealth and its Act is administered by the Minister for Education.

As the member for Mansfield has pointed out so often, TAFE has been to the forefront in the introduction of technology into industry. This is happening in some of our more progressive TAFE colleges. This leadership will be continued with the encouragement of flair throughout the department. The department certainly will be encouraging entrepreneurial expertise. I thank the member for Mansfield for his constructive support for the Bill.

The honourable member for Mansfield also made some other comments about industry. In fact, only this week I have approved the release of a further two staff members to help with this. I have also noted his encouragement for the joint-venture arrangements. He will be pleased to hear that my department is exploring fully the shared use of facilities with industry. The TAFE satellite network is a very good example of that.

I certainly want to thank the member for Gympie, Mr Stephan, for his perception in addressing the excellence envisaged for the new department. As he rightly pointed out, the legislation carries on from the good work undertaken by industry and the Industry and Commerce Training Commission.

The member for Ipswich raised the general issues of unemployment. Queensland's youth unemployment would be at the same level as that in the rest of the country if the Commonwealth provided the same level of support for higher education as it does in other States. Queensland is also severely disadvantaged because the benefit of the tariff system applies primarily to Victoria, New South Wales and South Australia. If one really wanted to go into that, one could give some really interesting statistics. The Federal Government has certainly looked after, and subsidised to a great extent, industries in those Labor-held States. I should say that that was the case until recently, as New South Wales is no longer a Labor State.

The member for Ipswich also spoke on the issue of whether technical and further education should not be left within the Education Ministry. I would have to ask him: what about the Commonwealth? I would have thought that he would have followed its example. In his comments tonight he seems to be alone, because generally everybody else has supported very, very strongly the lead that has been given.

He was also critical of Queensland's performance in vocational training. Queensland has led Australia in initiatives such as pre-vocational training, which was commended by the OECD. Queensland proposed the introduction of traineeships, which was taken up by the Commonwealth. The first one was in Cairns.

The member for Ipswich also spoke about senior colleges. I simply say that they are working particularly well. The senior college principals are very supportive of what the Government is doing. They believe that they now have an independence that is very useful. The colleges are working well and the Government will continue to make them work well.

I will now comment on the remarks made by the member for Springwood. His contribution was well researched and his thought-provoking comments were good ones.

The member for Townsville East said that the community should expect some mistakes when colleges break new ground. All departmental officers, particularly those in colleges and in policy areas, are being encouraged to be entrepreneurial. If mistakes occur as a result of the pro-active approach, I hope that the member and his colleagues will not be critical and overlook the many successes that will have been achieved. I have to say that, generally, the mistakes have been minimal and it is great to see everybody co-operating in the excellent way that they have. The member also highlighted the need for the department to be forward-looking. Clause 6(f) of the Bill does just that by providing for research and development in the areas of employment, vocational education and training. The research will take proper account of new development technology through person-power planning. It is important that we plan ahead and make sure that we have the courses ready to fit the bill. It is important that we look at the leasing of equipment where possible so that, when technology changes and different equipment is needed, we are in a position to be able to supply it immediately. We will be taking steps along those paths.

I thank the honourable member for Broadsound for his contribution to the debate. He made considerable comment on the additional facilities on the Capricorn Coast. Of course, he is never backward in putting forward the views of the Capricorn Coast. I might remind him that we also have a number of facilities in the Yeppoon and Emu

Park areas. He was also supportive of the consultative council of the Rockhampton College of Technical and Further Education. I thank him for the interest he takes in that college.

The member for Bundaberg raised the issue of apprentices attending the Bundaberg TAFE. The numbers at the Bundaberg TAFE seem low. I will have the matter checked. Of course, 1983 was a peak year, whereas 1987 was a low year. The intake has now increased substantially. There are now more colleges than in 1983 and the apprentice workload has been spread so that more apprentices can attend locally.

The member for Bundaberg also raised the issue of co-operation with the Department of Education. That is important. The Minister for Education has come into the Chamber to listen to my reply. We have been co-operating very well. It is tremendous to be able to work with a Minister like Mr Littleproud and to have such enormous co-operation in what we are doing for the betterment of education in all fields—the vocational area and his area. It is a great step forward. I believe that I have answered the comments made by the member for Bundaberg. I also accept his comments about Mr Reedman and the Bundaberg college. It is a brilliant concept and it is working well.

The member for Nundah's comments are always well researched. I compliment him on that. I have noted his comments on the staggered dates of graduation of students. That is fair enough. I believe that it should be considered. The Minister is accountable to the people for the operations of his department, and the operations and activities conducted in the name of the corporation. We believe that the buck stops with the Minister, and that is as it should be. I am prepared to take the responsibility.

I thank the member for Cairns for most of his comments—not quite all of them. He was quite complimentary in his remarks about the Cairns College of TAFE. I assure him that there is no power struggle between my department and the Department of Education. It will not happen, so he does not have to worry about it. There are no top-heavy structures in the department. All officers are being kept informed of changes. We have had meetings with principals. I have been to most areas of the State and met teachers and their wives and families. I will continue to travel around the State. Everywhere that we have been, we have received quite supportive comments from everybody, including the press.

I thank the member for Bulimba for his contribution. He always thinks things out fairly carefully. He spoke about apprentices. I have already informed the House that the apprenticeship intakes have increased. I thank the honourable member for his general comments.

I can assure the member for Mount Coot-tha that this legislation will encourage joint activities with industry. That is what it is all about. In regard to clause 6 and the future of the Minister to foster industry appreciation or participation—the Government is moving on that.

In regard to the matter of literacy and numeracy—I am aware that many people are in need of literacy and numeracy education. In Brisbane 33 000 people cannot read or write.

**Mr Wells** interjected.

**Mr LESTER:** The honourable member should listen. I am trying to do something useful.

I have visited the Newmarket State High School. Again, in another joint venture with Education, TAFE teachers are available at that school. The school is providing some rooms. I am delighted to be able to report that more than 100 people are voluntarily helping to train people to read and write. As I say, I have visited that school and I have met those people and had a cup of tea with them. They are very happy that the Government has recognised what they are doing. I take this opportunity to thank those people who are making an effort to help others to learn to read and write.

The member for Mount Coot-tha raised the issue of intellectually handicapped young people. Many young people who do not have the required educational standard become apprentices. At present in Townsville an experiment is in progress. It appears to be working very, very well. It is the right of everybody, whether he is handicapped or not, to learn a trade, and I can assure the honourable member that the Government will be pursuing this matter.

The member for Mount Coot-tha raised the matter of a statement of aims. I simply say that the Government has spelt out what it is trying to do. This Bill is an interim Bill. It is the forerunner of a more wide-ranging Bill, and I believe that it will be quite useful.

I want to conclude by again thanking all honourable members for their contributions. I believe that the Government is taking education in the vocational field closer to more people, it is involving more people. I also want to thank our teachers and instructors. Many of them are pursuing courses of excellence far beyond the call of duty. The Government greatly appreciates that. Obviously, this co-operation is worth while.

I ask that honourable members get behind this new department. It does not matter to what party they belong. It is important. Everyone is going in the same direction. All honourable members want to give more people in Queensland the opportunity to pursue vocational education courses.

Motion agreed to.

#### Committee

Hon. V. P. Lester (Peak Downs—Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Affairs) in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 4, as read, agreed to.

Clause 5—

**Sir WILLIAM KNOX** (11.20 p.m.): I was interested to hear the Minister's response to my advocacy of a change in the status of the corporation sole. He made the remark that the buck stops with the Minister. Of course, that is not correct. The buck stops with the accountable officer.

At the moment, of course, the accountable officer is the under secretary of the department. If anything goes wrong, it is the under secretary, the accountable officer, who goes to gaol, not the Minister. Responsibility stops with the Minister. In certain circumstances, if the Minister has not been carrying out his duties, culpability stops with the Minister. But the buck—the money—stops with the accountable officer.

The Auditor-General, through the Treasurer's Instructions, gives instructions to the accountable officer, not to the Minister. The instructions now, of course, in the new policies of the Government give enormous powers and responsibility to the accountable officer. The accountable officer is answerable not only to the Auditor-General but also to this Parliament directly. In the new arrangement that the Government has in mind for restructuring the control of the public service, as announced already, there will be further accountability to this Parliament by permanent heads. That is welcomed.

"Responsibility" is the word, and it stops with the Minister. The finances of the department stop with the accountable officer. So in having as a corporation sole the Minister, who is not the accountable officer, the under secretary now is the accountable officer. One would presume that in the new Bill that the Minister is going to present to the House there will be a Chief Executive, Department of Employment, Vocational Education and Training, who most likely could be the accountable officer if the under secretary is not going to be the accountable officer of this new department of State. Presumably in the list of accountable officers published in the *Queensland Government Gazette* we will see "Chief Executive, Department of Employment, Vocational Education and Training".

Of course, up till now the accountable officer for these operations has been the Director-General of Education. So there has to be a change made in the official list of accountable officers. Because it has been Government policy to absolve Ministers of the responsibility of being corporations sole and giving it to the permanent head, where it should be—this is not something new; it has been done on a number of occasions in recent years—and simply because this piece of legislation was lifted out holus-bolus without any alteration, according to the words in the Education Act where the director-general is the accountable officer and the corporation sole, I think a mistake has been made in making the Minister the corporation sole.

The Treasurer of this State—a powerful political figure—was a corporation sole. The Queensland Government divested him of that office and made the Under Treasurer the corporation sole, or the corporation of the Treasury now the corporation sole. It may be that it is being changed to take away the corporation sole status of the Treasurer of the State; and rightly so, because the people who hold the office and who have the day-to-day responsibility of the funds of the department should be the accountable people. All statutory bodies of each department and all corporations set up by those departments by law are subject to the oversight of the accountable officer, who is usually, but not in every case, the permanent head of that department.

Earlier I read out the list of people who in recent years have become corporations sole. They include the commissioners, the administrators of each hospital in the State and the Water Resources Commissioner. The Minister for Racing, the Minister for Education and the Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Affairs are the only Ministers left who are still corporations sole. In the case of the Minister for Racing, it is only in relation to the operation of the Racing Development Fund, not all the other responsibilities that he has.

As I pointed out earlier, every Minister, by virtue of his office as a member of the Executive Council, is an agent of the corporation of the State anyway and has the right to enter into agreements on behalf of the State as long as all of those matters are subjected to the approval of the Governor in Council. That is the present position. There is no particular merit or virtue in having the Minister as a corporation sole. I know that it is not a great matter of public interest. However, at the same time it is a move in the wrong direction. The permanent head—in this case, the chief executive—should hold that position.

Therefore, I move the following amendment—

“At page 2, line 36, omit—

‘Minister’

and substitute—

‘Chief Executive Department of Employment, Vocational Education and Training’.”

**Mr LESTER:** Firstly, I thank Sir William Knox for informing me of the proposed amendment and for explaining to me beforehand the reasons behind it. That was very much appreciated.

We have checked with the draftsman, and it was his opinion that things should stay the way they are. Under the Westminster system, the Minister has ultimate responsibility for the department. Through the department he must give effect to Government policy. Therefore, it is appropriate that the Minister should administer the corporation which is to be established under the Act for the purpose of the department. In view of that, I am unable to accept the amendment.

**Question—**That the word proposed to be omitted stand part of the clause—put; and the Committee divided—



AYES, 68		NOES, 9
Ahern	Littleproud	Beanland
Ardill	McCauley	Beard
Austin	McElligott	Innes
Berghofer	McKechnie	Knox
Booth	Mackenroth	Lee
Borbidge	McLean	Lickiss
Braddy	McPhie	Schuntner
Burns	Menzel	
Burreket	Milliner	
Campbell	Muntz	
Chapman	Neal	
Clauson	Nelson	
Comben	Newton	
Cooper	Palaszczuk	
Davis	Prest	
De Lacy	Randell	
Eaton	Row	
Elliott	Sherrin	
Fraser	Simpson	
Gately	Slack	
Gibbs, I. J.	Smith	
Gibbs, R. J.	Smyth	
Gilmore	Stoneman	
Glasson	Tenni	
Goss	Underwood	
Gunn	Vaughan	
Hamill	Veivers	
Harper	Warburton	
Harver	Warner	
Hayward	Wells	
Hinton	Yewdale	
Hobbs		
Katter	<i>Tellers:</i>	<i>Tellers:</i>
Lester	FitzGerald	Sherlock
Lingard	Stephan	Gygar

Resolved in the affirmative.

Clause 5, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 6 to 12, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

### Third Reading

Bill, on motion of Mr Lester, by leave, read a third time.

### ADJOURNMENT

**Hon. B. D. AUSTIN** (Nicklin—Leader of the House) (11.39 p.m.): I move:

“That the House do now adjourn.”

### University of Queensland Medical School Academic Staff

**Mr SHERLOCK** (Ashgrove) (11.39 p.m.): Successive Health Ministers have not come to grips with real issues involving the health system in Queensland. A series of preventable crises in health care have occurred over a period. I believe that those crises reflect the order of priorities put on health by the Government in this State and on other basic concerns that affect Queensland families.

Time and again, the Government has demonstrated its crane mentality. It is prepared to outlay large capital sums on health but it has expended lightly on infrastructure and on providing funds for ongoing services. Three recent examples have arisen of the plight of Health Ministers who are not prepared to tackle hard problems.

Earlier this evening I referred to the crisis in the University of Queensland Medical School that threatens the very existence of that school. That crisis has arisen because

successive Health Ministers have failed to grasp the nettle, despite protracted calls from clinical academic staff. For over a decade Ministers have not been prepared to tackle the problem and the current Minister will not even answer telephone calls from senior clinical academics and will not talk to them.

Successive Health Ministers have been made aware of the problems facing the Queensland Medical School not only by their departmental officers and senior university administrators, but also by the clinical academics themselves. In 1987 the Premier, Mr Ahern, who at that time was the Minister for Health, visited the major clinical departments of medicine and surgery and was personally apprised of the situation. At that time he promised a solution, and 12 months down the track the crisis predicted at those meetings is here and a solution has not yet been found.

An appropriate mechanism must be established to ensure that the clinical academics of Queensland enjoy salary equity with the visiting and full-time staff with whom they work shoulder to shoulder at the operating table day after day and week after week in Queensland's public hospitals. They seek parity with their colleagues in New South Wales. This 20-year-old problem must be solved permanently. The closure of the Queensland Medical School cannot be countenanced simply because academic salaries in other States or the financial rewards of full-time and private practice in Queensland are so much greater than can be provided by the Queensland University. The current clinical facilities of the medical school cannot be retained and academic staff cannot be recruited to fill the current vacancies which are running at approximately 20 per cent. At the present time each of the clinical academics is providing between 20 and 30 man-hours per week for 2 or 2½ days, and neither they nor the university are being paid for that experience.

Recently there was an experience at the Princess Alexandra Hospital where nurses were evicted from accommodation. This occurred at the worst possible time with the proximity of Expo and the rental hikes that are occurring all over town at the present time. This was an appalling time for young people to lose the security of that accommodation.

**Mrs HARVEY:** I rise to a point of order. The honourable member for Ashgrove is deliberately misleading this House. No nurses have been evicted, nor will any be evicted. I have spoken to Mr Bill Job this afternoon and he has again confirmed that no-one has been evicted from that hospital. The member is deliberately misleading this House.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row):** Order! Order!

**Mr Comben** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr Comben** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! Order! I warn the honourable member for Windsor under Standing Order 123A for disobeying the Chair. I have called for order half a dozen times and the honourable member has ignored me.

**Mr Comben:** If she is going to mislead the House, what do you expect?

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! I will ask the honourable member to leave the Chamber under Standing Order No. 123A if he argues with me. Order! In my opinion it is not clearly established that there is a point of order, and I ask the honourable member for Ashgrove to continue.

**Mr SHERLOCK:** This is an example of an arrogant Minister who has had ample time to speak to this House during ministerial statements taking up the time of back-benchers, who have limited opportunity to speak on critical issues.

I had intended to spend a couple of minutes speaking about the crisis in the psychiatric ward at the Townsville Hospital at the present time, but time will preclude me from doing so. Very serious allegations are being made and prima facie charges—

Time expired.

#### **Police Escorts for Road Trains**

**Mr HOBBS (Warrego) (11.44 p.m.):** Tonight I wish to bring to the attention of the House a matter that concerns the Department of Main Roads. This problem is affecting my electorate in the western areas of Queensland and has arisen through the closure of the Condamine Highway due to flooding.

The people in the area do not mind flooding and are very pleased that the rain has finally come to the area. Unfortunately, it has not rained everywhere and there is still a great deal of drought-stricken country, particularly further west in my electorate where there are many areas of land which have only had half an inch or an inch of rain. Yet in the south-eastern areas of the State the rain can be measured in feet.

There certainly was a vast difference in the amount of rainfall in different areas. Because of that some stock have to be moved and that is what I want to speak about tonight. The road trains come from Charleville or Quilpie down through Roma and take the Condamine Highway from Roma to Dalby and Toowoomba. Problems arise if the Condamine Highway is closed and the road trains have to use what is known as the down-the-line road from Miles and Chinchilla. If they use that road, the regulation provides that they have to have a police or private escort. The problem with that is the terrific cost involved with the police escort and the inconvenience and additional cost for a private escort. It is most unsatisfactory. If police are used it takes a lot of manpower to undertake the escort duties. The police have enough to do as it is without having to worry about trying to get road trains through these areas.

I am asking that in future during flood-times the alternative route be offered to operators. With floods or damage to bridges and roads, the need to use the alternative route can arise at any time. However, it is usually only at flood-times, which do not happen very often. The road trains need an alternative route that they can use to get the livestock to the markets.

Transport costs to the producer and to the transport-operator are certainly currently very high. Fuel prices are exorbitant. All honourable members know about the high excise that is levied on fuel. Roads are starting to deteriorate but not a lot of money is coming back for work on them, particularly from the Federal Government. I will not enter into debate on that subject tonight.

I have a lot of respect for the transport-operators—the truckies. They have their problems. They have to pay a lot of money for their trucks. It is not unusual for a couple of hundred thousand dollars to be paid for a road train with its trailers. There are many overheads. The depots cost a lot of money to operate and run efficiently. If transport-operators find that additional escort charges are placed on them, that cost will be reflected in the charge to producers, who are at the end of the line and have to pick up the tab. The department needs to look very, very seriously at this issue and ascertain if there is a real need for these escorts. I do not think there is.

The trucking industry always seems to be either flat out or going quite slowly. At present the trucks are running absolutely flat out. Most drivers have been working around the clock. At present they have no time at all to spare. The last thing needed is to have trucks ferrying one trailer at a time from, say, Roma to Dalby. Sometimes the road trains can actually get to Miles and perhaps drop one trailer there, go on to Dalby and then return.

Time expired.

### Fire Services Levy

**Mr PREST** (Port Curtis) (11.49 p.m.): For the past three or four years we Queenslanders have been ripped off by the National Party Government's fire services levy imposed on the ordinary home-owner. For years we have been told untruths by the Ministers in charge of fire services in relation to the deficit and the money borrowed to cover the costs of the maintenance of fire services in Queensland. Those untruths were repeated in this House some time ago by the then Minister, Mr Martin Tenni.

The people of Queensland have been ripped off by the fire services levy ever since this Government changed from the old system of payments based on the insurance premiums paid on properties and their contents to the levy system.

At the time of the change-over, the Government employed two Tasmanians by the names of Paltridge and Ripper. Without a doubt, they were both rippers. The Tasmanian authorities were only too willing to give each of those fellows a one-way ticket to get rid of them; so they ended up in Queensland as employees of the State Fire Services to advise the Minister, who really knew nothing about fire services. In other words, there were Mr Tenni, Mr Paltridge and Mr Ripper, all without any knowledge; so it was a case of the blind leading the blind. We ended up with a fire service that was broke and in tatters.

The Ministers who followed Mr Tenni have both acknowledged the problems. Mr Neal did nothing to remedy the problems in the service and the fire levy imbalance. He was always talking about making a change—even about reverting to the insurance system—but talk is all that it was.

It was very obvious that the land-owners in the commercial and industrial sector made donations to National Party funds and that they had too much clout for any equitable change to be made to the system.

The present Minister, Mr Cooper, admits that previously the system of funding fire services was split 50/50 between domestic and commercial sectors, whereas today the domestic sector is contributing 65 per cent whilst the commercial and industrial sector is paying only 35 per cent. He, too, is saying that levies will increase. However, honourable members can bet their last dollar that it will again be at the expense of the domestic sector.

The whole of the Act must be amended to bring it up to date to meet the needs of and to make the payments compatible with the service that we receive.

I ask: why should some people in a declared board area—as is the case in the Murgon district—who are living some 30 to 40 kilometres out of town be charged a levy because they are in a declared district, even though they cannot be given adequate fire protection from that brigade, which only has one fire officer? Their homes would be burned to the ground before the brigade could be summoned, assemble and arrive at the fire. The Act must be changed to allow areas to be deleted from a district if the brigade cannot give a service.

Years ago, fire boards brought areas under a brigade district just so that the shire councillor for that area could have a seat on the fire brigade board. It was really done just to make him feel a little more important in the area. Now, because those areas are in a brigade district, they have to pay a levy.

Under the Act as it is today, a property cannot be deleted from a fire district unless the owner is prepared to be transferred into another fire district. For that reason alone, the Act must be changed to allow areas that cannot be given a fire service to be deleted from a district so that the people concerned do not have to pay the levy.

Besides, far too many Government appointees on fire boards will never set the world on fire. They are only on the boards for the prestige, the perks and the payments; so let the Minister change the Act so that we will have a better fire service in Queensland. It is quite obvious that the fire services legislation is very much out of date. Honourable members know that there are far too many boards and far too many representatives

who are merely seat-warmers. They are causing the domestic sector great expense. Years ago, under the insurance system, the fire services were in a much better state and people were not paying nearly as much as they are paying today.

In the past, when questions were asked about the deficit that had accumulated with fire services, we were always told that they were not in trouble. However, since Mr Tenni passed the responsibility to Mr Neal and, more recently, to Mr Cooper, the truth is coming out that something needs to be done. There is no use sweeping the matter under the carpet, saying that it will be done at some later date. We want it done today. It should be done before the House rises to give the people of Queensland better fire protection. The fire protection that they receive should be compatible with the charge that is being made upon them.

### **Benowa State High School Band**

**Mr VEIVERS** (Southport) (11.54 p.m.): I rise to bring to the attention of the House a critical position of the Benowa State High School band, which is going to play at Expo. I have written to Government departments about those young people. I have asked Expo to fund the band and to take an interest in the only State high school band that is representing Queensland at Expo. No interest has been shown at all. I have run into a brick wall.

Other secondary school bands will be playing at Expo but Benowa is the only State high school band that is playing. I find it totally reprehensible and irresponsible that that band does not even have enough money to travel in order to gain experience or to purchase uniforms. Nothing can be found for the band. It is just about destitute. I find that very sad.

To a certain extent, private schools can fund their own activities. Students attending private schools have wealthy parents who can throw in some money. However, the kids at Benowa are not in that happy position.

These young Queenslanders are trying hard to do the right thing by Queenslanders but Queenslanders down the coast are definitely not doing the right thing by them. I hope that the relevant Government departments will reconsider their positions in relation to granting funds to this band. Money is being paid out to secure other entertainers to appear at Expo. Why cannot the Expo Authority look after a State high school band, for God's sake? It is the only one in Queensland.

I also hope that personalities such as Peter Laurance of Sea World—a million kids a year visit Sea World—will dig into their pockets. Christopher Skase of the Sheraton Mirage might be able to throw in some money. Mike Gore, formerly of Sanctuary Cove, who reputedly has a few million dollars, might be able to throw in some money.

**Mr Prest** interjected.

**Mr VEIVERS:** Just let me finish. The honourable member has had his go.

Max Christmas is in the real estate game on the Gold Coast. Hopefully Max will be able to throw in some money, along with some other people. I sincerely hope that those people can see their way clear to get behind the Benowa State High School band and support their effort. The students of that school, their teachers and their parents have spent hundreds of hours of their free time, with no pay, to get that band to a sufficiently high level to enable it to play at this most important function that will put Queensland and Australia before the eyes of the world.

As I have already said, the Expo Authority has turned its back on this State high school and these young men and women who are endeavouring to be ambassadors for their school and for the Queensland Government.

I would like to know what I have to do to tap the purse-strings of Government or industry to help these very worthy young musicians to achieve their goal, which they so richly deserve.

### Crown of Thorns Starfish

**Mr WELLS (Murrumba) (11.58 p.m.):** Those honourable members who have survived till this midnight hour will be aware of the crown of thorns starfish and the devastation that it has caused to large portions of the Great Barrier Reef. However, no honourable member will be aware of the causes of the occasional infestations of crown of thorns starfish. The reason for that is that the scientists themselves have not yet decided what the causes are.

Some scientists believe that infestations of the crown of thorns starfish are a cyclical natural phenomenon which has occurred in the past, which will occur again and which the reef can survive. However, other scientists believe that infestations of the crown of thorns starfish are due to the fact that human beings have altered the water quality in the areas in which the crown of thorns starfish breed and have denuded the waters of those predators that prey on the crown of thorns starfish.

Whatever the truth, we as members of this Parliament do not know the answer and we cannot know the answer until the scientific studies on the matter are completed. Those scientific studies that are being undertaken at present by the Australian Institute of Marine Science include a number of very interesting projects. One of the projects that is being examined at present is one that involves drilling a core of sand at the bottom of the ocean and examining it to determine whether the fossil remains of crown of thorns starfish have survived from previous ages. If there are such remains, then of course the geological sediment will reveal that the crown of thorns starfish is something that has been around for a long while and that the reef will keep on surviving. If there are not, it will indicate that the crown of thorns starfish is a recent and therefore probably human-related phenomenon.

Another study that is being undertaken at present involves the search for a biological control for the crown of thorns starfish that would be specific to the crown of thorns starfish and would not damage the rest of the reef ecosystem.

**Mr Austin:** That might make a worse problem if they do that.

**Mr WELLS:** That is perfectly possible. If a biological control was sought, it would be necessary to find one which would be specific to the crown of thorns starfish and which would not stay around afterwards. Of course, such a biological control as that could only be used if it was determined that the crown of thorns starfish was a human-related phenomenon.

Research on the crown of thorns starfish is being conducted according to funding that is provided by the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority. The funding for that authority is being provided by both the Queensland Government and the Commonwealth Government. However, in the last full financial year, 1986-87, funding for scientific research into the crown of thorns starfish was reduced by 23 per cent. I emphasise that, until that scientific research comes up with the answers, we as members of Parliament and legislators will not know what action we should take. That cut in funding therefore will have retarded the research that is being undertaken at a time when the research needs to be brought forward.

The Great Barrier Reef benefits all Australians; however, it is a natural phenomenon that benefits Queenslanders particularly. As well as being the eighth wonder of the world, it is a great money spinner for Queensland in terms of the tourist industry. Therefore the Queensland Government ought to put direct funding into research to ensure that the results of the research are brought forward so that we can make a decision as to what action should be taken in respect of the crown of thorns starfish.

Recently I paid a visit to one of the sites of the most devastating infestations of the crown of thorns starfish, namely, Holbourne Island, which is located near Bowen. I visited the reef. What I saw at that reef was shocking. The local residents told me that only a month earlier the reef around the island had been a coral wonderland. The reef on which I dived was one on which there was no live hard coral at all; it had all been

destroyed and there were only the dead brown husks of coral formation. There were still a few fish around, but without the colourful camouflage of the coral in which they had previously hidden they had been reduced greatly by predators. The starfish were everywhere. At 10 feet or at 45 feet there were many starfish. They were completely in control of an ecosystem that they themselves had destroyed.

It might be that the crown of thorns starfish is a natural phenomenon; then again, it might not be. If they are not a natural phenomenon, right at this moment millions of crown of thorns starfish are clinging with their 15 arms and hundreds of suckers and everted stomachs to the defenceless beauty of the eighth wonder of the world, destroying it in an obscene feeding embrace. This Parliament should provide the funds to make sure that it is not a party to that destruction.

### Mount Etna Caves

Mr HINTON (Broadsound) (12.03 a.m.): I raise a matter concerning Mount Etna in central Queensland that has been of some interest to me since I became the member for Broadsound. Mount Etna has been an environmental controversy involving a large limestone mining operation in the area by Central Queensland Cement across an area that had a unique wilderness phenomenon, namely, a bat cleft nursery of the little bent-winged bat, which has been the subject of major interest for conservation groups in Queensland. A year ago I took an interest in this particular issue because I felt that the nursery had to be preserved and was something that could be developed, and in fact will be developed, as a considerable tourist attraction in central Queensland.

I am very pleased to be able to report to the House, as everyone is well aware, that the Government took some interest in this, and events culminated in a visit to the area by the Premier of Queensland, Mr Ahern. At that time he declared 17 hectares of that mountain to be an official purposes reserve under the trusteeship of the Mines Department and also the National Parks and Wildlife Service for the preservation of that particular area. Since that time some extremist elements of the conservation movement have continued to agitate for the preservation of Mount Etna, despite the fact that the proper sanctuary has been given to the bats in that area and that it has been properly preserved.

A Mount Etna committee was formed. On 7 April the committee issued a press release in the following terms—

“The Mount Etna Committee has claimed that Premier Ahern’s much publicised ‘SOLUTION’ to the Mount Etna Caves dispute is already in tatters.

A spokesman for the committee, Mr. Craig Hardy, said recent actions taken by Central Queensland Cement . . . and the Queensland Government show that the Premier’s reserve proposal was never anything more than a confidence trick.”

That extremist view is not supported by the majority of the conservation movement either in central Queensland or, indeed, at a State level.

I refer now to a letter dated 11 April 1988 that was written by the Director of the Wildlife Preservation Society of Queensland, Mr Don Henry, to the Premier, in which he said—

“We welcomed your announcement of the protection of a substantial area of Mt. Etna earlier this year. This was a valuable step forward in protecting particularly the Bat Cleft area and surrounds. The action of the company in surrendering the majority of Mining Lease 326 was also commendable.”

It certainly was. In relation to mining—that company reduced itself to a 30-year reserve, whereas previously it had available approximately 100 years of limestone-mining. That company acted in a very responsible manner by recognising the uniqueness of the area.

This particular group is now making claims in the media that need to be refuted. It claims that the Mount Etna departmental official purposes reserve will not be a secure tenure. That is a ridiculous claim. If it was an environmental park, I suppose that it could be seen to be more secure. In fact, under the trusteeship of the National Parks and Wildlife Service and the Mines Department, it is a very secure tenure. In fact, the

National Parks and Wildlife Service is now gearing up to promote the area as a tourist attraction.

The particular group to which I have referred has claimed also that the company intends to mine Mount Etna in the future. That is an indictment on that company, which has been very responsible throughout the whole episode and should be commended rather than be seen to be involved in an insidious plot. It has been claimed that, in any case, the bat cleft will be destroyed by mining in that area.

The mining lease covers 40 of the 46 cavernous areas of Mount Etna. As I said, the 30-year mining reserve does not include the mountain, which will be preserved. All that that group is doing at this stage is engaging in publicity-seeking rather than entering into any worthwhile cause in relation to the conservation movement.

Time expired.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 12.08 a.m. (Wednesday).