

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**THURSDAY, 13 OCTOBER 1988**

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

**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT****Comments by Member for Mount Coot-tha about Hervey Bay Senior College**

**Hon. V. P. LESTER** (Peak Downs—Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Affairs) (10.01 a.m.), by leave: I wish to raise in this House today the serious matter of the uninformed allegations that were made by the Liberal spokesman on Education, Mr Schuntner, about the Hervey Bay Senior College, its staff and all concerned with it. I must say that it was one of the most scurrilous attacks on the personal staff of this college that I have ever seen. The honourable member should not try to get out of it. I have all of the evidence here. The gentleman concerned, Mr Schuntner, told the *Observer* that he would like to see a comprehensive investigation and evaluation of the college and that it should be done by an independent expert. He said that the college has been a controversial project from the start and that there may be some big problems.

Mr Speaker, the first thing that should be considered is the fact that the honourable member has put under threat your independence as the Speaker. The Liberal Party espouses the Westminster system and the independence of the Speaker. As all honourable members are aware, you were the guiding hand in the implementation of this college. As Education Minister, you made it happen. It is an innovative project. It has been highly successful.

Mr Speaker, for you to answer this matter properly you would need to temporarily leave your chair as Speaker, come down to the floor of the House and engage in a cheap, political, mud-slinging match. But that is not your role as the Speaker.

The honourable member did not even have the courage to go to the college. He did not go near it. He made the allegations about its staff from outside without having been informed. I have never had a complaint from either a student or a parent of a student at that college. Quite clearly, the honourable member is totally uninformed.

**Mr SCHUNTNER:** I rise to a point of order.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! What is the honourable member's point of order? Under which Standing Order does he rise?

**Mr SCHUNTNER:** That I find offensive the words that I have not visited the college. I have visited it. I find them offensive and ask that they be withdrawn.

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

**Mr LESTER:** The newspaper articles show clearly that the honourable member has attacked the integrity of the people and the college by talking about inquiries, big problems and things such as that. He cannot get away from that.

I will relate to the House the reaction from the staff and the student council of the college. They said that the statements about the Hervey Bay Senior College attributed to Mr Lyle Schuntner on 6 October in yet another newspaper—the other one was the *Observer*; this one was the *Maryborough-Hervey Bay Chronicle*, so the honourable member really had a field day when he was up there—"have challenged the capacities and dedication of the college teachers as well as the integrity and character of all members of the student body." They also said—

"Such an assault, based as it was on hearsay rather than observed fact, has undermined the morale of a very qualified hard working and student-centred staff. Reactions have varied from anger to a 'what's the use of trying' response."

They stated further—

“Probably of greater concern has been the influence of Mr Schuntner’s comments on the self-esteem of the Hervey Bay Senior College student body. These young adults have come to believe in themselves and their capacity to contribute positively to our society. Visitors to the college invariably comment on how friendly, happy, co-operative and well-adjusted the students are.”

I will now deal with the record of these particular colleges and in particular the record of this college. A senior college offers a choice of tertiary entrance education or hands-on experience after Year 10. At the Hervey Bay Senior College, 20 students—or 21 per cent—attained a TE score of 900 or more. That is well above the State average. In addition, 47 per cent of the students attained a TE score of 800 or more, which is markedly better than the State average of 40 per cent. That includes students attending private schools as well. Trying to condemn the ability of this college and the results of this college is absolute hooey.

I want to speak about senior colleges for a moment and refer to some of the comments that have been published in the media. One such article was headed, “Rush for college. New style of education’s a big winner”. In fact, I am led to believe that, at the Alexandra Hills college, five times as many people are applying for places as there are student places.

In relation to the Hervey Bay Senior College—a great number of people from Maryborough want to go to that college to be trained and taught.

Mr Schuntner became worried about the awfully negative reaction to what he had done. In a later press statement, he tried to say that it really was not the college he was attacking, but rather the choice of education. I simply say to him, “What about the people in Emerald who go to a very good high school?” They do not have a senior college at Emerald, so what about their choice of education? What about the choice of education for people who live in Rockhampton or anywhere else? At least senior colleges provide a choice of education. Based on TE scores, the tertiary education that is offered appears to be better than the conventional type of education.

The member for Mount Coot-tha stands condemned for putting at risk the integrity of these wonderful people who do so much to enhance education ethics in this great State.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### World Heritage Listing of Cape York Peninsula

**Hon. G. H. MUNTZ** (Whitsunday—Minister for Environment, Conservation and Tourism) (10.09 a.m.), by leave: On 17 September 1988, the *Courier-Mail* carried a report quoting a spokesman for Senator Richardson as saying that there is no World Heritage nomination hit-list and that there are no plans to nominate Cape York for inclusion on the World Heritage List. That same spokesman reaffirmed a statement by Senator Richardson on 24 March that Cape York was not under consideration for World Heritage listing. I hope Mr Scott is listening to this. I can only describe that statement as sheer nonsense. The facts are that there is a hit-list.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! There is far too much audible conversation in the Chamber. Members will please come to order.

**Mr MUNTZ:** The Australian Conservation Foundation has come out with its hit-list in glorious colour. I refer honourable members to a recently released two-volume, glossy publication, *Australia’s Wilderness Heritage*—and I have a copy with me—published by the Weldon Publishing Company in association with the Australian Conservation Foundation. Incidentally, the foundation received a grant of \$149,300 of taxpayers’ money from the Federal Government in the 1987-88 financial year.

I will quote a few lines from volume 1 of the book to inform honourable members what the book is all about. In paragraph two of the introduction, written by a former Director of the Australian Conservation Foundation, reference is made to the existing seven areas of Australia that are on the World Heritage List. The paragraph then states—

“Undoubtedly there will be more, and some of those already inscribed will be extended. Recognising that this is a dynamic process, Australia’s Wilderness Heritage also describes other areas which the Australian Conservation Foundation believes have the potential to become part of the world heritage. For the entire continent, the list could eventually include twenty to thirty places, and the final chapter suggests a range of other possibilities.”

Let me inform the House of the Australian Conservation Foundation’s hit-list as it relates to Queensland. Firstly, of course, there are the north Queensland rainforests. But now, to the new areas—

- Number 1 is the Great Sandy region—Fraser Island, Cooloola and the Great Sandy Strait between Fraser Island and the mainland. They are proposed for definite listing, with Moreton Island, in particular, and Stradbroke and Bribie Islands receiving honourable mention.
- Number 2 is Cape York Peninsula. I might mention that I am talking about an area that is bigger than England and Wales put together—an area of approximately 15 million hectares. It is unbelievable that any Government could nominate this area and ask countries such as Cuba and Bulgaria to recommend what should be done with land in north Queensland.

**Mr Scott:** Oh, yes—mention Cape York.

**Mr MUNTZ:** Mr Scott can say whatever he likes. It is about time he stood up and spoke out in support of the rights of the people who live at Cape York. The greenies want the 15 million hectares of Cape York. The proposed Cape York space station would be a casualty of their greed.

- Number 3 is an area identified as the eastern arid region. This includes the channel country of south-west Queensland and areas of the Simpson Desert in Queensland, the Northern Territory and South Australia. The documentation for this nomination has been prepared. The channel country consists of some of the richest grazing land in this State. Queensland cannot afford to be dictated to by overseas countries when deciding what to do with the land.
- Number 4 is the rainforests of southern Queensland. Particular reference is made to the Lamington National Park and the Conondale Range. In other words, the rainforest areas would include the hinterland of the Gold Coast and the hinterland of the Sunshine Coast.
- Number 5 is the Riversleigh fossil area in the gulf country.

However, this is not all. The greenies also want—and the Australian Government wants—the Great Barrier Reef marine park extended as far north as Papua New Guinea. They also express the view that commercial fishing is damaging the reef. Bang goes our reef fishing industry as well!

But what backing does this list have? Is it included in just another well-produced, coffee-table book? The answer is, “No”. It has the full backing of none other than one Robert James Lee Hawke, who has written the foreword for the book. He has endorsed the contents of it. The Labor Party—including members of the Opposition in this State—have endorsed its publication.

**Mr R. J. Gibbs:** Of course we have.

**Mr MUNTZ:** The greenies have now come out of the closet. The honourable member wants to lock away the whole of Cape York, the channel country, all the islands along the Queensland coast and the hinterland of the Gold Coast and the Sunshine Coast. The evidence is available for all to see. The objective of the greenies is to tie up

as much of Australia as possible. Their claims are never-ending. How soon will their supermarket shopping list become a hypermarket list? They will never be satisfied. Aided and abetted by green Labor, they want to take over land management in Australia. Queenslanders have an inherent right to manage their own land.

**Mr ARDILL:** I rise to a point of order, Mr Speaker.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! What is the point of order on which the honourable member rises?

**Mr ARDILL:** It is impossible to hear the Minister because of all the talk that is going on in the National Party benches.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! That point of order is facetious.

**Mr Comben:** It is true.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I warn the member for Windsor under Standing Order 123A.

**Mr Comben:** I can't hear him.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I warn the honourable member again under Standing Order 123A. The House will come to order.

**Mr MUNTZ:** As I was saying, Queensland does not want their interference. Queenslanders do not need their help, or the help of the Federal Government or overseas organisations, in managing our land.

The book to which I have referred is nothing less than blatant greenie propaganda, but it is a dangerous production because some uninformed people will be fooled by the pretty pictures. Its only redeeming feature is that the greenies' World Heritage hit-list is now exposed for all to see. But is there also a hidden agenda? What have they not been willing to disclose?

I conclude by summarising the areas of the State of Queensland that the Commonwealth will control if the Australian Conservation Foundation is successful in achieving all its objectives—

- Fraser Island
- Cooloola
- Great Sandy Strait
- Moreton Island
- Stradbroke Island
- Bribie Island
- Lamington National Park
- Conondale Range
- Other south-east Queensland rainforest areas
- Cape York
- Riversleigh
- Channel country
- Simpson Desert
- An extended Great Barrier Reef marine park.

Of course, I have not mentioned the 9 000 square kilometres of north Queensland proposed for World Heritage listing, which incidentally is not all rainforest. In fact only two-thirds of it is rainforest. I have not mentioned the other large areas around Australia that the Federal Government is eyeing off with evil intent. These areas are listed for all to see.

This is a very serious matter and the Hawke Government and the ultra-greenies must be stopped now.

### PAPERS

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

#### Reports—

- Rural Fires Board of Queensland for the year ended 30 June 1988
- Queensland Government Printing Office for the year ended 30 June 1988
- State Fire Services for the year ended 30 June 1988
- Government Motor Garage for the year ended 30 June 1988
- Queensland Probation and Parole Service for the year ended 30 June 1988
- State Stores Board for the year ended 30 June 1988
- Parole Board for the year ended 30 June 1988.

### QUESTIONS UPON NOTICE

#### 1. Housing Commission Waiting-list on Gold Coast

Mr GATELY asked the Minister for Family Services and Welfare Housing—

“(1) Is he aware that 578 families, 502 single parents, 183 welfare applicants and 394 pensioners are on the Gold Coast Queensland Housing Commission waiting list, which represents approximately 4239 persons requiring housing?”

(2) Is he aware of the increasing number of people being displaced from low-cost housing on the Gold Coast due to rapid development, together with the increased number of applicants for State housing accommodation, resulting in excessive waiting periods for applicants?

(3) Will he give an undertaking to ask for a deputation for me to meet with himself, the Federal Minister for Housing, the Federal Treasurer and the Prime Minister for urgent discussions with a request for approval for a one-off Special Purpose Grant to the Queensland Government to be made available within six months for low-cost housing so as to relieve the critical shortage which has been created by conditions outside this Government's control?

(4) Will he demand that part of Mr Keating's Budget surplus of \$5,500m be immediately allocated for the purpose of Gold Coast Government housing?”

Mr McKECHNIE: (1) Like the honourable member, I, too, am aware that there are many people waiting for Queensland Housing Commission homes on the Gold Coast, as there are in many other areas of Queensland. The current waiting-list figures are: Gold Coast, 1 657; and the total in Queensland, 12 621.

(2) With rapid development in tourist areas, low-cost rental accommodation is becoming extremely scarce. Similarly, existing commission accommodation is much in demand leading to long waiting-times. For this reason I have recently changed existing policy so that applicants on the Gold Coast are now entitled to apply for other areas between the Gold Coast and Brisbane, or in Brisbane. This means that those whose need is desperate enough can move to areas with much shorter waiting-times, such as the Beenleigh area. In order to further alleviate the situation, in 1988-89 I have had programmed for construction in the Gold Coast area 214 new commission dwellings—an increase of almost 40 per cent over the previous program.

Mr Mackenroth: The biggest problem you have got is that none of your National Party members live in their electorates.

Mr McKECHNIE: I will accept that interjection from the honourable member for Chatsworth. I receive repeated representations from members on the Gold Coast that further Housing Commission homes be provided in their electorates. I might add that I like having Housing Commission homes built in my electorate as well.

The program on the Gold Coast has been achieved by the Queensland Government despite the fact that there has been a decrease in real terms this financial year in the level of Commonwealth funding for housing. In fact, the amount of funding allocated this financial year by the Commonwealth for expenditure on housing through the commission is almost 8 per cent less than that for the previous year.

**Ms Warner:** You don't spend money on public housing, anyway.

**Mr McKECHNIE:** This Government has increased funding for public housing by 40 per cent, despite an 8 per cent decrease in real terms in the amount provided by the Commonwealth.

(3) I am sure that all honourable members are aware of my numerous appeals to the Federal Minister for housing, both publicly and privately over the last six months, for additional funds to ease the special housing crisis caused in Brisbane and the Gold Coast by Expo 88.

**Ms Warner:** You have used the public housing money irresponsibly for years.

**Mr McKECHNIE:** The honourable member keeps on interjecting. I am talking about her electorate. She has failed miserably to get even one extra cent from the Commonwealth for her electorate. I will help her electorate, whereas the Commonwealth will not.

The Federal Minister and his Government have failed to respond to my approaches. As requested by the honourable member, I will make approaches to the Prime Minister for discussions and make him and his Federal Cabinet colleagues aware of the acute problems on the Gold Coast and of difficulties in other areas of the State.

(4) I have already publicly criticised the Federal Government for budgeting for a \$5,500m surplus when there are so many people desperately in need of public housing.

## 2. Freeholding of Land at Turtle Cove

Mr INNES asked the Minister for Land Management—

“With reference to a parcel of land situated on the ocean side of the Cairns to Port Douglas road called Turtle Cove on which is built a tourist facility—

- (1) Is that parcel of land freehold?
- (2) Was the parcel of land formerly Crown land?
- (3) Who was the first person or company to acquire an interest or title from the Crown and when did that occur?
- (4) (a) What is the area of the land; (b) when was it freeholded; (c) who freeholded the land; and (d) what were the conditions of freeholding?”

**Mr GLASSON:** (1) The parcel of land in question is described as lot 26 on plan NR.7068 and is held under freehold tenure.

(2) This parcel of land was excised from timber reserve R.315, parish of Mowbray in 1962.

(3) This area of land was originally described as portion 122, parish of Mowbray and was purchased at auction on 1 May 1962 by P. and J. Paten at an upset rental of \$20 and was held as special lease 26423. It was subject to the following conditions—

- (i) The lessees shall use the leased land for the purpose of erecting and constructing a motel and for purposes incidental thereto.
- (ii) The lessees shall, within two years from the commencement of the lease and to the satisfaction of the Minister construct buildings on the leased land in accordance with plans and specifications approved by the council of the Shire of Douglas of a value of not less than \$10,000.

On 29 November 1968 this lease was transferred to George Quaid, Junior. Upon application by Mr Quaid it was approved on 16 September 1970 to amend the boundaries of the lease, as the original area was not entirely suitable for the construction of a motel, due to the nature of the terrain. Consequently, a new special lease, 34577, was issued to Mr Quaid over portion 26, parish of Dulanban for a term of 30 years from 1 November 1970 and which was subject to the same special conditions as applied to the previous special lease 26423.

(4) (a) Portion 26, parish of Dulanban contains 5 561 square metres.

(b) On 23 February 1984 Executive authority was granted for the conversion of special lease 34577 to freeholding tenure and, subsequently, special lease purchase freehold No. 1389 was issued to Mr Quaid for a term of 10 years as from 17 January 1984. The special conditions attached to special lease 34577 were complied with prior to the approval to grant freehold title over the area.

(c) The land was freeholded by George Quaid, Junior.

(d) The purchasing price of the land was \$55,000 and the lessee elected to pay one-tenth deposit with the balance payable in annual instalments over a term of 10 years. Subsequently, the lessee paid out the balance owing on special lease purchase freehold 1389 on 18 March 1987 and a deed of grant over the land was signed and issued on 28 May 1987.

Information has just been given to me that George Quaid, Junior no longer holds the lease; as from 20 July 1988 the registered owner is James Sidney Howe Wills.

### 3. Applications for Land on Gold Coast Crown Industrial Estates

Mr VEIVERS asked the Minister for Industry, Small Business, Communications and Technology—

“As the applications for industrial land under his portfolio are increasing in the Gold Coast region, what action has he, and the Queensland Government, taken to reduce the waiting list that has built up since the implementation of the program?”

Mr **BORBIDGE**: I wish to thank the honourable member for the question, which clearly indicates the strong demand for industrial land on the Gold Coast. This strong industrial growth is a reflection of the growth being achieved throughout Queensland.

On the Gold Coast, the Crown industrial estates at Molendinar and Ernest Junction have proved to be particularly successful.

Mr **De Lacy**: They are only half full.

Mr **BORBIDGE**: In view of the letter to me from the member for Cairns of 4 October, I am surprised that he would dare interject. He raised a matter in this House relating to an industrial estate in Cairns demanding that the Government take action; now he has written to me asking the Government to back off. That shows the hypocrisy of the honourable member for Cairns.

In his letter the honourable member for Cairns said—

“I have today visited the premises and I am pleased to say that the Lease is at least being used for purposes for which it was intended. The new owners are conducting a Fence Shop business which involves the manufacture, sale, and erection of a variety of fences and garden equipment.”

Mr **De LACY**: I rise to a point of order.

Mr **SPEAKER**: Order! Under which Standing Order does the honourable member stand?

Mr **De LACY**: I ask the Minister to table the letter so that everybody can see the whole context.

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

**Mr De LACY:** I move—

“That the Minister table the letter to which he has referred.”

**Mr BORBIDGE:** I am more than happy to table the letter. However, I would just like to read out—

**Mr De Lacy:** Read the whole lot.

**Mr BORBIDGE:** It will be there. In his letter, the honourable member for Cairns went on to say—

“They have carried out some improvements already, including laying a concrete floor, 200 metres of fill, constructing a lockup and preparing for the construction of a leanto. They have plans in place for substantial additional improvements next year.

. . .

I therefore would not like anything I have said or done to prejudice the operations of the current lessees.”

What a hypocrite! I am more than happy to table the letter so that the honourable member's hypocrisy and political thuggery can be revealed to the people of his electorate.

**Mr De LACY:** Mr Speaker, the Minister is reading half the letter. He is not reading it in context. I ask him to withdraw the statements that he made at the conclusion, because I find them personally offensive. He has taken the words out of context. If he reads the whole letter, it will be found that it is the Minister's misrepresentation and the poor performance of his department that has created—

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Cairns will resume his seat. The member for Cairns has taken exception to the final remarks that the Minister made. I ask that they be withdrawn.

**Mr BORBIDGE:** If he is now saying that he did not write the letter that he signed—

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr BORBIDGE:** I will withdraw.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I understand the Minister is tabling the letter so that all honourable members can peruse it in full.

**Mr BORBIDGE:** Yes, that is correct.

**Mr Goss:** Have the guts to incorporate it in *Hansard*.

**Mr BORBIDGE:** I am tabling the letter.

Before I was interrupted, I was saying that the Crown industrial estates at Molendinar and Ernest Junction have been particularly successful. All land has been allocated on these estates and factories are either operating or under construction on the vast majority of sites.

To meet the continued demand, development of the Gold Coast Crown industrial estate at Labrador is well under way and it is planned that the first block will be available for lease early in 1989. Colgate Palmolive has chosen this estate to establish a major manufacturing plant and about 30 other firms have applied for land. The development of the Gold Coast Crown industrial estate is part of the program undertaken by the Government to ensure that, in areas where eligible manufacturers create a demand for factory sites, suitable land is available.

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

## QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

### World Heritage Listing of North Queensland Rainforest Areas

**Mr GOSS:** In directing a question to the Premier, I refer to his decision not to head a Queensland Government delegation to Brazil to lobby against the inclusion of north Queensland's rainforests on the World Heritage listing. I ask: is it correct that he advised yesterday's meeting of National Party members that he was not prepared to head that delegation because he did not want to be identified politically with a loss? Can he confirm that the cost of this political point-scoring mission by the Environment Minister, Mr Muntz, whose last trip to Paris was such a spectacular and costly failure, and the Justice Minister, Mr Clauson, as well as their accompanying entourage, will be in the vicinity of \$200,000—money which could be far better spent on job-creation programs to assist the timber communities of north Queensland?

**Mr AHERN:** The report in this morning's *Courier-Mail* was incomplete and inaccurate. The Government is prepared to go right down to the wire on this issue. It calls into question the credibility of the Australian Labor Party in Queensland inasmuch as it is prepared to back this total take-over of the powers of the people of Queensland in favour of decision-making direct from Canberra on a whole variety of issues in the future.

The Honourable the Minister for Environment indicated to the House this morning that this is just the first try-on as far as Queensland is concerned—the wet tropical rainforests. A whole range of other options are now being unveiled by the conservation movement, particularly in relation to Cape York, the area to which the Government is looking forward very confidently in regard to the space industry. That area is next on the hit-list. There are also the desert lands in western Queensland and the mulga lands.

**Mr Scott:** That is not true, and you know that.

**Mr AHERN:** This morning, evidence which indicates that was presented orally and was tabled in this House by the Minister under the signature of the Prime Minister of this country.

The Leader of the Opposition must come clean on these issues and say where the Labor Party stands. Is the Labor Party indicating to the people of Queensland that it is prepared to give power to Canberra to control huge tracts of land along the coast from Cooktown to Coolangatta and inland to the Northern Territory border in respect of land use generally and in respect of the mining industry? The Leader of the Opposition and the Australian Labor Party must come clean with the people of Queensland on that issue. Are they fighting very hard to give decision-making to Canberra or not? The time has come for the Labor Party to stop trying to hoodwink the people of Queensland and to assist the Government in its fight to have decision-making in this State remain with the communities of Queensland. Why is it that the unanimous views of the local authorities of Queensland are being totally ignored?

The Labor Party is getting set to sell out a vast number of other areas in respect of land-use decisions. It is as simple as that. The Labor Party in Queensland is on a sell-out course, and it will be sold out itself at the next election.

### Fitzgerald Commission of Inquiry; Investigation of Gold Coast and Albert Shire Rezoning Decisions

**Mr GOSS:** In directing a second question to the Premier, I refer to a report in the Gold Coast press last Saturday which stated that the Fitzgerald inquiry is investigating a number of Gold Coast ministerial rezonings and associated property developments. The report states—

“The possibility of bribes changing hands in return for town planning approvals will be probed by investigating officers.”

I ask: can the Premier confirm that the Fitzgerald inquiry is investigating such matters? Will he give an assurance that the Cabinet oath of secrecy will be lifted in relation to these investigations so that Cabinet Ministers can also talk freely about their knowledge of and involvement in Gold Coast and Albert Shire rezoning decisions?

**Mr AHERN:** When the Leader of the Opposition rose this morning, I thought that the people of Queensland were at last going to get a question on something that is of direct concern to them.

**Mr Goss:** Is not corruption important to the people of this State?

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The Leader of the Opposition has asked the Premier a question. The Premier will answer that question as he sees fit. If the Leader of the Opposition continually interjects, he will have to be dealt with.

**Mr AHERN:** The Leader of the Opposition is trying to make this place a second chamber of the Fitzgerald inquiry, which he does by the day. The truth of the issue is that the Fitzgerald commission is carrying out a total examination into corruption in this State. Every request by that commission has been met. Requests for resources, for powers and for a widening of the terms of reference have all been met. When a request was made in respect of the oath of secrecy of Cabinet Ministers and former Cabinet Ministers, approval was given on all points. When a request was made to make Cabinet papers available, they were made freely available on all matters.

The issues that Mr Tony Fitzgerald, QC, is pursuing and how he is pursuing them are matters for him. I do not know whether he is investigating such matters or not. It is a question for him. He does not have to ask me, nor should he; nor should I ask him.

**Mr Goss:** You don't know?

**Mr AHERN:** I don't know.

The issue is quite clear. If the Leader of the Opposition wants to appear before the Fitzgerald inquiry as an advocate or a witness, he should go up to the other end of George Street and do it, and let Tony Fitzgerald get on with the job.

#### **Queensland Government Support for Sporting Activities**

**Mr STEPHAN:** In directing a question to the Minister for Education, I refer to the contribution by the Queensland Government to encouraging sport and the role that it has played in encouraging sporting activities. I cite the example of the Seiko Target 88 Swimming Squad. I ask: what was the level of the Government's involvement in the Seiko Target 88 Swimming Squad? In addition, does the Minister consider that it was a successful campaign?

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** First of all, it is appropriate to congratulate all the Olympians from Queensland, particularly the Queensland swimmers, for their efforts. Last Saturday a public reception was held for them, and they received quite appropriate adulation.

It should be put on record that out of that 25-member swimming squad, 12 swimmers plus the coach, Laurie Lawrence, actually made the Australian side. In addition, I understand that those swimmers made up more than half the Australian side. Those 12 swimmers produced 9 finalists and 3 medals.

I also want to place on record that Seiko played an important part in putting together the Target squad. It has been the practice now for quite some time in swimming circles to identify those who have international talent and to give them appropriate training. It has paid off, and in this case it has paid off extremely well.

Seiko has been to the fore in providing assistance. The Queensland Government has also been to the fore as a result of its policies over the years of supporting sport, first of all at the base level right across the State and then identifying talent and making

money available to assist those talented people. The Queensland Government made available \$60,000 to help this Target squad.

**Mr Campbell:** You're cutting back on swimming in schools.

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** That is an interesting comment. That has nothing to do with this matter whatsoever.

I point out that there is one spot in Queensland in which the Government is having great difficulty in regard to school swimming. The Education Department has done as much as possible to cater for the people in the Darra/Inala area. There is a facility out there that is now inappropriate, and it has been found necessary to take children by bus to a swimming-pool called Amazons on the Brisbane River. That is quite inappropriate because a great deal of time is involved in getting the children there and back again, thus causing a loss of valuable school-time. It would be nice to think that the Brisbane City Council would be able to build a public swimming-pool out at Inala because it is beyond the capacity of the local p. and c. associations to build pools in the schoolgrounds.

As to the question of whether I consider that the efforts of the Queensland Government in regard to the Seiko Target 88 Swimming Squad were appropriate—yes, I do believe they were appropriate. However, I think the Government can go even further to ensure better co-ordination of the schooling requirements and coaching requirements of some of these talented young swimmers, if they are to remain at international level.

To that end, my assistant director-general, Dr Ken Robertson, is chairing a committee that is considering ways in which those things can be better co-ordinated. The Government looks forward to continued success on the part of our swimmers.

#### **Compensation and Restitution of Promotional Rights for Police Officers**

**Mr BURNS:** I direct a question to the Minister for Police as the Minister responsible for ensuring that police morale is maintained by way of decent wages, working conditions and just promotional and transfer rights for policemen and policewomen. I ask: what procedure has the Government put in place or what discussions has the Minister held with Commissioner Fitzgerald in relation to financial compensation and restitution of promotional rights for honest policemen and policewomen who have been victimised and, in some cases, hounded from the force because they stood up against the corruption and the crooked leadership that his Government backed?

As the Minister who represents the policemen and policewomen in Queensland, will he give the House a guarantee that police who were denied promotion will have their promotions approved and will be financially recompensed for the loss of promotion; that those who suffered punitive transfers at great personal cost to themselves and their families will be recompensed for their loss; and that those who have been served with writs by corrupt police—writs which were financed by the Government from the public purse—will be financially recompensed? Will the Minister stand up for the honest police who spoke out against corruption and who have paid the penalty for it?

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I want to read that question. I ask the honourable member to give it to me. If I believe it is in order, it will be placed on notice. The honourable member may ask his second question.

**Mr BURNS:** Do you think it is sub judice, Mr Speaker?

**Mr SPEAKER:** No. I want to read the question.

**Mr BURNS:** Do you want me to read it out again?

**Mr SPEAKER:** No, I do not.

### **Queensland Treasury Corporation Committees**

**Mr INNES:** My question will give the Premier a chance to talk about things other than the Fitzgerald inquiry. I ask: would he explain to honourable members or amplify the reports that we read in the press from time to time during the recess that certain committees have been established or that people have been appointed to chair committees associated with the new Queensland Treasury Corporation to give advice to the Government on the development of financial responsibility and on the economy?

Would the Premier put in context the role of the Private Sector Advisory Committee and the other committees that have been set up, and would he outline the type of persons who will be appointed to the committees that have been set up under the mantle of the new Queensland Treasury Corporation?

**Mr AHERN:** The issues relating to the Queensland Treasury Corporation and the Private Sector Advisory Committee are entirely different. The Queensland Treasury Corporation has two committees operating under its control, only one of which has been appointed at this stage. As the honourable member would be aware, the Queensland Treasury Corporation is an organisation that was formed with two primary purposes. One purpose was to give greater horsepower to the borrowing capacities of the Government and its statutory authorities. By "horsepower" I mean a greater borrowing capacity by virtue of scale. That has been proceeding carefully and successfully.

The Government has spoken to representatives of the QEGB and the Brisbane City Council, who have been most interested in the concept. They are participating on the advisory committee, which is advising on the borrowing sector. The idea is that the users will have representation on the management committee of advice. That is not an unreasonable course. As other persons from other statutory authorities are added to that committee, the view would be that they should have representation there. The idea is that, without compulsion, the Queensland Government is getting a much larger organisation capable of borrowing more money and therefore obtaining loans at a lower rate of interest. That appears to be working. So far, it appears that 50 basis points on the borrowing is the gain over what would have been the previous arrangement.

There are two facets to the Queensland Treasury Corporation. The borrowing facet, which has been completed, is proceeding well. The investment facet has still not yet been determined. The idea is to give private sector advice to the corporation, and that will give it some knowledge of the private sector industry in its process of investment in economic projects and equities, principally in Queensland.

The establishment of PRISEAC was a recommendation of Sir Ernest Savage. Sir Ernest Savage recommended to the Government that there should be a separate private sector committee to advise the Government and to give it direct advice not through the public service. That committee is headed by Ross Palmer. The Government has selected a number of people who represent a broad cross-section of the private-enterprise community to commence the presentation of that advice to the Government. That occurs not only in the investment area and the borrowing area but also in the area of policy advice generally and public service administration. It is taking some time to get the concept together.

Ross Palmer meets me regularly. I am most impressed with the original work that has been done. Each member of that committee is taking advice from his particular sector. For instance, Roger Marshall is forming contacts with the mining industry to ensure that its advice comes through PRISEAC to the Government. The whole exercise is working well. The Queensland Government is developing close contact with the private-enterprise community, and I am most impressed with it.

### **Initiatives by TAFE to Train Workers in CAD-CAM Technology**

**Mr SHERRIN:** In directing a question to the Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Affairs, I draw his attention to the strong demand within Queensland for workers trained to utilise new technologies, in particular, computer-aided design and

computer-aided machining, known as CAD-CAM. I ask: what initiatives have been undertaken by TAFE to train workers in the area of CAD-CAM technology?

**Mr LESTER:** I thank the honourable member for his question. An interesting statistic on computer technology has come to light and it relates to the Government's ability to deliver in that field. Students in Japan attend school on 240 days per year, which compares with 200 school days for students in Australia. If one wants to rationalise the matter, it can be said that, in the usual course of events, before entering post-secondary education Japanese students have an advantage of two additional years' education. I do not suggest for one moment that Queensland should adopt the Japanese system, but it is something of which honourable members should be extremely aware.

The other important facet that applies in other parts of the world is that industry supports the education of young people, particularly post-secondary education courses, by supplying technology and equipment and by providing other associated help. In comparison with other countries, industry support in Australia is very poor. That is a matter that must be addressed. Industry has to train its future workers and contribute significantly to that training so that Australia is in a position to compete with other countries. However, the situation is changing. Recently, Prime Computers made an investment of \$443,000 in the Mount Gravatt college of TAFE through the offset system. That represents a cost-saving of \$800,000 to the Mount Gravatt college of TAFE. Effectively, it means that 400 additional students will be able to be given assistance in computer training. As a result, the Queensland Government will be able to provide many additional courses.

Many small businesses are moving towards computerisation. Without disrespect to them, I have to admit that in some instances their knowledge is somewhat limited. Because of the innovations that are being introduced at the Mount Gravatt college, seminars will be held to assist small businesses to obtain expertise in simple computers. Conferences will also be held at the Mount Gravatt college of TAFE. I believe that recently the Ford motor company held a very successful conference at that college, during which the latest technology in engine-tuning and associated fields was discussed.

The added interest in computerisation has resulted in industries wanting to become involved. Project Pay Packet has created approximately 3 000 associate diploma positions in business, computer management and the tourism and hospitality industries. Computer technology will play a very important role in the future.

In answer to the honourable member's question: yes, we are moving forward. Industry is becoming involved. That move is welcomed, but it is only the start; we have to go further.

#### **Ipswich Amateur Turf Club**

**Mr R. J. GIBBS:** In directing a question to the Minister for Local Government and Racing, I refer to recent reports that up to \$1m has been misappropriated from the Ipswich Amateur Turf Club.

I ask: is the misappropriated money race-club money, or does it include moneys from the Racing Development Fund? Over what period has the misappropriation taken place? Are charges pending against any employee of the Ipswich Amateur Turf Club? Have the books of the IATC been audited on an annual basis and, if so, why was such an outstanding discrepancy not detected by the auditor? During the past three years, what scrutiny has the Minister's department applied to the financial affairs of the IATC?

**Mr RANDELL:** The honourable member's question is very comprehensive.

**Mr Cooper:** Questions, plural; there were about 10 questions.

**Mr RANDELL:** I will endeavour to answer the honourable member's questions as best I can. As I go through them the honourable member may remind me of some aspects that I may have forgotten. I would like to deal step by step with what happened at Ipswich.

I was informed by telephone that a discrepancy had been found in the accounts of the Ipswich Amateur Turf Club and that the matter had been reported to the police for investigation. It would be remiss of me to attempt to pre-empt anything that may occur during that investigation.

I understand that a report has been forwarded to the Queensland Turf Club, which is the principal club for that area. As soon as I was informed of the discrepancy I requested a meeting with the Chairman of the Queensland Turf Club, Sir Edward Williams. He came to my office with David Laing, the secretary of that club.

**Mr R. J. Gibbs:** How many days——

**Mr RANDELL:** I ask the honourable member to allow me to complete my answer.

The upshot of my discussions with Sir Edward Williams and Mr Laing was that I instructed officials from the Queensland Turf Club and my department to have onsite discussions with members of the Ipswich Amateur Turf Club in an endeavour to ascertain what is happening there.

Following that meeting a report was submitted to me, which I considered very thoroughly. In my capacity as Minister for Racing, and under the provisions of the Racing and Betting Act, I decided to dissolve the committee of the Ipswich Amateur Turf Club and appoint two joint administrators. Because that was a very serious step to take, I thought very long and hard about my decision. The administrators I appointed are very reputable men, namely, Mr David Laing, the secretary of the Queensland Turf Club, and Mr Dick McGruther, an accountant. I was pleased to note that the honourable member who asked this question congratulated me in the media.

**Mr R. J. Gibbs:** I didn't congratulate you.

**Mr RANDELL:** Yes, he did.

**Mr R. J. Gibbs:** Let's not draw the longbow.

**Mr RANDELL:** The honourable member welcomed that move. I believe that he said that I had done the right thing.

As I said, it took me quite a long time to make that decision, by which I am prepared to stand. I hope that the club will be back in operation in the near future. I am determined that racing will continue in Ipswich. Because a considerable amount of money is missing, that will not be an easy task. I hope that the honourable member will support the racing fraternity in the Ipswich area. I am awaiting a report from those two administrators.

In the past approximately \$3.5m has been paid to the Ipswich Amateur Turf Club from the Racing Development Fund. Advances from that fund are made available to trustees as and when progress claims for work are submitted. That sum of \$3.5m was given to that club only when progress was reported. When reports are received about certain work that has been done, receipts must be lodged so that we can ensure that the work has been undertaken. That is the only way in which a club will obtain money from the Racing Development Fund. I would not expect that any money that has been received from that fund would be involved in the discrepancies, but I am keeping a close eye on the whole operation.

I appeal to the honourable member to help the Ipswich Amateur Turf Club and the racing community in the district in an endeavour to maintain racing in Ipswich.

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

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**Mr De LACY (Cairns)** (10.59 a.m.), by leave: This morning, in answer to a question, the Minister for Industry, Mr Borbidge, made some comments which I found objectionable and offensive. I would like to put the matter straight.

Mr Borbidge stated that I have made representations on behalf of people in Cairns—which I have. However, by quoting selectively from a letter that I wrote to him, Mr Borbidge has resorted to the grubbiest trick in the book. More importantly, Mr Borbidge chose to make public a personal and confidential letter that I had written to him on behalf of some of my constituents.

**Mr BORBIDGE:** I rise to a point of order. The Opposition requested that I table the document.

**Mr De LACY:** I will refer very briefly to what the Minister was talking about this morning. George Raptis and a couple of others——

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I cannot allow the member to carry on a debate. If he had a personal explanation, I believe he has made it. I would suggest that he conclude his remarks.

**Mr De LACY:** To set the matter straight, I seek leave to have incorporated in *Hansard* the letter so tabled this morning.

Leave granted.

Maritime House  
18 Abbott Street  
Fax 070 51 7329  
Phone 070 51 2868

P.O. Box 1259  
Cairns, Q. 4870

4 October 1988.

The Hon. R. E. Borbidge, M.L.A.,  
Minister for Industry, Small Business,  
Communications & Technology,  
G.P.O. Box 1141,  
Brisbane, Q. 4001.

Dear Mr. Borbidge,  
Arumpin Pty. Ltd.

I refer to the Special Lease on the Portsmouth Industrial Estate, Cairns, currently vested with Arumpin Pty. Ltd., Located at 63 Aumuller Street.

The Lease was previously held by Al Engineering and sold to Arumpin Pty. Ltd. Earlier this year. It has been the subject of a number of speeches made by me in State Parliament because of the way in which the Lease was being traded.

I have today visited the premises and I am pleased to say that the Lease is at last being used for purposes for which it was intended. The new owners are conducting a Fence Shop business which involves the manufacture, sale, and erection of a variety of fences and garden equipment. They have carried out some improvements already, including laying a concrete floor, 200 metres of fill, constructing a lockup and preparing for the construction of a leanto. They have plans in place for substantial additional improvements next year.

It would be a great travesty of justice if your Department were to proceed with plans to have the Lease forfeited. It would also be a great irony. When I commenced my campaign to put an end to the shonky deals and the profiteering in land which was going on in Industrial Estates, I was at great pains to stress that people who were using the Estates in a productive and legitimate way were to be commended and assisted in every way possible. I therefore would not like anything I have said or done to prejudice the operations of the current lessees.

The great tragedy of the situation is that the original owners of Arumpin have walked away with the best part of \$200,000 and did nothing to honour the lease conditions. If they can be pursued in any way, shape or form, then you have my full blessing. But I repeat, I can see no value, nor do I support, action against any lessee who is honouring the lease conditions and meeting the objectives of the Industrial Estate Program, as the current lessees are doing.

Your favourable consideration of this request on behalf of the present lessees, Mr. and Mrs. Kleverlaan and Mr. and Mrs. Hewer, would be greatly appreciated.

Yours faithfully,  
KEITH De LACY, M.L.A.

At 11 a.m.,

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

## SUPPLY

### Estimates—Fourth Allotted Day

#### Estimates-in-Chief, 1988-89

#### Land Management

#### Department of Lands

Debate resumed from 12 October (see p. 1239).

**Mr McPHIE (Toowoomba North) (11.01 a.m.):** In looking through the Estimates of the Land Management portfolio I am struck by the number of changes and improvements that have occurred in the field of organisation and the provision of facilities over recent years. Those changes and improvements have received very little acknowledgement from the Opposition, the media or in any other way. However, there is a great record there that should be acknowledged. What has been achieved is totally in line with Government policy. It is in line with the recommendation of the Savage report, which this Government has been progressively implementing over recent years.

One overall aim of land management that is well exemplified is the provision of the best possible service at least cost to the public and client organisations. That is very definitely being achieved. I congratulate the Minister and his staff on that.

The Estimates cover a large number of areas. Possibly one of the most notable, and certainly one that is readily identifiable to anyone who goes to the Woolloongabba area, is the new Sunmap Centre, which houses the Department of Geographic Information. That department has made significant advances in the use of new technology and computers. It has produced a very impressive technical trade display at Expo 88. If any members have not seen that display and are interested in that sort of thing, I really think they should look at it. The department has gone ahead and made significant steps forward in that area. Computers and new technology are utilised in the mapping section of the Department of Geographic Information for land data. That technology is also used for valuations, titles and many other areas that the Minister's responsibility covers, such as the larger ones that are in the public eye.

The Minister is also responsible for stock routes and the control of vermin and weeds. Right throughout Queensland the Lands Department is doing a top job for rural industries. Restructuring has also occurred in the Minister's responsibilities. Forestry has been transferred from his portfolio. It is sad that, after so long, Forestry's relationship has been severed from his portfolio. However, it is a good move. Forestry, along with the National Parks and Wildlife Service, is now the responsibility of the Minister for Environment, Conservation and Tourism. Although it is sad that Forestry is no longer the responsibility of the Lands Department, it was a logical move to transfer it to a portfolio with which it has a lot of commonality.

The Valuer-General's Department is now the responsibility of the Minister for Land Management. That is a sensible move. That department is so tied up with land titles and land data that I really wonder why it was not transferred before.

Sensible changes have been made in relation to the Titles Office. That office is now known as the Department of Freehold Land Titles. It was transferred from the Justice Department to the Minister's responsibility. The new department was established to take effect from 1 July this year. These moves have put the Valuer-General's Department, the Titles Office and the Lands Department together under the one portfolio. It is a

sensible move. It is logical. As I mentioned before, it is in line with the rationalisation brought about by this Government in line with the policy directives and recommendations of the Savage committee.

When the Titles Office was the responsibility of the Justice Department, problems did occur. The Lands Office also had problems. In a number of ways, mainly because they were the responsibility of different Ministers, the interface between them was not as good as it could have been.

Where they are the responsibility of only one Minister in the one big portfolio, a far better and more streamlined service will be available to the public. A vital and integral component of the Department of Freehold Land Titles is the land information system. That system has been developed to specifically convert into a new lot on plan description the old titles, subdivisions, real property details, resubdivisions and so on that became confusing. Other Government members have already spoken about that in this debate.

New technology and digitisation are absolutely essential to enable this job to be done. Some 2 million titles had to be converted. The conversion of freehold titles has finished and the other conversions are proceeding at a fast rate. That will provide for quick reference and rapid updating of information. The records are accurate. A streamlined service is provided to the public. It has also provided for the simplification of records. The department's work has been significantly enhanced.

Mention has been made of the one-stop shop proposal. The ultimate aim of that is to fully computerise everything. It is expected that all the following information will be available from one place: leasehold land registration transactions and searches; Valuer-General's information, searches and answering of inquiries; plan purchases; and purchases of Sunmaps. In addition, when this system is developed throughout the State, stamp duty information will be available through co-operation between the department and Treasury. Group titles and building unit title transactions will also be able to be carried out. The provision of that type of information will be of tremendous assistance to the public and to the agents who service public needs.

Computerisation has provided a great deal of assistance because information on valuations is now available in more detail. In presenting his Estimates, the Minister mentioned the unimproved valuation system. I support the Minister's remarks and I support the system. I realise that problems are being experienced in certain areas with this unimproved valuation system, but I believe it is the best. No viable alternative has been produced that offers similar benefits. The system began on a Statewide basis in 1946. It is now functioning very well. The significance of unimproved valuation is that local authorities use it as a basis for the calculation of rates. I point out to the Committee that \$615m in revenue is collected by local authorities by the use of that system of valuation. The bases of calculation of the rates are the unimproved valuation and the statistical information that is provided by the Valuer-General.

State land tax amounted to \$62m in the last financial year. I would not object if that amount were decreased even further, although I realise it plays a vital part in producing income for the State. Unimproved valuation is the starting-point for all valuation apportionments for a property that is sold, and it is a recognised basis for numerous transactions throughout this State. The unimproved valuation system is also used as a basis for determining grants made to local authorities by the Queensland Local Government Grants Commission and the Commonwealth Grants Commission, although that fact is not often acknowledged. The unimproved valuation is a vital factor in determining fiscal equalisation for local authority areas. Through the introduction of computers and the updating of technology, the calculations can be made very rapidly, which could be of tremendous assistance.

Since the Estimates of the Department of Lands were last debated, a system of annual valuations has been introduced. If up-to-date computer equipment had not been available, the task of providing annual valuations would have been massive, and probably

impossible. The annual valuation process began in 1985. General land valuations previously were updated every five to eight years or so. The high rate of inflation resulted in that system's being unacceptable because it resulted in a complete loss of relativity in individual values of property, and marked variations occurred between shires. It was impossible to maintain any part of the relativity. Because a period of between five and eight years elapsed between general valuations, the rate of inflation caused valuations to increase massively. When the new valuations were announced, everybody started to scream because the increases were so great.

In contrast to that, the annual valuation scheme provides for increases to occur on an incremental basis and the system is able to keep pace with the rate of inflation. I do not intend to use the figures that have been extracted by officers of the Minister's department, but merely point out that the figures are available if required. The figures show that, since the annual land valuation system was introduced, a massive decrease has occurred in complaints and in the number of objections to valuations. The main reason for the decrease is that an element of relativity has been introduced, and massive increases in valuations are all in the past. People are now able to accept valuation increases, provided that valuations are updated regularly and are not too high. People fight like wildcats when their valuations have been increased enormously, and rightly so.

Although some difficulties have been experienced with the new system, most of them have been sorted out. I give credit to the Minister and to the Valuer-General, who is attending Parliament today, for their dedication and willingness to sort these problems out by consulting people and getting to the bottom of the problems. They have made every endeavour to simplify the process, and that is also a credit to them.

When changes occur, it is impossible to notify people by simply mailing the information. Although written notices sent through the post might be the ideal, the costs are monumental. I point out to the Committee that many properties are the subject of separate titles. I understand that there are approximately two million of them. If the Valuer-General's Department were to print notices and have them folded, put into an envelope and mailed, the manpower and funds required would result in prohibitive cost. Because the present system is so effective, it would not be worth all the expense to post notices of land valuation changes.

People are becoming used to the present system, which entails advertising in the press the changes that are proposed in each local authority. Details are made available for public inspection for a period of three weeks after the advertisements appear in the newspapers. Land-holders are able to inspect the valuations and find out what the increases will be. At the same time, they are able to compare the valuation for their property with the values given for similar properties. This readily available information has assisted in overcoming many of the objections that people previously had. However, if a person still wants to lodge an objection to a valuation, the right of appeal has been maintained. Overall, the system is working very well.

**Mr Davis:** I hope so.

**Mr McPHIE:** I draw the attention of the honourable member for Brisbane Central to the recent announcement made by the Minister that any Brisbane resident concerned about the recent annual valuation of his land can inspect the special display of all city valuations in the State Government's Anzac Square building. That display is currently being held, and I am sure that officers of the Valuer-General's Department would be pleased to see either the honourable member or any of his constituents.

**Mr Davis:** I have been there.

**Mr McPHIE:** If the honourable member would listen, I will tell him where to go. I will give him the phone number, too. The display is being held on the first floor of the State Government's Anzac Square building, 265 Edward Street in the city, and the inspection times are between 8.15 a.m. and 4.45 p.m. from Monday to Friday. The display ends this Friday, so the honourable member had better hurry. If he is unable to

inspect the display, he can obtain details of his valuation by telephoning the department on 07-2278176.

**Mr Davis:** I found out my area's valuation had gone up 26 per cent. So much for annual valuations!

**Mr McPHIE:** I doubt that that would be for an annual valuation. Relativity has to be introduced into the system. The honourable member should try to understand what is being done. There must be no more of those sweeping statements from the honourable member for Brisbane Central.

Apart from technology, the department is also concerned with the control of vermin and weeds in country areas across the State. A top job is being done by many people in the country areas. In many ways the job is routine and ongoing. Honourable members all know about the dingo barrier fence, which protects so much of Queensland's sheeplands, and the rabbit barrier fences that protect the good farmlands from the ravages of the rabbit plagues from the south. There has been increasing progress made and emphasis placed on biological control of insects and weeds. This method of control beats the alternative method of spraying with insecticides and produces better and more reliable results. Certainly biological control does not result in the side-effects that have been experienced with insecticides.

The best story about biological control relates to the cactoblastis moth, which cleared the prickly pear from so much of the western downs properties. Biological control has been considered for the control of many different vermin and weeds in the country areas. The people on the land put up with rodents, grasshoppers, rabbits, wild pigs, harrisia cactus, parthenium weed and burrs of all kinds. Has the honourable member ever had a burr under his saddle and been unable to cope with it?

**Mr Davis:** Do you know who brought them in? Your forefathers out there.

**Mr McPHIE:** By my forefathers, and by the honourable member's forefathers as well.

In addition, there is the rubber vine and all sorts of other problems. The battle to control the vermin and weeds continues. This work is being done by various boards and those who have the responsibility throughout these regions to provide protection. The people who are receiving the benefits are being asked to contribute through their local authorities towards the costs of control. I believe that is correct; although, some of the local authorities—especially those in the large cities—maintain that they do not have a specific problem and should not have to pay these precept levies. Most of the people who live in these areas should pay the levies because they live in areas that are covered by this overall protection, and many industries benefit from it. It is to the overall benefit of Queensland that rural land be protected as much as possible, and everyone across the State who benefits from it should be happy to contribute in some small way.

**Mr Davis:** Are you saying we should be paying for the rabbits, too?

**Mr McPHIE:** There are a few rabbits that Queensland should be protected from, and most of them are on the other side of the Chamber. This Government is not bringing in biological control to stamp them out, because it is quite happy to have them here.

I found an interesting article in the *Courier-Mail* dated 12 October 1988 which, I am sure, will be of concern to most honourable members. The article deals with the degradation of a large area of mulga country out west. I know this country very well from personal experience. It is an area that should cause concern. Various reasons are advanced as to why the degradation has occurred, such as drought and seasonal conditions, which are often the main reasons. However, when the going gets tough and the graziers have to make a living—or when their returns are high and they want to capitalise on them—they take a punt on the weather and hope for a good season. If they do not get

a good season, the end result is overstocking, which is one of the biggest problems in that country. It comes to the fore after a bad season. It is not possible to pre-judge conditions. I have no idea how to do it; nor do the people who have lived in this region all their lives, own large holdings and have tons of experience.

If honourable members opposite had paid attention, they would have seen that in the State Budget, in order to make some of the smaller places more viable and sort out a few of the problems, this Government made a \$50m allocation over three years for rationalisation in rural areas. I hope that some of that allocation will flow through to help the mulga country. After World War I, about 60 or 70 years ago, the ALP Government cut the land up into blocks that were far too small. That was a disgraceful move. If small holdings still exist out there, some of that \$50m should be used to straighten out the problem, thereby protecting the well-being of the mulga country. I know that the Minister for Tourism is looking for a viable area of mulga country for the establishment of a national park, and I hope that some progress will be made in that area in the ensuing 12 months.

I note in the Estimates that work will commence on 1 867 residential and industrial allotments during the year. That is a good money-spinner for the department and the Government. I am delighted that 52 of those allotments are in Toowoomba. It is a pity that there are not a few more. The department generated a cash surplus of \$23.4m in 1987-88, which is an increase of \$19m on the previous year's figure. I do not expect that that figure will continue to rise, because much of it came from the sale of these residential and industrial allotments. However, it exemplifies the onward-looking and progressive work done by this department, and, with further rationalisation and development of its legislative program, the department will continue to the benefit of Queensland in the years ahead.

I congratulate the Minister and the members of his department, Mr Baker, Mr Trickett, Mr Davies and the new man Mr John Cridland in the Department of Freehold Land Titles, on the work that they have done. They are giving Queensland value for money.

Time expired.

**Mr De LACY (Cairns) (11.22 a.m.):** I am pleased to speak to the Estimates of the Lands Department. Land is an issue that is of vital concern to the people of Queensland. Land-use decisions that are made today will impact very strongly on future generations of Queenslanders. That is why the members of this Parliament, as custodians of the land in this State, need to be very vigilant in overseeing the way in which the land is used. Land is a finite resource and, in the context of increasing population, it is a diminishing resource. It is, therefore, the best investment, and the means by which most rich people secure their riches.

When land is alienated into private hands, its monetary value increases, but most of its other values—its scenic, recreational, wilderness and scientific values, its role as part of the ecological and food cycles and so on—are diminished. As I said, most of the rich people of Queensland got rich by trading in land or property, but it is mostly all paper money. They have not created any real wealth; they have made themselves wealthy, but not the community.

Recently in Cairns we had a fund-raising exercise to get money for a Cairns campus of the James Cook University. Something like \$7m was pledged from the private sector, but virtually all of those pledges came from people who made their fortunes out of land development or trading in land. To a certain extent, the laws of economics are similar to the laws of physics.

**Mr Glasson:** Is it a sin to make money?

**Mr De LACY:** No. It is not even a sin to make money trading in land. I am making the point that most people who are rich gained their wealth by trading in land. I think there is too much of a bias on that, and I will come to that in a minute.

For every action there is an opposite and equal reaction. Every time someone gets rich without creating new wealth, someone else is that much poorer. We are all paying for those paper profits in the higher cost of housing blocks, in housing rents, in rents for every dinkum business person who attempts to sell a product, provide a service or manufacture something, and ultimately the consumer pays when a big margin is added to the price of every item purchased to pay for the rent.

When many rich people start pontificating about what is wrong with society, they talk about the break-down in traditional values, about dole bludgers and about people expecting something for nothing from society. They miss the obvious because they do not look in the mirror. They miss those people who bludge on society by taking out unearned profits, people who distort the system by creating paper profits—paper money, not real wealth.

At least the former Country Party used to stand for farmers, who were the productive people, the people who made their money by hard work, by producing on their land. Today we do not hear very much from the National Party about farmers, about the people who are productive in the real sense of the word. The National Party now represents the white-shoe brigade, the land speculators, the traders in property, the quick-quid merchants and the creators of paper profits.

This is the real cancer in our society and this is where our system has gone wrong. In recent weeks I have spent some time down on the Gold Coast checking matters. Honourable members should see what is going on down there. People talk in terms of hundreds of thousands of dollars—even millions—and buy property and immediately relist it. There are all sorts of deals, shonks, \$2 companies, selling Crown land by transferring shares in companies, sliding money from one company into another, dodging tax and so on. No wonder Trevor Boucher is after these people. Last week there was the spectre of the member for Aspley denigrating Mr Boucher for wanting to get a piece of this action. If the member for Aspley knew of the amount of money that was being siphoned off through large profits by people in this community who are not paying tax, she would not have put up the sort of defence that she uttered the other day. The only people down on the Gold Coast who are not getting rich are the ones who are doing the real work—the PAYE workers and the businesspersons trying to make a quid while paying exorbitant rents and so on.

The National Party Government aids and abets those who trade in land. This year I have been running a campaign to try to expose the way in which certain people are making huge profits by trading in Government land, that is, Crown land. The Queensland Government is making land available at subsidised or concessional rates, and individuals are skimming off all the profits and all the concessions for themselves.

On the Portsmith industrial estate in Cairns—this was referred to this morning by the Minister for Industry—George Raptis and a couple of others purchased a Crown industrial lease for \$200,000 and immediately resold it for \$400,000. After I exposed this scam last April, what did the Government do? What did the Minister for Land Management do? Nothing! What did the Minister for Industry, Mr Borbidge, do? He did nothing about George Raptis, but, as he mentioned this morning, his department is now harassing the genuine lessees who are attempting to conduct an industry in line with the lease conditions in addition to servicing the \$400,000 they paid to private land sharks for Government land. They paid that \$400,000 not for freehold land, but to George Raptis and his company for Government land. What a travesty of justice! What a pathetic reponse on the part of an incompetent Minister in charge of an incompetent department.

Of course, the Minister for Industry added a new dimension to that pathetic performance when this morning he stood in this Chamber and read a confidential letter that I had written to him on behalf of the present lessees, the ones who are trying to abide by the lease conditions. If ever a man stands condemned for his actions in this Chamber, it is the Minister for Industry. I hope he is judged accordingly.

In August I exposed another scam on the Molendinar estate at the Gold Coast. A lessee who had been paying subsidised rent at the rate of \$7 a week for nine years for two acres of prime, fully serviced industrial land just 10 minutes from the heart of Surfers Paradise sold out for a cool profit on the land—it was just the land; there was no business operating—of \$200,000. It was sold to a \$2 shelf company at that. At the same time the shelf company had the land on the market for \$750,000. It planned to make a profit of \$385,000 for an all-up investment of \$15,000. I am pleased to say that my publicity seems to have prevented that sale. However, the initial sale has gone through, which makes a joke of the lease conditions, the professionalism of the department and the objects of industrial estates.

As I have said numerous times in this Chamber, this sort of thing is happening everywhere. Wheeling and dealing in Crown land is in plague proportions. I will give the Committee another example by referring to a property located at 21 Activity Crescent, Ernest Junction Crown industrial estate. It is special lease No. 44085. The lease, together with the improvements thereon, is up for sale for \$475,000, and the price is firm. No business is being conducted on the premises. There is a building of approximately 900 square metres, which represents a land utilisation of about 20 per cent. After seven years, only 20 per cent of the land is being used. In no sense of the word, therefore, have the lease conditions been met.

The first condition of all such special leases says quite unequivocally that “the lessee shall . . . establish an approved industry on the land and shall maintain such industry during the balance of the said term”. That condition is a straight excerpt from the Land Act and, as such, I believe it to be beyond the Minister’s authority to approve freeholding unless an industry is being carried out. I point out that the Minister has given permission for the freeholding. It is still a Crown lease, although prospective buyers have been advised that freehold title will be available. On making further inquiries, it seems that the Land Administration Commission has approved an application to freehold the land.

The requirement that lease conditions be met prior to freeholding proved once again to be spurious. Furthermore, the freeholding is obviously being granted in this instance simply so that the lessees can profit from the sale of the land. At today’s prices—\$200 per square metre—the building would have cost approximately \$170,000 to build. Freehold conversion has been set at \$82,000. The person concerned, Jill Carol Althaus, stands to make \$220,000 from the sale of Government land. I repeat that it is from the sale of Government land, not private land. In those circumstances, it is as easy as falling off a log to make money.

I will restate my objection. That land is being leased from the Crown at \$168 per annum—\$3 per week for approximately two acres; it is not producing any wealth in the sense that there is no industry being operated, nor business being sold; the objectives of the industrial estate program are not being met; and the profit is simply on the sale of Government land—tax-payers’ land—on which the person concerned has been receiving a massive subsidy on rent for seven years. Once again, certain people are getting rich by profiteering in Government-subsidised land, while at the same time they are pushing up the price of land to genuine business people. It is a disgrace.

I now wish to refer to another area of land management in Queensland which is very important and very much in the news. Much of the debate concerning the World Heritage nomination of the northern rainforest centres on management of the area. The Queensland Government has argued that there is no need for World Heritage listing or intervention by the Commonwealth because its management has been exemplary. One has only to look at a few examples to see how ridiculous that claim is.

Take the now infamous Cape Tribulation-Bloomfield road. The bulldozing of that road through the rainforest brought worldwide condemnation and ridicule to Queensland, and it is now obvious that the whole thing was ill-conceived and will continue to be an enormous drain on the local rate-payers and the Queensland tax-payers.

Before that, there was the subdivision of land in the Cape Tribulation area by George Quaid. This was another case where the local authority was opposed to the

development but the Government intervened on Quaid's behalf. The result was the loss of some of the most significant lowland rainforest in the region.

More recently, the Government has allowed Quaid to construct a highly destructive road through the rainforest just so visitors to his Southedge tourist development can have faster access from the coastal highway. The Leader of the Opposition asked a question about that development. However, he is nearly 12 months too late. It was a scandal 12 months ago.

Again, the local authority opposed Quaid, but the Government supported him. We need to ask: how is it that Quaid can get the Government's support for anything he wants to do? How was he able to construct a road through a State forest when he had only a permit to traverse? And, having done the wrong thing, how then was he able to turn it into full approval by Cabinet? Mr Ahern would have us believe that things have changed in the Government. What a joke!

Then there is the matter of logging in the Cape Tribulation national park. How can the Government claim to be managing those rainforests so well, when that can happen? And when it did, the Minister, Mr Muntz, publicly defended the action as an honest mistake.

The national parks legislation is riddled with loopholes, allowing any company or corporation to log our national parks. If the Government had any interest in proper management, it would have amendments to the national parks legislation before Parliament now to get rid of those loopholes.

Then there is the issue of converting leasehold land to freehold and selling it to developers for a pittance. Again, the Leader of the Liberal Party, Mr Innes, has been asking a series of questions about the very cheap freeholding of leasehold land that has been occurring on Cape York Peninsula.

A particular case in point is Leefe holding near Ingham. The great irony is that the Queensland Government has allowed the Catholic Church to clear the forest on part of the holding that lies within one of the three core areas that it has identified as being of highest conservation significance and worthy of World Heritage listing.

In short, the Government has an appalling record in relation to management of the northern rainforests and land management in general.

Now to return to the issue of the World Heritage nomination. Early this year, when it became clear that the nomination was going to be supported, the Government changed its tack and said it would accept World Heritage listing of a small area. It also argued that it has the best information database relating to the wet tropics and so knows best where the boundaries should be. It also argued that it was therefore in the best position to manage the area.

Last December, the Government set up the Northern Rainforest Management Agency—NORMA—to “fight World Heritage Listing”. NORMA set up a scientific advisory committee to advise it on such things as the scientific and conservation significance of the area.

The problem was that the committee kept coming up with the wrong answers. In the first report it produced as a discussion paper, it found that three-quarters of the area that the Forestry Department had allocated for logging was of such high conservation significance that it should not be logged. The Minister, Mr Muntz, publicly dismissed the report as containing computer errors. That was, in fact, correct. But what Mr Muntz did not point out is that, when the errors were corrected, the case for conservation was even stronger.

The Government has misused tax-payers' money in producing two rainforest reports for wide distribution to put its case against the Commonwealth's World Heritage nomination. It refers to some 25 scientists being involved in developing its proposal that only three small core areas should be nominated, while logging continues elsewhere. These are presumably the members of and advisors to the NORMA scientific committee.

In fact, the advice of the scientific committee was ignored by the Government because it rated the conservation significance too highly. So the chairman of the committee produced another document in which he reduced the area to be set aside for conservation to 65 per cent. That document was given to the IUCN in June in the name of the scientific committee, even though the committee had never seen it. He has been chastised by members of the committee for that action. But even that proposal did not satisfy the Government, so an interdepartmental committee came up with yet another document, which proposed that only 25 per cent should be conserved.

In short, the position reached by the Government has little to do with scientific evidence. It is a political decision to try to keep the rainforest timber industry going in north Queensland—an industry that was steadily dying, anyway. I suppose that that is a reasonable objective, but now the Government is trying to keep the political debate going in the forlorn hope that it might win back some lost political credibility.

Just a couple of weeks ago, the Minister for Conservation, Environment and Tourism, Mr Muntz, wrote to the IUCN claiming that he had scientific evidence that the nomination included areas that were not of outstanding significance. Where is this evidence? Has it been published so that its scientific validity can be tested? When the Premier's office staff have been asked for these scientific reports, they have said they will not be released as they are "confidential". How can scientific reports be confidential? They are either scientific reports, or they are not scientific reports. It is a disgrace that the Minister can tell an international conservation body that he has scientific evidence but refuses to make that evidence available for scrutiny by other scientists in Australia.

Of particular importance in this issue is that the development of this scientific database, which the Government claims to be so superior, has been a last minute panic job and would never have occurred were it not for the Commonwealth's initiative in nominating the area for World Heritage listing.

If this information is so important for management, why was the work not done years ago? How can the Government claim to have been managing the area so well if it has not had this information until now? And if it were not for the Commonwealth's initiative, this Government still would not have the information, and it would have been happy to go on mismanaging the area indefinitely. But, of course, the Government is now going to be forced to manage the area properly. The listing will proceed and eventually the Queensland Government will co-operate with the Commonwealth on management of the area.

The Government knows the listing will proceed. From the *Courier-Mail* this morning we learn that the Premier refused to lead the delegation to Brazil in December to lobby the World Heritage Committee against the listing because he did not want to be associated with a failure. This morning he said, "That is only partly right." The Premier knows that the listing will be approved, but he is going to waste tax-payers' money anyway by sending Mr Muntz and Mr Clauson to do their bit. He is happy to have Mr Muntz disgrace himself—mind you, that would not be a new exercise for Mr Muntz—and Queensland, as he did in Paris in June, but the Premier wants no part of it himself.

In summary—the Government has a lot of ground to make up before it can claim to be a responsible land-manager. One of the first things the Government needs to do is to stop the sale of Crown lands. It is only by maintaining leasehold tenure that the Government can have proper control over land use and planning. It is particularly important that Crown lands are not sold to help balance Government Budgets or to return favours to political friends. And it is critical for the people of north Queensland that the Queensland Government stop its political squabbling with Canberra and get down to serious discussions about how they can responsibly and jointly manage these outstandingly important rainforests.

It is an ideal opportunity to get integrated land-use management instead of the present approach where there is ad hoc construction of roads, quarries, tourist developments, subdivision, etc, all of which are eroding the natural assets of the region. Obviously, services must be provided and tourist developments are essential, but they have to occur

as part of a comprehensive plan and be sensitive to the environment. More than that, there are many areas of the State that urgently require comprehensive land-management plans if they are to avoid being continually and perhaps irreversibly degraded.

**Mr STONEMAN (Burdekin) (11.42 a.m.):** I rise to support the Minister and his department in the presentation of these Estimates. I do not think that the scope of the administration of this department and the various subdepartments that are encompassed within the Minister's area of responsibility is generally recognised.

The latest report of the Land Administration Commission shows that there are some 86 000 parcels of land in the State under the direct and indirect jurisdiction of the Minister's department. I think that those figures warrant some inspection, and I will examine them later in my speech.

I believe that, given the number of those parcels of land of varying size and usage, there is a need to streamline the transactions and change the tenure procedures and the management processes. In the presentation of his Estimates, the Minister made very obvious the need to streamline the processes through the use of computerisation and to bring together the sections of Government administration that relate more particularly to land administration. The Government has recognised, and continues to recognise, the need for a streamlining of these processes.

There is a huge variation in the uses to which land in Queensland is put. It is not just one parcel of land. The usage varies, and varies in a dramatic way. It varies to take into account changing needs and circumstances, the demands of the community and the fact that the people who are utilising the land have to try to make a living from it. I suppose that the most obvious example of this is the beaches. There is a constant demand for more and more beachfront land by people who wish to live near the beaches, not only permanently but also for holiday purposes, and by others who wish to have access to beaches just for general recreational purposes. It must be borne in mind that there is a continuing need to provide public access to beaches, but no more beachfront land is being created. This State has a finite amount of beachfront land. Therefore, despite the pressures that are brought to bear on high-focus areas such as beaches, extremely careful management has to be exercised. I am not talking about beach protection areas; I am talking about the land adjacent to beaches which is used for recreational purposes.

The strip along the coast of Queensland is largely very urbanised, although there are considerable areas in which there is no housing. However, generally those parts along the coastline that are able to be inhabited are becoming more densely populated. That requires a management process by the department that is both objective and flexible. Of course, that process must be built into management programs. In the hinterland fringe, many hobby farms and full-time farming operations can be found. In the Burdekin, many areas are used for intensive agricultural purposes. A great deal of land along the coastal fringe of Queensland is used for cane-farming and associated urban developments, service industries and so on.

Further inland, one encounters the range country, which is regarded as rough country. A large part of that land is used for grazing cattle and forestry development. Because of new pasture techniques, greater use is now being made of the land. Years ago, there would not have been a great demand for land of that type. However, with the development of tick-resistant Brahman cattle, country that was once thought to be too rough to be capable of use has now become almost dress-circle country. That management of that land by the department needs to be addressed in a way that may not have been originally perceived.

As one travels further inland, one finds the brigalow areas. The Government needs to maintain a balance between the present use of the land and its future development. The community is becoming increasingly aware of degradation and erosion problems. There is a need to maintain production in this State while at the same time recognising those problems.

Even further inland, one encounters the desert lands. Opposition members ought to take note of my little lesson in geography. Once Opposition members move off the coastal strip, they seem to lose interest. I have read some of the speeches that were made yesterday in this debate by Opposition members. They tended to harp on 1 or 2 per cent of the land that comes under the jurisdiction of the Minister. They seem to forget that a huge area of the State—about 71 per cent—is leasehold land. In most instances, an examination of the speeches by Opposition members shows very little, if any, reference to the other areas of the State that form such an important part of the Queensland economy.

**Mr Glasson:** They have got no interest in it.

**Mr STONEMAN:** Opposition members have absolutely no interest in them whatsoever.

Opposition members chose one or two coastal areas and harped on them the whole time. They touched on only the peripheral areas. Opposition members should recognise that thousands of men and women are trying to work with the Government to manage the State's production in a responsible way. The Government has recognised that fact.

Inland from the coastal range, the desert areas are encountered. It is not a desert in the sandhills sense; it is desert in the figurative sense because most of it is heavily timbered. I have a considerable knowledge of that type of country. A number of types of timber can be found. Special techniques are required to manage the forests.

The basalt area north of Charters Towers and Hughenden is unique. In many instances, the production from it is dramatic.

The peninsula area was the subject of some interest by Opposition members. However, they referred to only one or two properties. Mr Eaton referred to Starcke Station. The Minister will recall that 30 years ago some of my acquaintances worked some of that country in a family operation. The enthusiasm with which those people approached the use of the property was commendable. However, the problems were quite dramatic. Like many other people who tried to develop the peninsula and gulf areas, effectively, they had to walk away without any realisation of their hopes and aspirations. Opposition members take a single property at a particular time, point the finger of accusation and say that someone is going to make a fortune or that he is being given a favour. I suggest to Opposition members that the history of development in the peninsula and gulf areas shows that the number of people who walk away with empty pockets is greater than those who make any money.

The Government needs to make sure that incentives are provided for people to utilise new areas. That does not mean that from time to time there will not be a need to assess the use of that land. It is interesting that every time reference is made to one of those little places, Opposition members constantly harp about it without any recognition of all the good things that are happening in this State.

**Mr Davis:** You are making the same old speech.

**Mr STONEMAN:** The honourable member will hear it again and again. Sooner or later Opposition members will wake up to the fact that land use in Queensland is a very composite and complex operation that needs to be assessed in totality rather than in a piecemeal way.

I move now to the areas a little further west, to the Queensland western downs. Again, the country in that area is vastly different from other areas. The western Queensland downs is occupied largely under grazing homestead freeholding leases and perpetual lease selections. Since the last occasion on which the Minister's Estimates were debated, a dramatic change has taken place in the structure of tenures, and that has been to the benefit not only of the management of the State but also to the people who are out in the country trying to make a living. Honourable members can rest assured that it is never easy to make a living in those areas.

At the moment, the price of wool is very high. No matter how high the price of beef or wool is now, that is no consolation during periods of drought. That problem must be faced not only by the people who live on those properties but also the department that administers the management processes that are involved in the leases, the tenures and the rentals, which I will mention in a moment. I was interested in the comments that Mr Comben made about massive subsidies.

This Government and the department are realistically and properly approaching the very complex management processes that apply to areas such as the Darling Downs, the channel country and the mulga country. The land-management information system is being fine-tuned. I congratulate those people who are involved in the digitisation of land information in this State, which I understand is nearing completion.

Because there will be an increasing demand in the future for computer-based information to be made available to the public, I ask the Minister and his departmental officers to build into the system a facility whereby—rather than simply purchasing photographs or maps of land forms—people can access digitised information on microcomputers or other computer systems. That will be an important management tool as maps and photographs have been in the past. I do not believe that one instrument of management has had a more dramatic effect on our capacity to understand land systems than aerial photography and the constant improvements that have been made to it. It is probably the most unique and incredible business tool that we could ask for. As a management tool, aerial photography is without parallel in the control of erosion, the development of timber and pastures, the siting of water resources such as dams and bores, and the construction of fences, roads and so on. A system by which the public could access digitised information on floppy discs would complement aerial photography.

I turn now to the sale of land to foreign investors, which is the subject of several studies at the moment. In the past, foreign investment has been important to the development of this State and nation, not only in terms of the techniques that have been developed and the capital that has been generated but also the values that have been maintained.

In the past realistic concerns have been expressed that because of currency drifts and the relativities of values, land valuations can be inflated. There are always ups and downs. If foreign investors had not purchased land in the seventies, many of the people who had spent their lives on the land—particularly pastoral land—would have suffered tragic circumstances and would have walked away with nothing; they would have been bankrupt. Because those people were able to reach international and local markets, land values were maintained. As a result, many of those people have been able to return to the land and the structure of valuations and sales has been maintained. We must be very careful that we do not frighten foreign investors away and say that we do not need them. We do need them.

During the past few years major changes have been made to the tenure structure, particularly pastoral leases and grazing homestead perpetual leases, which have led to a more effective utilisation of land. I have already outlined the dramatic variations in seasonal conditions.

Although they should be aware of them, honourable members are obviously not aware of the deprivations that people experience in the inland parts of this State, as well as those areas that are close to or on the coastal strip. Those people need security and support. The only way in which that can be achieved is by providing a facility that will provide security. During the past few years this Government has moved commendably towards enabling those people to have greater security without putting at risk any of those factors which all honourable members would wish to be retained.

I was interested to hear Mr Comben's comments about rentals and his statement that, "Someone out there is getting a massive subsidy from the people of Queensland in terms of rent forgone." I wonder if Mr Comben is aware of how many people are trying to maintain an entire community structure to the severe detriment of what would

be regarded as normal life-styles and living standards. Those people must be considered. It is all very well for honourable members to claim that wool prices are very high. However, because of drought conditions many people have no stock on their properties and are unable to farm them. Those people have to live through those hard times.

As the honourable member said, although it would be reasonable to hold an inquiry, I do not know how, in the finite sense, a commercial return could be assessed. We have to give latitude and err in favour of the tenant. If we are going to treat the inland leasehold areas of this State as purely commercial operations on a year-to-year basis we will have no-one left there. We have to allow a great deal of flexibility.

Mr Casey indicated that ballots should be introduced. That is very commendable. He spoke about the Labor Party being involved in the ballot system and said that it should be reintroduced. That is fine. I am sure that, from time to time, ballots will be held. However, no more land is being made. There is a limit to the way in which land in this State can be cut up. There is a limit to the degree of development that can be carried out on land. That has to be borne in mind.

The Labor Party seems to have forgotten that, in the 31 years since it was in power in this State, a huge development process has been undertaken in Queensland. It is simply not good enough for the Labor Party to say that it will go back and do what it always did, because a third of a century has passed and things have changed very dramatically. When Labor was last in power, World War II and the Korean War impacted fairly dramatically on the economy of this State.

In the concluding moments of my speech I commend the Minister on a couple of other aspects of his portfolio, particularly the initiative that has been taken in the management of rubber vine, which is a major concern in many areas, particularly in my part of the State. It is a management problem of mammoth proportions. Other major aspects of management relate to rabbit control and the dingo barrier fence. They are all a part of the mosaic of land management within Queensland.

I have very much pleasure in supporting the Minister and his departments in this Estimates debate. I commend them for the work that has been done. I support them in their continuing work. I believe that the people of Queensland are well served by that work.

**Mr INNES (Sherwood—Leader of the Liberal Party) (12.02 p.m.):** I recognise the valuable work that is carried out under the Minister's portfolio. Indeed, in my own electorate is the Alan Fletcher Research Station, which is the centre for the attack or, should I say, the fight against the massive and detrimental intrusion and invasion of exotic plants such as those referred to by other members when they spoke about harrisia cactus, the rubber vine, parthenium weed and others. The department has presided over a lot of very beneficial work. In many, many areas the department is operating at levels of great efficiency.

I will concentrate my remarks on some matters that concern me. However, in no way do I intend to give a distorted view that I do not recognise and accept the dedication and efficiency that the department provides to the State at large. In a debate such as this there is a danger that Government members in particular suggest that nobody else really has a stake in the great bulk of the land of this State, and that only people on the land have some particular claim to participate with authority in the debate. That is a contention that I reject. Another suggestion is that members who represent urban electorates know little about these sorts of matters. I might point out that I am the only leader of a political party in this State who has lived and worked in the outback. In fact, both the leader and the deputy leader have lived and worked in the outback.

**Mr Prest interjected.**

**Mr INNES:** I am talking about the far-western regions.

**Mr Stoneman:** That's why he supported the one vote, one value so much.

Mr INNES: The problem is quality of representation rather than numbers, because a bigger picture has to be looked at.

Recognising the limitations that some people have in putting things into perspective, as a deliberate exercise I took my family camping on the banks of the Paroo before my children reached the age of seven or eight. All three children have been in the mulga country. In the first speech that I made in this House I spoke about the vital necessity of retaining the rich, productive, arable land in this State in competition with a variety of other uses.

In this week's Rural-Mail section of the *Courier-Mail* the Warrego Graziers Association and a subcommittee of the UGA expressed deep concern about the mulga area. The headline was—

“State's mulga area near-desert: report.”

In fact, I can recall with clarity that in about 1980 or 1981 I pointed out to my kids the problems of pushing the mulga, which was necessary because of the drought that existed at that time, as fodder. I also pointed out that, because of the very light cover of soil—six or eight inches—in the Paroo area, and because of the removal of the binding qualities of the roots, sheet erosion would develop.

These are important issues for all of us. They are productive areas. They should stay productive areas. However, with the loss of all soil they are not productive. By the time the great storms rise in the west and deposit their clouds everywhere else, some impact is felt throughout the urban areas. Of course, if too much land becomes desert, with a growing population there will be an increasing restriction on the continued productivity of vital and important primary industries.

The member for Cunningham, Mr Elliott, spoke about the principle of freeholding. Indeed, my party supports the general proposition of the importance of people's rights over land. Freehold is the best title of all. As Mr Lickiss pointed out, what is almost as good as a freehold title is the concept of perpetual leasehold. Leasehold has been used in a very imaginative and essential way in the development of this State. Conditions that were in the broad public interest were attached to leasehold land.

At times long-term practices might start to have detrimental effects. Long-term practices such as clearing cause erosion. Erosion will affect regions rather than single properties. It may well be that, in themselves, conditions and covenants relating to leaseholding become the vehicles for changing policy. Once freeholding has taken place, that opportunity is perhaps lost. It is very difficult to impose obligations upon freehold title-holders.

If it is a completely neat legal mechanism, it is far easier to allow conditions to be imposed on leasehold. Long-term leasehold gives most property-owners little problem with their banks. The banks of Queensland and Australia understand the concept of leasehold. Most banks keep their register of leasehold. They will lend against leasehold. It is a very well-known title in Australia. It is a title that offers opportunities of imposing some beneficial long-term public controls.

An interesting comment appears in the report of the Land Administration Commission. The report mentions that, although initially various people saw the advantages of converting leasehold tenure to freehold, the demand for the conversion has tapered off. Perhaps it is easy for a grain-farmer on the Darling Downs who has a small property to assert that owners of freehold property look after their land much better than owners of leasehold property do. However, I do not think that that would be so for constituents in the Minister's electorate. The majority of leasehold property-owners in his electorate would not suggest that they are not capable of maintaining and managing very efficient and successful properties. Most of the Minister's electorate would be covered by property on long-term leasehold tenure; in fact, most of the land west of the Great Dividing Range would be the subject of a long-term leasehold agreement.

Recently I spoke to people from the south and people from the Warrego region of Queensland. I was told that a certain well-known Australian entrepreneur is busily buying

properties in the Warrego area and paying astronomical prices. Apparently the amount being offered for the properties is so great that people who have always said they would never sell have suddenly changed their minds and have decided to sell. The important condition of the purchase is that the property has freehold title. That condition is being imposed by a person whose basic business activity is the ownership of newspapers rather than the management of sheep or cattle properties.

I have no doubt that, when a person deals with international banks such as the Bank of Tokyo, it is much easier to complete transactions if the title is recognised internationally and does not merely reflect a system that is peculiar to Australia. Overseas investment corporations do not understand as well as Australians do the concept of long-term leasehold. It is interesting that the man on the land—the person who is actually engaged in producing wool or grazing cattle—is far less interested in freehold than other people whose basic business interests are other commercial activities.

I make the comment that, within the traditional arrangement of Crown land affairs of this State, opportunities provided by the review of long-term leases do exist and would be conducive to the introduction of simple and effective measures to prevent overgrazing, erosion and desertification without any affront to the traditional methods of holding property, to the quality of title or to the productivity of the land. Those opportunities are provided through the medium of a leasehold system. I have spoken to people who are combating erosion in this State and they say that it is extremely difficult to get freehold property-owners together to establish broad-area erosion-control measures.

I turn now to a matter that I mentioned earlier. The Minister will realise from the nature of the question I asked today that I take an interest in this matter. I refer to land management on Cape York Peninsula.

**Mr Glasson:** Before we get on to Cape York, can I ask this: does your party, the Liberal Party, support freehold or is it anti-freehold? I am trying to work out your position.

**Mr INNES:** I am sorry, but I said that freehold title can be used beneficially, and in many cases the Liberal Party would support freeholding of land.

**Mr Glasson:** But do you support the principle of freehold land?

**Mr INNES:** I am saying that in certain areas of this State owners of leasehold property do not have any problems with long-term leasehold. The majority of people on the land who have broad-acre or grazing properties are happy to retain leasehold tenures. The report of the Land Administration Commission revealed that the people I have referred to are happy to maintain that position and are happy to retain the property as long-term leasehold. They have not sought freehold title. I am suggesting, that when freehold title is sought, it is often sought by people who are not the types to be found in the Minister's constituency; they are not long-term primary producers or graziers. People who play no active part in primary industries are more interested in the freeholding concept than in leasehold property. Therefore, the whole process of where leasehold begins and freehold ends has to be examined. That is why I wish to refer to Cape York.

Recently I spent some time talking to a property-owner from the western side of Cape York who has spent millions of dollars on improvements for the property. Although grazing is not his original business activity, he intends to put in a long haul. He is endeavouring to raise the carrying capacity of his property to 40 000 head. I asked him whether he had considered freeholding. His answer was, "No. Why?" He explained that he had no problems with tenure. It had not occurred to him to obtain freehold title, although he had spent millions of dollars on pasture improvement, fencing and the construction of new yards. He had invested heavily in all the best techniques of animal husbandry.

**Mr Stoneman:** It would be a pastoral holding that he could not change anyway. Why would he worry about it?

**Mr INNES:** It is possible to obtain special lease conditions and freehold title over land that was the subject of a pastoral lease. Indeed, several people have done exactly that, which is why I asked the question.

Mr Stoneman has referred to Starcke station. My information indicates that the honourable member is indeed correct: earlier owners of Starcke station did put significant investment and energy into the development of the property. They constructed yards and sheds at the northern end of the property, and at the southern end of the property they carried out pasture improvements and cleared the land. They did all the things that the terms of the lease were intended to achieve, and proper animal husbandry practices were carried out.

Anybody who has lived and worked in northern Australia would be aware of the problems associated with open-range cattle-grazing, particularly at the top end of Australia in high rainfall areas. The ideal of most people who are involved in grazing at the top end of the Northern Territory or Cape York would be to have at least a couple of properties—one on Cape York and another in a better area where the condition of stock can be improved and the stock prepared for market. Those areas offer better quality pastures for the whole year round rather than the green but lank and hopeless types of pastures that are available only during the wet season in the cape.

The reality is that many people who have engaged in farming and grazing at the northern end of Australia have failed. Nobody would argue about that. With that in mind, I give credit to the people who owned Starcke 20 years ago. The evidence is available on the ground that the earlier owners put a great deal of energy into development of the property. They took the trouble to clear the property. The property is so well developed that one of the complaints that was made to me is that at the northern end of Starcke station in the Cape Melville area, there are not hundreds of wild bulls but thousands. There is scarcely a cow to be seen, the sheds and the tractor have not been used in years and the yard fences have fallen down. There have been few or no operations carried out under the conditions and intent of the lease.

**Mr Stoneman:** Economics have unfortunately forced that.

**Mr INNES:** That is right.

The people who acquired the land from the genuine lease-holder had other motives—and I suggest that Mr Quaid is a developer and not a pastoralist. The new owners then went through the charade of acquiring a freeholding right with conditions which suggest that it is still in the landlord's—that is the Crown—interest. The lease intends that the land be used for pastoral purposes, because the conditions do not state that the person should develop a \$500,000 or \$2m tourist resort. The conditions covered the provision of dips and yards and the things that relate to the cattle industry.

I have raised a substantial legal point; that the legal wording of the conditions for the freeholding of that 23 500 hectares did not allow for the acceptance of previous improvements that were credited to that particular condition. The words were perfectly clear; \$600,000 worth of improvements had to be carried out within three years from the commencement of the lease and not before the commencement of the lease. My information is—and there are some grounds for this from the evidence on the land—that the improvements with which Mr Quaid was credited were the improvements carried out way back by the good people Mr Stoneman spoke about. The improvements were carried out by the previous lease-holders who had genuine cattle interests.

It is a charade for a special lease for freeholding land to be granted on the assumption that the land will remain a part of the pastoral lands of this State, when this is absolutely not, and—never was, the intention. The value that was put on the land was a value based on the fact that the land was still described as marginal or, as the honourable member for Burdekin indicated, difficult cattle country. The price was \$1.25 per hectare. People would not be shocked or surprised by that price if the land were in fact marginal cattle country on the cape. Recently I saw an interview on television with the new chairman of the Cook Shire Council. He wants to have development because he has a

small rate base and a heap of roads, bridges and other projects he wants to carry out on the cape. The moment the land is freeholded, it is worth millions or tens of millions of dollars on the market.

**Mr Glasson:** What rot!

**Mr INNES:** I do not exaggerate. For example, there was a transaction in the Iron Range region, which is much further to the north and far more remote. In two months last year the land increased in price from a few tens of thousands of dollars to \$14m. The information from the Department of Freehold Land Titles and other places where such transactions are recorded demonstrates that fact.

If this land is to be alienated from the pastoral estate of Queensland, then the shareholders—the people of Queensland—should share in and benefit from that sale. If there is a vital need for things such as anti-erosion work, then the money should be provided. I have not argued in any way against the provision of money to fight the erosion battle in this State. That is an absolute priority and a very important consideration. However, Queenslanders must get their full dollar and not allow some individual who was never a genuine pastoralist to benefit from a loophole in the Act or use the Act to create a massive windfall profit for himself.

A previous speaker mentioned George Quaid's happy history with Crown land transactions. Apparently approximately 23 500 hectares is the amount of land that can be obtained under a special freeholding lease in that area, because 23 500 hectares was also the figure involved at Silver Plains when Mr Richard Rand, Junior—that well-known Australian who has never lived here and who has done little for this country—was allowed to acquire freeholding rights over 23 500 hectares of Silver Plains in two parcels of land, which was unusual. One of the parcels of land just happened to be the guts of a very long-standing national park proposal, the McIlraith Range national park. At Southedge station, Mr Quaid—as this Chamber knows from an answer to a question of mine—was allowed to freehold 16 500 hectares of land. I will point to that transaction and the subsequent question that I asked of the Minister. The fascinating thing is that in 1975—and it is clear from the terms of the lease—a special freeholding lease was granted which clearly involved the provision of land for pastoral purposes. In 1983 16 500 hectares of land was leased, 200 hectares of which had to be improved by ring-barking, the sowing of pastures and the provision of a dam to provide permanent water. In addition there had to be payment for the cost of a survey, but that is obvious because there cannot be a title without a survey. That lease was granted one month before the State election of 1983 and three months after the National Party took over Government in its own right. If one goes back earlier to coalition days, one finds that 23 500 hectares that were subject to a special lease—which adjoined that land on the other side of the Mitchell River on the same pastoral holding—were allowed to be freeholded for a cost of \$7.50 per hectare. There had been eight years of inflation and improvement in land prices, but the price went down. Unusually, this happened a month before a State election.

Time expired.

**Mr PERRETT (Barambah) (12.22 p.m.):** I have great pleasure in speaking to the Land Management Estimates. Before I was elected to this place I had the privilege of chairing the lands committee of the Cattlemen's Union, and I congratulate the Minister and his staff on the courteous way in which they always entered into negotiations with me or my committee.

What I shall say today probably summarises some of the concerns of land-holders from the top to the bottom of Queensland. Their major concern is really for the future, which is what I shall speak about. Land care is a subject that should concern all Australians, particularly primary producers. In fact, it does. We all use the environment—the soil, the water and the air—but far too often the vocal minority, the armchair conservationists, dictate the policies implemented by government. More notice should be taken of practical, practising conservationists.

Most people who make their living from the soil are conservationists. They have an empathy with the land and a vision for the future, but often they cannot achieve their goals. They are limited by climatic factors, by the sheer weight of economic pressure or by lack of knowledge. I commend the Cattlemen's Union for its land-care concept; it seeks to change all this.

Any discussion on land use must cover such subjects as climatic limitations, land form restrictions such as slope and swampiness, soil types, the inherent ability of soil to adapt to a particular use, the basic requirements for public recreation and the need for the production of food and fibre. I will comment only on the land used for agriculture and on what I believe is happening to this valuable resource in our nation. From my own experience as a land-owner, I can see that the agricultural technology, or lack of it, supplied to farmers today is leading to the ultimate destruction of its food and fibre-producing capacity. There is sufficient evidence in the Barambah electorate to prove this claim.

I have become aware of the availability in the past of proper soil technology worked out by a person whose nutrient balance tables produced a huge jump in production in the USA and Europe. This skilled advice has been ignored by Governments, and farmers Australiawide have been the losers. This particular soil scientist is an American who lives in Queensland. I have evidence in my files that the Federal Government has completely ignored any approaches that have been made. Having been kept uninformed about soil technology, farmers are being forced to use up their land, not because they want to but because they have to do so to survive. Only a few favoured sectors of farming are left and even these are not keeping up with costs.

**Mr Scott:** Goodness me!

**Mr PERRETT:** If the honourable member for Cook would listen, he would be better informed.

Farming does not mean only profits for the farmers, who provide the food that keeps families alive. Given the rate of collapse of very many of our rural industries, I suggest that serious consideration be given to the implications for people in the next few years of a considerable drop in food and fibre production. I urge: do not talk to the so-called experts; just ask the farmers; they do not have a reputation to protect.

**Mr Scott:** You just quoted an expert. This American expert—what about him? Is he a farmer now, or is he just an expert?

**Mr PERRETT:** The Government has not given him a go.

**Mr Scott:** Which—the State Government?

**Mr PERRETT:** Without mentioning any names, I simply say that the material I have comes from a member of the honourable member's party.

The most unpalatable concept is that we have destroyed our ability to produce viable crops. Contrary to popular local myth, our soils are amongst the poorest in the world. The reasons for this are to be found in the geological history of the continent. Farmers are surface miners, and even the best soils cannot last for ever unless each generation replaces the mineral nutrients that their cropping and grazing removes. Until very recently, our farmers thought that they could continue stripping the soil of its nutrients and it would still bear crops. They have now found differently—although not even their specialist advisers understand either the significance of the trends or, more importantly, what to do to redress the situation.

The problem that farmers face today is that the cost of rejuvenating the soils is greater than the return. Agricultural crops and grazing animals remove a wide variety of nutrients from the soil. If these nutrients are not replaced, the ability of the soil to sustain economic production will diminish, eventually to the point where profitable production is impossible. If the proper nutrients are added in the correct balance, profitable production can be continued indefinitely.

Failure to grasp the enormity of this looming problem has its origins in our cultural as well as our political heritage. The consequence of that failure and of not acting properly will be a national disaster of a kind we in Australia always believed happened elsewhere. This is because we have been living on our capital. By "capital", I mean the accumulated riches of the earth built up over the ages. Once our capital is gone, we are on the steep slide to the status of a Third World nation. Because of the odd mixture of frailties collectively called human nature, frankly, I think the chance of averting disaster has almost gone. This does not mean we should not try; but we must realise that the difficulties are formidable. Even if today we started to do all of the right things and no more of the wrong things, it may be too late.

The logistical problems of the required remedial action are numerous. None is greater than that of education, that is, educating enough people, firstly, to see that the problem exists; secondly, to help people appreciate the dimensions of the problem so that large-scale remedial action could become a political reality; and, thirdly, to educate enough specialists in the technology so that it can be successfully implemented.

A soil study for future land use should be implemented immediately. The Government should provide scholarships for recipients to study soil science in the USA or wherever else the right technology is available. More experts should be trained in land care, and the storage of water, both on the surface and in the soils, should be encouraged. Governments, both State and Federal, should view the subject as one of urgency and ensure that sufficient funds are available to carry out any necessary programs of preservation and rectification.

The basis of the land-care program of the Cattlemen's Union is the local committee. This committee comprises representatives of all primary industries in a shire or region, a DPI representative, a representative from local government, a member of the National Parks and Wildlife Service and a representative from a local conservation group.

The duties of the local committee will be to educate and encourage land-holders to adopt a property or a catchment plan in conjunction with neighbours. This property plan will be the blueprint for development, and the expertise and the guidance of DPI officers will be sought.

The committee must at first establish its credibility, but ultimately it will recommend that those land-holders who adopt a property plan will be eligible for incentives such as accelerated depreciation and development loans of a long term and at favourable rates of interest. By adoption of that program, we are using self-regulation and not waiting for stringent Government controls.

In order to assist in the formation of new committees and the continuing working efficiency of all such committees, it is essential that an overall co-ordinating role be established to give uniform direction and guidance during the critical developmental phase. That is the role of the State Government, through the Premier's Department. Other State departments, such as the Department of Primary Industries, and the National Parks and Wildlife Service will be needed to provide extension and secretarial back-up for the local committees. The research and information that is already available must be conveyed to land-holders as soon as possible.

The Federal Government would provide funding in three main areas—

1. for incentives, such as taxation incentives and loans;
2. education and research; and
3. extension.

That funding would be channelled through the State departments.

Mr Innes referred to a report in the Rural-Mail section of yesterday's *Courier-Mail*. I will refer to that report, because it sums up much of what I have been saying. It stated—

"A huge tract of once valuable south-west Queensland mulga country is degrading into useless desert, according to a major report.

The report said symptoms of degradation were painfully evident: extensive sheet and gully erosion, reduced water infiltration, massive regrowth, woody weed invasion over thousands of square kilometres, prolonged drought and falling carrying capacity.

There had been major loss of critical top soil. More than 30 percent of the area was so badly affected it would be difficult to save.

The Warrego Graziers Association land degradation committee has produced the damning report of ruination and neglect. It has also come up with a plan to attack the decline in productivity.

The report said thousands of square kilometres of fragile land has suffered through generations of bad management and settlement policy.

It said this needed to be addressed urgently if the region was to have any future.

. . .

The graziers' stark warning combines and updates the results of more than 20 years' research which have largely been ignored.

. . .

The report identifies primary causes of degradation as grazing leases which are too small, over-expectation of the country's potential and financial pressures which have encouraged poor management.

It said: 'the country has shown to be extremely fragile and sensitive to degradation under domestic livestock pressure.'

Overstocking has been a major factor, particularly high grazing pressure during and immediately after drought, the report said.

There had also been an explosion in native animal populations resulting from improved water supply.

The report was critical of a past lack of understanding of the area's ecology.

This steady decline has been the focus of research at the Charleville Pastoral Laboratory for the past 20 years.

Management strategies had previously been devised but not adopted."

That is the sad part.

It is essential that we face the realities and that we look at the real world when we make plans on how to invest our energies. Farms are for sale for less than they were seven or eight years ago. Bank-managers are addressing the problem, and so should we. It is our inherent duty to preserve our land for future generations, and as a matter of urgency we must make every effort to do so.

I have an extract from the publication *New Scientist* entitled "Farming for the Real World", which I believe summarises what I have been saying.

The final paragraph states—

"The 20th century has seen spectacular advances in agriculture. There is not much left of the century. If, by the end, it could be established in the world's consciousness that farming ought to be designed to feed people, and that that is its prime function; and established, too, that existence is intrinsically precarious and can be guaranteed, if at all, only through cooperation and appropriate strategy, as well as by agricultural technique, then the century will have been well spent. If not, then we will see that the present state of Ethiopia is not anomalous at all. If you take a broad historical view of the world, and of our own somewhat frivolous approach to it, it is exactly as you would expect."

Mr Scott: Are you saying that the graziers will make us a Third World country?

**Mr PERRETT:** I am saying that we all have to take an interest in our future or we will become a Third World country.

I seek leave of the Committee to incorporate that extract from *New Scientist* in *Hansard*, as it summarises what I have been saying.

Leave granted.

#### Farming for the real world

Colin Tudge

THE FAMINE in Ethiopia is not actually going to end. Indeed, it is going to spread. Only rain can even begin to bring the famine to an end, and it has not rained much in southern and eastern Africa in the past half decade. Africa, except for the west and the middle, is, for the time being, a very dry place.

In fact, one way and another, most of the world is pretty inhospitable—too dry, too wet, too cold, too hot, too rocky, too salty. Admittedly it is possible, surprisingly often, to find a range of crops and a system of farming that will overcome the shortcomings; it is foolish to expect that any one system can last forever, because conditions, everywhere on Earth, are changeable. That, indeed, is one of the most obvious facts of history—and, as archaeologists and palaeontologists are increasingly discovering, of prehistory. There are gross, long-term fluctuations, as in the ice ages, and in the periods of desiccation that replaced much of the rich, ancient rainforests of Africa with the desert and savannah that persist today. But the much smaller oscillations that take place from century to century, or from decade to decade, are quite enough to render any particular system of agriculture totally inappropriate; and enough, therefore, to starve a generation or to see off a society.

In short, life on Earth, for the human species, is intrinsically precarious. It becomes more precarious as the world's population grows. Partly, this is for the simple arithmetical reason that the more people there are the more liable to die at any one time when things go wrong. And partly it is for the slightly subtler reason that the more we convert the natural landscape into city and farm the less there is to fall back on. But the precariousness is not peculiar to the late 20th century. All societies that have ever farmed anywhere have lived with the certainty—whether they realised it or not—that they could not go on doing whatever they were doing, in that place, forever.

Admittedly, there are very few agricultural problems these days that cannot in theory be overcome by appropriate technique. During this century, after all, the advances in agriculture have been as remarkable as in any other field of technology: the modern varieties of wheat, for example, and the ways that they are farmed, at least in Britain, are as difficult from, and superior to, those of the turn of the century, as is Concorde to a Wright brothers biplane. In the past three decades, too, we have seen the beginnings of conceptual changes that are far more significant than any single technical change. There is the realisation that the agricultures of the world cannot be improved just by transposing the varieties and techniques of Europe. Each area of the world has its own special problems that require their own special solutions. For semi-arid lands (as much of Africa has become), techniques of irrigation that can account for every half litre of water, ranging from nutrient film techniques, in which plants grow on a recycled film of water, to computer-controlled subsurface webs of feeder tubes, doling out a decilitre here and a decilitre there, plant by plant. Such techniques are for the time being, and perhaps inevitably, confined to those rich countries that happen to find themselves with arid territory: Israel, California and Australia; and they are not used for staples on the grand scale but for favoured high-value cash crops such as cotton. In poorer countries and on the grander scale everywhere, solutions for semi-arid conditions include the improvement of crops that for decades were left out of the account: sorghum and a host of legumes.

The techniques for survival are improving them and they are at last to some extent being applied to the conditions and the societies that really need them. But the efforts are piecemeal. However, what the human species has not yet begun to do is to take its own plight seriously. Worldwide we can see some brilliant coups of agricultural technique, some miracles of productivity in the factory farms of the West and triumphs of human ingenuity on hillsides and deserts in the East and South. But we also see the miracles of Western technique being used to very little purpose, except to make fat people even fatter, and the ingenuity and effort of the poorer countries squandered through lack of fertiliser, or traction power, or irrigation, or land reform or marketing. Nowhere in the world (that is not an exaggeration) do we see agriculture specifically designed to feed people. Its prime task, everywhere, is to make profit, or to prop up some ancient system of fealty, or quantify the importance of some chief in

heads of cattle. Still less do we see the kind of cooperation between countries, as opposed to the somewhat brutal melee of trade and the occasional heroic hand-outs, that would enable some countries, in times of temporary plenty, to help out others, in times of temporary setback. And still less do we see agriculture with any degree of in-built flexibility, that would enable a system that works well in one decade to move with minimum pain into something different, when conditions change in the next.

The 20th century has seen spectacular advances in agriculture. There is not much left of the century. If, by the end, it could be established in the world's consciousness that farming ought to be designed to feed people, and that that is its prime function; and established, too, that existence is intrinsically precarious and can be guaranteed, if at all, only through cooperation and appropriate strategy, as well as by agricultural technique, then the century will have been well spent. If not, then we will see that the present state of Ethiopia is not anomalous at all. If you take a broad historical view of the world, and of our own somewhat frivolous approach to it, it is exactly as you would expect.

**Mr PERRETT:** The subject of land care and preservation is a complex one. We must preserve that land and use it wisely. If we use up our mineral resources now, they will be gone for ever.

In the past, we have been guilty of transferring our resources into money and taking them out of the country. Farmers are the first to feel the squeeze. Our eyes are opened only when poverty stares us in the face. Any individual, company or group who uses our natural resources directly should be vitally concerned.

Another matter I want to touch on briefly is mining. I believe that the agricultural and mining industries in this great State have to live together and work hand in hand. There is one matter that causes me great concern. With the advent of modern mining technology, there has been an increase in alluvial mining in this State. The use of the big machinery that is available for alluvial mining can virtually rip apart good grazing and agricultural land. The problem lies in the restoration of that land. I have seen instances in which the land has not been restored properly, particularly in north Queensland, where the soil types are such that, once the surface is disturbed, enormous erosion takes place.

I believe that some of the mining companies have been guilty of the rape of the country because they have not paid due regard to the proper restoration of the land. The Mines Department must ensure that it actually polices what is happening in these areas. The Cattlemen's Union has shown the way. Let us all support that union in its endeavours to do what we as a nation should have been doing many years ago.

**Mr CAMPBELL (Bundaberg) (12.40 p.m):** I listened with interest to the previous speaker, the member for Barambah, who dealt with the aspect of the responsibility of land-owners in land management. I believe there are other aspects of the Estimates that should be examined in this debate. I refer to the management of the department in its overall responsibility to the State. Two other aspects that I will also be raising are rural residential development and freeholding.

As I said, I listened with interest to the member for Barambah. In regard to soil conservation and the degradation that is occurring at present, which has reached a very bad stage, the honourable member said that the experts do not really have the answer, that the Government should not listen to the experts and that it should talk to the farmers.

The member for Barambah then mentioned a report in yesterday's Rural-Mail section of the *Courier-Mail* concerning the Warrego Graziers Association Land Degradation Committee. I will quote again what the honourable member quoted—

“The graziers' stark warning combines and updates the results of more than 20 years' research which have largely been ignored.”

The farmers did not listen to the experts. After 20 years of research, something should have been done, but nothing was done. I think there is also a need to listen to the experts. If that had happened, perhaps something could have been done to alleviate the problems being experienced in that mulga area.

I ask the Minister to take on board the findings of that report and to investigate the possibility of implementing those findings by introducing them into policies contained within an Act of Parliament. The article stated also—

“Management strategy had previously been devised but not adopted.”

It goes on—

“The aggregation of small, unviable mulga country properties is the key to a rescue scheme proposed by Warrego graziers.

Graziers said it was crucial that properties be increased in size to achieve an economic return without the devastation caused by overstocking.

Under the proposal, schemes would also be set up to control native animal grazing and to encourage reclamation of degraded country.

Land holders taking part in the scheme would register their intention to sell.

Assistance could then be given to other small graziers to acquire additional land to carry about 8500 sheep to make their businesses viable and avoid overstocking small holdings.”

I ask the Minister and his department to examine that report closely to see whether this type of management program can be implemented to save this mulga country.

**Mr Glasson:** Who is the author of that report?

**Mr CAMPBELL:** It is the report of the Warrego Graziers Association Land Degradation Committee. That association deserves to be complimented. It was not a report by the Cattlemen’s Union; it was a report by the Warrego Graziers Association. As I said, the association deserves to be congratulated on that report. It would be appreciated if the Minister would examine the report closely to see whether such strategies can be implemented.

One aspect of land management that is causing major problems in some fairly remote but coastal areas is rural subdivisions. Over many years, people have gone looking for their dream and have ended up with a nightmare. Frequently they are fairly low income earners. There is an area outside Dalby—out Chinchilla way—in which people have bought 40 to 60 hectare properties and have ended up living in a caravan or a tent without power or water.

I want to raise an issue concerning the Wartburg region, which is just north of Baffle Creek and south of Seventeen Seventy. Some of the people who have moved there just do not understand the problems of isolation. They have moved there expecting to be able to set up a home. In reality, those people are faced with drastic living conditions—

**Mr Glasson:** These are rural residentials, are they?

**Mr CAMPBELL:** Yes.

**Mr Glasson:** They ought to be banned.

**Mr CAMPBELL:** I believe that they are causing many problems, and I welcome the Minister’s comment. They are causing great concern to many families.

A number of issues have arisen and I would like to mention them. One is the provision of services. These people put all their savings into buying a block of land and then they are caught. They just do not realise the true position, and they are not told. I believe that there must be a way of ensuring that before people buy these blocks of land, they understand the cost of providing services to that land.

I cite the example of a resident in that area who bought a 40-acre rural residential block which, before 1986, would have been regarded as Rural A. He bought his nice little block of land. This person has enough money, so he will survive; others will not.

The block in question comprised 16 hectares, or 40 acres, and cost \$30,000. It was one of the better blocks in the subdivision. Associated fees were \$3,500; fencing of

boundaries cost \$4,500; and power, where available, cost \$4,200. However, if the house is sited at the back of the block, an extension will be required. Sometimes that extension is needed because the land at the front of the block is so low that it is not possible to build a structure there. That involves the expenditure of a further \$8,000. To provide an annual supply of water, the cost is \$3,500. A pump, motor and fittings to get the water from the dam to a home would cost \$3,750. House-water storage, consisting of a tank with a minimum capacity of 5 000 gallons, would cost \$1,800. In effect, to obtain the same services as a person who owns a residential suburban block——

**Mr Glasson:** Did you add all of them up?

**Mr CAMPBELL:** The total comes to \$59,250.

**Mr Glasson:** And one cow?

**Mr CAMPBELL:** And one cow.

It is not an inexpensive block of land; in fact, it is very expensive. Its real price has doubled.

To build the home that the person wanted, the extra cartage costs to get all the material to the site would be \$8,000. For an entrance culvert he would have to pay \$257 to the council. The cost of a automatic-pressure water pump and motor to make certain that the water supply to the home was satisfactory would be \$335. The cost of council fees and the builders' licence would be \$200. A septic tank service and effluent drain would cost about \$1,200. The total of all those items is \$69,242. Basically, that is the cost of providing the services received by the owner of an urban block of land.

I raise that matter because at the moment people in the area are living in tents and caravans and using lanterns. Some people might be able to afford a generator. As well as the additional financial burden, the people in the rural residential subdivisions are faced with the problem of isolation. A visit to a doctor involves a two hours' drive. The Government has a responsibility to make certain that people are made aware of what is happening. I have outlined only some of the problems that are encountered.

**Mr Glasson:** Don't you believe the local authorities have a case to answer for approving these subdivisions?

**Mr CAMPBELL:** Local authorities have a case to answer. Does the Minister know to whom the local authorities are responsible? The State Government!

Another problem experienced in rural residential subdivisions is flooding. I table a photograph of Matchbox Road, Paradise Estate. It shows water lying beside the formed road 12 hours after rain. The photograph shows that it is impossible for the owner of the land to gain access to his property. The photograph was taken after one or two inches of rain had fallen the previous day.

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

**Mr CAMPBELL:** Another problem, the responsibility for which must rest with the local authority, is the lack of access to the beach. A macadamia nut farm is located at the front of the estate. As the crow flies, the estate is between two and three kilometres from the beach. The only access to the beach by property-owners is through Rules Beach, which involves travelling over 23 or 24 kilometres of dirt road. If it rains, the road is impassible because of the bad drainage in the area. The people in the rural subdivision cannot get to the beach. The planning of such a subdivision should not have been allowed. Something should be done so that the property-owners can gain access to the beach. An environmental park has been established in one area, but access to it has been prevented because the area has been closed off. Property-owners bought land to take advantage of the nice beach and the fishing, but they are flat out reaching the beach.

I turn now to the problem with valuations. A commercial primary producer receives certain concessions. If he has a rural home site, he does not obtain that concession. Wealthy land-owners and farmers who own 400 hectares pay the same rates as their

neighbours who own 50 or 60 hectares. In fact, the 400-hectare properties could have better land than the 50-hectare properties. It is unfair and inequitable for that to happen. In one instance, because the property is regarded as the person's home, he pays more rates because his valuation is higher. A person with a larger property that is not only his home but also his living receives a special concession. Perhaps the Minister could examine some of the anomalies that have occurred because of that concession, especially in areas of rural subdivisions.

Provision has not been made for a rubbish tip in the rural residential subdivision to which I have referred. Residents must travel to Rosedale, which is about 30 kilometres away, to get rid of their rubbish. If they do not do that, the rubbish finishes up on roads and in other areas. The matters to which I have referred are substantiated in letters that I have received from people who reside in the area. An investigation should be conducted into the problems encountered in rural residential areas. Because the farms are located in low-lying areas, problems similar to those encountered in the mulga will be experienced. Additional pressures were applied to farmers in mulga areas. Honourable members have seen examples of the resultant land degradation. Similar problems will be experienced because of the mismanagement of rural subdivisions and "paradise" areas in Queensland.

I come up with a hardy perennial. It is not a plant; it is not a weed; it is something that I raised with Mr Wharton in 1984 and relates to the excessively higher costs for home-owners freeholding Housing Commission perpetual land compared with the cost of freeholding land under the control of the Lands Department. Under the Land Act, if a person freeholds a \$12,000 block of land and pays it out, special provisions apply for future costs and discounting-back so that he can actually buy that freehold block of land for \$5,707 cash. Under the Land Act a perpetual rural lease would cost only \$3,739, while for a Housing Commission perpetual lease a person would have to pay \$12,000. That appears to be an anomaly. Small Queensland families who wish to buy their own homes should be treated as fairly as those large land-holders and rural land-holders are treated.

I raised this issue again in 1985. At that time the Minister said, "Put it on paper. Give it to me and I will have a talk to Mr Wharton." On 20 March 1986 I wrote to the Minister, outlined the situation and asked for discussions to be held. As yet I have not received a reply from either the Minister for Land Management or the Minister for Welfare Housing on that aspect of the freeholding of land. It is about time that that anomaly was corrected so that the ordinary Queensland home-owner can be given the same concession as that received by rural land holders.

I turn now to the management of the Lands Department and the losses that have occurred over a long period because of the failure to assess and levy revenue or other amounts receivable together with debts that are written off. I ask the Minister to explain some of these aspects. This is not something that occurred on only one occasion. As far as I have been able to ascertain, this matter goes back to at least 1984, although I have not researched further back than that.

A note to the Department of Lands Appropriation Account for the year ended 30 June 1984 refers to "Losses of or deficiencies in public moneys or other moneys". Under the heading "Losses due to failure to assess and levy revenue or other amounts receivable (215 cases)" it states that the sum of \$50,954 was lost to the public of Queensland. The debts written off—235 cases—amounted to \$49,436. I do not know what those debts were or who owed that money.

**Mr Glasson:** I will reply to both in my summing-up.

**Mr CAMPBELL:** That is good.

The annual report of the Land Administration Commission for the year ended 30 June 1985 includes an entry for forgone assessment of collections—216 cases—involving losses of \$136,441 and debts written off—251 cases—resulting in losses of \$66,117. Recoveries of \$6,144 were made during that year.

For two years the department knew that it was forgoing income. The warnings were there. However, for the year ended 30 June 1986 the forgone assessment of collections—274 cases—amounted to losses of \$512,466. The debts written off—596 cases—amounted to losses of \$97,907. The forgone assessment of collections amounted to more than half a million dollars.

Recently a poor pregnant woman who was unable to pay a speeding fine was put in gaol. However, during 1986—just one year—this Government was able to write off the sum of \$512,466.

For the year ended 30 June 1987 the forgone assessment of collections—378 cases—involved losses of \$306,113. The debts written off—1 156 cases—amounted to \$113,968. Under the heading “Notes by Accountable Officer—Forgone assessment of collections” the annual report states—

“Under the provisions of the Land Act 1962-1987, rents payable to the Crown in respect of certain leasehold tenures are required to be re-assessed at fixed intervals during the term of each lease. As the Act places a limitation on the recovery of retrospective rental increases of this nature, prolonged delays in the re-assessment process result in revenue forgone.”

Three years later this Government is taking action to reduce the outstanding reassessments.

**Mr Glasson:** What do you want me to do—put them in gaol?

**Mr CAMPBELL:** The Minister did not mind when that poor pregnant woman was put in gaol.

The 1987-88 annual report of the Land Administration Commission states that forgone assessment of collections—100 cases—amounted to \$101,000 in losses and that the debts written off—88 cases—amounted to \$19,000.

This Government could have considered its management processes and employed more valuers to collect those losses. Also, it could have changed the Act so that that money could have been collected retrospectively.

**Mr Glasson:** We have.

**Mr CAMPBELL:** Has the legislation been changed?

**Mr Glasson:** Yes.

**Mr CAMPBELL:** Why was the Act not changed in 1985, 1986 and 1987?

The total losses on the forgone assessment of collections during those five years from 1984 amount to \$1,106,974. The total debts written off amount to \$346,428.

I will enjoy reading next year's annual report of the department. I hope that the Minister will be able to say, “We have no forgone assessment of collections and no debts written off.”

**Mr Glasson:** The thing is you don't understand how the losses come about. They are not actually losses. If you buy a parcel of land and you have a commitment over a period of time and you cannot meet your commitment, the land reverts to the Crown and that is written off as a loss by the Crown. It is not a loss at all.

**Mr CAMPBELL:** That comes under surrender or forfeiture of leases and then, if those leases are resold, the money is recouped. However, the forgone assessment of collections means that the department has not gone out and reassessed the value of that land. That is all it is.

**Mr Glasson:** What's that one you've got there?

**Mr CAMPBELL:** I am referring to the 1987-88 report.

I have raised several issues including the responsibilities of land-owners and the problems that are associated with rural residential subdivisions. Action should be taken

to consider the problems that are arising throughout Queensland, the responsibilities of the department in the collection of revenue that is owed to it by land-owners, and the freeholding of land. I ask the Minister to consider the situation and achieve equity for small families.

Sitting suspended from 1 to 2.30 p.m.

**Mr GILMORE (Tablelands) (2.30 p.m.):** During the two years that I have been a member of this place it has been my pleasure to serve on the lands committee.

**Mr R. J. Gibbs:** That has been two years too long.

**Mr GILMORE:** I can assure the honourable member that it is only the first two years of very, very many.

**Mr R. J. Gibbs:** We always wish you a short but happy stay.

**Mr GILMORE:** I can assure the honourable member that I am here for a long and very happy stay.

During my term on the lands committee I have had a very happy relationship indeed with its members and, indeed, with the Minister and his staff. I want to say a couple of things about the Minister and his staff. The Minister, in terms of his portfolio, has an extraordinary range of responsibilities. He is responsible for lands, valuations and a wide range of other matters, including the Rural Lands Protection Board, about which I will speak today. The Chief Commissioner of Lands, Mr Wally Baker, is a man with whom I have had an excellent rapport over the last couple of years. On every occasion on which I have approached Mr Baker for assistance, whether it be on a technical matter or a complicated matter, he has always received me very well. He has always achieved results. The same can be said about Mr John Trickett, the Valuer-General. His staff have been very good to me. I refer more particularly to a member of his staff in Cairns, Mr Mal Wright, the rest of the valuing staff and the office staff.

**Mr Scott:** You would get along very well with Senator Richardson, a nice fellow like you.

**Mr GILMORE:** Yes, I get on very well with the senator.

I want to say a couple of words about Ian Anders, the district land commissioner in Cairns. He does an extraordinary job. He has a very efficient office. Indeed, it is my understanding that it is one of the most efficient offices in Queensland. Because of the nature of my electorate, I have many dealings with Ian Anders relating to road closures, property boundary problems and various other things. Ian never fails to please. Nothing is too much trouble. Inspections that are required are carried out very quickly indeed. I am very pleased to have had the relationship that I have had with Ian Anders up to now.

**Mr Scott:** That doesn't apply in the peninsula. I agree with you about Mr Anders being capable, but I don't agree that——

**Mr GILMORE:** I agree that Ian Anders is tremendous in the work that he does. I remind the member for Cook—and I feel that it is hardly reasonable that I should have to remind him—about the distances that have to be travelled in the peninsula. The honourable member's electorate covers that area. Some difficulties do occur because of that distance.

**Mr Scott:** I thought your Government looked after the whole State.

**Mr GILMORE:** It certainly does, and it does so very well indeed. Mr Anders covers an extraordinary area. He does an extraordinarily good job.

Before I move on to another topic, there is one other person about whom I want to say something. I refer to the Minister's secretary, Margaret Cryan. She is probably the doyenne of Ministers' secretaries in this State. She is a remarkable woman and is

always pleasant. Everything that needs to be done gets done with a minimum of fuss. Never has she failed to do something for me when I have approached her. I felt that I should say that.

I congratulate the Minister for Land Management on the two annual reports that have been placed on my desk in recent times. They are the annual report of the Land Administration Commission and the annual report of the Rural Lands Protection Board. It is the second report about which I want to address my remarks.

The Rural Lands Protection Board is one of the unsung heroes of the Lands Department. It plays a very important role in helping people who live in the rural areas of this State. The responsibilities of that board cover such things as pest eradication, the control of the barrier fence and the eradication of vertebrates, as well as weeds and insects. I want to cover some of those areas briefly.

One of the major vertebrate pests that has plagued this country since it was first introduced some years ago by a gentleman with the unfortunate name of Austin is the rabbit. I understand that the rabbit was introduced into Australia as a means of sport for the gentry and possible food for the lower classes, as they were considered at that time. However, the rabbit thrived.

**Mr Simpson:** Near Geelong.

**Mr GILMORE:** Yes.

The depredations of the rabbit were quite extraordinary in this country. At times there were rabbit-caused droughts. Very little could be done about rabbit plagues until the advent of myxomatosis. Myxomatosis remains the major weapon that is used against the rabbit today. Other means of control include gassing and trapping. However, today, myxomatosis remains the major weapon that is used in the fight, and it is spread through various vectors such as mosquitoes, sandflies and, of course, rabbit fleas.

**Mr Davis:** We all know that. That's old hat.

**Mr GILMORE:** I am quite sure that there are more fleas on the honourable member than there are on most rabbits.

It is imperative that control of the rabbit population is maintained. Today the rabbit population is still spreading into areas where rabbits have never been seen before. Recently, on two occasions, that became obvious to me. On one occasion I was driving along the road from Atherton to Herberton and I saw a dead rabbit on the road. More recently, late at night, I was driving between Chillagoe and Petford and a rabbit crossed the road in front of my vehicle. That was the first time that I realised rabbits were in the Chillagoe region. For some years they have been seen as far north as Mount Garnet and Georgetown.

**Mr Scott:** Do they all have their green-and-gold cards?

**Mr GILMORE:** Of course.

It is important that as the population of rabbits moves north, it is controlled. Rabbits have the potential to cause further rabbit-caused droughts, similar to the rabbit-caused droughts earlier in the century, and similar to the kangaroo-caused droughts that are occurring today. I commend the Lands Department and the Rural Lands Protection Board for the work that they continue to do to control the rabbit population in this State.

There is another major predator, which is a native predator of this country, that has caused serious concern to the pastoral industries of this State for many, many years. I refer to the dingo. Dingoes have caused depredation of pastoral stock over many years. The stomach contents of dead dingoes indicate that they generally do not consume large numbers of domestic stock. However, they are responsible for killing large numbers of stock, particularly sheep—apparently as thrill killing. That has become a major problem in sheep and cattle grazing areas, and it is the reason why the dingo barrier fence was

erected years ago. Again, I commend the Rural Lands Protection Board for the rerouting and reconstruction of the dingo barrier fence. Approximately 20 000 dingoes have been killed and bounties have been paid on scalps that have been returned. Those results would suggest that the dingo barrier fence must have had a salutary effect on the predacious activities of dingoes.

I point out that the majority of dingoes that are killed in the State have been victims of the 1080 poison campaign. Since the introduction of 1080, the Government has been able to engage in aerial-spraying campaigns to help eradicate dingoes. Of course, it is also possible to spread 1080 by the use of commercial and meat baits. The Rural Lands Protection Board has carried out considerable research in investigating the best ways to engage in eradication practices to ensure the maximum kill of dingoes and the maximum protection of non-target species.

The third most important predator that has been introduced into rural areas of Queensland is the wild pig.

**Mr Davis:** You mean feral pig.

**Mr GILMORE:** I thank the honourable member. Feral pigs have had an important impact on the economics of the region. In one of its many publications, the Rural Lands Protection Board has suggested that feral pigs present a major cause for concern if ever an outbreak of exotic disease were to occur in Queensland's pastoral industry. The board has expressed the concern that it would be almost impossible to eradicate the feral pig, and, in such circumstances, Queensland could be faced with a considerable problem in controlling exotic disease.

It seems to me that it is appropriate and reasonable for this Government to embark on a feral pig eradication campaign before an outbreak occurs, instead of after it happens; that is, now rather than at a later stage.

Particular problems arise when eradication campaigns are attempted in national parks and timber reserves. Until recently, it has been impossible to gain permits to hunt for wild pigs in those areas I have mentioned and on other Crown land. I understand that it is still virtually impossible to obtain permits. Although it is not the responsibility of the Rural Lands Protection Board to go into national parks and onto other Crown land, it is the board's responsibility to control feral pigs. I am very firmly of the view that the Government should introduce urgently a system of issuing permits so that trappers and hunters can go to areas of the State in which wild pigs are endemic to assist in controlling—or eradicating, if possible—feral pigs.

I cannot think of any reason to commend the preservation of feral pigs. They are extremely difficult to hunt because they live in very difficult terrain. If they are threatened, they head off and hide in thickets or in other places where they cannot be seen. It is very difficult to get at them. They foul waterholes and destroy the nests of ground-nesting birds and crocodiles, and turtle rookeries. They seem to be capable of not merely surviving but thriving in a multitudinous variety of land forms—from the sand dunes of the coast to the wet tropical rainforests and out on the open western plains. Nothing stops feral pigs from thriving. They are capable of producing two litters a year and are therefore capable of exponential increases in their numbers.

It is obvious that feral pigs have the potential to present a very serious economic problem for this State. Several methods of eradication are available. A 1080 poisoning campaign can be engaged in and the animals can also be trapped, which requires a great deal of skill. Fortunately, an export market has recently been developed for meat obtained from feral pigs and people are trapping the animals for commercial purposes. That factor gives me reason to be hopeful. Other methods of eradication that have been tried are shooting the pigs from helicopters, shooting the pigs at ground level and hunting them with dogs. I would be in favour of any means of eradicating feral pigs.

The Rural Lands Protection Board is also concerned with the eradication of weeds such as water-hyacinth, parthenium, harrisia cactus, rubber vine and the giant sensitive plant, to name just a few. Rubber vine is a matter of major concern in my electorate.

**Mr Davis:** Are you a graduate of an agricultural college?

**Mr GILMORE:** I have seen quite a bit of rubber vine. It has taken over the watercourses, particularly the Mitchell River, the Walsh River and other rivers in my electorate. Growth of the weed has made it very difficult for stock to get to waterholes and it is almost impossible to muster the stock using those rivers to obtain water. Rubber vine also makes the eradication of brucellosis and tuberculosis very difficult and has been the cause of shoot-outs of cattle in areas in which cattle could not be mustered because of its spread. Rubber vine is a native of Madagascar. I am pleased to say that the Rural Lands Protection Board in recent times has been involved in a considerable amount of research in attempts to find a means by which the spread of rubber vine can be controlled, by the introduction of either a natural insect predator or a plant disease.

There is some hope. I understand that one insect and a major rust are being tested on rubber vine with some hope of success. There is also a new chemical on the market which is having some success on broad-acre rubber vine control. The giant sensitive plant is of major economic concern in the wet tropics, the sugar belt and the pastoral regions. The control and eradication of the plant are of prime concern to the Rural Lands Protection Board.

One of the major plague insects that the board is determined to control is the locust. Plagues of locusts have been responsible for depredation right across the southern area of Queensland in particular and are capable of reducing crops and pastures in a short space of time. They are also capable of moving vast distances in short periods, particularly at night. A plague can disappear from one area and arrive at another unheralded, except by the dawn. The Rural Lands Protection Board plays an extremely important and continuing role in the control of plague locusts in this State.

I draw the attention of honourable members to the publications distributed by the Rural Lands Protection Board in respect of rabbits, dingo and wild pig control. There are several publications relating to ecology and the habits and distribution of these animals. There is another very important series of documents known as *Pestfact*, which cover topics such as declared plants, parthenium weed and other problems. I recommend that all members obtain these documents, particularly the members representing rural electorates—although it would not hurt the city members to obtain them as well. By doing that; they will understand the problems faced by the rural communities of Queensland and by the members who represent rural electorates.

Finally, parthenium weed is causing grave concern in Queensland. I am pleased to say that there is no parthenium weed in my part of the State. I understand that parthenium weed is endemic in 120 000 square kilometres of Queensland. It is capable of extending over vast distances because it is spread by vehicles. The Rural Lands Protection Board is undertaking considerable control measures, including roadside spraying and the identification of areas of parthenium weed, and is providing assistance to landholders, such as by way of free chemicals for the control of this dreadful curse. The Rural Lands Protection Board, the Minister and all of those officers who are responsible for this work must be commended.

It has been a pleasure for me to speak in this debate on the Land Management Estimates.

**Mr SCOTT (Cook) (2.49 p.m.):** I will echo the words of the honourable member for Tablelands; it gives me, too, great pleasure to take part in this debate. That is not a very original statement in this Chamber, nevertheless it is true for those members who take part in a debate such as this.

The debate is on the Estimates of the Minister for Land Management. However, he is not really the Minister for Land Management, because so much land is outside his control. All of the tourist developments have been taken by his colleague the Minister for Tourism. The foreshores which have been alienated for tourist development are also under the control of the Minister for Tourism, in spite of the efforts of the Minister for Primary Industry, who is in print as having warned about the alienation of the very

important fish-breeding habitats, foreshores and things of that nature. This Chamber is certainly debating land, but it is not debating land management.

I will add my voice to those who have complimented the staff of the department. They are excellent people to work with at my level, and I say that genuinely and sincerely. I have a good relationship with them. When I ring up the departmental officers, they appreciate my integrity and I appreciate theirs. It is not always necessary to go through the Minister, because he can trust his staff and members to talk about things in a proper manner. I get a good deal from the department, and I intend to keep it that way.

Previously I interjected on the honourable member for Tablelands—who is one of the new boys in this Chamber—because his narrow approach was confined to stock routes. I know that there is a stock route in Tablelands, because it is occupied by a high-voltage transmission line. Stock routes do not mean very much in the electorate of Tablelands, as it has been alienated by the FNQEB. However, I cannot blame the current member for that.

I will look at land management on Cape York Peninsula in totality, to the extent that I am able in the short time at my disposal. It is a very complicated story, and it is complicated further by statements from a foolish Premier.

Queensland lost an arrogant and fascist style of Premiership, only to have it replaced, unfortunately, by inanity and foolishness. It is a shame. This morning in the House the Premier once again tried to repeat what Senator Richardson had said or what will happen in various parts of this State regarding land use. His statements were utterly foolish ones, made by a foolish man. That is becoming more apparent.

I refer to a total rebuttal made by Senator Richardson on Friday, 16 September 1988, in a release headed "Ahern's claims nonsense". The release states—

"Senator Graham Richardson today described claims by the Queensland Premier . . . as 'nonsense'."

That relates to land use on the peninsula. I seek leave to have this small, but absolute, rebuttal incorporated in *Hansard* as part of my speech.

Leave granted.

Friday 16 September 1988

#### Ahern's claims nonsense

Senator Graham Richardson today described claims by the Queensland Premier, Mr Mike Ahern, that there was a "World Heritage hit list" of places in Queensland as "nonsense".

"I publicly denied the existence of any World Heritage hit list in the Senate on Thursday 24 March 1988. How much more formal does Mr Ahern want my denial to be?" asked Senator Richardson.

Senator Richardson said: "There is absolutely no substance in Mr Ahern's claims that Cape York, Fraser Island, Moreton Bay, the Gulf Country, the Channel Country or any other part of Queensland is on a hit list."

But Senator Richardson welcomed the Queensland State Government's announcement of the development study into Cape York Peninsula. The Senator hoped its terms of reference would include due consideration of the region's important conservation and wilderness values.

**Mr SCOTT:** That statement rebuts totally what the Premier said. How many times does Senator Richardson need to say it? The Federal Government will not alienate further land under World Heritage listing in Queensland in anything like the foreseeable future. Yet the nonsense goes on.

At various times conflict over the land management of Queensland appears in the media. The Minister for Tourism is hell-bent on destroying all that he can. Unfortunately he is not consulting the people of this State, who are worried about what will happen with tourism. So that intrudes on the responsibilities of the Minister for Land Management.

He does not control tourism in any way and his good officers sitting in the lobby must be worried about the alienation of land over which the Minister no longer has control.

World Heritage listing does not come under the control of the Minister, yet it covers Queensland land. Perhaps there would be a better attitude towards World Heritage listing from the Minister for Land Management; certainly the Minister for Tourism does not have a very good or constructive attitude. He is going to Brasilia to try to rebut the Australian Government's argument for World Heritage listing. That is relevant to this debate. I am speaking about land management in Queensland; the land covered by the World Heritage listing will remain the land of Australia and the land of Queensland.

I shall refer to a paper by Mr Jim Thorsell, who is the executive officer of the Commission on National Parks and Protected Areas, International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources. I mention that title because it authenticates the things that are said. He said—

“My own experience, after evaluating more than 50 World Heritage nominations from 26 countries, is that two stood out in terms of their solid and scientific documentation and both these were from Australia. The first was the nomination of the East Coast Forest Parks here in New South Wales.

. . .

A second exceptionally well-prepared nomination is the one submitted this year for the wet tropical forests of Queensland.”

That has been said so often in this place. It was a well-prepared, deserving and totally justified case, yet we hear the trite trivia from the Government side of the Chamber trying to knock what the Australian Government is doing to conserve the environment for Australians yet to come. The paper continues—

“In the evaluation, in fact, IUCN has noted that this nomination ‘is the most comprehensive ever received for a natural World Heritage property’.”

That is a sweeping but valid statement. It is also a true and commendable statement. The paper continues—

“Australia's efforts in the promotion of public awareness of the heritage concept have also been exemplary.”

That means that this narrow-based Government in Queensland is swimming against the tide of public opinion because this expert says that Australia's efforts—not the narrow efforts of this Government—are well based. He goes on to speak about the awareness of the Australian people when he says—

“This awareness is amplified by the substantial coverage of Australia's heritage in books, films and television which clearly indicates the attention that these resources receive and suggests the vicarious values that people receive in just knowing such areas exist and are being well cared for.”

Unfortunately, “vicarious” is a word that would be beyond the knowledge of the people on the Minister's side of the Chamber. It simply means that the people of Australia gain great pleasure just from knowing that those areas are being looked after. So the Minister and the Government can do all they like. They can get out there on the hustings and try to condemn World Heritage listing, but they will see what will happen. That will be just one of the many things that bring the Government down. That is so because it is true that the people of Australia, the people of Queensland and the people of my electorate want World Heritage listing, and I am very pleased about that.

**Mr Menzel:** What about Bill Eaton?

**Mr SCOTT:** Do not worry about the member for Mourilyan.

He will survive up there because his cause is just and right and because he is an extremely good member. People will recognise those qualities. I know what the honourable

member is getting at. There is a very narrow base of rednecks up there, which is exemplified by the letter that was read in the Chamber a couple of days ago. I know the type of people up there to whom the Government is speaking. They are a very narrow group of people who are not to be commended in any way at all.

Before I digressed on a very important subject, I was speaking about the things over which the Minister really has no control. He will not control the proposed space base because that land will be alienated. On the one hand the Government speaks about Third World countries controlling the land that falls within the World Heritage listing—that will not happen; that is utter and absolute nonsense which demonstrates the narrow thinking from the Government side—yet on the other hand, if the space base eventuates, thousands of hectares of land will be controlled by people from overseas. How does the Government rationalise that? In the end, it will be the American defence lobby that will control that land if the space base goes ahead.

**Mr Sherrin:** Are you against the space base development?

**Mr SCOTT:** I have a lot of reservations about the space base. I am quite prepared to argue them here. I am certainly not going to listen to some trivial interjections from a back-bench pip-squeak who knows nothing at all about it. I will speak about the space base at the appropriate time.

**The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr Alison):** Order! The honourable member has used an unparliamentary term about the honourable member for Mansfield. I ask that it be withdrawn.

**Mr SCOTT:** I do withdraw. It was a slip of the tongue. Actually, I hold the member in quite high regard and I am sorry that I got carried away.

I hear that the Minister for Industry, Small Business, Communications and Technology, Mr Borbidge, has got himself a world trip. I see that he is shaking his head. Could I suggest to him that he correct the ABC, because its news bulletin claimed that he was going on a world trip with the Minister for Finance, Mr Austin. Perhaps it is not a world trip, but it is a nice little overseas trip.

**Mr Borbidge:** It is six cities in eight days.

**Mr SCOTT:** The Minister is going overseas to talk about the space base, but there is a worry about the alienation of that land and there is a worry about all of the people that the base will bring to a very narrow area of land, the Cape York Peninsula.

I am quite happy to say here that I do not know whether I am for it or against it. I can say that quite openly and honestly because I do not know enough about it, but I am keeping a pretty close eye on it. When I find out more, I will make up my mind.

**Mr Hayward:** Are you saying that the title will be transferred to the American defence forces.

**Mr SCOTT:** In an indirect way I believe that the title over Queensland land will be under the control of American defence establishments. The honourable member has interpreted what I have said in slightly different words.

I am making passing reference to all aspects of land in Cape York. I shall now refer to the way in which Aboriginal people hold land, which again is not directly within the responsibilities of the Minister. Members in this Chamber would be aware that areas of less than one hectare on Aboriginal trust land can be owned in perpetuity by Aboriginal people. That is a very good state of affairs. I see that the Minister is nodding his head. I know the constructive role that his department played in the preparation of the principal of the deeds of grant in trust, which was then put into practice. Unfortunately that is not being handled in the right way by his colleague the Minister for Community Services. In this Chamber I have given credit to the department. It was a little gem in the way in which it was discovered that, instead of having land rights legislation, the Queensland

Government could have land rights under a section of the Land Act. It was very shrewdly carried out.

Areas of more than 1 hectare eventually end up under the control of the Land Administration Commission. Because the Aboriginal people can apply through their own council for areas greater than 1 hectare, if the council approves and if there are no objections—or if objections are not sustained—the application goes to the Minister for Community Services. It eventually goes to the Land Administration Commission, and a lease is issued. I warn honourable members that the use of that land must be watched as much as is land use in any other part of Queensland. I say that for particular reasons. The Aboriginal concept is that land is not something that can be used. Unfortunately, they are being pressured to use it in a commercial and, sometimes, a degrading way. Aborigines believe that land is sacred. They like to know that it is there and they like to be able to touch it. The Aboriginal people for whom I have the greatest regard hold land as being sacred; they do not want it commercially exploited and developed. However, that is being pushed on them.

At Hope Vale, large areas have been claimed under a deed of grant in trust; but every tree is being removed. I understand that Eric Deeral owns a large parcel of land there. A bulldozer was brought in and every tree was removed. He is a man who was once a member of this Assembly—a man who was once a National Party member. He was chosen to accompany the delegation to Paris to argue against World Heritage listing of north Queensland rainforest areas. He and Mr Eric Law, who is from Cherbourg, were both taken to Paris. Yet they did not represent the Aboriginal people. They were bought suits to wear during that visit. Mr Law, who is a senior public servant on a high salary, had a suit bought for him to wear to Paris.

**Mr Hayward:** Ministerial expenses?

**Mr SCOTT:** Yes, ministerial expenses.

Those events must be watched very closely. I am interested to know whether that land has in fact been cleared in such a terrible manner.

I will now mention the remaining Aboriginal reserves—what I call the unallocated reserves—that exist near Cooktown, such as the Old Mapoon and Normanton reserves. Many requests are being made of Mr Katter to allow that land to go to Aboriginal people—Aboriginal co-operatives. So far, he has not been able to do that. It is beyond his capacity to sort that out. However, in the meantime, many people are worried. I am sure that officers of the Lands Department are concerned about the alienation of Aboriginal land. They have a stronger feeling for Aboriginal land than Mr Katter has.

I understand that one of Mr Katter's advisers, Lester Rosendale, who works in the Department of Community Services office in Cairns, visited Kakadu in the Northern Territory and was extremely impressed with what he saw being preserved there. Traditional Aboriginal heritage is being included as part of our national heritage. Mr Rosendale was foolish enough to say to Mr Katter, "Really, with this World Heritage listing, can't we do something similar to what has been done in Kakadu?" Because he had the temerity to support something that the Federal Government was doing, he was immediately condemned in very strong terms by Mr Katter. Mr Katter can deny in this Chamber that he made this statement, but I have been informed that he said, "I hope your children will spit on your grave." Unfortunately, that is the type of language that Mr Katter uses. Next week, when his Estimates are being debated, I will have more to say, because he has said and done some other terrible things which should be made known in this Chamber.

In Mr Glasson's department, which is a sensibly run department, the officers deal with both large and small subdivisions of land. Firstly, I will refer to the smaller subdivisions. I am not implying that I agree with everything that the department is doing; however, at least it is a formal department with which one can have discussions. One can examine its Estimates in a proper way and make reasonable criticism of the things that are not being done. Of course, many things are not being done. This morning

in the Chamber we heard how large areas of land are being alienated—that is not quite the right term—freehold and we were told the price at which they are being freeholded. I make numerous approaches to the department about the charges that are being imposed to freehold small blocks of land. I will continue to do that; it is my job. Quite often, departmental officers make mistakes about the value of land.

Some years ago, a small block of land in Cooktown was advertised and was taken up by people named Leys and Deckel. However, that land had no access across the creek. When they saw on the map that the road led up to the creek, they were not sufficiently well advised to inspect the property and they bought it in good faith. Now they have a block of land that has no real access. Another part of land that would have provided an access was closed as a permanent road closure. I have taken that matter up with the Lands Department, without any result. I have suggested that they approach the elected council and attempt to obtain some redress there.

Lands Department officers are also slow in making inspections. How long will it be before the approved subdivisional plan for Horn Island is put in place? I have spoken of the slow rate at which inspections are carried out. Once a year is the only time that inspectors can get up to the peninsula. If they miss out on that, it is bad luck; they have to do it the following year, if they are lucky.

I have been asked about the subdivision of cattle holdings in the peninsula. The Cape York Development Association has also taken the matter up and put a case to the Minister. I have seen a copy of the reply and, unfortunately, it is largely waffle. No proper case is being put forward by the department as to whether or not smaller subdivisions could take place. Outside experts should be employed to look at land use in regard to raising cattle.

Yesterday, the Minister for Primary Industries told me privately that, in regard to BTEC, he has two private contractors make their own assessment separately from the DPI inspectors. They then compare notes. It is not a confrontation-type thing; it is a sensible statement on the merits. That should be done with the size of holdings—the so-called living areas. The matter has not been resolved yet.

Mr Innes questioned some of the large land deals in the north. He has a new-found expert, who rang my office to do a bit of skiting. I understand that he is not looked on with any great favour by various Government departments. I have no doubt that more will come out about that later.

Mr Glasson could not answer the question asked by Mr Innes in regard to the price of the land that Farndale eventually ended up with on Peter Huybers' property at Lockhart River Mission Station. I will not repeat what the member for Sherwood said. It will be in *Hansard*. The Minister was bluffed. He could not answer the question. He could not say whether or not it was sold at a highly inflated price. How is the Minister going to control that? He must be able to answer those questions. It is no good the Minister sitting there with a puzzled look on his face.

**Mr Glasson interjected.**

**Mr SCOTT:** The Minister can answer me in his reply.

A classic example is Prince of Wales Island. There had been an occupational licence over most of the island. An arrangement has been entered into with the current leaseholder. As I understand it, that arrangement is not too bad. However, many rumours are flying around that Kerry Packer is set to buy Prince of Wales Island for \$3.2m. It concerns me that deals of that nature are going to be done down this end of George Street.

I can go to the Lands Department and obtain certain specific public information, but will honourable members ever hear about the way in which those deals are done? The door is being cracked open by the Public Accounts Committee, but it is only a crack. I do not know whether honourable members will be able to use a Public Accounts

Committee to find out about these arrangements so that they can reassure the people of Queensland that no deals are being made.

The Minister's record of answering questions in the Parliament is not very good. I hope that it improves.

**Mr LANE (Merthyr) (3.09 p.m.):** It is unusual for a metropolitan member to enter into a debate such as this. It is not a traditional area of interest for those of us who come from the capital city. However, I want to make a few cogent remarks about the administration of the Lands Department or, to use its upgraded name, the Land Management portfolio.

I will start off with the good news. I was pleased at the action of the Premier in bringing together under one portfolio and one Minister the various areas of land activity. That enables them to be managed in conjunction, and it enables a total Government policy to be applied to these matters.

The structure has been put into place. I understand quite clearly that, because of the very nature of public administration, for 12 months or so after such an event there will still be the inevitable jockeying for positions within the power structure of the department—who sits on what chair where and who is senior to whom. That inevitably goes on in the public service. It has gone on for hundreds of years and, of course, it will not change now.

The idea was a good one. I endorse it. I would like to see it lead to better things. The reason that I am on my feet this afternoon is to advocate that the Lands Department, which is presided over by my friend Mr Glasson, get some entrepreneurial flair into its ranks. Everyone could speculate on how that can be done. I am not suggesting that the department recruit Mike Gore or half a dozen of the white-shoe brigade and appoint them as lands commissioners. However, I am suggesting that the department go some way down that track and introduce a pro-active approach to using the great resource known as Crown land—which belongs to the people of Queensland—for the betterment of the State.

It is an unfortunate fact of life that the Lands Department in this State has traditionally been a department of rural land. I suppose the reason for that is the way that selections were taken up, the way that leases were granted in the State's early history and the way that land was not passed into freeholding until after quite a lengthy process. The department seemed to husband its land together; it seemed to hoard it. What I am saying is that the department has traditionally had a Steptoe-and-Son mentality in that it hoards everything it has and is very reluctant to give anything up. I think that that mentality has to be changed as an act of Government policy.

I notice from the annual report of the department that there has been some estate development. Page 17 of that report states—

“In all, 477 allotments were sold for a total value of \$12.1 million, a substantial increase on the 193 allotments sold in the previous financial year.”

I take it that these are either residential lots or perhaps small industrial lots. It is a good thing that they were sold. I would like to see much, much more of that. \$12.1m worth of activity is a tiny pimple on the great pumpkin of land development in this State—land development that is mostly carried out by the private entrepreneurs who fight for the land in the first instance through the freehold market.

I would like to see the department, while still making sound political judgments, open up its doors to the sale of Crown land far and wide throughout this State for a number of different uses. The first would be for the use of a young person buying land to set up a home for his wife and children. All honourable members are aware of the large population influx into this State. Recently I saw in a press release by the Premier that 2 000 people a month are migrating from other States to the Sunshine State of Queensland. 2 000 people want to put down their roots and have a roof over their heads at a location in this State.

It is in the very nature of the Anglo-Saxon race on which this country was founded to want to own a block of land—a piece of dirt. People want freehold land. The Government should encourage the sale of land to people on a freehold basis on which they can site their homes.

**Mr Scott:** Only Anglo-Saxons?

**Mr LANE:** I am not interested in the fanatic on the other side.

In addition, I would like to see more land made available in a very pro-active way to the manufacturing industry. As I see it, for many years this State has lived on the back of the sheep, on cattle and on grain and, in recent years, its natural resources and its minerals. It is time this State got off the back of primary industry; that manufacturing industry became the leading industry in this State and in this great nation; and that Queensland became the leading tourism State in this nation. Queensland is already on its way to achieving that.

The resource that is the key to manufacturing and tourism in this State is land. The Crown, through the Government and the people in this Parliament, sits on that land, hoards it and does not give it up very easily. The expression that land is alienated from the Crown says it all. It does not seem to me to be an alienation from the people of Queensland to sell off some Crown land for the betterment of other Queenslanders. However, that expression has existed for a hundred years. It is anathema to me and I would like to see it changed. I am very confident that with the new structure in the department the expression will be changed and that a more positive and a more pro-active approach will be adopted. I look to the Minister and to the Government to achieve that. If that is not done, Queensland will perish in the industrial world and in the world of tourism.

Many times honourable members have heard the expression “populate or perish”. If this were a debate about immigration, I would be happy to be on my feet talking about populating this country with people from all around the globe. With limitless migration into this State, the country could be populated before someone comes and takes it from us. Billy Hughes said it back at the beginning of the century; I am repeating it today.

Accompanying that mentality of populate or perish is the other axiom which is “develop or perish”. Development is needed in this State. The department that must take the initiative with development is the Lands Department. I hope that it will be equal to that task in the future. I am afraid that, in terms of secondary industries and tourism, in the past the department has not been as active as it should have been. The Queensland Government has to shake off its mentality that the Department of Lands is a rural lands department and start to alienate Crown land. Land should not be alienated in a bad and irresponsible way without thought; it should be done in an entrepreneurial way with proper, sound judgments being made. It should not take the rest of the century to do that; it should be done in 1988.

In support of that proposition, I draw attention to the actions of the Greiner Government in New South Wales since it was elected. The Greiner Government is a very pro-active Government that promptly appointed the Deputy Premier of that State and the Leader of the National Party as the Co-ordinator-General of that State. He is out actively seeking industry around the world. In a very entrepreneurial way, he is using Crown land as the bait. That is what is needed in this State. At the moment, Queensland does not even have a full co-ordinator-general. I will not buy into that discussion today; I will leave it for another day. The action of the Greiner Government in cutting red tape and in using the basic resource of land as a bait to industry to come to New South Wales and develop and as a bait to tourism—and, of course, using land on which to build houses to put roofs over the heads of the employees who work in industry—is something that the Queensland Government will need to follow. Perhaps the Lands Department needs a Christopher Skase, if not a Mike Gore. That is the type of thing that I am advocating.

Already the Cain Labor Government in Victoria is actively seeking industry. If industry is turned away from another State, the Victorian Government will gobble it up because it is desperate to provide employment for the people in Victoria. Its narrow win at the recent election shows that it really has something to worry about.

The Victorian Government is out in the market-place chasing industry. I would like to see the Queensland Government chase industry, but that should be done through the department that sits on the land, the department that has charge of the land, and the department that is in the front line of being able to recommend to the Government the sale of land or the making of land available to various industries.

Today, the industrial world is highly competitive. The Queensland Government cannot continue to ride on the back of the sheep, as it has done in the past and as some previous Governments have done. I know that the Frank Nicklin Government and the Bjelke-Petersen Government laid a great basis in this State, and that is evident from the way in which this State has been developed. Those Governments adopted a very steady, a very sound and a very responsible attitude to rural development in this State. Overseas investors were invited to open up the coal-fields. That was a great era. It took great courage on the part of the Government of the day to do that. However, the Bjelke-Petersen Government was criticised by honourable members opposite for selling off the farm because it made land available for mining. If that was selling off the farm, let us start selling off the farm now for the betterment of every Queenslander.

Land is the one resource that Queensland has left. To husband it, to hoard it or to stack it under the house, as Tom Foley did when he stacked the tobacco under his house and held people to ransom, is to adopt the mentality that Queensland must rid itself of, and the Queensland Government must get rid of it from the Lands Department.

I have nothing against the officers in the department. There are some very decent, very courteous and very efficient members in the department. However, it is a matter of changing Government policy and making sure that that policy is implemented. The Government has the timeless attitude about rural land that it will be there tomorrow, that one can take 100 years to process the files and it does not matter because the seasons will come round again, the fields will be ploughed, another mob of sheep will go out, and calves will be born. That timeless attitude to the land is old-fashioned and must be changed.

I have spoken about the axiom of "develop or perish". That is something in which I believe in a real way. Land is a capital resource that belongs to the people of Queensland. It is said that it is Crown land. The Queen owns the land on behalf of the people of Queensland, who are her subjects. The people of Queensland have a right to do with it what they will. If it is the determination of the Government, which represents the people, to sell the land for development or for improvement, so be it; that is what should happen. I call on the Minister to take up that matter.

So that honourable members will not think that I am manufacturing my contribution to the debate, I draw attention to the development of the old Evans Deakin ship yard at Kangaroo Point. I was a member of Cabinet when the first decision was made on that matter. In fact, I played a part in encouraging the Government to make a decision to get rid of that land that was available after the ship yards at Kangaroo Point closed down. I can remember going to the site with a couple of the Ministers of the day, Mr Doumany and Mr Hewitt, and inspecting the site on behalf of the Government. We walked around the site and had a look at it. The department tried to put together a package that included the adjacent land. There were fights and brawls with the next-door neighbours. A great tentativeness existed about how that development could proceed. Although that occurred seven years ago, the Minister would remember it well.

That great eyesore should have been removed five years ago. The land on which the ship yard sits should have been developed and built on by now. Thousands of jobs would have been created in the building industry and thousands fewer people would be out of work. It would have afforded the engineers, architects and other talented people who graduate from the colleges and universities in this State the opportunity of exercising

their professional skills. Regardless of whether the development of that site involved office accommodation, a residential complex, hotel, convention centre, trade centre or any of the other uses that have been canvassed over the years in the newspapers and trotted out before elections, it should have been completed by now. Nothing has been done on that site.

**Mr Glasson:** Why?

**Mr LANE:** I ask the Minister not to ask me questions such as that. I do not want to hurt anyone's feelings.

The reason why that development has not gone ahead is that it was duck-shoved around the Cabinet table and from table to table within the department. When the proposal was first mooted, no-one had control of all of the departments that were involved in such a development proposal. I am sure that if the Minister had been the Minister for Land Management at that time and if he had had the authority of Cabinet to act on that proposal, that development would have occurred five years ago and all of those good things would have happened. But because control over the proposal was held by several departments, that development did not go ahead.

Does any honourable member believe that it is good to see that great barren desert of land in the centre of the city? Of course not. I concede that the Government has made a lease arrangement with a preferred developer who has been sitting on his hands for the past two or three years. However, before he can commence that development, that preferred developer still has to jump City Hall, which is another high jump for him.

The objections that have been lodged to the proposed development did not exist five years ago. Although I blame no specific individual for the massive delays that have occurred, the Government red tape from which developers must untangle themselves has contributed to those delays. What is required in the department is a person such as Christopher Skase who will take the initiative and say, "Right. You have got it. Put your cranes up next week and start building on the site."

I could cite examples of how land has been sold to the benefit of this Government and the tax-payers of the State and the money has been used to create employment and for other worthwhile activities. The Minister is well aware of those examples and I do not intend to canvass them today.

Some flair and pro-active thinking is needed. This Government should look to the market-place and employ people such as the manager of Ray White or Raine and Horne and say to them, "Go for your life. We want you to make \$50m by next Christmas for the people of Queensland." That is what should happen. I am pressing for new Government policies to be translated into decisions and action.

I was pleased and delighted by the recent announcement that was made by the Government in relation to the Lang Park Trust. As honourable members would be aware, on several occasions this year I have made requests for the nature of that trust to be reviewed. I have pointed out the shoddy treatment that that great team the Brisbane Broncos has received from the administration of the Lang Park Trust. For one reason or another, the personalities in that trust have changed dramatically. I hope that the members of the new trust will hold some of those business skills that are required to maintain a venue which the people of this State will be happy to attend and where they will be able to watch the great Brisbane Broncos play other teams and win the next grand final.

**Mr Davis:** They can't play it at Lang Park.

**Mr LANE:** All right. The honourable member knows what I mean.

I notice that the Minister is smiling. He is obviously looking forward to attending great games at Lang Park. The ball is at the Minister's feet. He has a responsibility to help the Brisbane Broncos and clean up the Lang Park Trust. I am pleased that the

Minister has made that announcement and that I have played a part in bringing that about. I look forward to a great football season at Lang Park next year. I hope that the legislation is in operation by that time. I hope that the new management people and the business entrepreneurs are in place by then.

Time expired.

**Mr SMYTH (Bowen) (3.29 p.m.):** It is interesting to hear Government members talk about the people of Queensland and the things that they deserve. Mr Lane spoke about the employment in the public service of people such as Christopher Skase. The Government would probably put such a person on a contract and pay him a great amount of tax-payers' money.

Mr Lane made some comments about the fact that land in Queensland belongs to Queenslanders. He spoke also about squatters who should be allowed to take up land. I believe he referred to Anglo-Saxons. Australia has a multicultural society in which people should be able to purchase land of their own and build homes for their families.

Mr Lane and the Government should take note of what has happened in the last three years in Queensland in relation to squatters on beachfront land. The Government has simply moved in with bulldozers and bulldozed the places away.

**Mr Glasson:** That's not correct.

**Mr SMYTH:** It happened in my electorate. I can introduce the Minister to people who have in the past supported him politically. Now he has taken away their right to squat and their right to own a piece of land on the beachfront. The Government is getting rid of the small people who invest in land and allowing large property developers and monopolies to buy it.

I now turn to the coal and gold mining industries in Queensland. Land management is supposed to be looking after the future of our grazing land, which is occupied by people who support the National Party Government. I do not know why they do because the Government never does anything for them.

In the coal-mining areas in central Queensland, the coal-mining companies have withdrawn machinery from the restoration work that was being carried out on areas following open-cut strip mining. The restoration work has ceased. Under the Mining Act 1968-1983, which this so-called National Party people's Government introduced, penalties may be imposed on large companies or small companies. Section 28 (ix) states—

“a condition that for breach of any of the covenants or for failure to comply with any of the conditions in the lease on the part of the lessee, his executors, administrators and assigns to be observed and performed the Minister may, subject to this Act, either forfeit the lease or impose on the lessee a penalty not exceeding \$2 000.00 . . .”

In coal-mining areas the cost of restoring the spoil heaps on one hectare of land is anything up to \$10,000, let alone \$2,000 for a whole lease. Perhaps the Minister can enlighten the Committee on what the Government proposes to do. I suppose he may say that at this time the coal-mining industry is having troubles because of low coal prices. However, what does his Government intend doing in the future about the restoration of spoil heaps that have been caused by the mining of coal?

Up until about three years ago the Mines Department restored some of its spoil heaps. However, a close look at those spoil heaps reveals that one could not ride a horse or a motor bike across them. They have simply not been restored in the proper manner. Top soil has not been put on the spoil heaps. Instead, dirt from immediately above the coal seam, which is sometimes up to 45 metres below ground level, has been put on top of the ground and grass will not grow on it.

I now refer to gold-mining in central Queensland and other places in the State. In my electorate of Bowen representations have been made to me by cattle-producers who

have had problems with gold-mining concerns in their area. The gold-mining companies are coming in, taking off the top soil and not carrying out any restoration work at all.

**Mr Glasson:** That's not the Lands Department.

**Mr SMYTH:** Does the honourable member think it might be land management? It has nothing to do with the Lands Department?

**Mr Glasson:** That responsibility lies with the Mines Department.

**Mr SMYTH:** The Minister can pass the buck around wherever he likes. However, it is still land management in Queensland.

**Mr Hinton:** That's the Mines Department.

**Mr SMYTH:** I hear the member for Broadsound echoing in the background. I suggest that he should view some of the coal mines in his area. I doubt whether he has been on one coal-mining site since he has been elected.

Another aspect of land management—and I suppose the Minister may now say this is the responsibility of the Primary Industries Department—relates to the spread of parthenium in Queensland. Some years ago, when parthenium was first introduced by large companies involved the cattle industry, Mr Lester made the statement that he would ensure that parthenium was eradicated in Queensland. Since then Mr Lester has moved to the coast. He does not see the weed any more, so I suppose he thinks it does not exist.

When that weed was first introduced the State Government fully subsidised local councils and local growers in the use of Atrazine, the chemical that was used to destroy it. Since then the Government has closed its eyes and it now subsidises local councils only to the tune of 50 per cent. It does not support the local growers. I understand that the Government places stringent conditions on the councils about where they may use Atrazine. I ask the Minister: what does the Government intend doing about parthenium in the grain-growing areas and the beef-growing areas in central Queensland? If something is not done about the growth of that weed, the cattle industry and the grain industry in Queensland will be restricted in the sense that buyers will be worried about the spread of that particular pest.

The use of land in Queensland should be controlled for the benefit of the Queensland people. I do not believe that that is the policy of the Government of the day. The Government should ensure that infestation by noxious weeds is kept under control so that future generations of Queenslanders do not have to bear the burden of the short-term, money-grubbing attitude that this Government has adopted.

**Hon. W. H. GLASSON** (Gregory—Minister for Land Management) (3.39 p.m.): I wish to thank each member who has made a contribution to the debate. In most cases, the speeches were a very responsible reaction to the Land Management Estimates.

I will begin my reply by addressing the points raised by the Opposition spokesman, the honourable member for Mourilyan. The honourable member expressed concerns that he has mentioned on previous occasions. I will address those issues in the order in which he expressed them.

His major concern was centred on a property named Southedge. Southedge was the subject of a question asked by the Leader of the Liberal Party on Wednesday, 12 October. In my response to that question I mentioned the conditions that applied to freeholding Southedge. People do not seem to recognise and appreciate that some of the figures relating to Southedge refer to transactions that occurred some considerable time ago. At the date the lease was issued, the value of land on Cape York Peninsula was very different from its realistic present value.

I will take this opportunity to table a document that will clearly set out the basis of the transactions. Although I would prefer to read it to the honourable member, I have so many acknowledgements to make before 4.30 this afternoon that I will have to

table the document instead. It sets out details of the basis on which rents and valuations are calculated, and sets out also the philosophy underlying leases that apply specifically to land on the cape.

The yester-year history of the cape is that it contains some of the poorest natural grazing country in Australia, bar none. Costs associated with transport, labour and communications in early settlement days were prohibitive. Suddenly, because of the development of tourism—and I emphasise “tourism”—the cape has taken on a different character. More importantly, during the past six months the development of the space station on the cape has meant that the cape is becoming a boom area.

When the Leader of the Liberal Party refers to the tens of millions of dollars that the present owner of Southedge stands to gain because of the freehold rights attached to the lease, he echoes what the honourable member for Toowong had to say when the concept of freeholding islands off the Queensland coast was first mentioned—if they could be developed to become resorts of international standard after the investor had expended large sums of money. I ask the honourable member to name one island that has returned a profit of tens of millions of dollars. I say to the honourable member that not one island has realised such a profit—not one at all; nor will that be the case with Cape York. Obviously, by virtue of the development of the space station, a natural impetus will be provided to people who are endeavouring to obtain land on the cape. The time for investment in the cape could not be more opportune, thanks to the possibility of enormous expansion linked to development of the space station. At this stage, I seek leave to table the document to which I have referred.

Leave granted.

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

**Mr GLASSON:** The second issue I wish to address is the availability of information in relation to vacant Crown land and access by the public to that information. I inform the Committee that the information is available at the Department of Lands and at the Department of Geographic Information. Vacant Crown land and all leases and reserves are currently shown on administrative working maps that are maintained by the Department of Geographic Information and held in both the head office in Brisbane and in various district offices. As soon as the computerised corporate working map is implemented throughout the State, the public will have much quicker access to that information from the new one-stop shops that will be developed throughout the State.

The Opposition spokesman also referred to land that became available at Chillagoe at very reasonable prices. The release of that land was an initiative taken by the Department of Lands. Mining tenements were handed over by the Department of Mines to the Lands Department and later released on to the market.

The honourable member for Warrego, Mr Hobbs, praised the success of the annual valuation system because of the problems that had been overcome. Many more problems will be solved when the system of annual valuations operates throughout the State.

His major concern was in relation to non-posting of valuation notices to property-owners. I point out to the honourable member that notices are still posted to remote locations of this State, such as local authority areas of Bulloo, Quilpie, Diamantina, Burke, Carpentaria, Croydon, Winton and Etheridge. This service will be extended to other remote local authority areas, such as Boulia. Next year when the system is fully operational, notices will still be posted to property-owners in Boulia. As I stated when presenting my Estimates, however, the costs associated with posting annual valuations to land-owners throughout the State of Queensland would amount to more than \$1m. Every opportunity is taken by this Government to ease the burden on people living in remote areas who may not have the opportunity to have their valuations reviewed.

The honourable member for Warrego also referred to the dingo barrier fence. Many other speakers referred to the same topic, so I will take this early opportunity to address my comments to the queries raised by honourable members.

The honourable member for Warrego asked why the dingo barrier fence was ever allowed to fall into disrepair. I can inform him that that occurred because of various circumstances that arose many years ago when the dingo barrier fence was originally built. In the 1950s, wool was the most important commodity and the major export-earner for Queensland. At that stage, the wool industry was quite lucrative. The perimeter of the fence was extended so that it encompassed as much sheep-grazing land as possible in the State of Queensland. Shortly after that, the wool industry declined and the exact opposite occurred. Cattle prices increased at about the same time as wool prices became depressed.

Cattle were inside the dingo barrier fence, and the cattlemen could not give a continental. The terrain was rough and at about that time the poison 1080 was introduced. Because of the set of circumstances prevailing at that time, the cattlemen said, "To hell with the fence! We have this marvellous, magic 1080 poison, and the dingo problem will be of no further concern to us." Of course, that is far from the case.

The realignment and re-erection of the dingo barrier fence was due to many people. The Government decided, after discussions with the industry itself, where the fence alignment would be located. Officers of the Rural Lands Protection Board were also involved and Queenslanders owe them a tremendous debt of gratitude for the efficient way in which they carried out that task. I refer to Ron McCullough, who had to access the cost of the realignment and re-erection of the fence. I do not know how he came to be so close to the actual figure. The construction of the fence came about through the dedication and under the supervision of very practical men.

I turn now to the contribution made by the honourable member for Mackay. He focused on two issues, one of which, the Young Farmer Establishment Scheme, is no longer the responsibility of the Rural Lands Protection Board. It is now administered by the QIDC. The honourable member was critical of the initial guide-lines in the scheme. However, he defeated his own argument in his summing-up.

He made the initial criticism that only \$150,000 could be borrowed under the scheme for land establishment. At the time of the introduction of the scheme, \$150,000 was sufficient to establish people in different industries on the land. Since that time, inflation in land prices has made that virtually impossible.

Mr Casey went on to say that the QIDC has had to move in and endeavour to foreclose on many of the people who borrowed under the scheme. I believe that if the scheme had allowed people to borrow in excess of \$150,000—say, for example, \$200,000—the foreclosures would have come at a much earlier time.

The honourable member referred to the achievement of the Labor Party in settling people on the land. I repeat—as I said when my Estimates were previously before the Chamber—that following World War II when returned servicemen wanted to be established on the land, a settlement scheme was drawn up. At that time there were numerous very large pastoral holdings approaching the termination of their leases. They were used for the land ballots that took place at that time. Those land banks are no longer available; the land bank of yester-year has gone. The only remaining large pastoral leases are in the cattle country, and I do not believe that those areas will ever lend themselves to subdivision in a fashion that will produce viable properties. If the large areas of leasehold land in the north-western and northern areas do not include a river, there is no living. In other words, the outside country is quite viable, provided that one of the rivers in the great river system, namely, the Diamantina River, Coopers Creek, or the Georgina River, flows through the property. Those properties will never be able to be subdivided, because they would not be viable.

The honourable member for Southport gave a brilliant presentation of his knowledge of the Department of Freehold Land Titles, and I thank him for his contribution. He clearly demonstrated the co-operative commitment of all departments within my portfolio to improving the quality and ease of access to land information services. There is no doubt that he is a very capable member.

I come now to the contribution made by Mr Comben, the honourable member for Windsor. I am not in any way surprised at his attitude. I pay him tribute for the fact that last night during his speech he refrained from denigrating officers of the department. He did denigrate them sometime ago in this Chamber, but he was man enough to apologise.

I wish to thank all members on both sides of the Chamber for their tribute to and appreciation of the courtesies shown by officers of my departments. As Minister for Land Management, I am tremendously proud of the staff of my departments and the service that they give to the people of the State of Queensland. Instead of thanking honourable members individually, I thank them as a whole.

There was only one honourable member—and I will comment on him when I come to address his remarks—whose comments I do not appreciate. The honourable member was Mr D'Arcy, and I do not appreciate his remarks. When he calls me or my officers corrupt, he is far from the mark.

The only thing Mr Comben wants to do is to turn the whole of Queensland into an environmental or national park. He would probably like to quadruple the land rents paid by the people living in the remaining areas, make a million dollars and send everyone away from the land in western Queensland. He made that comment last night.

**Mr Scott:** That's totally unfair.

**Mr GLASSON:** The honourable member was not here and did not hear the debate.

**Mr Scott:** I was here. I was in the Chamber the whole time.

**Mr GLASSON:** What I am saying is perfectly correct. I refer the honourable member to *Hansard* and the comments made by Mr Comben regarding land rents.

There is now before the Land Court a case put by the department and the industry. A decision on rents for both cattle and sheep properties in this State will be given by the Land Court. After the court's decision is delivered, it will be very interesting to compare the rents that prevail now with those that will then be put in place. Today the member for Burdekin talked about commodity prices. Although sugar and grain prices have improved to a degree, in no way is the man on the land in a tremendously fortunate position. Although commodity prices may have improved, the drought conditions that have been suffered by the man on the land throughout this State and the rest of the Commonwealth of Australia have made his lot a very difficult one.

I thank the honourable member for Burnett, Mr Slack, for his contribution, in which he spoke of the independence of the Valuer-General's Department and how its work is largely misunderstood. Many people still equate valuations with rates and assume that an increase in valuation will lead to a similar increase in rates. Many other members on this side of the Chamber referred to the link between valuations and rates. Although the valuation is the basis on which rates are determined, it is up to the local authorities to adjust their rate in the dollar so that the increased, or decreased, valuations raise exactly the same amount of funds.

He pointed out the great benefits of annual valuations, but referred to a couple of problems. He was right when he said that no system is perfect. He correctly indicated that small parcels of land often increase in value to a greater extent than larger parcels. That is only natural, because the market-place for the smaller parcels of land has much greater competition. He also referred to some of the problems caused by the amalgamation of valuations in a local authority area. However, many of the difficulties could be overcome if the local authorities adopted a differential rating system. That option is open to all local authorities.

The member for Moggill, Mr Lickiss, made a sizeable contribution. He himself was a valuer and at one stage was Queensland division institute president. He made some complimentary remarks about my portfolio and the past and present officers. I thank him for that.

I can sympathise also with some of his remarks about the similarities between freehold and perpetual lease tenures and the future possibility of a single title register. However, there are differences in the management of these tenures and in the way they are perceived by the commercial world and land-owners themselves. The four separate departments in my portfolio will continue to co-operate closely in the enhancement of land registration and information services.

As mentioned previously, the one-stop shop approach will be pursued enthusiastically and the recently established land information unit will assist me in co-ordinating the accelerated development of the State's land information system, to which this Government is committed.

He also mentioned the valuable contribution being made by the Land Management portfolio to Queensland's future. This was recently demonstrated by the tropical rainforest project in north Queensland. From the comments of some of the world experts who have visited Queensland to see the World Expo, I believe the rainforest study at DGI is currently at the forefront of technical development in the world. In fact, Queensland's case for a sensible solution to this problem is very much being strengthened by the use of this latest technology within DGI.

I thank Mr Lickiss for his kind words about the former head of the Department of Geographic Information, Mr Mac Serisier. It was with some pleasure that I learned last week that Mac Serisier was elevated to the highest honour that his profession can bestow, that of Honorary Fellow of the Institution of Surveyors, Australia. I believe this is just reward for the excellent work he did during his contribution to the development of Queensland.

The member for Cunningham, Mr Elliott, referred to valuations. His electorate is unique in that the annual valuations actually decreased. Because of the depression in the grain industry, the relative values were reflected in the annual valuations. That resulted in valuations decreasing by 40 per cent. From that example, I think everyone will appreciate that, when annual valuations are finally in place by 1990, it will be much fairer for land-holders and much easier for local authorities to give justice to their rate-payers.

In response to the member for Woodridge, Mr D'Arcy, I say that the Land Administration Commission and I always act responsibly. I take strong exception to his implication that my officers and I could be dishonest. We consider the public interest and obtain the views of interested departments. The views and recommendations of the Harbours and Marine Department and of the fisheries branch of the Department of Primary Industries are obtained. Other relevant authorities such as the Beach Protection Authority, port authorities and, in the instance that he referred to, the Gold Coast Waterways Authority are consulted. The waterways authority had a large input into the development that has taken place in the Broadwater.

While I am speaking about that area and South Stradbroke Island, I should say that the Lands Department is aware of the 1974 Peel report and has regard to it. However, such a report cannot be regarded as determinative. It was made years ago and not only has technology changed, but also our knowledge has improved and our society has changed.

I am not aware of the tractor that was said to be working on Coomera Island. However, investigations will be made as to whether that is correct. Sanctuary Cove is basically all freehold land. The lease on Sovereign Island, which was previously Andys and Griffin Islands, originated in the 1960s. I also have information on Ephraim Island. I seek leave to table the three documents which were referred to by Mr D'Arcy, the member for Woodridge, last night.

Leave granted.

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

**Mr GLASSON:** Mr McPhie, the honourable member for Toowoomba North, outlined some of the Government's reasons for the creation of the Department of Freehold Land Titles and the logic of placing the department within the Land Management portfolio. An Opposition spokesman also mentioned that matter. Mr McPhie pointed out that those moves are totally consistent with Government policies developed subsequent to reviews covered by Sir Ernest Savage. He also outlined some of the major initiatives under way to improve land information services available to the public. I thank him for his contribution.

Mr McPhie made reference to the dingo barrier fence, which I dealt with previously. He referred to the Rural Lands Protection Board, which was referred to by many other Government members. Mr Scott, who followed that contribution by the member for Tablelands, did not seem to appreciate that the Rural Lands Protection Board protects the lands of this State. Its role is very challenging.

I pay tribute to the scientists within both the Alan Fletcher Research Station at Sherwood and the Tropical Weeds Research Station at Charters Towers for the continuing research that is being carried on both on shore and off shore, in North and South America, east Africa and Madagascar. The people in north Queensland would be aware of the enormous infestation by rubber vine in the grazing lands of north Queensland. At present, a research officer is in Madagascar. She has made significant progress in an endeavour to combat rubber vine. I pay tribute to that officer's dedication and to the dedication of the other officers of the department.

Mr De Lacy, the member for Cairns, spoke about the northern rainforest areas, which I might mention is not within my area of responsibility.

**Mr Scott:** Aren't you Land Management?

**Mr GLASSON:** The rainforests are not within my area of responsibility. Mr Scott believes that Land Management should cover everything.

The honourable member for Cairns said that he saw little evidence of Queensland's information database on the northern rainforest areas. He also queried the existence of evidence that showed that the extremely large areas that have been designated by the Commonwealth Government for World Heritage listing do, in fact, include land that has no environmental significance.

I suggest that the honourable member should visit the technology trade centre on the fifth floor of the Sunmap Centre, where he can see these areas for himself. He can be assured that this evidence will be included in Queensland's well-documented case to the forthcoming High Court appeal against the proposed World Heritage listing.

The honourable member for Cairns emphasised the need for land to be provided to the public in the most efficient manner and at the least cost possible. In fact, the Department of Geographic Information has been moving that way for some years now by ensuring that all surveying is undertaken by private industry. This ensures that the public gets the most advantage of the competitive nature of the market-place, and that real survey costs are kept to a minimum. He also referred to industrial land, as did the member for Merthyr. Leasing of land for industrial use is not under the control of the Lands Department. My colleague the Minister for Industry and Small Business is responsible for that.

I seek leave to table the document referred to by Mr De Lacy on those leases.

Leave granted.

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

**Mr GLASSON:** The member for Burdekin raised an interesting question about the relationship of technology to land management. I thank him for his support of current progress on the digitisation of the land boundaries of Queensland. As he pointed out, Queensland is now well advanced in that process, mainly as a result of its vision to use

the excellent resources of the private sector in obtaining that data. The combination of the use of both private and Government skills and technology is unique to Queensland, and has resulted in Queensland having most of those special skills in the private sector in Australia. That has given private industry in Queensland a definite commercial advantage when bidding for overseas projects.

Mr Innes, the Leader of the Liberal Party and member for Sherwood, dwelt on leases on Cape York. I have covered that point. However, more importantly, he compared leasehold land to freehold land. I was not certain whether he was in favour of freehold land or leasehold land. When I asked him where he and his party stood on freehold land, I did not receive a clear answer. I will be interested to know the final results.

The member for Sherwood, like many other members on both sides of the House, spoke about the degradation of mulga lands. My department is well aware that the mulga lands of south-west Queensland are subject to degradation from both wind and water erosion. Concern has been expressed about the problem.

The member for Bundaberg referred to a report that is at present the subject of discussion between the Lands Department and the DPI. It is hoped that something positive will come out of those discussions and that funds will be made available to assist the land-holders.

The mulga country in this State is subject to very severe drought. Unfortunately, the land-holders are not in a position to spell the land because, as was stated by a number of members, when those blocks were initially cut up, they were cut up into much smaller areas than would be required to make a viable unit today. Therefore pressures are brought to bear on the land-holders and administrators of that land which makes it very difficult for them to maintain the land as we would wish.

The member for Barambah, Mr Perrett, indicated the importance of adequate, reliable information if a sensible conservation policy is to be developed. I can only support those comments as they reinforce the major thrust of the State land information system presently being developed by my department. Indeed, it is this Government's policy to ensure that this important information can be made more readily available to the man on the land. Information about land and its management is very important for the people of Queensland, as much of our wealth comes from the land.

The member for Bundaberg made a very important contribution to the debate and expressed some concerns. First of all, he spoke about his concern in relation to land settlement. He referred to what are termed rural residential subdivisions. That is not and cannot be my responsibility or that of officers of my department. Rural residential subdivision is the responsibility of the local authority. The example cited by the member for Bundaberg in relation to Seventeen Seventy would obviously be the responsibility of the relevant local authority.

I have personally seen some disgusting, unbelievable examples of squalor in rural residential subdivisions throughout Queensland. I am not saying that that is always the case. However, people from the southern cities come up to Queensland with great expectations. They buy land after seeing it in a brochure. They come up to Queensland to follow their dream of owning a piece of land, settling on it and making a living—not a fortune, but just a living. In some instances there is no hope of even obtaining power and water supply, the simple necessities of life. I believe that some local authorities have a lot to answer for.

The member for Bundaberg also referred to losses which are incurred and have been set out in the annual reports of the department over the years. As I said, those losses can be easily explained. I do not want to waste any time, so I seek leave to table the documents that clearly set out the losses during that time.

Leave granted.

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

**Mr GLASSON:** The third matter of concern to the member for Bundaberg related to the differential between the freeholding prices of the Lands Department, the Queensland Housing Commission and the Mines Department. The Minister for Mines, the Minister for Welfare Housing, I and the heads of the three departments have held discussions in an endeavour to come to grips with that problem. No wonder the people of Queensland are being bamboozled. Unfortunately, because of the Commonwealth/State Housing Agreement, the hands of the State are very much tied. The Commonwealth will not agree to fall into line with the State in relation to this policy.

The member for Bundaberg said that he wrote to my department in 1986 and he did not receive an answer. I apologise if that occurred. That will be checked out and the honourable member will get an answer which, together with those documents, will clearly indicate why further progress has not been made in this area.

The member for Tablelands, Mr Gilmore, spent much of his time talking about the Stock Routes and Rural Lands Protection Board. I have already dealt with it, and I do not intend to elaborate on it.

The member for Merthyr, Mr Lane, said that the Government should be taking a new direction by way of a more open approach, one could say, to making land in many different areas available for utilisation. Mr Lane's greatest concern appeared to be the fact that not enough industrial land is being made available. Again I say that the responsibility for industrial land does not fall within my portfolio. When over the last eight years local authorities or others have felt the need for the establishment of industrial estates, if Crown land has not been available, land has been purchased for those very developments.

I do not think that the Government should embark on an open-door approach. The Government has to be responsible and make available industrial land to cater adequately for the needs in that area. As Mr Lane said, I think that Queensland has to endeavour to move more towards the industrial area to increase its economic base and employment opportunities for the many people who are flocking to this State. Although I do not entirely agree with his proposal to employ a sales entrepreneur, it is worth looking at that matter when dealing with Crown land and its alienation.

I take this opportunity to comment on Mr Lane's statement about the redevelopment of the old Evans Deakin ship yards at Kangaroo Point. The commission made a recommendation to the Government on how it should deal with that land. It was decided to call tenders related to a larger area. The Government was trying to consolidate an area that would make it more viable and attractive to entrepreneurs, from wherever they might come, to develop that land. Great difficulty has been encountered by the preferred tenderer for that development in his endeavour to satisfy various requirements of the Brisbane City Council. I believe that those difficulties have almost been overcome. I most certainly hope that the company will overcome the problems, because the extra inconvenience and expense that it must have incurred would be enormous.

The member for Cook paid a tribute to the department's approach and its endeavours to assist the Aboriginal people in granting them title over their own land. That has been a great achievement, in conjunction with the Department of Community Services and Ethnic Affairs. Mr Katter, who is the Minister responsible for that department, and his departmental officers have received the greatest possible co-operation from officers of the Lands Department. Again I pay a tribute to the efficient way that they have approached what at the time appeared to be a very difficult problem. Many people are satisfied with the circumstances that prevail today.

I challenge Mr Scott's statement that I could not answer a question asked by Mr Innes, the member for Sherwood and the Leader of the Liberal Party.

**Mr Scott:** You didn't. You did not answer it. I could see the wheels turning but you couldn't come up with the right words.

**Mr GLASSON:** The honourable member for Sherwood asked a question containing five parts, and the fifth part of his question contained three other parts. The Act to

which Mr Innes referred was introduced in 1972, which was a long time before I became a member of this Assembly. No-one would realistically expect anyone to carry around that sort of information in his head. That is just not on.

**Mr Scott:** Was Peter Huybers profiteering when he sold that land?

**Mr GLASSON:** I would like to address that question. People on the opposite side of the Chamber—sadly, I say “people”—feel that to make a profit is a sin in the State of Queensland. Indeed, it was a commercial venture that was open to anyone who wanted to enter into it. If that person was successful in making a profit from that deal, good luck to him. He most certainly did not con the system. Everything that has transpired in land-dealings throughout this State has been in accordance with the Act. As I said, I hope that that paper that I tabled will satisfy some of the concerns of the Leader of the Liberal Party in relation to the jaunt that he made to the area recently. On Tuesday morning I saw the honourable member’s adviser in the gallery. Today I saw the Leader of the Liberal Party on a replay of a television program. It was bad taste by the Leader of the Liberal Party to put himself in front of the television cameras and to talk about hundreds of millions of dollars when indeed the land does not even have a waterfront. Photographs were taken of great long beaches, as was done with Silver Plains. It was dishonesty to an extent that one would not expect from any person who occupies a seat in this Chamber.

If someone is going to talk to the public of Queensland about a lease, let him be honest. What is entailed in the lease? Silver Plains does not have a beach frontage. It never has had a beach frontage and never will have one. The dealings in relation to Silver Plains were a play toy of the Labor Party about three years ago. I took the opportunity of going right over Silver Plains. Believe me, if that man ever fulfils the conditions that apply to the freehold land that he will receive, he certainly deserves it.

**Mr Scott:** If he then sells that to a tourism developer, is that still his right?

**Mr GLASSON:** If a tourism developer bought the land, that is the risk that he takes. If I had funds which would allow me to become an equity partner in any major development in the area that the honourable member is talking about, and if I was asked to be a share-holder, I would say, “No thank you.” It will be many decades after I leave this earth that that area will ever command patronage from the world’s holiday-makers. The Great Barrier Reef can be seen much further south than that. I pointed out the difficulties in living in that area, such as the heat and the monsoons. It is not possible to even have a decent swim up there because of the presence of crocodiles and box jellyfish. It is not the haven that some people would lead others to believe by showing the film, which I consider to be a deceitful film, on Channel 7.

No Opposition member can claim that I have not responded to something that has been brought to my attention. I have requested officers to take action for the fulfilment of certain conditions on a lease document that is held by my department. The land commissioner in Cairns will be inspecting that property in the very near future. I must say that I was not impressed by the information about the cattle yards that was contained in that document. The lease document will be dealt with clause by clause. If that gentleman has fulfilled the terms of his lease, he will be able to proceed. However, if he has not fulfilled those terms, he will be required to do so before he is allowed to freehold the land.

At 4.24 p.m.,

**The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr Burreket):** Order! Under the provisions of the Sessional Order agreed to by the House on 27 September, I shall now put the questions for the Vote under consideration and the balance remaining unvoted for Land Management.

The question for the following Vote was put, and agreed to—

Land Management—

Department of Lands—Salaries, Administration	\$
Expenses, etc. (Consolidated Revenue)	16,454,000

Progress reported.

## CONSTITUTION (EXECUTIVE ACTIONS VALIDITY) BILL

### Second Reading

Debate resumed from 28 September (see p. 963).

**Mr GOSS (Logan—Leader of the Opposition)** (4.26 p.m.): I agree with many of the statements that were made in the Minister's second-reading speech. The comments that he made about constitutional philosophy with regard to the Governor in Council appear to be appropriate. It would seem to be appropriate that the Governor in Council should not be seen as a deliberative body but rather as a body by which the Governor acts on the advice of his Ministers.

I have no objection to a number of the clauses. The subsection 6B referred to in the Bill relates to ministerial action to approve the use of land or a building notwithstanding that such use is regulated and/or controlled by a council by-law. Whether the Minister should be able to, or should, exercise power to intervene in that way in the work of local government is an important philosophical question. However, for the purpose of the proposed amendment one is looking at recommendations by Ministers in the first place and not at, for example, a town plan that is put forward by a local authority, as was the case with most other amendments. I questioned the legal effect. The result seems to be that, on the matter of ministerial recommendations, the Governor in Council is a deliberative body. I am not sure about the philosophy of that proposed amendment or whether any real consideration has been given to that effect. It seems to be out of keeping with the remainder of the Bill.

In general terms it is justifiable to criticise the Local Government Department for the way in which it interferes where it should not. For example, one case that springs to mind relates to the development by the Noosa Shire Council of sensible planning philosophies and instruments, particularly with regard to the north shore of the Noosa River. This Government has something to answer for in that regard.

As the Minister said, this legislation has been introduced as a result of various developments, decisions and court actions taken in relation to the world's tallest building. In part, this legislation necessarily arises because of actions that were taken by a previous Government, subsequent actions that were taken by the Ahern Government and court proceedings that were instituted as a result of disputation over the world's tallest building. Once again, this course of development and the behaviour of the Ahern Government demonstrate the Premier's retrospective approach to honesty and integrity in Government. As I said, this legislation arises partly from the decision that this Government made to amend the town plan.

One of the reasons why this legislation is necessary is that State Cabinet was prepared to undertake a decision overriding the Brisbane City Council. That was not an isolated example of how the Queensland Cabinet has ridden roughshod over the interests of local councils. It is happening all along the coast.

While the current Premier, Mr Ahern, was a Minister in the Queensland Cabinet, ministerial rezonings became a common occurrence. In relation to the Mainsel case—Cabinet was prepared to submit to the dictates of the then Premier, Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen; yet the current Cabinet and the current Premier, Mr Ahern, have displayed a retrospective approach to honesty in Government with a belated interest in this matter and the issues arising in the Fitzgerald inquiry. Once again the Premier was not prepared to take a stand in Cabinet against the moves to override the Brisbane City Council.

It is worth noting that the Government is quite happy to make this legislation retrospective to affect the decisions that were made years ago. By comparison, the powers of the Public Accounts Committee to investigate the spending of tax-payers' funds will not extend back beyond December of last year—certainly not back to the period that is covered by this legislation.

When it suits Mr Ahern and the members of Cabinet who were also members of Cabinet during the Bjelke-Petersen era, they are prepared to go back and deal with the events that occurred before this administration; but, when it could be politically embarrassing, they do not.

**Mr Randell** interjected.

**Mr GOSS:** That is not why this situation has arisen. As the Minister knows, it has arisen because the Government has been caught out with the corruption surrounding the Mainsel issue and the necessity to fix it up, to show some backbone and to exhibit some honesty retrospectively. The Minister was not a member of Cabinet, so I will not criticise him.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row):** Order! I point out to the Leader of the Opposition and the Minister that the cross-fire in the Chamber is not adding very much to the debate at the moment.

**Mr GOSS:** Very well, Mr Deputy Speaker. I will take your advice and ignore the Minister.

I do not wish to unfairly criticise this Minister because he was not the member of that Cabinet that failed to show the backbone and that failed to show the honesty that the public of this State is entitled to expect from people who hold responsible positions in the Cabinet.

Because the public pays a heavy price, it is important that the public sees that honesty and backbone from people such as the current Premier and the Ministers, not just now when it is convenient and unavoidable but also in previous years when they have sat back. This is not just a piece of legislation to fix things up. It is the public that pays a heavy price for that lack of backbone and this retrospective honesty that is now seen coming from this Government.

I refer in part to an article that appeared on the front page of last Saturday's *Gold Coast Mail* which refers to Fitzgerald inquiry officers examining documents and questioning witnesses in relation to ministerial rezonings and property developments in the area of the Gold Coast. The article also states—

“Gold Coast City Council officers and aldermen, as well as State and Federal politicians, are said to be among those who will be asked to comment on matters of concern.”

It is understood to be the first time that officers of the inquiry have extended their investigations to rezoning and building development matters, and that a number of files have been confiscated from council archives for the purpose of the investigation.

It would be very interesting to know—and the Opposition tried to find this out from the Premier this morning but without success—whether or not these investigations are in fact being undertaken by the Fitzgerald inquiry pursuant to the widened terms of reference that were recently agreed to, or whether they are part of some future corruption commission. If they are in fact being carried on by the Fitzgerald commission, then they are not something that fell at all within the original terms of reference relating to illegal gambling, prostitution and drugs, but are obviously quite specific investigations—quite specific targets that the inquiry has in mind and was able to undertake after having its terms of reference widened to basically encompass anything that it wanted to investigate.

The newspaper article to which I referred alludes to investigations of development decisions made during the time of the city administrator, when the elected council had been sacked because of conflict between the aldermen and Mayor Bruce Small. I

understand from the article that an investigation will be carried out to determine whether corruption occurred in relation to particular projects.

The scope for interference in the affairs of local authorities and therefore in the legitimate affairs of businesses and individuals right across this State is considerable. That is why I believe that this Government and the Minister and his predecessors have a lot of explaining to do and a lot to answer for in relation to the way in which they have interfered with councils.

As I travel around the State I receive complaints from various communities such as Cairns and Mulgrave about such things as the port authority. Whether it be Townsville, Mackay, Noosa or even the Gold Coast, councils are complaining about the interference—what they believe to be interference for the wrong reasons, for unprincipled reasons—by this Government in the legitimate affairs and the legitimate decision-making responsibility of local authorities.

As I said, it must be remembered that the public pays a price when friends of the Government are favoured by a decision and receive an advantage because, if that decision fails to be in keeping with the approach of the council, the Government is basically giving an improper advantage to a crony or friend and trampling over the legitimate rights of councils and the legitimate democratic rights of the people who elect the councils. With this Government, that problem flows across the board.

The price that is paid for the Fitzgerald inquiry is millions of dollars. In excess of \$10m was spent running the inquiry last year, and this year more millions will be spent on numerous prosecutions that will undoubtedly follow the release of the Fitzgerald report. There will be further costs in relation to police morale and dislocation of the force. There will also be a general cost, given the damage done to the social fabric of this State and the fabric of public administration.

This Government likes to engage in retrospective honesty. The first major test of whether or not it was prepared to act in accordance with the vision of excellence can be seen by looking at the disgraceful performance of the Premier and this Cabinet in relation to one of the most important development projects in this State, which of course is the development of the Expo site once Expo finishes. We all recall that on 31 January this year the Premier, Mr Ahern, told a news conference that the successful tenderer for the Expo site development when Expo concluded would not be decided for at least another two weeks. What happened? Surprisingly and unexpectedly, the decision was made the next day.

Many of us have heard the reports and many of us believe that this occurred after a secret meeting at National Party headquarters between various National Party knights and the developer, when it was agreed that Cabinet was stitched up, and the decision was made the next day to give this most important development to a crony of the National Party notwithstanding the fact that its tender did not comply in significant respects with the tender specifications. In other words, for the first major test of this Government and the first major test of this Premier, the old standards of cronyism were adopted. I believe that the public of Queensland will exact a very heavy price from this Government for that decision.

Subsequently, after some very strategic leaking of information by people who were placed to leak information in relation to the wrong-doing of this Government, the Premier could no longer stand the pressure. In June of this year he did a back flip and withdrew the tender from the River City 2000 consortium because he could no longer stand the heat and the public controversy that was arising as a result of the way in which that decision had been improperly made in February of this year. What will be the price paid by the public? The price paid by the public will be known when Expo finishes because, by November, the public of Queensland should have under way on the site a development that could be a real community asset.

However, after the tender was withdrawn from the River City 2000 consortium, legitimate tenderers who had lodged applications through the right channels and approached

the matter of tender in a legitimate and honest way were not prepared to come back into the fray. Because of that, Queensland lost the contributions that could have been made by legitimate and honest consortiums tendering for redevelopment of that site.

**Mr Davis:** Plus the cost of putting the tender in.

**Mr GOSS:** Indeed. The honest companies involved probably lost a total of hundreds of thousands of dollars, because proposals and tenders are not put together without substantial costs being incurred. When a fresh opportunity was given to those companies to come back into the bidding they were not prepared to do so, which is a sign of their lack of confidence in the integrity of this Government and their concern about its indecisiveness. Such was the low regard that the CM Group and others had for the integrity and indecisiveness of this Government, they would not submit tenders again.

Now it appears that the people of Queensland will suffer because of the indecisiveness of the Premier. A long delay will be experienced in the progress on that site of a comprehensive development that will meet with community approval and become established as a community asset, to be enjoyed for a long time in the future by the people of this city, this State and other areas of Australia. The delay caused by the Premier's indecisiveness will cost the people of this State dearly.

However, I suppose people should be grateful for the fact that, having granted that tender to a crony, the Premier and his Cabinet were weak enough to back down. I believe that the approved project would have been very detrimental to the future of this city and this State. The Government can certainly do better for the people of this State. It can secure a development on the south side of the river that will perhaps carry on part of the tradition and the spirit established on the Expo site by Sir Llew Edwards and his team—pursuant to a decision made originally, not by the Ahern Government, but by the Bjelke-Petersen Government. Hopefully, the exposure of the cronyism and lack of integrity that were a feature of the approval of that tender will be such that this Government will be forced to avoid following along that path.

This legislation is largely unobjectionable. It is necessary as a result of litigation, but it also highlights the wrong-doing of this Government in the past. In particular, this legislation highlights the price that the public of this State has had to pay because weak and indecisive Cabinet Ministers were not prepared to speak up to protect the public interest. Instead, they sat back quietly and held on to their ministerial positions. Those weak and indecisive Cabinet Ministers put their own comfort and their own personal position ahead of the interests of the public that they have sworn, but failed, to serve.

**Mr STEPHAN (Gympie) (4.42 p.m.):** It gives me great pleasure to join in this debate this afternoon and support the Minister in the introduction of this legislation. I take this opportunity to commend the Minister on the outstanding job that he is doing in the Local Government and Racing portfolio. One of the important attributes that a Minister for Local Government must possess is the ability to communicate with local authorities, understand their problems, and get an idea of what councillors think about certain issues. The present Minister, Mr Randell, has been able to achieve that degree of communication very well. I remind honourable members that the Minister's background in local government has equipped him to carry out his portfolio responsibilities with commendable efficiency. I compliment the Minister on his ability and on the active role that he plays in visiting local authority areas to find out their requirements, in listening to their submissions and in reacting positively to them. It has given me great satisfaction to be able to work with the Minister under the circumstances that I have outlined, and it has been a pleasure to give him the support that he deserves.

I listened with interest to the comments made by the Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr Palaszczuk:** It was all valid.

**Mr STEPHAN:** As soon as problems arise, the Opposition claims that they were caused by Government inactivity or delay in taking appropriate action, but never by

any other factors. The Leader of the Opposition mentioned the North Shore development at Noosa, which was the subject of a court case. Some problems arose in connection with that project.

**Mr Palaszczuk:** That is right.

**Mr STEPHAN:** I wonder what Opposition members think about the judgment in that court case? That judgment was the final decision on the matter.

Farther north at Rainbow Beach, delays have been experienced in reaching a final decision on the development of a project in that area. The point I wish to make is that when a delay occurs, a ground swell of opinion builds up in the community, irrespective of whether the opinions are right or wrong. I am concerned that the longer it takes to make a final decision, the more the ground swell builds up, and the more objections tend to increase, regardless of whether the objectors really know what they are objecting to. The trend at the moment is to object, and to knock projects rather than support them. It is all too easy for people to knock developers, but it is not quite as easy to find people who want to build and develop projects.

**Mr Palaszczuk:** Your Government is very adept at knocking things down.

**Mr STEPHAN:** I point out to the honourable member that building is taking place along Queensland's coastline, and developers are being encouraged by the Government. However, all that is heard from the Opposition is evidence of Opposition members' ability to knock proposals and development. The honourable member for Archerfield has just heard his own leader denigrate the efforts of this Government. Is the Opposition trying to create an illusion of development in this State? Instead, members of the Opposition should take note of the development that is occurring and learn a lesson from what is taking place.

The Leader of the Opposition also mentioned ministerial rezonings. It is interesting that in most instances, ministerial rezoning is carried out at the request of local authorities. Honourable members should recognise that Ministers do not simply carry out rezonings willy-nilly, which was the suggestion made by the Opposition. The Leader of the Opposition tried to create the impression that that is what has been happening, but that is not the case. Ministerial rezonings are carried out because of the demands that are being made upon local authorities. On many occasions, ministerial rezonings are requested by local authorities that wish to respond to the distinct demands for development approvals that have been made in their areas. Opposition members must not put the blame onto the Government when it is reacting to requests from people at ground level. If there is development as a result of a rezoning, the Opposition will blame someone because action will have been taken.

The Fitzgerald inquiry was also raised by Mr Goss. He is very keen to blame Mr Fitzgerald for everything. If anything is to be questioned, it should be transferred to the Fitzgerald inquiry. Mr Goss is a mirrorman; he gets someone else to reflect what he thinks is going wrong.

**Mr Palaszczuk:** The whole fabric of Queensland society at present is under the scrutiny of Tony Fitzgerald.

**Mr STEPHAN:** I do not believe that the whole fabric of Queensland society is under the scrutiny of the Fitzgerald inquiry. Some aspects of society are being investigated by the Fitzgerald inquiry, but to say that the whole fabric of Queensland society is under investigation at the moment is quite wrong. Perhaps the honourable member has a guilty conscience and feels that someone is looking over his shoulder and questioning every move that he makes. Perhaps he has something shady in his background and fears what someone else might do.

Accusations have been made and somewhere down the track those accusations will be investigated and charges will be laid. At the present time the Fitzgerald inquiry has simply listened to accusations from various members of the community. It is not the

final court of law. The Leader of the Opposition regularly refers to the Fitzgerald inquiry during question-time.

He also mentioned cronyism in relation to the redevelopment of the south bank. I am led to believe that the three major developers who were to proceed after the initial decision was made were supporters of the National Party, anyway. Irrespective of which developer was to be successful, this charge of cronyism would have been levelled at the National Party. The Opposition could do that on a regular basis because many people in the community support the National Party. As soon as the Opposition finds someone who supports the National Party, it levels the charge of cronyism at the Government. It is not cronyism.

How can the Opposition claim that it is cronyism in regard to the redevelopment of the south bank when each of the developers was known to support the National Party and its policies? That claim should be thrown out the window and the lawn should be fertilised with it. That is about all it is worth. The honourable member for Archerfield is shaking his head. Obviously, he is not too sure which way he is going.

In his second-reading speech on the Constitution (Executive Actions Validity) Bill, the Minister stated—

“... it must be clearly stated and understood that the Bill does not attempt to interfere with the substantive issues in dispute between the council and the company nor the right that any party has at law in respect of those issues, except to the extent that the validity of certain otherwise valid changes to the Brisbane town plan cannot be questioned on mere procedural grounds.”

The “mere procedural grounds” were used to hold up development in this case. The Government wants to see action taken, but I am not sure what members of the Opposition think of this Bill. The Minister went on to state—

“The Bill is essential to the proper and smooth functioning of Government in this State. It does not detract from the legal system, nor does it affect the rights of any parties in respect of town-planning matters other than to make it clear that town plans and amendments to them in force throughout Queensland are, in law, valid and binding, as of course they have always been thought to be.”

It is with pleasure that I support the Minister's introduction of this legislation. I compliment him for his enthusiasm and the way in which he goes about his duties.

**Mr BEANLAND (Toowong) (4.50 p.m.):** The Liberal Party supports the legislation that is before the House.

Over a period of some 12 months or longer a number of statements have come from the Government in relation to the appeal by the Brisbane City Council against Mainsel Investments Pty Ltd over the construction of the 107-storey building and how the proposal came about in the first place. Quite some time ago, the Government and 13 of the present 18 Ministers of Cabinet indicated that the Government would pass special legislation to allow this development to proceed. As I say, 13 of the 18 Ministers supported the development.

It is now history that, following the departure of Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen, the present Premier and Cabinet decided to take a different course of action. In many respects that course of action was to sit back and let the Brisbane City Council wear it. Over a period of time that is exactly what followed, except for the fact that the developer had a little help from the State Government in a number of ways. The Government was indicating that it would pass special legislation to stop the development going ahead, but, nevertheless, on 4 June an article in the *Courier-Mail* indicated that the Commissioner for Railways had in fact given approval for a clause 24 (3) as-of-right application to be made under the town plan. That application does not require advertising or allow the community the right to object or appeal to the Local Government Court. That is exactly what happened. The developer obtained the signature of the Commissioner for Railways on a clause 24 (3) as-of-right application and lodged that application with the Brisbane City Council. At the time, the Premier said that the Government was helping the council.

On 6 June, the Premier said that the council could call on laws, including the Building Act, the town-planning ordinances and the City of Brisbane Town Planning Act, to abort the development. He said that the council had the power not only to limit the height of the building but also to lay down any other building requirements that it saw fit. How misguided the Premier's statements were. All honourable members know that what followed was not an application under the Building Act; it was an application under the City of Brisbane Town Planning Act. Therefore, the Building Act did not come into consideration in this matter.

Under clause 24 (3)—the as-of-right clause—of the town plan the Brisbane City Council has very few rights. Further, in an article in the *Courier-Mail* of 6 June, the Premier said that the council could use section 30BA of the Building Act to force Mainsel to comply with any conditions it chooses to set. That is totally misleading and totally wrong. In fact, that was shown to be the case in the subsequent court case that the council brought against Mainsel.

The Premier made a whole series of statements in the press. I do not know why it was the Premier who was making the statements and not the Minister for Local Government or the Minister for Transport. As I understand it, the agreement was signed between the Commissioner for Railways, on behalf of the Government of Queensland, and Mainsel Investments Pty Ltd.

When one queries the Premier on the contract, the silence is deafening. Very few details have been forthcoming and, to this date, the community has not been given an opportunity to see this contract, which we were assured by the former Premier is a watertight contract for a building of 107 storeys. Over a period of time a number of unnamed spokesmen for the Government gave assurances that, in effect, Mainsel Investments had a watertight contract.

On 27 June, the Premier said that he had received more legal advice to the effect that the application was defective because the railway land was incorrectly zoned. I am still not sure what the Premier was dealing with. Apparently he was dealing with some rezoning application that the Minister for Local Government was at that time processing, but that had absolutely nothing to do with the application before the council. The Government seemed to be in a great deal of confusion over both of these applications. The developer, Mainsel Investments, had lodged a separate application altogether.

The land was zoned for railway uses but, because the land was so zoned under the Brisbane town plan, that is what caused the flaw that allowed the developer, once he had the signature of the Commissioner for Railways on the piece of paper, to lodge the application. That meant that the developer was leasing land from the Railway Department. Under the town plan, provided the application was in terms of the lease, it could be lodged with the council as a legal application. The court case that followed brought out nothing to indicate that the application was null and void in that respect at all.

The Premier said that the Government had since complied with a contractual agreement with Mainsel by initiating a ministerial rezoning on the railway-owned land. He added that the Government had also approved an amendment to the Brisbane town plan imposing a 250-metre height-limit on city buildings. He said that only three weeks after having told the council that it had all the powers in the world to take action to halt the development.

I am not sure from where the Premier was getting his legal advice, but certainly he was greatly confused on the matter. Under the Railways Act it is quite clear that the Commissioner for Railways is unable to sign a lease for land without the Government's approval. Sections 8 and 102 of the Railways Act clearly spell out that the Minister has to sign a lease agreement for it to be legal. Therefore, the Government was totally aware of the action being taken by the Commissioner for Railways. If the commissioner did something that was not legally correct, I ask the Minister what action the Government has taken against him for undertaking that course of action. The legislation now before the House is here largely because of the action that was taken on that fateful day early

in June when the commissioner signed the as-of-right town-planning application. It was that that set the whole ball game in motion. No action has been taken against the Commissioner for Railways at all. In fact, as far as I can understand, the commissioner acted quite correctly and quite legally in terms of the Government's position and with the Government's approval.

What has to be clearly understood is that the Government was proceeding down two courses. One course was initiating a ministerial rezoning that the Government said over and over again it was legally bound and legally committed to. The other course was to make life terribly, terribly difficult for the Brisbane City Council by allowing this as-of-right town-planning application to be made at a time when the council had indicated that it wished to insert a height restriction in the town plan. I think at that stage the council had advertised the fact that it wished to gain the power to impose building height restrictions. Since that time the council has proceeded with amendments to the town plan to provide for that height restriction. The Government initially received that application for the amendments, the history of which is known because it came out in the Supreme Court case before Mr Justice de Jersey. I might mention that that case is still proceeding; the appeal is before the Full Court of Queensland.

It is reasonable to expect that the Government may yet be faced with another dilemma on this issue. The Full Court may overturn the fine-line decision by Mr Justice de Jersey as to whether or not the application was correctly lodged. Only time will tell.

The Government's position made life extremely difficult for the Brisbane City Council. However, the Government did assist the council by taking up the height-restriction amendments that the council had put on display. Those amendments were subsequently taken off display and were submitted to the Government. The Government rushed them through, and the rest is history, because the objections did not go before the Governor in Council.

I am not critical of the Government for rushing those amendments through. In fact, I was trying to get the Government to put those amendments through much more quickly. At that time, the Government seemed to be dragging the chain. Clearly, if it had not rushed those amendments through, the council would not have had a leg to stand on when that second as-of-right application was made. As things stand at present, we could have the saga of the world's tallest building all over again. Only time will tell. Over the coming months, I am sure that more will be said on the matter and we will find out how good the contract is between the Queensland Railways Department and Mainsel Investments. Time will tell whether that contract is as watertight as some people believe, and whether or not Mainsel Investments will take the Government to court and win a case that costs the Government a considerable sum of money.

I turn now to the third-party appeal provisions concerning costs in the Local Government Court. I am talking about town-planning matters of great significance to the public of Queensland. The third-party appeal provisions were altered by the Government in December 1985, when the Government of the day changed the provisions so that objectors who appealed against decisions of the council of the day could have costs awarded against them. Prior to that, members of the community who appealed to the Local Government Court had to worry only about their own court costs.

The aftermath of having a situation in which costs can be awarded against an objector who appeals to the Local Government Court is that many people are afraid to take on the councils should they decide in favour of a particular applicant's proposal. Many people are now faced with the prospect of paying huge sums of money if they take cases on and have costs awarded against them. A person could have to pay tens of thousands of dollars, or he could lose his home.

Prior to 1985, the relevant provision in the City of Brisbane Town Planning Act stated—

“The Court may, upon application made to it, award costs—

- (a) in the case where an appeal is withdrawn before it is determined and the Court considers that the appeal was frivolous or vexatious, against the appellant;

- (b) in the case where a party has not been given reasonable prior notice of intention to apply for an adjournment of an appeal or other proceedings, against the party seeking the adjournment.”

Costs could be awarded in frivolous or vexatious cases. However, in a case which was not frivolous or vexatious, if a large developer ran up \$200,000 worth of costs by employing barristers, Queen's Counsel, town-planners and traffic engineers, he was responsible for his own costs. Now the situation is that the court may award such costs as it thinks fit.

The present provision states—

“The Court may make such order as it thinks fit as to the costs of any proceedings before it, including allowances to witnesses attending for the purposes of giving evidence at the hearing.”

That changes the whole face of Local Government Court cases in Queensland.

I appealed to the previous Minister for Local Government and I appeal to the present Minister to consider reverting to the situation that existed prior to Christmas 1985. I am not asking for that to occur in frivolous and vexatious cases. Prior to 1985, in a frivolous or vexatious case, costs could be awarded against people. However, when a legitimate case is brought before the Local Government Court, people should have to be concerned only about their own costs.

Many people in the community have few assets—perhaps savings of \$20,000 or \$30,000, or perhaps they own their own home—with which to fight court cases. They are not in a position to be able to fight large developers. At present, they turn a blind eye to the application and say, “We cannot proceed past the objection stage. We will have to let the application go.” I do not believe that is what justice is all about and I do not believe that is what was intended by the legislation. The previous legislation, which existed for a couple of decades, worked extremely well. I ask for a return to the pre-1985 conditions.

The large developer who has an application of substance will still be in a position to bring that application forward and argue the case in the Local Government Court. If the application is any good, it will stand on its own two feet and the developer will get the application approved. It might entail only another five or six court cases a year. Perhaps there are only two or three cases being dealt with at the moment. It is impossible to tell how many cases are involved. However, from talking to a number of people throughout Queensland, I know that they are concerned about this matter. I ask the Minister to give consideration—

**Mr Randell:** You also have the vexatious people who hold up genuine developments.

**Mr BEANLAND:** I am pleased to answer that interjection.

I would hope that cases before the Local Government Court are not held up unduly. I have had a lot to do with the Local Government Court. My understanding is that the Local Government Court can bring on cases very quickly indeed. There is no reason to believe that matters before the Local Government Court are not being held up now, if proceedings can be held up by frivolous and vexatious applications. If the Government has some concern in that regard, perhaps it ought to introduce a clause to ensure that cases are heard within two or three months.

I have been in the position of instructing solicitors to bring on cases very quickly because I could see that they were being held up unduly. In some instances, cases are held up by developers; it is not always the ordinary citizens in the community. In fact, over a period I have noticed that the worst offenders are large developers which hold up cases against other large developers. The Government should give consideration to this matter. It needs to be tackled in a totally different way. I think that the insertion of only one clause would overcome the problem. If nothing else comes out of this debate, I hope that there will be some amendments to the third-party appeal provision.

The last matter I want to raise very briefly relates to the town-planning amendments for the Brisbane City Council and perhaps other councils in regard to heritage legislation. I am aware that the Government presently has before it the heritage town-planning amendments, and has had them for several months. I would think that the Government is trying to make up its mind not only about the amendments but also about policy matters.

It is fair to say that if we are to have some worthwhile heritage legislation, certainly one way in which to obtain it is through local government, whichever council or local authority is under consideration.

The proposal for Brisbane city that is before the Government at present is already on display and there have been objections to it. It lists quite a number of buildings that are considered to be worth saving from a heritage point of view. Of course, it suggests a novel proposal to allow for the transfer of development rights for those people who own these buildings so that there is no loss of opportunity for them to carry out a development elsewhere or sell off the development rights that they would have otherwise been entitled to on that particular site had they developed it to its fullest extent. For example, if a person had a three-storey heritage building and could have demolished that building and put up a 12-storey building, that person would be able to enter into arrangements to sell off the other nine floors to some other prospective developer around the city.

I believe it is time for the Government to get serious and to give careful consideration to heritage legislation. The Minister also has responsibility for the National Trust of Queensland. I know that he would be sympathetic towards heritage matters. I would hope that this is a matter that the Government might examine closely in the very near future.

The Minister has had the town-planning amendments before him for some time now, and they were spoken of prior to that. I would have thought that sufficient time had elapsed in which the Government could have made a policy decision and could have gone down a particular track in relation to the matter. If the Government is going to wipe the amendments totally, the community should be told exactly what the position is. It seems to me that the Minister now has a wonderful opportunity to do just that.

This State ought to have worthwhile heritage legislation that does allow the property-owner to have some rights and does not force him to forgo rights and opportunities that he would have had if he had developed a particular site to its fullest extent. Legislation is needed to protect those rights. If the community wants buildings to be saved as heritage buildings, the community has to foot some of the bill. Perhaps the Government could consider some land tax rebates and so on to assist the people who own these buildings.

The right of appeal has to be maintained to protect the property-owner. It is not a one-way street. The Government has to be very careful to allow people who own these properties every opportunity to put forward their case through the Land Court and the Local Government Court and to ensure that they will not be financially worse off. That has to be balanced against ensuring that these buildings are saved. I look forward to the Minister making some comments on that matter.

**Mr PALASZCZUK (Archerfield) (5.14 p.m.):** At the outset, I make it perfectly clear that I am in total agreement with this legislation. However, I do want to make a few comments on the chain of events that occurred over the past year or so in relation to the so-called world's tallest building.

About a year ago—November, to be exact—I highlighted in this House the fact that Brisbane rate-payers could be held to ransom and be liable to millions of dollars in compensation that would have to be paid to developers in relation to this fiasco which is commonly referred to as the world's tallest building.

Under the then town plan, which was put forward by the Liberal Lord Mayor and endorsed by the National Party of Queensland and the National Party Government, it

was possible for any developer in Brisbane to build a building of any height, provided that it did not cover more than 35 per cent of the area of the site. I also said last year that it was then theoretically possible for a developer to put up a building of, say, 1 000 storeys, provided he had acquired enough land.

The Lord Mayor knew that, but she changed the rules. In doing so, the Lord Mayor misled the rate-payers of Brisbane. As a matter of fact, I will go further and say that the Lord Mayor fabricated any outrage that she expressed about the whole project. Does any member in this Chamber seriously believe that the Brisbane City Council was not approached on this subject? Even to get the project to the model stage, consultations at very high levels would need to have taken place. Absolutely no developer in Brisbane, in Australia or in any other part of the world would have gone to all that trouble without expecting the project to proceed.

Only one person came out of this whole sad and sorry saga with any credibility, and that was the then Premier, the former member for Barambah. Along with the Lord Mayor, the former member for Barambah was invited to the model launch by Mr Minuzzo. After hearing the public outcry about the height of the building, the Lord Mayor decided that she could not make it to the launch. What did she do? She left the poor former member for Barambah to carry the can by himself when he attended the launch with Mr Minuzzo.

Really, this legislation and the chain of events that preceded it have caused considerable uncertainty in the development of Brisbane. I have also been told that it is possible that developers had made investment purchases with the town plan in mind.

**Mrs Nelson:** Mr Palaszczuk——

**Mr PALASZCZUK:** The Liberal council had abandoned its own town plan. I predicted that the legal action alone could cost the rate-payers of Brisbane millions of dollars.

**Mr R. J. Gibbs:** Shocking!

**Mr PALASZCZUK:** I thank the honourable member for his interjection.

The Lord Mayor also made the statement that she feared that a huge hole in the ground that would never be filled would be created in the city. I suggest that because of the incompetence of the Liberal council, there will be many more holes in the ground that will not be filled. I point out to Mrs Nelson, who was about to interject, that not only the Liberal council but also the National Party should be censured over this issue. The fact that this legislation had to be introduced to save their collective hide is, in itself, tantamount to a censure.

**Mrs Nelson:** Do you think the abolition of the height restriction had more than anything else to do with the whole fiasco?

**Mr PALASZCZUK:** How will this legislation affect the development of the central business district in the future? As Mrs Nelson said, a height-limit of 258 AHD has been introduced into the Brisbane town plan. In effect, that means the construction of buildings will be limited to the height of 65 storeys.

**Mrs Nelson:** We had 18 months with no height restrictions.

**Mr PALASZCZUK:** That is so. That is why developers were purchasing properties in Brisbane; they had that in mind. Now they have all been caught out.

**Mrs Nelson:** They were told by the Lord Mayor that the sky was the limit.

**Mr PALASZCZUK:** The honourable member is right. They have all been caught out.

Really, what does all this mean to a developer? Firstly, no account is taken of the terrain in the city, which means that buildings on elevated sites are still restricted to the

height-limit of 258AHD, as are buildings on the low sites in the city. If I was a developer, I would certainly want to get maximum value for my money, that is, a building of the maximum height, and under the town plan I would look for low sites, not sites high on hills. It would be more cost effective to build on the low sites than on the high sites.

Another important point to be taken into account with the height-limit is that developers, in trying to achieve maximum storage space, will now go for the flat-top style of buildings, utilising as much floor space as possible.

**Mr R. J. Gibbs:** I believe that you should be our party's nominee for Lord Mayor next time round.

**Mr PALASZCZUK:** If one looks at the new CPI building with its cigar-shaped roof line, one would consider it to be a rather tall building. I would point out to Mr Gibbs that, because of the Lord Mayor's abysmal performance over the past 18 months, anyone who nominated as her opponent would be able to win the Lord Mayoralty hands down.

The CPI building, with its cigar-shaped roof line, is about 50 storeys in height, but has only 40 storeys of usable office space. In my opinion, the CPI building is an aesthetically pleasing building, but with the passing of this legislation and with the amended town plan, the CPI building will be a building of the past, and it should be placed on the list of heritage buildings because the majority of new buildings will be of the ugly, flat-top construction. In other words, our city will become impersonal fingers of glass and cement.

**Mr Davis:** Another Dodge City.

**Mr PALASZCZUK:** There will be no Chrysler Tower of New York, with its magnificent architecture, constructed in Brisbane. That in itself will be a real shame because Brisbane will be restricted to only one type of construction.

After the new Premier, Mr Ahern, disposed of the former member for Barambah earlier this year, he asked Mr Minuzzo and the Mainsel company for a briefing on the world's tallest building. Did he question them about the height of the building? No! Did he question them about the architectural design? No! Did he ask about restricting the height of the building? No! All he was interested in was the traffic problem that would result in the vicinity of the building. That is all that the Premier wanted to hear. If the traffic problem could be solved, he would be happy. Mr Ahern received the answer from Mainsel that the developers were prepared to spend \$15m on pedestrian and road traffic not only in the vicinity of the proposed building but in the area up to a number of blocks away. It is not common knowledge that the so-called world's tallest building, in reaching a height of 107 storeys, was to have only 96 storeys of office space.

The handling by this National Party Government and the Brisbane City Council of the proposal for the so-called world's tallest building has been a complete and utter bungle. The introduction of this legislation is tantamount to an admission by the Government of its total failure to handle that sad and sorry saga that is known as the world's tallest building.

**Hon. J. H. RANDELL** (Mirani—Minister for Local Government and Racing) (5.24 p.m.), in reply: I thank honourable members for their worthwhile contributions to this debate. The Opposition Whip made some very worthwhile interjections.

The honourable Leader of the Opposition made much of the issue of retrospectivity yet failed to appreciate that this Bill protects the very councils that he alleged that this Government has been and still is overriding. The honourable Leader of the Opposition should be aware that ministerial rezonings have no more bearing on this Bill than the Mainsel case does. That is what this Government has been trying to say. Yet every Opposition spokesman mentioned that issue time and time again. This Bill affects all town-planning schemes in the State and the amendments to those schemes.

I thank the honourable member for Gympie for his contribution to the debate and the remarks that he made about my warm personal support. As the honourable member said, many ministerial rezonings were undertaken at the request of the relevant local authorities. The honourable member for Archerfield seemed to question that aspect, but I assure him that that assertion is absolutely correct. The honourable member for Gympie quite rightly pointed out that ministerial rezonings have a proper place in this State and always will have, particularly while I remain as the Minister.

I thank the honourable member for Toowong for his support of the Bill. However, as a former Deputy Mayor of Brisbane, he needs reminding that the Brisbane City Council agreed to the rezoning of the site for what was proposed to be the world's tallest building.

The honourable member for Toowong referred to statements that were made in relation to the effect that the Building Act would have had on the Mainsel project and suggested that in some way those statements were erroneous. The honourable member for Toowong should be aware that that aspect has never been fully tested and that, in the long run, it could be found that the Act would have a substantial impact on the proposal.

On behalf of the Government I reject utterly the suggestion that was made by the honourable member for Toowong that there was some sort of devious arrangement between the Commissioner for Railways and Mainsel in respect of the application that was lodged pursuant to what he called section 24 (3). The honourable member was referring to clause 24 (3) of the town plan, which relates to as-of-right uses. The honourable member should be aware that the town plan and the rights pertaining to that clause were both created by the present Liberal administration of the Brisbane City Council, of which he was once a member.

The honourable member for Toowong also raised one of his old favourites—the provision in the law for the awarding of costs by the Local Government Court. I assure the honourable member that those provisions are working well and I have received no complaints alleging any untoward order for costs that has been made by the court since that provision became law. Moreover, at seminars that my officers have attended, local government practitioners have stated that those changes have had no adverse effect.

The honourable member for Toowong referred also to heritage issues and the preservation of historical buildings. This Government is vitally concerned about those issues. Each year it makes a substantial contribution to the National Trust of Queensland to assist it in its very valuable work. I appreciate the work that is done by that trust. In fact, this year at my suggestion the contribution to that trust was increased by 20 per cent, which was greatly appreciated by the National Trust Committee. Once again I thank all honourable members for their contributions.

Motion agreed to.

#### Committee

Hon. J. H. Randell (Mirani—Minister for Local Government and Racing) in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 6, as read, agreed to.

Schedule—

**Mr ARDILL** (5.28 p.m.): The Minister and the honourable member for Gympie missed the point that was made by the Leader of the Opposition. This legislation has not been introduced solely because of a specific ministerial rezoning. Because of an expectation by many developers—probably including Mainsel—that ministerial rezonings are the norm in Queensland, the Government found it necessary to introduce retrospective legislation.

Far too many ministerial rezonings have occurred in Queensland. All honourable members have witnessed the problems that have occurred on the Gold Coast, and I do

not believe that we have seen the last of them. The problems relating to ministerial rezonings should be addressed. Ministerial rezonings should not be used to override the powers of local government. In some cases local governments have been sacked specifically so that changes could be made.

**Mr Newton:** When did that happen?

**Mr ARDILL:** That happened on the Gold Coast. The Gold Coast City Council was sacked because it wanted to introduce special rezonings, not because there was fighting between the council aldermen and the incompetent Mayor.

Nothing less than a sledge-hammer approach has been adopted to ministerial rezonings in this State. On many occasions ministerial rezonings have given developers such as Mainsel the idea that they can go ahead and override local councils and the wishes of the local people. That is why this problem of retrospectivity has arisen.

**Mr Stephan:** Who gave you that brief?

**Mr ARDILL:** Don't be ridiculous. I have been involved in local government for 15 years. It just so happens that I have had a lot more experience with the nuts and bolts of a town plan than anyone on the other side of the Chamber, including the Minister.

At the particular time that I introduced the 1976 town plan it was widely praised throughout Queensland and, in fact, throughout Australia, as being the best town plan that Brisbane had ever seen. The problem is that the honourable member read from a brief and did not understand what he was talking about. When he read from the brief he did well, but when he spoke off the cuff he did not understand that the Leader of the Opposition was saying that if it had not been for that expectation of a ministerial rezoning and the overriding of the normal procedures in this State—Mr Palaszczuk mentioned before that the fabric of this State has all but been destroyed by the National Party Government—there would be no need for this retrospective legislation.

As the Leader of the Opposition clearly said, the existing legislation is correct and we in the Opposition support it. As set out in the schedule, the Minister takes to himself a power which he must have as a reserve power, just the same as Governors-General and Governors need a reserve power. However, that power should not be exercised except in exceptional circumstances. In the past, far too much of that exercise of power has been seen. Quite clearly, developers such as Mainsel and the cronies who have tendered for the redevelopment of the Expo site have the expectation that their wishes will prevail in this State; that they will be allowed to do whatever they wish without any concern for the wishes of the people or the wishes of local government.

**Mr RANDELL:** The Leader of the Opposition said that this legislation was brought about by the Mainsel decisions. This legislation validates past actions, not only of this Government but of previous Labor Governments. It also validates actions by previous Labor Brisbane City Councils. The honourable member was a part of those actions. This legislation will actually validate some of the actions that the honourable member was a part of when he was a member of the Brisbane City Council.

Let me say loud and clear that ministerial rezonings will always have a place in Queensland at the proper time and the proper place. They will be made only after they have been properly judged on their merits. That is done in the interests of the economy of Queensland, in the interests of jobs and in the interests of ordinary common people in this State. That has to happen.

This legislation is validating actions not only by past Labor Governments but by past Labor councils. I repeat that the honourable member was a part of those councils. As a matter of fact, I can tell the honourable member that several members on his side of the Chamber have asked me to approve ministerial rezonings for them. I can tell him that. I think if past records were checked, more would be found.

Schedule, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

### Third Reading

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

## RACING VENUES DEVELOPMENT ACT AMENDMENT BILL

### Second Reading

Debate resumed from 13 April (see p. 5793, vol. 308).

**Mr R. J. GIBBS** (Wolston) (5.36 p.m.): The Bill before the House is fairly small in content. Although it contains minor amendments, it is very important to people employed by the various trusts associated with the racing industry throughout Queensland.

The Bill makes provisions for and lays down the requirements that shall apply to superannuation funds that will be made available for employees at racecourses. In his second-reading speech the Minister said—

“It is Government policy that the superannuation benefits offered to the staff of statutory authorities should not exceed generally accepted standards for public sector employees. This aim can be achieved if proposed benefits incorporated in new superannuation schemes or amendments to existing schemes require the approval of the Governor in Council.

Of the trustees appointed under the Act, only the trustees of the Albion Park Paceway have established a superannuation scheme for employees and the provisions of the Bill in no way affect the existing benefits. Any future amendment of this scheme will, of course, require the approval of the Governor in Council.”

I certainly do not see anything underhand about the legislation. However, when the Minister replies I would like him to spell out very clearly why the Government has suddenly needed to bring in a safety factor of this nature by way of legislation. I accept what the Minister has said, namely, that at the present time only one superannuation scheme is in operation for employees of race club trusts, and that is at the Albion Park Paceway. Is there any suggestion in any shape or form that perhaps the Albion Park Paceway Trust has been a little overgenerous in relation to its superannuation provision, and if so, perhaps the Minister could outline that to the House. If that is not the case, then why was it suddenly necessary for this legislation to be brought before the House?

As I said, I see nothing wrong with the Bill that is before the Parliament. The Opposition will certainly support it. Although the Bill is of a minor nature, its intent is important. This evening, this legislation affords me the opportunity of raising other issues that are relevant to the racing industry. The issues to which I refer should be looked at by the Minister. He should take responsible action in addressing those issues.

This morning in the House, I asked the Minister a question about the future of the Ipswich Amateur Turf Club. I must say that I am most dissatisfied with the present situation in Ipswich. Although I am not dissatisfied in terms of the action taken by the Minister because he took whatever action was possible, I point out that in his answer to my question, the Minister drew the longbow. He said that I had publicly congratulated him on the action taken, but that is not correct. At no time did I do that. However, I certainly agreed with the Minister's action in standing down the committee.

The events that have unfolded have created a very serious problem for members of the committee who are residents of the city of Ipswich. I make no apology for saying that, in my opinion, a number of the committee members have been committee members for far too long.

Contrary to newspaper reports about the amount of the misappropriation from the Ipswich Amateur Turf Club being \$450,000, I am reliably informed that the figure will probably be closer to \$1m.

**Mr Randell:** Is that true?

**Mr R. J. GIBBS:** If it is not true, the Minister can correct me.

I am advised also that the misappropriation has been taking place over a period of between five and seven years. It is most unsatisfactory that the current Chairman of the Ipswich Amateur Turf Club, Mr Versace, publicly made a statement indicating his disagreement with the Minister's action in standing down the committee. In the case of Mr Versace, I think the Minister's action was totally warranted.

In the circumstances, I cannot accept that any member who served as a committee member of the Ipswich Amateur Turf Club for a number of years is a competent member of the committee. I make it clear that I am not questioning the honesty of individual members of the committee and I am in no way suggesting any improper dealings on their part. However, I strongly question the competence of members who for the last seven years were part of the Ipswich Amateur Turf Club but did nothing while the milking of the club's funds took place. Moreover, the members knew absolutely nothing about the misappropriation.

This morning I asked the Minister over what period the misappropriation had taken place. He was not able to answer my question. I appreciate the sensitivity in relation to the charges pending against an employee of the Ipswich Amateur Turf Club.

**Mr RANDELL:** I rise to a point of order. I draw to the honourable member's attention the fact that I thought it would be remiss of me to make a statement on the matter while the police investigation was taking place. I would not cast any shadow of doubt on or make any imputation against any member of that committee until evidence indicated to the contrary. I appeal to the honourable member to respect my decision.

**Mr R. J. GIBBS:** I accept what the Minister has said.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row):** Order! I remind the honourable member for Wolston that the Bill refers to another matter. The Bill refers only to those racing institutions that are involved in land owned by the Racing Development Corporation. I do not know whether or not the honourable member is in order in raising a domestic matter relating to the Ipswich Amateur Turf Club because it really has no connection with the Bill that is under discussion. I remind the honourable member for Wolston that if he wishes to pursue the matter, I may have to raise the question of relevance.

**Mr R. J. GIBBS:** I can answer that query very simply by making the following statement: tonight, this Parliament will pass legislation that will affect superannuation benefits of people who work on racecourses. It seems to me that at a time when the Parliament is discussing the ability of turf clubs to administer superannuation funds for employees, it would surely be a matter of concern to this House and to the public of Queensland that in the Ipswich area, funds have been milked by misappropriation which may well affect employees of the racecourse in future. Because of the actions taken by somebody at the club, those employees may not be able to have superannuation funds distributed in the way that honourable members may wish.

I accept what the Minister has said. I will not indulge in naming people or bringing personalities into this debate. I appreciate the sensitivity of this matter and the fact that a police investigation is under way. However, there has to be an answer to questions that are separate from the criminal investigation proceedings. Somewhere along the line there must be answers to questions about the procedures that were followed at the club, especially the auditing arrangements of the club's books. The Minister must surely accept that the situation is truly amazing.

**Mr Randell:** I would not like to pre-empt the investigation.

**Mr R. J. GIBBS:** That is all right. I do not want the Minister to pre-empt the investigation. However, to say the least, it is amazing that up to \$1m can be misappropriated from a turf club over a period of between five and seven years. I point out that the books were being audited every year, yet the misappropriation was never picked up. It just does not add up. Ultimately the problem will have to be tackled.

In conclusion, the point I wish to make is that with the standing-down of the committee, considerable damage has been caused to the reputations of a couple of members who were elected to the committee in recent times. Those people now find themselves in the position of having been stood down. Rumour-mongering being what it is, they find that they are the target of unsavoury and nasty rumours that are circulating in Ipswich. I believe that these people are honest and that the matter should be cleared up urgently. It should be given top priority. If charges are going to be brought against people, they should be prosecuted quickly so that the turf club can resume its operations.

I return to the point raised by the Minister previously, that is superannuation, which is vitally important. I believe that the whole administration of the racing industry in Queensland needs not only an overhaul but also, from my point of view and that of my party, a drastic change in direction. I confidently predict to members of this House that at the Labor Party's conference this week-end, which will begin on Friday evening and continue through Saturday and Sunday, the party will make a very firm policy to establish a gaming, racing and liquor commission in Queensland. It will be that commission's responsibility to run the entire racing industry in this State. In my opinion, the QTC has become an outmoded method of racing administration.

**Mr Veivers:** That would be another quango. Do we really need another commission for racing in Queensland just because of this hiccup in Ipswich?

**Mr R. J. GIBBS:** No, it is not because of that. With due respect to the honourable member for Southport, he is a little out of his depth. I am aware of the permanent damage that he has sustained over the years as a result of putting his head into too many scrums. Consequently, I will not be brutal with him.

The fact is that the administration of the QTC leaves much to be desired. I have said it in this House before and I will say it again: it is time that Sir Edward Williams was given a golden handshake in one form or another. That would be the best thing that could happen for racing in Queensland. He is an overauthoritarian force and the racing game needs to be opened up in a fairer fashion. The old-boy club that is virtually responsible for running racing in Queensland should be disbanded forthwith.

The Fitzgerald inquiry has raised a number of aspects concerning the racing industry. When one talks about the penalties, such as the possible fines and gaolings of people in the future who have been associated with the illegal activities of starting price book-making, one could easily make the fair and relevant comment that the reason that SP book-making has flourished in Queensland is the lack of action by this Government in providing proper betting facilities for the public at large. The simple fact of the matter is that a great number of people do not derive satisfaction from betting with the TAB. That could be for a number of reasons. At the time of placing the bet they do not know the amount of money that their investment will return. If they do not have a telephone account containing a reasonable amount of money, it could involve them in some inconvenience in having to go to the TAB at the week-end or for a midweek meeting. It is high time that consideration was given to the provision of on-course telephone betting facilities, directly linked with a book-maker at the track, for people who wish to utilise that service. A person would know the price he would be getting and the return he would receive. The odds could be relayed to him straight away over the telephone and he would know exactly what his return would be. That does not happen with the TAB.

It is easy to understand the Government's opposition to that proposal. It opposes the proposal because its profit return from the TAB would possibly be reduced. The other reason why the Government would not adopt that proposal is—and I have always believed this—that it is the long-term intent of this Government to completely wipe out on-course book-makers in Queensland. I say quite bluntly that the disappearance of book-makers from the tracks of this State and Australia will be a tragedy for the racing industry.

**Mr Veivers** interjected.

**Mr R. J. GIBBS:** This raises a very relevant point in relation to book-makers.

**Mr Veivers:** Mr Gibbs, you are not taking any interjections today?

**Mr R. J. GIBBS:** The reason why I will not take an interjection from the honourable member for Southport is that if he keeps up this self-abuse it will not be long before he requires the services of a seeing eye dog.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row):** Order! I remind the honourable member for Southport that unless an interjection is accepted by the member who is speaking, it is not valid. The Standing Orders state that a member must not interrupt another member who is speaking, except by leave.

**Mr R. J. GIBBS:** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, I was in dire need of your protection.

Book-making is the only profession that I know of where people pay tax in the form of turn-over tax after a losing day at the track. There needs to be a total reassessment of book-makers' turn-over tax. It seems ludicrous that a book-maker has to pay tax on the amount of his turn-over at the track, whether it be at a Saturday meeting or a midweek meeting. He or she can lose thousands of dollars, yet he or she must still pay tax into the coffers of the Queensland Government. On behalf of book-makers, I appeal to the Minister to take a very serious and long look at the implications that this very evil tax is having. It is driving licensed book-makers off the courses. The Minister himself has seen the very dramatic decrease in the number of licensed book-makers, and unless this Government is prepared to take urgent action, I fear that within the next five years the situation will arise where there will be absolute and complete totalisation of betting throughout the State. I believe that the Government wants to see that happen anyway. I do not believe that would be a healthy situation for the racing industry.

Recently in my capacity as shadow Minister for Racing I have been to a number of tracks throughout Queensland to speak with racing officials and to look at facilities. I think it is generally accepted that the former Minister for Racing did much for the industry but I have always believed, as I have said in this House before, that, in terms of the moneys that were previously available under the Racecourse Development and Assistance Fund, there has been a gross overcapitalisation in the provision of facilities for some of the far-flung country areas. There simply was not the need to spend that sort of money on tracks in those places that hold between two and half a dozen meetings a year. The facilities needed by the public did not have to be supplied that urgently. Certainly there was not the need that there is at some of the metropolitan, near metropolitan or major provincial tracks throughout the State.

Ipswich is a classic example. The public grandstand up there is an absolute disgrace. I will go so far as to say that, although its removal would inconvenience some people, because it is a fire-trap it should be demolished. Every time I look at that shocking wooden grandstand at Bundamba it reminds me of the tragedy that was shown on television a couple of years ago when in the United Kingdom an old wooden grandstand caught fire and hundreds of people were burnt or trampled to death in the pandemonium and panic that occurred after the fire took hold. I do not suggest that that would happen at Bundamba, but I do suggest that the building is unsafe and that it should be demolished. There is an urgent need for a new grandstand to be built at Bundamba.

In terms of safety I have never seen a worse track than the one at Cairns. I am particularly addressing my comments to the area of track after the finishing post. On their pull-up run the horses are required to negotiate a 30-degree bend. Major falls have become a frequent occurrence. In fact, on the day that I was there—I was accompanied by the member for Bowen—in the last event, which attracted prize-money of \$12,000 from Rothmans or Winfield, after the winning horse passed the post there was a melee which resulted in a shocking fall. It could have been a tragedy. The jockey was taken to hospital. Fortunately he was not seriously injured, but that sort of thing has become a very common occurrence at the Cairns race-track.

The problem needs to be tackled urgently in one of two ways. With the development that is taking place in Cairns, which is becoming one of the great cities of Australia and a major tourist destination, and with those tourist dollars coming in, naturally services have to be updated and made available to the public, particularly the sporting public. The racing industry is no different to any other tourist industry. Because of those factors, the popular alternative given to me by a number of the members of the committee whom I spoke to up there—I think it is a sensible one—is that the Cairns racing club should be totally redeveloped. I know that there is one school of thought that the track should be torn up and the facilities redeveloped on the current site, but I think the progressive thinkers associated with that turf club have put forward the better suggestion that the land should be sold and that there should be a total redevelopment of the track and its facilities located perhaps a little further out of the city.

**Mr Randell:** To whom did you speak?

**Mr R. J. GIBBS:** I will not name the person who made the suggestion. I met with a number of the people on the committee of the Cairns turf club.

**Mr Randell** interjected.

**Mr R. J. GIBBS:** No, they are on the committee. Their opinion is that the facilities should be relocated.

**Mr Randell:** It is in their own hands.

**Mr R. J. GIBBS:** It is in their hands to a degree but a great deal of Government assistance is needed to get that off the ground. I believe it could be done on a pay-back basis. The facilities could pay for themselves but Government assistance is needed to get it under way in the first place.

It is interesting to note that the long-serving president of the Cairns club was removed from his position only a couple of days ago because of the club's lack of progress. It is a fine club with a fine group of members. I can see the Minister shaking his head, but I assure him that the information I received this afternoon is that he has just lost the presidency of the club.

**Mr Randell:** You are not thinking of Toowoomba, are you?

**Mr R. J. GIBBS:** I am speaking about Cairns. As I said, the track at Cairns leaves a lot to be desired, as do the public facilities.

Another major problem that requires urgent attention is associated with the Willows Harness Racing Club in Townsville. I think it is common knowledge that the club has been having financial problems.

**Mr Randell:** I have been assisting them.

**Mr R. J. GIBBS:** I know that the Minister has given assistance. I am convinced that the club is not looking for ongoing or continual hand-outs from the Government. The club has a very splendid group of members.

**Mr Randell:** We want to resolve the problems.

**Mr R. J. GIBBS:** I accept that the Minister wants to do that.

Sitting suspended from 6 to 7.30 p.m.

**Mr R. J. GIBBS:** Prior to the dinner recess, I was making a point in relation to some of the problems that are being faced by the harness-racing people in Townsville. I am aware that a discussion has been held with the Minister and that some direction has been established to assist the club. However, from my discussions with the club, it is obvious that it is not seeking a consistent or ongoing hand-out from the Government. It wants to be self-sufficient financially. It has been explained to me that that can be achieved with some restructuring of the club's finances.

However, a problem exists with the operation of the TAB in Townsville, as the trots have only an on-course tote. It somewhat limits the betting ability of the people of Townsville and surrounding areas who wish to place a bet on the trots. A need exists to extend a proper TAB off-course betting service to those people who may want to place a bet on the Townsville trots. I am aware that an inherent problem exists in that there are no radio broadcasts of races north of Rockhampton.

Although I realise that that proposal would be costly, the Minister should consider providing full race broadcasts to north Queensland so that, at some time in the future, full TAB facilities can be provided to areas such as Townsville to allow them to bet on a wider basis.

For a long time the industry has been screaming for the establishment of a racing appeals tribunal. I understand that it is in the pipe-line at present. When the Minister introduces a provision setting up such a tribunal into this Parliament—I hope it will not be in the too-distant future—he can be assured of the support of the Opposition. Opposition members have been very much aware of the need for it. It is something for which the industry itself has been crying out for a long time.

Recently, in this Parliament I spoke about the way in which the Blue on Red affair was handled and about what I considered to be most unfair treatment of Bruce McLachlan, who is Queensland's leading premiership trainer. In that case, the Queensland Turf Club found him guilty of the offence, and the only group to which he could lodge an appeal was the Queensland Turf Club. He had to appeal to the very people who, only a couple of weeks previously, had found him guilty of a fairly serious charge. Of course, on appeal, the sentence was reduced. The logistics of the exercise are ridiculous when the committee that finds a person guilty then hears the appeal. That situation cannot work. The sooner a racing appeals tribunal is established in Queensland, the better it will be for the industry and the public.

**Mr Davis:** Hear, hear!

**Mr R. J. GIBBS:** I must say that, if there was a person in this Parliament who is more astute in relation to the racing game than Mr Lee and me, it would have to be Mr Davis. However, if the honourable member for Yeronga should tip his latest racehorse to any honourable members, I urge them not to back it, because he is a poor tipster.

The Opposition is happy to support the legislation.

**Mrs McCAULEY (Callide) (7.35 p.m.):** I rise to speak in support of this small Bill. It is important that the Minister and his department have input into and close scrutiny of race clubs in Queensland which are under their control. As the honourable member for Wolston said, if changes should be made, I firmly believe that Mr Randell is the person to make those changes. He is responsible for a difficult portfolio. It is easy to make one's mark in a portfolio when the funding is there; however, when the funding is not there, it is a difficult job. He has done an excellent job so far in his handling of this portfolio.

The Bill deals with trustees in relation to large courses. However, there are many small race-tracks throughout Queensland. My electorate has two race-tracks—Thangool and Calliope. Calliope is a very small track and does not hold race meetings frequently. However, Thangool is larger. I am very proud of that race-track. It is important that these courses, be they big or small, have a competent committee to run them. The Thangool race-track has a very competent committee of the highest possible integrity. That committee does an excellent job with the 12 or so race days that Thangool has each year.

The building that the club erected with Racing Development Fund money is a credit to it. It is named the Arnie Rideout building. Arnie Rideout could be known as the father of the racing industry in the Thangool area. The running of the club shows the tremendous community spirit that is found in its very best form in areas such as Thangool.

**Mr Davis:** How many race meetings?

**Mrs McCAULEY:** There are about 12 a year. There are over 100 horses in training in that area. It may not seem to be a large number to the honourable member for Brisbane Central, but for a country area that is a good effort.

The president of the race club is a long-term resident of the Thangool area, Mr Laurie Moller. He is helped by Bob Moschioni and various other people, who are really the salt of the earth when it comes to putting their shoulder to the wheel and making things work. That is exactly what the Thangool race club is all about. Even the trainers are local people.

**Mr Hinton:** Don't forget Kathy Moller.

**Mrs McCAULEY:** Nobody could forget Kathy Moller. She does a tremendous job.

Racing in the Callide Valley is very complementary to the lucern industry, which Mr Hinton would know a bit about. We have our local book-makers such as Ron Mazzer; we have local trainers such as Bob Stemm, Norm Unwin and the Ninnesses. We also have local punters, such as Dr Tan, who keep the local book-makers in business. It is a very nice little circle that goes round and round. We have charity race days such as the Lions cup day and the cancer fund-raising day. They are important events.

Racing is a very popular recreational activity in Queensland, so the Racing portfolio is very important.

**Mr Hinton:** Do you go down to Kitty Shean's hotel at the end of the day?

**Mrs McCAULEY:** The honourable member may do that.

Next year when the Racing Development Fund might have some funds, I know that it will be administered wisely and well by the Minister and that courses such as Calliope and Thangool will get the money necessary to upgrade their facilities. As I said, more than 100 horses are in training in the Thangool region. That in itself is a very important small industry to the whole region. I believe very strongly that there is a need for strict vetting of the use of funds.

I have visited various racecourses throughout Queensland such as Kilcoy, where a very big shed complex has been built. It is an excellent facility but, of course, it is not finished. I have been to courses at Wondai and Nanango——

**Mr Hinton:** Have you been to Ridgeland?

**Mrs McCAULEY:** Yes. I know Ridgeland well.

There is a need for a uniform standard of building. The facility built by the Thangool Race Club is a credit to that club. It has done an excellent job with the money that was available to it. The facilities are of the highest possible standard. The grounds have been very well landscaped. There is a definite need for a set of uniform standards, which perhaps could be monitored by the Minister's department, to ensure that funds are used in the wisest possible way.

**Mr Davis:** We need a new track down here.

**Mrs McCAULEY:** For which club?

**Mr Davis** interjected.

**Mrs McCAULEY:** I am sure that that will not be a problem.

That is quite different to talking about the small country race clubs. They are really the only ones on which I can comment.

**Mr FitzGerald:** The heart of the racing industry.

**Mrs McCAULEY:** Those small clubs are indeed the heart of the racing industry.

This small Bill, which deals with superannuation schemes, leads to the broader field of racing throughout Queensland, which has been tackled very competently by the present Minister. As the Minister said, if he visited a race-track in Queensland every week-end for a year, he still would not get to them all. The Minister has a very difficult job to do, and he does it admirably. I support the Bill.

**Mr DAVIS (Brisbane Central) (7.41 p.m.):** I will be brief in my remarks. However, I want to mention a number of matters that I feel need to be aired. It is very unusual for me to congratulate a Minister of this Government, but I do congratulate the Minister on his elevation to this very important portfolio.

Although the former Minister must also be congratulated for the way in which he put racing on the map in Queensland, he has obviously left a number of monuments, some of them in the Racing Development Fund, which may be a fairly big obstacle to the present Minister. The former Minister built many monuments at racing clubs throughout Queensland which I feel in many instances were not necessary and which have not helped the racing industry very much.

It is all right for the member who has just resumed her seat to talk about the racing clubs in her electorate. However, it is obvious that the former Minister went around the State and glorified many people——

**Mr FitzGerald:** You haven't been to Silks for a while.

**Mr DAVIS:** Yes, I have.

The former Minister went round to a lot of those clubs. Obviously he was trying to get National Party members on side in pursuit of the premiership, which unfortunately he never attained.

The Opposition Racing spokesman raised the matter of turn-over tax and the role that book-makers have to play. It is usual for me to support the book-makers. In the past I have condemned book-makers and the way in which they operate, but on this occasion I have to agree that they have a problem.

**Mr Lee:** You have ridiculed them.

**Mr DAVIS:** At least I am big enough to admit that the book-makers do have a problem.

I think the book-makers can be helped in a number of ways. A reduction in the turn-over tax would be of assistance. Book-makers should be allowed to take bets on any form of gambling on the racecourse. They should be allowed to take bets on football games, elections and——

**Mr FitzGerald:** They wouldn't want to put much money on you.

**Mr DAVIS:** No, they will not be betting on me next time, but in the past they would have been able to do that.

Book-makers should be able to take bets on any form of race meeting, be it greyhounds, trotting, pacing or whatever, as long as they pay for the land lines to the course. They should be able to take bets on doubles, that is this race and the next race. They should be given a free hand.

For the life of me, I cannot understand why the Minister has knocked back betting by telephone to the course. Surely in this modern day and age there are enough telephonic——

**Mr FitzGerald** interjected.

**Mr DAVIS:** The Leader of the House even has a telephone at his seat. Instead of using an SP book-maker, he may be able to get through directly to the course. There must be enough safeguards that can be put in place in this day and age.

Honourable members are told that the Government is going to introduce videotaping of suspects being interrogated in relation to various crimes. Surely it would be easy to monitor betting with book-makers at the track. That would be one way of getting rid of the curse of SP betting.

That takes me to my old favourite—betting on Brisbane races at the Rocklea trotting track. I do hope that the new Minister will have a little bit more intestinal fortitude than the former Minister and the Liberal Ministers who preceded him.

**Mr Randell:** You didn't say that when the former Minister sat here.

**Mr DAVIS:** That is not right. I never missed him when it came to the Rocklea and Capalaba tracks.

I attended the opening of the Rocklea track when Mr Walsh was the Treasurer of this State.

**Mr FitzGerald:** That was a few years ago.

**Mr DAVIS:** That was a few years ago. However, I was there. Mr Walsh was a far-sighted Treasurer.

The Rocklea track was opened to enable betting on Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne races so that SP betting would be curbed. For many years the Rocklea club carried on with that sort of betting. It was knocked on the head purely and simply—

**Mr FitzGerald:** Were you in a pram at the time?

**Mr DAVIS:** No. I was there as a person who was—

**Mr FitzGerald:** How old were you?

**Mr DAVIS:** I think at that stage I was just 21 years of age. I was eligible to bet.

**Mr FitzGerald:** You told me you were eligible to bet as a 15-year-old.

**Mr DAVIS:** I know that I was eligible to bet, because I would not have done anything illegal by being there.

Nevertheless, I remember the words of the Treasurer of the day. He said that the reason for the establishment of the betting facility was to enable the people on the south side to bet legally. That system remained for many years until the QTC, in its usual stand-over fashion, stopped the patrons of the Rocklea Trotting Club from being able to bet with book-makers on Brisbane gallops. Punters are able to bet with the TAB, because an agency is located on course. However, punters are not able to bet with book-makers. That is a rather childish and churlish way for a Government to operate. The Rocklea Trotting Club requires that facility; otherwise its profits will fall very quickly.

**Mr FitzGerald:** You missed a page.

**Mr DAVIS:** This is a prepared address.

I refer now to place betting. Government members would not know what place betting was.

**Mr FitzGerald:** We know that winners pay and the others don't.

**Mr DAVIS:** The member for Lockyer is perfectly correct. If a person bets for a place on the TAB, he very rarely receives a good return on his investment.

**Mr Warburton:** Did you ever do any credit betting at Holland Park?

**Mr DAVIS:** I did not do any credit betting. I left that to people with Rolls Royce cars. I have never been nearly as lucky as some people who have been mentioned recently.

**Mr Milliner:** You are renowned for being a successful punter. Were you ever as successful as Sir Terence Lewis?

**Mr DAVIS:** I just mentioned that I have never been lucky enough to have that sort of success.

Place betting is a very important part of the betting system. A large number of people prefer place betting to betting for a win. The return on place betting is pathetic because the Government's cut is too great.

**Mr Austin:** Rubbish!

**Mr DAVIS:** It is. Over the years I have gone through the place-betting statistics. Very rarely on the TAB does place betting pay anything like a quarter of the win odds. If the Government was smart enough——

**Mr FitzGerald:** You have got to be able to pick the damned horses.

**Mr DAVIS:** That is all right. The member for Lockyer is a nice gentleman. However, he is obviously a person to whom I cannot speak intelligently because he cannot absorb what I am saying. It is a fact of life that the return on place betting is far too small and the Government's cut should be reduced. If that was done, more people——

**Mr FitzGerald:** What is the cut at present?

**Mr DAVIS:** It is 17.5 per cent. The honourable member thought that I did not know what it was.

I hope that some of the matters that I have raised will be taken into consideration by the Minister.

Very often honourable members hear racing clubs complain that they cannot attract patrons, including families, to the races. I shall cite a reason why they cannot.

**Mr FitzGerald:** You don't want kids at races.

**Mr DAVIS:** Why not? The honourable member would not understand. My children have been attending the races for many years.

**Mr FitzGerald:** That's only to bring you home.

**Mr DAVIS:** The fact of life is that I do not see anything wrong with racing, which is the sport of kings—even though I am from humble working-class stock. I am not like the member for Yeronga, with his plush life and his millions. If only I had a conveyance to go to the races or to the trots, how much better it would be.

**Mr FitzGerald:** Ever since Clem took the trams off, you've been in strife.

**Mr DAVIS:** The trouble in this Chamber is that members on my side of the Chamber come from humble working-class people. I never try to betray my background, which, of course, was a rural background. I came from the country, where I worked hard. I never try to betray that. I never try to betray the fact that I come from humble working-class people. However, Government members from the squatocracy and the landed gentry like to rub it into the poor battlers—the poor workers. That is the difference between Government members and Opposition members.

The Minister attends exclusive luncheons at the BATC, at the QTC and at the Albion Park Harness Racing Club. Every child over the age of 14 is charged a \$5 entrance fee by the clubs.

**Mr FitzGerald:** They are not allowed to bet.

**Mr DAVIS:** A person is not allowed to bet until he is 18 years of age.

**Mr FitzGerald:** They are not allowed to drink.

**Mr DAVIS:** They are not allowed to drink; but they are charged an entry fee of \$5.

The last time that I went to the races I took two friends and another person and it cost me \$15. Although it is a small thing, it is stopping people from going to the races.

The Minister has taken over a very big job. At least he has shown a little bit of conviction by standing up to the Ipswich Amateur Turf Club straight off by putting in an administrator. I think that that is a step in the right direction.

**Hon. N. E. LEE (Yeronga) (7.53 p.m.):** Members of the Liberal Party support the Bill. They are very pleased to support any organisation in which workers are receiving superannuation. Superannuation could be the only saving a person could make throughout his life-time. Anything that makes for an enjoyable later life for people is supported by the Liberal Party.

I am pleased that the Deputy Premier and the Minister for Finance are present in the Chamber. I hope that the superannuation scheme for people in the racing industry will be better than the scheme that covers members of Parliament. Benefits reach a peak after 20 years of contributions and then they decline. The benefits also reduce beyond the age of 65. It is the only scheme in the world in which payments increase with salaries—on which we are taxed—but benefits reduce. It is an unfair and unjust scheme and I hope that the people in the racing industry are treated better than honourable members are treated. It is unfair that after 20 years members are required to make additional contributions on which they are taxed and receive less when they finally retire. Something should be done about that system to make it fair—just like this Bill, which is fair.

I take umbrage at what was said about two very good people who are involved in the racing industry, namely, Kevin Versace and Sir Edward Williams. Kevin is a very loyal and honest businessman whom I have known for many years. He has given many hours of his time to the racing industry and I see no reason why he should be attacked. Not always does the man at the top see what the man at the bottom is doing and where the money is going.

The honourable member for Wolston very severely attacked Sir Edward Williams, a fine gentleman who has done an enormous amount for the racing industry. He has given many hours of his time per week to the racing industry without receiving a fee. Because it would be another quango that will be paying a lot of money to its members, I do not support a racing commission in any shape or form.

The principal racing clubs in Queensland are doing an excellent job at no cost to this Government. I refer particularly to the clubs in Rockhampton, the south-east, south-west and north of the State. I find it hard to believe that anyone could say that the people who are involved in those clubs are not doing a good job and are wicked and dishonest men. The committee members of those clubs are elected. If they do not do the right thing, members have every right to vote them out at election-time.

I defy any member to say that the Queensland racing industry has not prospered and been more successful than any other racing industry in the world. The only aspect of the racing industry that I feel could be improved is the appeals process, which could be accelerated. On many occasions I have told the Queensland Turf Club that its appeal process is slow and that appeals should be heard as soon as possible after people appear before the stewards.

I am sorry that a full report from the TAB for the 1987-88 financial year has not been made available. Although one report was tabled in this House yesterday it was not a full report that gave a complete break-up. If a person wants to gather any information from that report he has to do a lot of homework. I hope that a more comprehensive report will be tabled next year so that honourable members can ascertain the profits that are made by the TAB.

The turn-over for the TAB for the financial year 1987-88 was \$10 billion and the book-makers' turn-over was approximately \$5 billion, a total turn-over of \$15 billion. The profit that was made by the Queensland TAB during that period was \$28.6m. That

is not a bad little cheque! Last year Queensland Government revenue from the racing industry amounted to \$38m. Because I have not had the opportunity to peruse the latest report of the TAB I do not know what that figure would be for this year. However, I am sure that it would be more than last year's figure.

Regardless of what party is in Government, it should consider the fact that it costs a lot of money to train horses. More money should be given back to the racing industry. I realise that the Government needs revenue, but \$38m in one year from the racing industry is a large sum to put into the Consolidated Revenue Fund.

Queensland's 158 race clubs conducted 1 375 race-meetings during the 1987-88 financial year. The total number of races held was 7 769, with stakes of \$28,518,986. It might surprise many race-goers to learn that Queensland has the same number of race clubs as the more heavily populated State of New South Wales, and that Victoria has only 66 race clubs.

A comparison of the number of tracks is very interesting. Queensland has 139 racing venues to Victoria's 66. That is why it is very difficult for prize-money to be raised in Queensland. I realise that and I understand it. According to those figures, there are too many race-tracks in Queensland. Through the TAB and by other means, the Minister has to service all of the race clubs. I know it is very difficult for this Minister or any other Minister to have to say that some race-tracks in country areas will have to be closed. I know what it is like to live in the country and I know what is like to have to drive 100 miles to the races. If race clubs are closed, it is possible that people will not have an opportunity to attend a racecourse. Nevertheless, there is no reason whatever why another race-track needs to be built in Queensland. No more new race-tracks should be built. Certainly, additional training tracks should be built, but no more race venues.

As I said, it is certainly impossible to justify the establishment of any new race-tracks. Throughout Australia, no fewer than 36 405 horses tried to earn prize-money last season. With 36 000 horses competing for the prize-money, the amount of money that could be distributed to each successful horse is certainly not very much.

The enormity of the industry in Australia can be gauged from total national prize-money of \$146m. Race clubs handed out a total of \$42.6m in stakes for group and listed races. Considering that the number of black-type races is now 472, it is not surprising that there has been a major push for some of them to be dropped. It would be better to reduce the number of listed races and group races and possibly spread the prize-money more evenly to more races so that not just the top horses earn the big prize-money. There is a possibility that the lower amounts of prize money could be raised and the amount of prize-money set aside for Group 1 races and listed races could be reduced so that the prize-money could be more evenly spread. All people are not lucky enough to have top horses. It is the battler with the horse that tries and tries again who really keeps the racecourse going.

**Mr Randell:** Are you saying there should be more equity in prize-money?

**Mr LEE:** If there were fewer group races and listed races, more of the higher prize-money could be provided for the lower-class races. That would not cost the Government any more money and it would not cost the race clubs any more money, and the prize-money would be spread more evenly over the races.

**Mr Burns:** It would give the battler a go.

**Mr LEE:** That is right. It gives the battler a go.

It is like the battler at the golf club who has a handicap of 27. He has hardly any hope of ever winning a prize. Now and again he might fluke winning a prize. It is the same in racing. It is the little fellow with the battling horse, a horse that he has possibly bred or tried to buy at a reasonable price instead of paying thousands of dollars as the

big men in the racing industry do, who keeps the racing industry going. It is important that somehow the prize-money be increased.

Less than 12 months ago it cost much less than \$1,000 a month to train a horse. Today it costs well over \$1,000 a month. However, prize-money has not increased in conformity with the training fees. Sooner or later the main flow of people who own horses, because they enjoy seeing their colours go around the track and possibly winning a race now and again, will be lost. If the prize-money is a lousy \$200, \$300, \$500 or \$1,000, it will not even pay for a month's training fees. Somehow the prize-money has to be increased. One of the ways of doing that without costing the Government any more money is by cutting back on the prize-money for listed and Group 1 races.

**Mr Randell:** Would you say a different formula for the TAB distribution?

**Mr LEE:** Yes, that could be done, too. By all means. There is no reason why it could not be done.

I heard that the TAB takes 15½ per cent out of every dollar that is invested. I believe that it is 18½ per cent. Maybe consideration could be given to putting some of that 18½ per cent into increased prize-money. That would give the battler a better chance.

As I said before, prize-money distributed for thoroughbred racing throughout Australia in 1987-88 was more than \$147m. Horse sales, mainly yearlings and brood mares, accounted for more than \$110m. To those amounts must be added the wages of staff on stud farms, vets, farriers, trainers and their staff, float-drivers and the owners of brood mares. There were over 40 000 brood mares. The stud book fees for them are \$50 each, making a total of \$2m in stud book fees alone. Some of the breeding mares will probably never throw a decent foal; nevertheless, if a person wants to register them, he has to pay for an entry in the stud book. There are also the foal returns which bring in a significant sum of money. So much for the punter!

Another person who has to be given some consideration is the book-maker. He plays a very vital part in the racing scene. Book-makers bring atmosphere, colour, variety and vitality to the racecourse.

**Mr FitzGerald:** I thought you said you were short of notes. You have got enough to go for another half an hour or so.

**Mr LEE:** I might, too. I do not speak in debates very often. As I said, only two magnets draw people to the races; they are champion horses, or champion dogs, and book-makers.

**Mr Slack:** What about bad women?

**Mr LEE:** The honourable member may be attracted to bad women, but I am not. I am sorry to have to say that; but if the honourable member interjects in that manner, he will have to cop the consequences.

**Mrs McCauley:** There are none around here.

**Mr LEE:** I have not noticed. I have not been looking for them, so I would not know. Evidently one of the honourable member's colleagues said that there were.

The pay-outs issued by book-makers are in the vicinity of 95 per cent of the total amount invested, whereas the TAB pay-out is approximately 82 per cent. I regard the difference as quite significant. It is very important that the Government should do everything it can to help book-makers.

I regret to inform the House of a great decrease in the number of on-course book-makers. As I said earlier, book-makers play an important part in creating an atmosphere of excitement on a racecourse. For the gallops alone, 274 book-makers were licensed in 1985. In 1988, the number has been reduced to 156. Honourable members will note that the number of book-makers coming onto the course is dwindling. Book-makers

involved in trotting in 1985 totalled 42, but in 1988 the number decreased to 25. In 1985 there were 88 book-makers licensed for coursing, but only 36 in 1988. Honourable members will realise from those figures that book-makers are slowly drifting away from racecourses. I cannot emphasise enough the importance of book-makers to the racing industry.

Earlier the honourable member for Wolston spoke in favour of phone-in betting. I, for one, would wish to study that proposal in great detail before I recommended the introduction of phone-in betting. I am concerned that the introduction of that system could result in another form of SP book-making.

**Mr Berghofer:** SP bookies?

**Mr LEE:** I do not have anything to do with them.

**Mr FitzGerald:** They take you down every time, don't they?

**Mr LEE:** The other day the honourable member told me that they were taking him down, but I can honestly say that I do not know any SP book-makers. I like to attend the races because I enjoy watching a good horse-race. As far as I am concerned, book-makers are an important part of the racing industry.

**Mr Davis:** You like the social side. You like hob-nobbing with all those socialites.

**Mr LEE:** I have always enjoyed mixing with nice people. I believe that the people one meets at the racecourse—particularly those in the members' enclosure—are very honest. I can tell the honourable member of an instance in which a commissioner underpaid \$3,000, and the other party involved did not realise that the money was owing. A week later the commissioner approached the other person and said, "Look, I'm sorry but I made a mistake in my calculations. Here is the \$3,000." To my mind, that example demonstrates that people involved in the racing industry are honest.

Where else except at the races could a person go up to a book-maker and simply say, "I want X dollars on such and such a horse.", and be sure that the other person would take his word for it? People of that calibre are not found in all walks of life. I certainly could not trust the honourable member for Brisbane Central. If I placed a bet with him, he would welsh on it. As I say, at least book-makers are honest. As far as I am concerned, there are more honest book-makers than there are ordinary honest citizens, or even honest members of Parliament.

**Mr Campbell:** I wish you would point to the other side.

**Mr LEE:** I could not do that because I believe that there are quite a lot of honest men on the Government side of the House, particularly in the last two rows of the back benches.

I hope that the Minister for Finance took on board some of the points I made about superannuation for members of Parliament. I wish this superannuation scheme for the racing industry every success.

**Hon. J. H. RANDELL** (Mirani—Minister for Local Government and Racing) (8.13 p.m.), in reply: I thank all honourable members for the contributions they made to the debate, although I noticed that their remarks ranged far and wide. In particular, I thank the honourable member for Wolston for his support of the Bill on behalf of the Opposition. I assure the honourable member that no suggestion has been made that the superannuation scheme operating in the racing industry is overgenerous. The existing scheme will not be affected; nor was it feared by me that an overgenerous change was about to occur.

The Bill has not been brought suddenly before the House. It was introduced last session. It is designed to implement a wider Government policy on superannuation. I remind honourable members that a similar Bill was introduced for the National Trust in the last session. That Bill will be introduced in the present session as part of a tidying-up exercise to bring about implementation of a policy that applies to the Acts I administer.

The honourable member for Wolston again referred to the problems that have arisen within the Ipswich Amateur Turf Club. I take this opportunity to thank him again for his public support for the action I took in response to those problems. As I indicated to the honourable member during question-time today, the investigation by the police and by the administrators who have been appointed is continuing. It would be improper of me to comment further at this stage. However, I repeat once more that it is my intention that racing will continue at Bundamba. The honourable member for Wolston also referred to the proposal to allow on-course book-makers to have telephone-betting facilities. The honourable member for Brisbane Central also referred to that matter. Although I have rejected the proposal at this stage, the matter is being examined on a national basis as a result of discussions that I chaired at the last Racing Ministers' conference on the Gold Coast. Honourable members will appreciate that, given telephone technology, it is not feasible or desirable for one State to go it alone on this issue. A truly uniform and national approach is required. I expect that the task force that has been set up will report back to the next Ministers' conference and that a decision will be made at that time.

**Mr Davis:** There is still a chance?

**Mr RANDELL:** The door has not been closed, but as I said before, one State cannot go it alone. The States have to get together. The matter is beset with problems. I simply cannot say at this stage that on-course telephone betting will be introduced until all the problems have been considered.

I remind the honourable member for Wolston that the Government reduced the turn-over tax imposed upon on-course book-makers in the 1987-88 Budget.

**Mr Davis:** Not by much; by half.

**Mr RANDELL:** The Government reduced it. I can say that with all honesty.

I thank the honourable member for Wolston for his very positive support of my proposal for an independent appeals tribunal. I assure him that this tribunal proposal is under very active consideration and I anticipate that I will be able to make an announcement as to its structure and functions in the very near future. I thank the honourable member for his assurance that he will support this legislation when it is introduced into this House.

I thank the honourable member for Callide for her contribution to this debate. In her usual very competent way she made a very solid contribution to the debate. She has a great knowledge of the racing industry and certainly appreciates the difficulties of country racing clubs. I agree with her that country clubs are the nursery of the industry. She spoke of the great depth of job opportunities provided by the racing industry, something that is often taken for granted. If one looks at the feed and insurance industries that the honourable member spoke of, there is no doubt at all that racing provides thousands and thousands of jobs. The honourable member can rest assured that the Racing Development Fund will be used wisely in the future. Clubs will be made more accountable and must conduct their affairs in a businesslike manner.

The matters raised by the honourable member for Brisbane Central were very largely covered by previous speakers, but I welcome his contribution and enjoyed sharing his trip down memory lane. I acknowledge the fact that he has claimed many times that Steele Rudd was his grandfather or great grandfather. I think that fact has been lost sight of many times in the past.

The honourable member for Yeronga, Mr Lee, knows more about racing than most members in this House. I listened with great interest to his speech. I thank him for his support. Over the years he has made a very valuable contribution to the racing industry. He knows the racing industry backwards and always makes sensible comments when speaking on racing matters in this House. That is why I listened with interest and will take on board all the matters raised by him. It is common knowledge that the honourable member has successfully raced horses over the years and I wish him well in the future.

I am pleased that he has stated his support for racing clubs in country areas. There is no doubt that these clubs are vital to the industry in Queensland. I was interested in his comments that there should be more equity in prize-money. His remarks bear consideration. He has reached the same view as I have and has rejected the idea of a racing commission which, as he said, would be another quango. I could not agree with him more that the principal club system which administers the galloping industry has served the industry well and is basically sound.

Motion agreed to.

#### **Committee**

Clauses 1 to 5, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

#### **Third Reading**

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

### **NATIONAL TRUST OF QUEENSLAND ACT AMENDMENT BILL**

**Hon. J. H. RANDELL** (Mirani—Minister for Local Government and Racing) (8.21 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

“That leave be granted to bring in a Bill to amend the National Trust of Queensland Act 1963-1981 in certain particulars.”

Motion agreed to.

#### **First Reading**

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

#### **Second Reading**

**Hon. J. H. RANDELL** (Mirani—Minister for Local Government and Racing) (8.22 p.m.): I move—

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

This is a small Bill designed to ensure that the approval of the Governor in Council will be required in future before the National Trust can amend its existing employee superannuation scheme or establish any new scheme.

It is Government policy that the superannuation benefits offered to the staff of statutory authorities should not exceed generally accepted standards for public sector employees. This aim can be achieved by ensuring that proposed benefits to be incorporated in new superannuation schemes or amendments to existing schemes require the approval of the Governor in Council.

The provisions of the Bill will in no way affect benefits under any existing scheme operated by the National Trust. The opportunity has also been taken to make two other amendments to the National Trust of Queensland Act. Firstly, in accordance with current drafting practice, detailed provisions dealing with the publication of by-laws made by the council of the National Trust have been repealed and replaced by a reference to the appropriate section of the Acts Interpretation Act on the same subject. Secondly, the council of the National Trust has been given an additional by-law-making power dealing with the offering of rewards for information relating to the damage or theft of National Trust property, etc. This power will be a valuable tool in preserving the important historical material under the control of the National Trust.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Burns, adjourned.

**MOTOR VEHICLES INSURANCE ACT AMENDMENT BILL****Withdrawal**

On the order of the day being discharged, the Bill was withdrawn and the Clerk read the original order.

**New Bill**

**Hon. B. D. AUSTIN** (Nicklin—Minister for Finance and Minister Assisting the Premier and Treasurer) (8.24 p.m.): I seek leave to bring in another Bill founded on that order.

Leave granted.

**First Reading**

New 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) (8.25 p.m.): I move—

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

The thrust and principle of the original Bill are embodied in this Bill. Certain amendments were required after discussion with the Law Society and other bodies. I believe that it is better to have the Bill in its present form so that members may satisfactorily consider what is included in it.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr De Lacy, adjourned.

**LOGAN MOTORWAY AGREEMENT ACT AMENDMENT BILL****Second Reading**

Debate resumed from 8 September (see p. 706).

**Mr BURNS** (Lytton—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (8.26 p.m.): Let there be no mistake: this Bill is not about the building of a tollway for the Sunshine Coast; it is about giving the Government power to build tollways in any part of Queensland. The Logan Motorway Agreement Act is being changed by this legislation to the Motorways Agreement Act. I ask honourable members to note the emphasis on the plural “Motorways”. It began with the Gateway Bridge, then came the Logan Motorway between Gailes and Loganholme and now there is to be the Sunshine Motorway. No doubt next there will be a Gold Coast tollway and a Route 20 tollway.

The Government has found tollways to be such money-spinners it is now intending to do to motorists what it has done for years to coal companies through freight charges on mineral-carrying railways lines, that is, force motorists into using them because eventually they will have no alternative. The Government will turn them into huge money-spinners by milking motorists for all they are worth.

The second matter I wish to point out is that this is no private motorway company as the Government would have us believe. The Logan Motorway Company Limited is a \$16 company that is a State Government front. The directors are largely public servants or former public servants. The current directors are Jack Tunstall Woods, former Director-General of the Department of Mines; John Hayward Andrews, former Agent-General to London and a former chairman of the Electoral Redistribution Commission; John Gralton, Assistant Commissioner of Main Roads for south-east Queensland as an alternate member for John Hayward Andrews; and an accountant by the name of Geoffrey Winston

Fraser. The claim by the Deputy Premier and Minister for Main Roads that this Bill will allow the State to enter into an agreement with the Sunshine Motorway Company Limited, just as it did with the Logan Motorway Company, so that this supposedly private company can build a tollway that the State Government supposedly cannot afford, is a public relations stunt and a fraud. The private company is a stunt. The legislation is a stunt. These motorway companies are owned by, and fully controlled and operated by, the State Government through dummy directors who are either public servants or former public servants. This legislation has nothing to do with the provision of a motorway for the Sunshine Coast; it has everything to do with this Government's attempt to crawl away from its responsibilities and make roadways a revenue-spinner for the State Treasury.

Roadways in Queensland have suddenly become a major part of the State taxation system. Who believes this Main Roads Minister when he says that the State cannot afford the \$45m for the Sunshine Motorway when in the same breath he says that the Government can afford it if a dummy public company is set up and the Government gives it the \$45m from the Queensland Treasury Corporation or guarantees its borrowings similar to the way in which it guarantees the borrowings of any other Government quango? Who believes the Minister when he claims that the tollway has to be built by private enterprise when the money can come straight from the Queensland Treasury Corporation? If the Government was honest, the Deputy Premier would at least say that the State cannot afford it; but he says that we will get it anyway and a toll will be charged. Why go through the charade of pretending that a private company is building it when the company itself is a front for the Main Roads Department?

The Government is pushing toll-roads because they are a money-spinner. In fact, I am told that the Sunshine Motorway began as an idea when private proposals were put to build a bridge across the Maroochy River. In fact, I understand it was a Mr Birrell, a town-planner up there, who proposed to a group in the Maroochy area that the way they could get the area booming was to build a bridge across the Maroochy River. He put a proposal to Mr Hinze who, in discussions with him, said, "Put a proposal to us." That group of citizens in Maroochy put up the proposal for the bridge across the Maroochy River. When Leo Hielscher and the Treasurer saw the sort of money that they expected to get out of that bridge, they said to the Government, "Don't give it to them, we will do it ourselves in this way." They wanted to do it under this charade. I understand that, when the former Under Treasurer saw the cash-flow projections, his eyes lit up with dollar signs and he decided it was too good an opportunity to miss.

A whole new taxation revenue area has been discovered by Treasury. Just as rail freights were the financial saviour over the last 10 years, tollways appear to be the saviour for the next 10 years. Queenslanders are already paying the highest car registration charges in Australia. In Queensland it costs \$179 to register a six-cylinder vehicle compared with nothing in Victoria.

**Mr Gunn:** No fuel tax here.

**Mr BURNS:** I want to remind the Minister that, as he has mentioned a fuel tax, he is reported in the newspaper in the following terms—

"He said he expected to come under further pressure from local governments to introduce a fuel tax—a proposal Cabinet has ruled out."

It is not the Minister who has ruled it out. The article continues—

"I can see their point. Some country ratepayers would be better off with the introduction of a fuel tax."

That is what the Minister for Main Roads, Mr Gunn, was reported as saying on 23 May this year. The article was headed "More SEQ tollways likely: Gunn".

**Mr Gunn** interjected.

**Mr BURNS:** I can always read the Minister like a book.

I have already compared registration charges for a six-cylinder vehicle in Queensland and Victoria. Now the Queensland Government proposes to slug motorists twice through toll-roads. Last month in the Budget car registration fees were increased. Registration fees are an aggressive form of taxation. They are a much bigger burden on middle and low income earners and families than they are on the rich and powerful. Queensland's registration fees are now so high that many of my constituents are finding them difficult to pay.

Some years ago, in this Parliament, Russ Hinze admitted that 80 000 cars in Queensland were unregistered. Because of the cost of registration, more and more people are taking the risk of driving unregistered vehicles. Queensland motorists would not have to pay those outlandish registration fees—and now road tolls—if the National Party Government spent the money that it received from motorists on roads instead of diverting it into consolidated revenue.

Recently, the Main Roads Minister, Mr Gunn, went off half-cocked when he falsely claimed that Queensland spends the fees that it raises from motorists on main roads. Nothing could be further from the truth. Just as the claim that the Logan Motorway Company and the Sunshine Motorway Company are private companies is a fraud, this claim by the Main Roads Minister is a fraud and a deception on the public. The latest annual report of the Department of Main Roads clearly shows that Queensland does not spend all the money that it raises from motorists on roads. The latest figures for 1986-87 show that motorists are being told one thing while the Government does exactly the opposite.

I turn to the traffic improvement fee. That sounds very explicit—traffic improvement fee. Queensland motorists pay \$14 per year for traffic improvement, but they are not told that only 20 per cent of that actually goes to traffic improvement; 80 per cent goes straight into consolidated revenue. That information appears at page 37 of the annual report. What a rip-off! The traffic improvement fee is a con job. It raised \$21m, out of which \$17m went to consolidated revenue and only \$4m went to what the Government claimed it was for—to improve our roads. If I was not such a law-abiding citizen, I would suggest to every motorist in Queensland not to pay the \$14 traffic improvement fee until the Queensland National Party Government becomes honest and spends it on what it claims it is collecting it for—on traffic improvement.

I turn now to the personalised number plate fee. Mr Hinze said, "Look at the money that it will raise for Queensland." I might add that he did not say that it was being raised for Queensland main roads. In 1986-87, the sale of personalised number plates raised \$532,000. Where did it go? Not on roads—it went straight into the Treasury. I hear Government members ask, "Why doesn't the Commonwealth spend all the money it raises from fuel taxes on roads?" This Government does not do it, but it suggests that someone else should. Why is not that money that is raised from motorists spent on roads?

I will look at the big money-spinner for the Government. In 1986-87, stamp duty collections on motor vehicle registration and sales amounted to \$52m, and it went straight to Treasury. That appears at page 37 of the annual report. I ask the Minister why that money was not spent on roads. He complains that the Federal Government is not spending its money on roads. Why is not the Queensland Government spending the money it raises from motorists on roads?

Stamp duty is payable at the rate of \$2 for every \$100 or part thereof on the market value of a motor vehicle. I cite the example of an old man who bought a car for \$2,300 and he had to pay \$46 in stamp duty to the "non-taxing" Queensland Government. That stamp duty is paid whenever a car is bought or sold. The motorists pay those charges, nobody else. So why does not the Government spend the revenue it raises from motorists on facilities for motorists? Government members continually bleat about the Federal Government not spending the money it raises from motorists on roads, yet it does exactly the same.

I turn to the enforcement section of the Main Roads Department. For the 12-month period ending 30 June 1987, the enforcement section issued a total of 10 261 complaints and summonses for breaches of the Main Roads Regulations. In respect of those complaints and summonses, the courts ordered fines, costs and fees totalling \$2,005,084. However, only \$1.440m was collected. What happened to the other half a million dollars? It went into Treasury. Yet the Queensland Government keeps blaming the Federal Government.

The RACQ has even got in on the political act. I suggest to the RACQ that it should turn its attention to the diversion of motorists' funds by the Queensland National Party Government away from roads and into the coffers of State Treasury. I will be surprised if it stops peddling the National Party line.

If the Queensland Government spent motorists' money on roads, it would have had an extra \$70m to spend in 1986-87, and probably close to an extra \$300m over the last five years. If that deceptive diversion of funds had not occurred, there would be no need for those unwanted and unnecessary toll charges. There would be no need for the fraudulent claim that private companies are building the tollways. There would be no need for extra toll slugs on motorists and no need for highly paid publicity officers to tell people how to drive on tollways. Tollways in Queensland have nothing to do with the Government's claim that it cannot afford to build them. Tollways in Queensland have everything to do with a rort and a fraud on the people of Queensland, and they are being pushed because the Government has realised that they are a good way of raising money.

The Gateway Arterial road has surpassed all expectations.

**Mr FitzGerald:** You were against it at the start.

**Mr BURNS:** I was not. What I was against was a plan to build the bridge and not build any roads to it. On that road, 13 people have died. I have been proved dead right in relation to that. Unfortunately, "dead" is a terrible word to use in relation to it, but the Government built the road expecting 12 000 or 14 000 cars to use it a day, yet 32 000 or 33 000 cars are using it. Those cars have to travel on a single lane. A dangerous situation exists at the roundabout near the airport. Motorists travel along a long main road and they reach a roundabout around which people are rushing to get to the airport. If somebody is not killed there before something is done, I will be surprised.

The same argument can be used about the Gateway Arterial road on the south side of the river. Motorists are used to speeding along the Gateway Arterial, and then they arrive at a narrow goat track which leads to a roundabout at the top of a hill. It is the worst intersection I have ever seen. Further along is the Old Cleveland Road intersection which has a set of traffic lights which bedazzles motorists. There are arrows, lines and two sets of lights in a row. Approximately eight people have been killed at that intersection, so obviously other people find it as difficult to negotiate as I do.

I complained about that intersection when it was built. I must say that Russ Hinze did spend extra money on it. The department planned that 23 000 cars a day on Wynnum Road would meet 33 000 cars off the Gateway Bridge at a set of pedestrian-actuated traffic lights. Honourable members can imagine that there would have been traffic delays of three or four hours at that intersection when the children were going to school. At least Mr Hinze had the foresight to find some money and construct an overhead bridge.

Although the Government says that it has no money to build new roads, a new road and a new bridge will be constructed over that road, because the Government has realised that it made a mistake. If that was a mistake, honourable members can imagine how bad the mistake was when it was going to be a single road controlled by a pedestrian-actuated traffic light.

Honourable members should not talk to me about the Gateway Arterial road. I have lived with the problem since the day it was built. It goes through the middle of my electorate and it has caused many problems there. Until it is fixed, I will continue to complain about it.

I will say this about the Gateway Arterial road; people use it. People say to themselves, "I will not pay \$1.50." I have used about three \$65 credit cards going to the airport and so on. It is convenient. People say to themselves, "I will drive around the long way", but they do not. People are prepared to pay the money. And people will be prepared to pay the money under this proposal.

The trouble is that the local people are going to have to pay to drive in their own district. That seems to be crazy. It appears to me to be double taxation. Some Sunshine Coast residents believe that they are getting a toll-road because the projections for the Logan tollway do not look very promising and that the Sunshine Coast tolls will be used to hide the early problems with the Logan tollway. Honourable members will have to wait and see whether that is the case.

I know that everybody attacks the Federal Government for not putting enough money into roads. However, the Federal Government, through the Australian Land Transport Program, the Australian Bicentennial Road Development Program and, since 1 January 1988, the Australian Centennial Road Development Program, has been the saviour of many Queensland roads.

I was an organiser for the Labor Party on the roads for many years. I drove on the northern highway. I drove on all the roads in this State, year after year. I used to wear out a Holden car a year when I was an organiser from 1959 to 1965.

The single-lane coastal roads up north were a disgrace. The roads south of Bowen and in many parts of central Queensland turned tourists away. Tourists would not return. Whenever I met a tourist I was told, "It is lovely up here, but the roads are too hard. We are not coming back."

The Federal Government has spent a lot of money on that highway. People driving on the highway to Cairns this year, as I have done, will find that it is a much better road than it used to be. It is a far better road than it would ever have been without that special Federal funding. Honourable members can argue that that funding should have gone towards local roads and bush roads. However, when I was an organiser, driving in the north west, up around Camooweal, the roads were terrible. The roads that were built as beef roads have been the saviour of the towns up there. They were specially designed. State Governments would not have built them.

Federal Governments of both political persuasions put special funds towards building special roads and other special projects. The Federal Government said, "We are going to build these roads." People could drive on a two-lane well-built highway with none of these little bridges or washaways for miles, and they would meet only three or four cattle trucks along the way. Those roads were opened up for the graziers and the tourists. That was money well spent.

Honourable members can argue about the direction in which the money was spent and the amount of money that was spent. However, it is wrong to keep harping and criticising. As a bloke who has spent a lot of time on the roads in Queensland, I must say that many roads are far better now than they ever were.

This financial year, Queensland will receive \$240m from the Federal Government for roads, which is 20 per cent of the total across the nation. It can always be argued that more funds are needed. It is the same old argument. Honourable members are always saying it themselves. The money has to come from somewhere. I always like to cite the example of the argument in which a bloke says, "We do not want taxes to go up, but we want the State to get more money." Somehow or other he seems to think that taxes do not have to go up in order to provide more money, that somehow or other the Federal Government should be able to keep taxes down and give people more money to spend.

In the last five Budgets up to this one, Labor has spent about \$1,500m on Queensland's roads, which is a 24 per cent increase in real terms on what the Liberal

and National Parties spent under Fraser. The Federal Government totally funds the national highway network.

**Mr Stephan:** How much did the Federal Government collect?

**Mr BURNS:** Members of this Government are always attacking the Federal Government in relation to its road-funding. I suggest that they read the Governor's Opening Speech and the Budget Speech and then explain to me why this Government takes credit for the roads that are built with Federal moneys.

The Nambour By-pass is fully funded by the Federal Government. Yet this Government takes all the credit in the Budget Speech. This Government also takes the credit for the replacement of more than 90 narrow bridges on the Nambour to Cairns section of the Bruce Highway. Up till a few years ago, this Government placed big signs on the roads saying, "This is a Queensland Government Project". Never once did this Government say that the money was coming from the Federal Government. Members of this Government are always whinging and whining. A bit further down the road there would be a Main Roads sign—a very small sign—saying, "This is an Australian Bicentennial Road Project". What a sham! What a mob of players!

The upgrading of the substandard sections of the Warrego, Landsborough, Flinders and Barkly Highways and the completion of the second carriageway between Ipswich and Toowoomba, including the Gatton By-pass, are all federally funded road projects. Local road-funding also has to be maintained in real terms.

The Federal Government has introduced a new category of priority roads called national arterial roads. That is designed to provide new and improved access to Australian ports. Honourable members should see the lousy road at Murarrie and Hemmant to the port in my electorate. The roads will also be designed to improve tourist access.

As far as I am aware, this State Government did not even attempt to put up a proposal that the new Sunshine Coast motorway should be funded not through tolls but through the next federally funded national arterial road scheme. I would like to see the proof that this Government applied for that funding. This National Party Government is so obsessed with not co-operating with Canberra that it prefers to slug motorists instead of trying to get the money from the Australian Bicentennial Road Development Program.

Motorists and families in Queensland are at the bottom of this Government's agenda. Sunshine Coast residents should also ask themselves why they have been neglected for years when it comes to getting decent roads. After all, the area has been represented by the Premier for 20 years. It was previously represented by a National Party Premier, and the Minister for Finance is also a local member. Despite the heavy political representation, the Sunshine Coast got the rough end of the pineapple when it came to road-funding.

In the three financial years to 1986-87, if we exclude Federal funding of the Bruce Highway, the Sunshine Coast received \$24m in road funds, while the Gold Coast received \$63m. This Government spent two and a half times more on the Gold Coast than it did on the Sunshine Coast—and I ask why.

The little Wambo Shire, which is represented by Sir Robert Sparkes and the National Party, received \$8m. It would be plain to all from these figures that Sir Robert Sparkes and the former Main Roads Minister, Russ Hinze, decided to look after their own back yards and give the Sunshine Coast the boot. Representation from Mike Ahern obviously had no effect at all on the allocation of road funds.

**Mr De Lacy:** He's putting all his efforts into prisons; he's working on prisons.

**Mr BURNS:** Is that right?

The Main Roads Department's allocation of road funds is blatantly unfair and obviously the result of political wheeling and dealing. Latest figures show that Main Roads allocated just \$17,382 per kilometre of main roads in Noosa Shire, whereas the

Albert Shire—the shire in which former Minister Russ Hinze has considerable interests—received \$44,980 per kilometre, or two and a half times more. I ask why.

In Maroochy Shire, where the department plans to build this toll-road because of a supposed lack of funds, the department allocated only \$28,264 per kilometre of main road. By comparison, the Gold Coast was allocated \$116,660 per kilometre, which is four times the sum received by Maroochy Shire. Why?

The Main Roads Department and its political master have a case to answer. Why are there such huge differentials in the Queensland Government's allocation of road-funding between shires in Queensland?

For the Queensland Government to claim that the Federal Government is to blame for the shortage of funds to local councils is nothing other than buck-passing. The Federal Government increased expenditure on roads by 25 per cent in real terms while the Fraser Government was in office. Whilst it can be argued that that is not enough, local councils know that the Federal Government allocates funds more efficiently and more fairly than the Queensland Government does. No council of which I am aware has ever recommended that the Federal Government hand over road-funding responsibilities to the State Government. I have never met a local government officer in Queensland who has said that road-funding allocations should be handled by the State Government rather than by the Federal Government. Even though local authority officers think that they are not getting enough road-funding, every one of them thinks that he will receive a better deal from the Federal Government.

I agree that local councils are not being allocated sufficient funds. Every local authority does not want the Queensland Government to handle the road-funding allocations, because it knows the way the Queensland Government has rorted the system in the past.

At least the public has had some victories over this Government on the tollway. Initially, motorists were to be slugged \$2.40 to travel on the tollway from the Bruce Highway near the Buderim turn-off to the David Low Way at Pacific Paradise. There was such an outcry that local residents would have to pay to travel on existing roads that the Government backed off and is now to charge initially at the Mooloolah River and the Maroochy River toll plazas. But I warn motorists that this is likely to be temporary and that after the public outcry dies down, the Government can at any time increase the tolls and introduce extra toll plazas.

The Minister for Finance, Mr Austin, tried to get out of the mess by pulling a swifty on the Premier. The Minister for Main Roads might have something to say about this, but I think that Mr Austin managed to get rid of all the toll plazas in his electorate. From what I can gather from the map in the Bill, the plazas are now only in the Premier's electorate and in the electorate of the member for Cooroora, Mr Simpson. A motorist will travel down the toll-road and pass through Mr Austin's electorate without paying a toll, but he will have to pay in the Premier's electorate and in Mr Simpson's electorate. He will not have to pay in Mr Austin's electorate, because Mr Austin is a good operator.

I congratulate Mr Simpson because he is the only member on the Sunshine Coast who has been prepared to speak out against the toll-road. Perhaps he is Deputy Premier material after all, as he claims to be. He certainly could not be any worse than the current Deputy Premier.

I want to know why this Government can spend millions of dollars on prisons and at the same time require honest folk to pay for roads by the payment of tolls. \$80m is to be spent on prisons, but a decent honest driver has to pay a toll.

I want to know why motorists have to pay tolls when they already pay the highest car registration fees in Australia. I want to know why, when the last Main Roads Minister can spend \$40,000 on his Christmas party for the Main Roads Department, motorists have to pay to use their local roads.

I want to know why millions of dollars are spent on personal promotion for Olympic Games petitions, with photographs of the Premier and the Lord Mayor of Brisbane, and on photos for ministerial promotion, when tourists and local residents and workers have to pay to drive in the Premier's electorate.

I want to know why millions of dollars worth of Queensland land and waterways are given away to mates of the Queensland Government to be converted into quick development profits, none of which flow back to Queenslanders, such as occurred at Sanctuary Cove, when ordinary motorists and families are forced to pay to drive on our roads.

I want to know why toll-roads are necessary when the Government has given approval for a marina at Victoria Point which could turn a \$700 Government land lease into a multimillion-dollar freehold site. The developer has a five-year lease on a 4.96 hectare waterfront Crown land site for the annual rental of \$200. The National Party Government is prepared and willing to give millions of dollars away to developers, and all that Queenslanders receive in return is \$200 a year in lease fees—and tolls on their roads.

The National Party Government will answer to the public at next year's election for this toll-road rip-off. Labor says now that when it is elected as the Government in 1989, it will remove those tolls. A toll-road has been so badly designed in one instance that the Logan Motorway from Ipswich Road has completely cut off and made useless the bikeway and footpath from Gailes, and it has isolated the Gailes Railway Station. The motorway should not have been built in that way. Perhaps the Minister would like to comment on that bureaucratic bungle which has led to the waste of millions of dollars.

I cannot understand why road-funding in Queensland has changed over the years. I read the Main Roads Department reports. In 1947-48, the Commonwealth provided 29 per cent of the total funds spent on roads in Queensland. The Queensland Government provided 71 per cent of those funds. In 1967-68, 10 years after the Liberal/National Party Government came to power, the Commonwealth Government provided 43 per cent of the funds and the Queensland Government's contribution was down to 57 per cent of the funds. All of a sudden the Queensland Government has reduced its input from 71 per cent to 57 per cent. In 1987-88, the Commonwealth Government contributed 56 per cent of the funds and the Queensland Government put in 44 per cent of the funds for roads.

The Queensland Government has continued to reduce the percentage of funds that it provides for main roads in Queensland while Federal Government funding has increased. The Queensland Government blames the Federal Government for all of its problems. Tollways should be seen for what they are.

**Mr Gately:** Tell us the extra taxes the Federal Government is taking off the motorists.

**Mr BURNS:** The honourable member will support the tollway on the Sunshine Coast because he does not have one on the Gold Coast. The people of the Gold Coast have been looked after by old Russ Hinze over the years. He even built a four-lane highway through the bottle department at his pub. All the way along the line the honourable member for Currumbin has been mollycoddled. He is waiting for the people on the Sunshine Coast to pay tolls when he will not pay them himself on the Gold Coast.

Tollways should be seen for what they are—revenue-raisers for the Queensland Government, which is a Government that is more concerned with squeezing every last cent out of the family budgets than it is with providing roads for Queensland motorists and families. Labor will oppose the Bill and divide the House on this issue.

**Mr BEANLAND (Toowong) (8.52 p.m.):** The Liberal Party opposes the amendments owing to what I can only say is a complete lack of policy by the Government on toll-roads in this State. The amendments certainly allow for open slather as far as toll-roads in Queensland are concerned. No limitation has been placed on the amendments that

are proposed to the Act. In fact, if the amendments are passed, nowhere in Queensland is safe from toll-roads. After all, the Government could easily decide to put a toll-road into the western part of Queensland, the northern part of Queensland or any other part of Queensland.

It must be remembered that both the Premier and the Minister for Finance represent electorates on the Sunshine Coast. If this is the way they treat their constituents who reside in that region, then none of the constituents of other honourable members are safe. Therefore, it is fair to say that this is the new form of hidden tax—the new taxing machine that the State Government is introducing. It is reminiscent of the hidden coal freights that the Government has imposed in this State for many, many years.

It is not good enough for the Government to introduce amendments to the legislation without first setting out some criteria or bases upon which toll-roads will be established. No policies or principles have been set out. Before this legislation is passed, it is important to establish criteria on how, where, when and why the Government will establish toll-roads.

Under this legislation the Government will be able to designate as a toll-road any road in Queensland over which it has jurisdiction. Although the Minister for Finance and the Minister for Main Roads have indicated that that will not be the case, honourable members will recall that in the past the Government has twisted and turned legislation and used it in a manner never before seen in this State. Honourable members will recall the way in which the Government lent money to Mr Gore at Sanctuary Cove. It is a matter of grave concern for all members that legislation is being introduced without details being given of the criteria on which it might be established or used in the future.

Because tollways can be beneficial to the community in certain areas, the Liberal Party is not opposed to them per se. Because the Liberal Party believes that the Logan Motorway will provide an alternative, quicker road system, it supports it. If people do not wish to use that road and do not mind taking a little longer to get from point A to point B, an alternative road system exists. The same situation applies to the Gateway Arterial road, for which alternative roads are available.

The Caloundra City Council is keen to establish a tollway between Caloundra and Beerburrum or Beerwah because it would cut out a considerable distance, particularly the Caloundra turn-off section of the Bruce Highway. In many cases tollways can be established quite legitimately.

No suitable alternative road system exists for the Sunshine Coast tollway, a third of which will use the current road system. No-one could say that an alternative road system exists for the section of road between the Maroochy River and Noosa. That scenic, winding coastal road system is not suitable for the huge development that will occur in that region during the next decade. The Sunshine Coast region is experiencing a boom that it has not experienced since the early 1980s. I am sure that the actions of this Government will contribute to a slowing-down of development in that region. Because no suitable alternative road system exists to that section of the coastal road, this Government should be considering the construction of a new major road system to be funded from current revenue sources, which I will mention in a moment.

During the South Coast by-election the people of the Gold Coast region were told by the Premier and Treasurer that no tollways would be established there. I am sure that the honourable member for Surfers Paradise would be happy that the people of the Sunshine Coast are being discriminated against and that the one part of the State that is safe from tollways is the Gold Coast.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Row):** Order! There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber and too many raised voices. The Chamber will come to order.

**Mr BEANLAND:** This issue highlights the way in which the people throughout the remainder of the State—particularly the people who live on the Sunshine Coast—are being treated as second-class citizens.

It is pertinent to note where the tollways will be established on the Sunshine Coast. Tollways will be constructed over the Mooloola River and the Maroochy River. It is interesting to note that the Nicklin electorate is situated between those two rivers. As a result, the Minister for Finance will be able to travel around the Nicklin electorate and use that tollway without paying a toll. All that I can say to the member for Nicklin—the Minister for Finance—is, “Well done again. You have given this Premier the same treatment as you gave to the previous Premier. In the end, you knifed him. Now you are doing the very same thing to this Premier.”

**Mr White:** He is at it again.

**Mr BEANLAND:** Obviously he is doing what he knows best.

The Government claims that no alternative sources of finance are available, which indicates that it has not really considered all of its priorities. This Government receives from coal freights a hidden tax of \$400m, which it does not like to tell the public about. On Tuesday in this Chamber, the Government admitted that the railways are subsidised by the revenue from coal freights. The people of this State know nothing about that \$400m subsidy, which is not received in royalties. The Government does not consider its priorities and say, “Look, we have that extra \$400m. Will we spend it on the railways? Will we spend it on the roads? Will we spend it on police? Will we spend it on health or education?”

**Mr White:** What about stamp duty?

**Mr BEANLAND:** I am pleased that the member for Redcliffe mentioned stamp duty. If ever there was a rip-off by the Minister for Finance, it is in the area of stamp duty. Small businesses in this state are being ripped-off by this rort that the Minister for Finance has introduced in the form of stamp duty. Stamp duty has suddenly become the largest source of revenue in this state, even exceeding pay-roll tax.

The Government received \$400m in hidden coal freights yet it does not consider whether its priorities should be to spend a small portion of that hidden tax on road-funding. No, the Government is quite happy to leave it where it is: with the railways. Just a small proportion of that hidden tax would go a long way to paying for road construction works in this State, unless of course the Government is considering massive tollway constructions or transferring on a massive scale some of the roads that presently come under its jurisdiction to toll-roads and using the toll system as another form of hidden tax to raise funds.

In recent times the State Government has also cut back in other areas of road-funding. There is no more pertinent example than in the area of local government, where the Government has cut the subsidy from 15 per cent to 10 per cent. Some three years ago, in a fit of so-called concern for unemployment in this State, the Government said, “Look, we will increase capital spending on roads from 10 per cent to 15 per cent and we will carry that through.” Since then no real reduction in unemployment has occurred. It is still as great today as it was then. It is as real a concern today as it was then. Instead of that, the Government cut back local government subsidies, because it is easy to kick the local authorities and cut back on their funding. If the Government looked at its priorities, I am sure that additional funds could be forthcoming. But, no, it is easy to put the squeeze on local authorities and cut their subsidy from 15 per cent to 10 per cent. Local authorities in this State will also feel the heel of the Government.

Having said all that, I think it is fair to say that the major culprit for cutting back funding for roads is the Hawke Labor Government. That Government came to power at a time when large sums of money were being put into road-funding around this nation. I heard an Opposition member say how much money the Federal Government has spent on road-funding. That is a small sum of money, considering that that Government is the major tax-gatherer in this nation. In recent years it has gathered more tax than any other Government in the history of this nation. Some of the taxes it has imposed include sales tax of 20 per cent on cars and 30 per cent on cosmetics

and jewellery; yet on fuel it is 150 per cent. Clearly, war needs to be declared on the Hawke Labor Government over its lack of adequate road-funding. It is not a matter of chance that this year the Federal Government will receive something like \$6,500m from fuel levies. At the same time it will return to the State Government \$1,200m. The other \$5,300m just happens to be the exact amount, give or take a few dollars, that it is estimated the Federal Budget surplus will be this financial year.

The motorists are being used as the milking cow to create the Federal Budget surplus. If the Federal Government was serious about putting into roads what it takes from the fuel tax, adequate road funds would be available throughout the nation.

It should also be noted that after personal income tax and company tax the next largest source of revenue for the Federal Government is the fuel tax levy. A few years ago the motorist did not pay any fuel tax, but he has now become the third-highest source of revenue for the Federal Government. I will put that in other terms so that motorists out in the community know exactly what they are paying. Out of the amount paid by the motorist for each litre of petrol, 31c goes to the Federal Government. The Federal Government returns to the State some 5.3c of that 31c. That leaves the Government with some 26c to create its huge Budget surplus.

The figures show that the capital grant for roads in 1986-87 was \$1,245m; in 1987-88 it was \$1,244m and in 1988-89 it is expected to be some \$1,215m. In effect, over the last four years cuts in Federal Government grants for road-funding of the order of 30 per cent have occurred. That has happened during the time when the Government has collected more funds from the community by way of taxation than ever before in the history of this nation. That is something that the Labor Party cannot run away from. It cannot hide its head in the sand. It is a fact of life. It is there in black and white.

This year in Queensland the allocation will be \$242.4m, a reduction of \$4.8m on the 1987-88 figures and a decline in real terms of \$18.4m. A considerable decline has occurred in the funds that come from the Federal Government, which has access to all the real major sources of revenue in this nation.

State road authorities are finding that with the cut-backs in road funding they are now faced with growing maintenance costs. Over the next decade or so some 80 per cent of the Government's funds that are allocated to roads will have to be spent on maintenance just to keep the roads in reasonable condition. This probably poses the greatest problem that confronts the nation in relation to road-funding. Therefore, I repeat my earlier statement that war has to be declared on the Federal Government.

I am concerned that the State Government will take the easy way out once more and regard this measure as a hidden form of tax-gathering. The use of roads in this State is such that 97 per cent of all passenger journeys are made by road, 77 per cent of all freight is carried by road, and 83 per cent of all domestic tourists travel by road. Those figures have been available for some time, but it is worth repeating them. When railways and air travel are being discussed, it is easy for people to forget that the road network is by far the major means of transportation in this great nation of Australia. I believe it is fair to say that roads are not being given a fair share of revenue from either the State or Federal Governments.

Road-funding is a matter that Governments at any level ought to consider in terms of priorities and allocation of funding. Governments ought to closely examine expenditure to find avenues that are available for implementing cut-backs. I believe that at the level of State Government in Queensland, there would be a number of very significant ways in which cut-backs could be introduced to effect savings.

It is interesting that in the Budget Speech, the Premier did not use the words "waste" or "inefficiency". Obviously, to pretend that waste and inefficiency do not exist in the public sector is pure fallacy. Apparently this Government is not examining waste and inefficiency.

The Logan Motorway Company is a private company that was established by the Government for the purpose of circumventing the funding arrangements that operate in

this State. Again, the question of just how far the Government would be willing to go in introducing tollways in this State must be asked. It is not much good having the Minister rise in his place to assure honourable members that the Government intends to introduce only one or two toll-roads. Although that may be the Government's intention now, in six months' time, Government members may change their minds when the matter is being discussed in Cabinet, as all honourable members would know. It takes only the stroke of a pen to change legislation. Honourable members would be aware that Cabinet has taken such action in relation to other legislation that has been passed by this Parliament. The Government has been known to change its whole philosophy and policy in exactly that way.

I carried out a search of company records and discovered that the Logan Motorway Company has issued 16 fully paid shares at a value of \$1 each. This company certainly does not have a great deal of asset-backing, but not doubt it serves the Government's purpose. I understand that there are six directors on the board. Four gentlemen each own four shares in that company valued at \$1 each. It is obvious that the company has been established for a particular purpose, and one can only hope that that purpose will not extend as far as using the public of Queensland as a milking cow, which is what the Federal Government is doing.

In conclusion, I point out to honourable members that I expected the honourable member for Cooroora to have been present in the Chamber because his comments on toll-roads have been so vociferous. Recently I happened to come across a copy of the *Sunshine Coast Daily* of Friday, 26 August 1988. The front-page headline reads, "MLA blasts toll roads". The article states—

"Member for Cooroora Gordon Simpson yesterday lashed out at proposed Sunshine Coast toll roads, saying coast people were facing unfair discrimination." Even National Party members of this Government believe that the people who live on the Sunshine Coast are facing unfair discrimination. The article continues—

"Mr Simpson's comments came in the wake of the resignation of prominent National Party figure, Alex Somlyay. The member added his voice to growing opposition to coast toll roads, saying he could not support proposed legislation which paved the way for toll roads."

That is a succinct and emphatic statement, if ever there was one.

Where is the member for Cooroora this evening? I had hoped that he would be present in the Chamber to participate in this debate and put forward his views, so that the people on the Sunshine Coast will know exactly where he stands on the amendments that are presently before the House.

**Government members interjected.**

**Mr BEANLAND:** It is quite clear that members of the National Party, quite apart from the honourable member for Cooroora, are also concerned.

I mentioned Mr Alec Somlyay. He has been quoted in an article in the *Sunshine Coast Daily* as being the former president of the Maroochydore branch of the National Party, who last week indicated that he was among those in the Nicklin electorate who were totally opposed to the toll-road. The report also states that the member for Nicklin had lost Mr Somlyay's support over this toll-road issue.

**Mr Ardill:** But he does not pay it.

**Mr BEANLAND:** Obviously Mr Austin is concerned that he will have to travel outside the electorate of Nicklin and that he will be forced to pay the toll, particularly if he has to travel to the electorate of Cooroora or Landsborough. Obviously he is concerned that he will have to use the road. Of course, no alternative road can be used to the toll-road.

This amendment is opposed not only by the Liberal Party, but also by the member for Cooroora. I have no doubt that it is also opposed by other members of the National

Party. As I said at the outset, the Liberal Party is not opposed to all toll-roads in cases in which an obvious need for a toll-road as a suitable alternative exists. However, I believe that a set of criteria and principles ought to be laid down for the establishment of toll-roads. At the moment, there are no guide-lines in relation to the amendments presently before the House.

Under this legislation it is open slather for the Government. I am sure that the people of the Sunshine Coast are worried that they will be badly discriminated against because no alternative road system exists at all. They will be forced to use this toll-road.

Debate, on motion of Mr Austin, adjourned.

The House adjourned at 9.16 p.m.