

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 7 MARCH 1989

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SECOND SESSION OF THE FORTY-FIFTH PARLIAMENT
Continued

TUESDAY, 7 MARCH 1989

Under the provisions of the motion for the special adjournment agreed to by the House on 24 November 1988, the House met at 10 a.m.

ABSENCE OF MR SPEAKER

The Clerk informed the House that Mr Speaker was attending the Thirty-eighth Seminar on Parliamentary Practice and Procedure at Westminster.

The Chairman of Committees (Mr E. C. Row, Hinchinbrook) read prayers and took the chair as Acting Speaker.

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: I am pleased to acknowledge the presence in the gallery of the Honourable Roger Vale, MLA, Speaker of the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly, Mr Rick Setter, MLA, and Mr Guy Smith, Clerk of the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly. I am sure that all honourable members welcome them to this Parliament.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!

ASSENT TO BILLS

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: I have to inform honourable members that I have received from His Excellency the Governor a letter in respect of assent to certain Bills, the contents of which will be incorporated in the records of Parliament.

ELECTORAL DISTRICT OF MERTHYR**Resignation of Member**

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: I have to inform the House that on 30 January 1989 Mr Speaker received from Mr Donald Frederick Lane his resignation as member for the electoral district of Merthyr. Attached to Mr Lane's resignation is a statement which he asked to be tabled.

Whereupon the document was laid on the table.

Seat Declared Vacant

Hon. M. J. AHERN (Landsborough—Premier and Treasurer and Minister for State Development and the Arts) (10.03 a.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

“That the seat in this House for the electoral district of Merthyr hath become and is now vacant by reason of the resignation of the said Donald Frederick Lane.”

Motion agreed to.

Issue of Writ

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: I have to inform the House that the dates in connection with the issue of the writ for the election of a member to fill the vacancy in the electoral district of Merthyr are as follows—

Issue of writ—20 April 1989;

Date of nomination—27 April 1989;

Polling day—13 May 1989;

Return of writ—14 June 1989.

ELECTIONS TRIBUNAL**Judge for 1989**

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: I have to report that I have received a letter from the Honourable the Chief Justice notifying that the Honourable Mr Justice James Burrows Thomas will be the judge to preside at the sittings of the Elections Tribunal for 1989.

PAPERS PRINTED DURING RECESS

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: I have to report that the following papers were ordered to be printed and circulated during the recess in accordance with the resolution of Parliament passed during the session of 1901—

Report of the Department of Primary Industries for the year ended 30 June 1988;

Auditor-General's report on the books and accounts of the Brisbane City Council and associated bodies for the year ended 30 June 1988;

Report of the Council of the Queensland Institute of Medical Research for the year ended 30 June 1988;

Report of the operations of the subdepartments of the Department of Health for the year ended 30 June 1988;

Financial statements of the Nominal Defendant (Queensland) for the year ended 30 June 1987.

COMMITTEE OF SUBORDINATE LEGISLATION**Resignation of Mr C. A. Sherrin**

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: I have to inform the House that I have received from Mr Craig Arden Sherrin his resignation as a member of the Subordinate Legislation Committee.

Appointment of Mrs J. M. Gamin

Hon. B. D. AUSTIN (Nicklin—Leader of the House) (10.06 a.m.): I move—

“That Mrs Judith Margaret Gamin, member for the electoral district of South Coast, be appointed a member of the Subordinate Legislation Committee to fill the vacancy caused by the resignation of Mr Craig Arden Sherrin.”

Motion agreed to.

Resignation of Mr D. E. Beanland

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: I have to inform the House that I have received from Mr Denver Edward Beanland his resignation as a member of the Subordinate Legislation Committee.

Appointment of Mr T. J. Gygar

Hon. B. D. AUSTIN (Nicklin—Leader of the House) (10.07 a.m.): I move—

“That Terence Joseph Gygar, member for the electoral district of Stafford, be appointed a member of the Subordinate Legislation Committee to fill the vacancy caused by the resignation of Mr Denver Edward Beanland.”

Motion agreed to.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**Changes in Ministry**

Hon. M. J. AHERN (Landsborough—Premier and Treasurer and Minister for State Development and the Arts) (10.08 a.m.), by leave: I desire to inform the House that the Deputy Governor for and on behalf of His Excellency the Governor on 19 January 1989—

(a) Accepted the resignation of the Honourable Leisha Teresa Harvey, BA, DipTeach, as a member of the Executive Council of Queensland;

(b) Accepted the resignations of—

the Honourable Michael John Ahern, BAgrSc, Premier and Treasurer of Queensland, as Minister for the Arts of Queensland;

the Honourable William Angus Manson Gunn, as Deputy Premier, Minister for Public Works, Main Roads and Expo and Minister for Police of Queensland;

the Honourable Ivan James Gibbs, as Minister for Transport of Queensland;

the Honourable Martin James Tenni, as Minister for Mines and Energy of Queensland;

the Honourable Geoffrey Hugh Muntz, AAIV, as Minister for Environment, Conservation and Tourism of Queensland;

the Honourable Peter Richard McKechnie, as Minister for Family Services and Welfare Housing of Queensland;

the Honourable Robert Carl Katter, as Minister for Northern Development, Community Services and Ethnic Affairs of Queensland;

the Honourable Paul John Clauson, Barrister-at-Law, as Minister for Justice and Attorney-General of Queensland;

the Honourable Robert Edward Borbidge, as Minister for Industry, Small Business, Communications and Technology of Queensland;

the Honourable Theo Russell Cooper, as Minister for Corrective Services and Administrative Services of Queensland; and

the Honourable Leisha Teresa Harvey, BA, DipTeach, as Minister for Health of Queensland,

(c) Appointed—

Craig Arden Sherrin, BSc, DipEd, BEdSt, MEdSt, to be a member of the Executive Council of Queensland.

(d) Appointed—

the Honourable Michael John Ahern, BAgrSc, Premier and Treasurer of Queensland, to be Minister for State Development and the Arts of Queensland;

the Honourable William Angus Manson Gunn, to be Deputy Premier and Minister for Public Works, Housing and Main Roads of Queensland;

the Honourable Ivan James Gibbs, to be Minister for Health of Queensland;

the Honourable Martin James Tenni, to be Minister for Mines, Energy and Northern Development of Queensland;

the Honourable Geoffrey Hugh Muntz, AAIV, to be Minister for Environment, Conservation and Forestry of Queensland;

the Honourable Peter Richard McKechnie, to be Minister for Transport of Queensland;

the Honourable Robert Carl Katter, to be Minister for Community Services and Ethnic Affairs of Queensland;

the Honourable Paul John Clauson, Barrister-at-Law, to be Minister for Justice and Attorney-General and Minister for Corrective Services of Queensland;

the Honourable Robert Edward Borbidge, to be Minister for Industry, Small Business, Technology and Tourism of Queensland;

the Honourable Theo Russell Cooper, to be Minister for Police and Minister for Emergency Services and Administrative Services of Queensland; and

the Honourable Craig Arden Sherrin, BSc, DipEd, BEdSt, MEdSt, to be Minister for Family Services of Queensland.

I lay upon the table of the House a copy of the *Queensland Government Gazette* of 19 January 1989 containing the relevant notifications.

Whereupon the honourable member laid the document on the table.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Labor Party Attack on Queensland Industry Development Corporation

Hon. B. D. AUSTIN (Nicklin—Minister for Finance and Minister Assisting the Premier and Treasurer) (10.10 a.m.), by leave: Mr Speaker—

An Opposition member: Where did it bite you?

Mr AUSTIN: The honourable member may as well get it off his chest. It bit me right there.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order! I will not tolerate unparliamentary conduct from either side of the House. I ask that the Chamber come to order.

Mr AUSTIN: Once again the time of this House must be taken in refuting another Labor lie. I refer to the untrue and mischievous campaign to undermine the reputation and credibility of a responsible business enterprise, the Queensland Industry Development Corporation.

It is time the Labor Party was called to account for its wild and damaging allegations—allegations in this case against honest, diligent QIDC staff. It is time the peddlers of this rubbish, such as Brisbane's *Courier-Mail*, were called to account to explain their efforts to substantiate the credence they have given to this attack on the QIDC.

Have they seen any evidence? I certainly think not. All I have seen so far is another Labor lie, another Labor attack on a Queensland institution or honest public servants, sensationalised in some sections of the media. Why has this newspaper devoted 50 paragraphs of copy plus an editorial to peddling unsubstantiated allegations, yet printed 10 paragraphs in rebuttal?

According to the allegations against the QIDC faxed to my office——

An Opposition member interjected.

Mr AUSTIN: The member can sit down and cop it sweet.

The only so-called evidence of misuse of funds is a report on a report apparently from the *Daily Sun* in 1987——

Mr Goss: The problem is that you have stacked it with cronies.

Mr AUSTIN: That is not the problem at all. The problem is that the Opposition has incompetent back-benchers whom the Leader of the Opposition does not even have the courage to put on his front bench. If the member for Caboolture is such a great accountant, why is he not sitting up next to the Leader of the Opposition as a financial adviser? The Leader of the Opposition stands condemned. His trouble is that he is just a little wimp. What about his famous trip to Canberra, when he was given the bum steer? That was a beautiful effort, wasn't it? They sold the land to the Japanese.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order! The time devoted to ministerial statements will not be permitted to develop into debate across the Chamber.

Mr AUSTIN: It was sold to people in Singapore, not to the Japanese.

There are then claims of some unnamed accountant somewhere in the State getting finance for a hobby farm, a claim of a cane-farmer extending his farm after receiving a disaster relief loan and some dairy farmer increasing his milk quota after receiving a concessional loan. There are no names, no dates, no times, no places and no amounts. There is nothing—I repeat “nothing”—for anyone to investigate. So I ask the House, “How is anyone to carry out an investigation?”

That was the basis of the *Courier-Mail's* campaign and it was also the basis for Senator Walsh, Labor's hit-mouth in Canberra, to claim front-page headlines that he would cut off the State's disaster relief money. Did anyone see him on the *7.30 Report*? Wasn't he a joke? He did not even know what it was all about. He thought that the Parliament had been sitting the day before. He kept referring to allegations made in State Parliament. He was the greatest joke ever.

The Opposition and some sections of the media go on about accountability. Why don't they show a bit themselves and back their claims with hard evidence? The *Courier-Mail* ran stories claiming the corporation's audit lasted probably only two weeks. That is rubbish. The QIDC is only new. The Auditor-General measures the time spent on audit procedures for the QIDC not in weeks, not in months but in man-years.

The valuable time of the QIDC and Treasury has been spent refuting Labor's allegations. They make 12 major points, which I will table and incorporate in *Hansard* so that honourable members can read them. I seek leave to table the Treasury report and to have it incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

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

Ministerial Statement by the Honourable B. D. Austin
M.L.A. Minister for Finance and Minister
Assisting the Premier and Treasurer
in Parliament, Tuesday, 7th March 1989

Mr Speaker:

It is totally incorrect and mischievous to suggest that QIDC is financially mismanaged.

The QIDC has reported a profit in its first two years of operation and is well ahead of budget this financial year—and this is on the basis of generally accepted accounting principles—not what I might call “Hayward” accounting principles which are distinguished by their lack of principle.

Mr. Hayward makes a number of claims and I propose to comment on each of them in turn to demonstrate clearly that Mr. Hayward does not understand or does not wish to understand the true position.

As the Opposition is so keen on plans, I call this my 12 point plan for the destruction of opposition credibility on financial matters.

First point—Mr. Hayward states that “the provision for doubtful debts on loan balances and the diminution in value of equity investments increased from \$4.737m in 1987 to \$6.393m in 1988 of which \$2.065m related to equity investment”.

This is a rather confused statement, and is incorrect as well.

The facts of the matter are that the corporation increased its provision for doubtful debts by \$2.1m in 1987/88 to increase the provision from \$4.737m as at 30th June, 1987 to \$6.837m as at 30th June, 1988.

The corporation’s basic policy is to maintain its provision at 1% of outstanding loan balances but as at 30th June, 1988, the provision was increased by a further amount of \$602,000 to provide additional coverage in respect of commercial lending.

It is true that the corporation wrote off bad debts of \$2.228m in 1987/88 compared with \$280,000 in 1986/87 and wrote down its equity investment portfolio by \$2.065m.

The rise in bad debts reflects the rapid growth of the QIDC’s activities. It also reflects the fact that the corporation is a development financier and it is inevitable that some businesses will for various reasons fail to reach maturity. The role of a development financier does entail the acceptance of risks and the Government acknowledges that this is the case.

However, despite the bad debt write-offs and the commercially prudent increase in the provision for doubtful debts, the corporation still made a net profit of \$2.349m in 1987/88 on the basis of generally accepted accounting principles.

Second point—Mr. Hayward claims that the \$10m equity injection by the Government in May 1988 was by way of a “subsidy”.

This is not correct. If Mr. Hayward had read the QIDC Act, he would have seen that the authorised capital of the QIDC is \$50m and that \$25m was provided to the QIDC by the Government as its initial capital injection. The Act envisaged that further capital would be progressively made available to the corporation, at a rate not exceeding \$10m every twelve months. There is nothing unusual about this. Any new and expanding organisation needs capital injections in addition to retained earnings.

Mr. Hayward states that it is significant that there was no appropriation for the \$10m capital injection in the budget papers for 1987-88.

However, it was not possible at the time the 1987-88 budget was prepared to accurately forecast when additional capital would be required but it was always clear that such would be required at some time in the future. Hence, contingency plans were made whereby moneys were set aside for this purpose in the Treasurer’s advance account.

Section 42 (2) of the QIDC Act provides that at the end of each financial year, the corporation shall pay out of profits derived from its operations a dividend to the consolidated revenue fund representing a return on account of the capital issued to the corporation.

In its 1987/88 accounts, the corporation provided for the payment of a dividend of \$1.307m which represented a dividend of 5% of the original capital injection of \$25m for the whole year and 5% of the incremental capital injection of \$10m for 42 days reflecting the fact that the \$10m was received by the corporation in May 1988.

It is therefore clear that the \$10m was not a "subsidy" as claimed by Mr. Hayward.

Third point—Mr. Hayward claims that the QIDC has exceeded its debt to equity ratio.

To come to this conclusion, Mr. Hayward has adjusted QIDC's accounts for what he says are Government subsidies of \$18.533m comprising \$10m in capital injection and a subsidy of \$8.533m relating to "costs—QIDC agency".

As already pointed out, the \$10m capital injection is not a subsidy and Mr. Hayward's claim that the payment for administration of Government schemes is a subsidy is also patently incorrect.

To support his argument that QIDC has exceeded its gearing ratio, Mr. Hayward has reduced QIDC's operating profit for 1987/88 by an amount of \$8.533m which according to Mr. Hayward is made up of "concessional interest subsidy" of \$2.391m and "QIDC agency" fee of \$6.142m.

It is clear from Mr. Hayward's "back of the envelope" calculations that he has confused the concepts of cash accounting as reflected in the public accounts and accrual accounting as reflected in the QIDC's accounts.

The amount of \$8.533m is the total amount actually paid by the Treasury to the corporation in 1987/88 in respect of administration of Government schemes. It includes payments in respect of the 1986/87 financial year and interim payments in respect of the 1987/88 financial year. It also excludes the component of the total administration fee in respect of natural disaster relief which QIDC recovers directly from interest payments received from borrowers and which is not actually paid by the Treasury.

The facts of the matter are that the corporation receives a negotiated "fee for service" to cover the cost of managing the Government schemes division which includes natural disaster relief and rural adjustment programs. It is not a subsidy and it is not valid to reduce QIDC's profit by this amount on the pretence that it is an artificial "balancing item" designed to ensure that the corporation makes a profit and operates within its gearing ratio.

On an accrual accounting basis, the fee for 1987/88 is \$6.5m.

The QIDC has been subsidised only to the extent of an amount to reimburse the corporation for lending at the 13.5% p.a. concessional rural rate, which is a long standing government initiative to help the rural economy. Indeed, this initiative has been in place in one form or another since 1902.

On an accrual accounting basis, this subsidy amounted to \$2.391m in 1987/88.

Again, Mr. Hayward claims that it is significant that there was no appropriation in the 1987/88 budget for payments to QIDC on account of administration costs.

However, the reason for this is that the basis for calculating the "cost recovery" fee was still under negotiation with the corporation and had not been finally determined. Costs needed to be allocated between the activities which the corporation undertakes on its own account and activities undertaken in administration of Government schemes. The appropriate basis of cost allocation had to be resolved in accordance with generally accepted cost accounting principles. However, as was the case with the \$10m capital injection, moneys were set aside for this purpose in the Treasurer's advance account.

Fourth point—Mr. Hayward suggests that the corporation has an unacceptable level of exposure to risk because it is operating up to the limit of its gearing ratio.

However, it is only logical that the corporation should operate up to the limit of its ratio because by doing so, it is performing, to the maximum extent which is prudent, the very functions which the Government intended.

The reason why the corporation was below this limit in 1986/87 is that this was its first year of operation and it was still in a build-up phase. In normal circumstances, it would be expected to operate close to the permissible limits.

Mr. Hayward questions why borrowings from the State or Federal Government are excluded for the purpose of calculating the gearing ratio. This is because these borrowings are effectively matched against the concessional rural loans which are provided in accordance with government policy.

Fifth point—Mr. Hayward points to the increased borrowings of the corporation as a sign of increased exposure to risk.

However, increased borrowings by the QIDC reflect the fact that the corporation is an expanding enterprise. The increase in the corporation's debt and equity capital base is matched by a commensurate increase in its assets.

As the corporation expands, so does its capacity to service its borrowings.

Sixth point—Mr. Hayward has tried to equate the corporation with the recently failed Rothwells bank.

This is wilfully mischievous and totally irresponsible.

Mr. Hayward suggests that the corporation is faced with the same financing situation as Rothwells i.e. borrowing short and lending long.

However, the key issue is not the maturity profile of the corporation's asset and liability portfolios but rather it is ensuring that an interest rate mismatch does not occur whereby the corporation's cost of funds is allowed to exceed the interest earned on the corporation's investments.

The fact that the corporation is borrowing short and lending long is an inescapable fact of life which is the normal situation faced by banks and financial institutions which traditionally lend money on longer terms (e.g. housing and commercial loans) than are applicable to their sources of funds e.g. depositors' funds. Does this mean that the Commonwealth Bank, Westpac, the ANZ and the NAB with their large individual depositor base are financially unsound, in Mr. Hayward's view? If Mr. Hayward can produce depositors who are prepared to lodge their deposits for terms of up to 20 years or more, then the corporation would certainly like to talk to them.

Indeed, "borrowing short and lending long" is not a recipe for financial disaster as suggested by Mr. Hayward because the interest rates on the corporation's loans are either variable during the term of the loans or in respect of the concessional rural lending, the State provides the corporation with an interest rate subsidy. Therefore, an uncontrollable and uncommercial interest rate mismatch (where the corporation is borrowing short on a variable interest rate basis and lending long on a fixed interest rate basis) will not arise.

Seventh point—Mr. Hayward seems to suggest there is something sinister in the fact that standby credit facilities at 30th June, 1988 were \$15.6m compared with \$29.3m at 30th June, 1987. However, this is not the case.

These standby facilities relate to the trade finance activities undertaken by the corporation. They are essentially multi-currency lines of credit which the corporation can draw upon from time to time to meet clients' requirements for trade finance facilities.

The fact that the level of the facilities fluctuates from time to time is not significant and merely reflects management's perception at any point in time of client requirements.

Eighth point—Mr. Hayward points to the increase in contingent liabilities as a further indication of unacceptable exposure to risk.

Mr. Hayward states that "contingent liabilities are a commitment which must be met". This is hardly a statement which one would expect to come from a chartered accountant.

Even students of basic accountancy know that this is incorrect. If liabilities definitely have to be met, then they are not contingent liabilities but are liabilities which would appear on QIDC's balance sheet.

The fact is that the increase in the corporation's contingent liabilities in 1987/88 is accounted for by the corporation's decision to provide a commercial bill endorsement facility for its clients. In this regard, the corporation has adequate recourse to other parties in the unlikely event that it needs to make payments under the facility.

Ninth point—Mr. Hayward seems to be suggesting that the QIDC's role in assisting the rural sector in Queensland is misplaced or too pronounced.

It is true that the corporation has a widespread client base in the rural sector with roughly 80% of its current loan portfolio in this sector. However, this percentage will decline over time as QIDC's commercial lending continues to quickly expand.

Honourable Members would be well aware of the importance of the rural sector to the Queensland economy and the special difficulties that this sector faces from time to time. Is Mr. Hayward advocating a reduction in the degree of attention that the Government gives to this important component of Queensland's and Australia's economy?

Tenth point—Mr. Hayward suggests that in administering Government schemes, the corporation is a vehicle for the National Party to extend political patronage.

This is not correct.

In fact, 71% of Government schemes activity in 1987/88 was overseen by independent committees comprised of respected professionals. It is true that the corporation administers

the natural disaster assistance scheme and certain other assistance schemes but this is undertaken in accordance with guidelines set by the Queensland and Federal governments.

It should be emphasised that the QIDC board is not involved in the day to day assessment of individual applications for financial assistance under government schemes. These are handled by QIDC staff under the delegated approval limits approved by the board.

Therefore, any accusation that the QIDC board is guilty of "cronyism" is really an attack on the integrity of the professional staff of the corporation.

Mr. Hayward suggests that the availability of Government scheme loans and concessional rural loans is being used as a tool to solicit clients away from their existing financiers. However, this is not (and never has been) the case. Clients must demonstrate that they meet the strict eligibility criteria for Government scheme loans and concessional rural loans.

Mr. Hayward gives three examples which he claims indicate that Government schemes are being misused.

If Mr. Hayward has specific instances where abuse has apparently occurred, then he should table the facts of the individual cases so that they can be thoroughly investigated and if necessary, steps taken to put them right.

Certainly, the Government does not condone abuse of these schemes. However, it is a fact of life that one or two cases might slip the net.

In this regard, honourable members will realise that because of the very nature of government scheme lending, e.g. natural disaster relief and so on, it is imperative that affected parties receive assistance as quickly as possible.

Therefore, the corporation has to strike a very delicate, pragmatic balance between making funds available as a matter of urgency and ensuring that all checks and balances are carried out to the letter.

Eleventh point—Mr. Hayward casts aspersions on the integrity and composition of the QIDC board. It is true that there is a significant rural representation on the board. However, this is to be expected given the large rural lending portfolio.

There is also a significant business representation on the board which makes for a balanced mix of acumen and expertise. The Chairman, Mr. C. J. Brennan is a very experienced and successful businessman and grazier.

It is certainly not true that QIDC is a "benefit society for those in the 'know'" and that "many Queensland farmers and business people are missing out".

There is nothing to preclude any business whether rural or commercial from applying for financial accommodation.

All proposals are evaluated on their merits in accordance with normal commercial principles approved by the board.

Twelfth point—Mr. Hayward states that there is no effective performance monitor available to measure the performance of the corporation. This is not the case. Both QIDC in respect of its own activities and the Government schemes division provide me as the relevant minister with annual audited statements of account and these are tabled in the house.

Mr. Hayward also claims that it is inappropriate for qidc to manage the venture capital fund which was an initiative announced by the honourable the premier and treasurer in his 1988/89 budget speech. However, QIDC has the necessary professional expertise to administer this fund including a venture capital committee comprised of very competent individuals.

It is clear that the performance of the QIDC as a development financier is admirable particularly when compared to the debacles in Western Australia and Victoria presided over by the Labor Governments in those States.

In conclusion, Mr. Hayward has completely misrepresented and distorted the facts for his own political "grand standing" purposes.

He should stand condemned for his scurrilous attack on a reputable financial institution which can only damage its standing in the financial community and diminish investor confidence. This can only serve to make it more difficult for the QIDC to achieve the objectives set for it by the Government which is to enhance the Queensland economy to the benefit of all Queenslanders.

Mr AUSTIN: I will make one last point. The author of this attack on the QIDC, the member for Caboolture, said last week on ABC radio that he gave me a copy of his report. He said he told a *Courier-Mail* reporter to give me a copy of it. What a joke

that is. Fancy a responsible member of this Parliament saying he gave a copy of a report to a reporter to be given to me. What a joke that is. He stands indicted for saying that. Every member of the House will have a transcript of what the honourable member said.

I ask honourable members to listen to this. That reporter, after a call from the member for Caboolture, asked my office to destroy Mr Hayward's report, saying that the honourable member opposite was concerned that a copy had been sent to my office. In fact, he was frightened that it might have been defamatory, yet he made the allegations on radio the other day. What a joke that is. He is a coward. Fancy ringing up a *Courier-Mail* reporter, getting him to send a report to me and then ringing up the reporter and asking him to withdraw the report as it might have been defamatory! Did the *Courier-Mail* print the member's lie? No, it did not bother.

This issue raises the question of the importance to the public of the Public Accounts Committee. Committee members will be receiving information from the public. Cheap political stunts such as we have seen from the honourable member for Caboolture could do lasting damage to the committee's standing and inhibit the free flow of necessary information. The honourable member for Caboolture is, reportedly, an accountant. His schoolboy accounting in this case shows that his time would be better spent doing tax returns for some of his colleagues.

PAPERS

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

Reports—

- Queensland Performing Arts Trust for the year ended 30 June 1988
- Royal Queensland Theatre Company for the year ended 30 June 1988
- Queensland Cultural Centre Trust for the year ended 30 June 1988.

The following papers were laid on the table—

Proclamation under the Employment, Vocational Education and Training Act Amendment Act 1988

Orders in Council under—

- Parliamentary Members' Salaries Act 1988
- Public Service Management and Employment Act 1988
- Governors' Salary Act 1872-1984
- State Development and Public Works Organisation Act 1871-1981
- Motorways Agreements Act 1987-1988
- State Housing Act 1945-1988
- State Housing (Freeholding of Land) Act 1957-1984
- Rural Training Schools Act 1965-1984 and the Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Act 1982-1984
- Workers' Compensation Act 1916-1988
- Health Act 1937-1988

Regulations under—

- Public Accountants Registration Act 1946-1975
- Architects Act 1985
- Professional Engineers Act 1988
- Health Act 1937-1988
- Hospitals Act 1936-1988
- Medical Act 1939-1987

By-laws under—

- Motorways Agreements Act 1987-1988

Dental Act 1971-1987
Medical Act 1939-1987
Pharmacy Act 1976-1987

Reports—

Workers' Compensation Board of Queensland for the year ended 30 June 1988
Report and Financial Statement of Department of Health for the year ended 30 June 1988
Princess Alexandra Hospital Research and Development Foundation for the year ended 30 June 1988
Medical Board of Queensland for the year ended 30 June 1988
Nurses Registration Board of Queensland for the year ended 30 June 1988
Dental Board of Queensland for the year ended 30 June 1988
Psychologists Board of Queensland for the year ended 30 June 1988
Optometrists Board of Queensland for the year ended 30 June 1988
Chiropractic Manipulative Therapists Board of Queensland for the year ended 30 June 1988
Physiotherapists Board of Queensland for the year ended 30 June 1988
Occupational Therapists Board of Queensland for the year ended 30 June 1988
Speech Therapists Board of Queensland for the year ended 30 June 1988
Podiatrists Board of Queensland for the year ended 30 June 1988.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Fixed-price Contracts in Building Industry

Hon. P. J. CLAUSON (Redlands—Minister for Justice and Attorney-General and Minister for Corrective Services) (10.18 a.m.), by leave: Representations have been made to me—

Mr R. J. Gibbs: Russell Cooper's running mate.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order! Is the honourable member for Wolston seeking an early demise?

Mr CLAUSON: Representations have been made to me, to a number of my colleagues and, I understand, to members of the Opposition by people who have had difficulties under building contracts with a number of apparently unscrupulous builders. I am referring to contracts that contain a fixed-price provision that terminates within a specified time after the signing of the contract.

If building is not commenced or completed prior to that time, the contract price is then subject to rise-and-fall provisions. This means quite simply that, if deliberate or unexpected delays occur, the home-owner is subject to a substantial increase in the price of the house. Naturally, this type of uncertainty must be of grave concern to those who are currently building houses, as many will have great difficulty in making the additional payments.

Provisions such as those I have mentioned are not uncommon in the building industry, in respect of both residential and commercial developments. When every party to the contract is aware of the provisions and acts honourably, no criticism can be made. However, when representations are made to intending home-buyers that the contract is a fixed-price contract and yet the terms contained in the written agreement differ from that premise, there is a natural feeling of aggrievement expressed by those to whom misrepresentations have been made.

I do not propose to embark on a sterile debate as to whether criminal offences under the provisions of the Criminal Code have been committed, or whether the contracts which have been entered into as a result of alleged misrepresentations are void or voidable. These are matters which will require the most careful consideration.

I issue a word of warning to all intending home-purchasers to carefully examine all documentation relating to the building contract and, in particular, the terms of the agreement or contract which is entered into. I would also advise all intending home-purchasers to protect their interests by obtaining the advice of their legal advisers in order that they may operate from a position of knowledge and strength.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

New TAB Computer System

Hon. J. H. RANDELL (Mirani—Minister for Local Government and Racing) (10.21 a.m.), by leave: On Monday, 6 March, the *Courier-Mail* printed a story which alleged that the TAB faced a \$8m bill because of the so-called flop of its new computer system. I wish to advise honourable members and the racing and betting industry of the true situation.

I have been informed by the TAB that, in 1986, because of the limitations of the equipment installed in 1980, it embarked on a major re-equipment program. After an exhaustive tendering process, the Digital Equipment Corporation was selected to supply computers to the TAB.

I have been informed further by the board that the proposed system, dubbed "TAB 2000", was to be developed on the Digital equipment and was an ambitious project designed to produce a state-of-the-art, sophisticated betting system for the Queensland punter. There was no doubt that it would be the best in Australia.

As with many computer products of that size, difficulties were encountered in the development process, and the implementation schedule slipped. In mid-1988, the TAB realised that the project slippage was of concern. That caused further problems, because the existing Burroughs equipment was then experiencing difficulties in expansion and catering for the 20 per cent increase in betting turn-over.

The board advised me that, in late 1988, it considered options with regard to upgrading the Burroughs equipment to guarantee continued service to the Queensland public, regardless of the implementation date of the new system. It decided to replace the ageing equipment with a new Burroughs machine which had the capacity to handle expected growth in the foreseeable future. It is estimated to cost \$8m. The expansion capabilities of the new equipment would handle the 40 to 60 TAB offices awaiting installation, which, in itself, would generate increased revenue to offset the cost of expansion. New Burroughs equipment will be installed well in advance of this year's spring carnival and the existing systems will comfortably process betting during the winter carnival.

The Queensland racing public may be assured, as I have been by the board, that the computer operations of the TAB will comfortably handle all forthcoming challenges and a further record turn-over and profit for the TAB is confidently expected.

Mr GOSS proceeding to give notice of a motion—

Government members interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition must be allowed to continue to give notice of his motion.

Mr GOSS: I am pleased to see that the Premier is awake.

Government members interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order! Will the Government benches come to order? There is too much audible conversation.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr MACKENROTH (Chatsworth) (10.27 a.m.), by leave: In 1984 in this Chamber I raised a matter relating to a friendship between a land-developer, Francis Patrick Luton, and the then Minister for Harbours and Marine, the late John Goleby. At that time my credibility was questioned to the extent that the Minister had a writ for defamation served on me.

My reason for raising this subject today is to place on record a recent event which proves some of my claims of 1984. On Wednesday, 1 February 1989, Mr Luton appeared in the District Court, and the following appeared in the *Courier-Mail*—

“A former National Party Minister had misled Parliament about his association with a land developer, a court was told yesterday.

Brisbane businessman Frank Luton told the Brisbane District Court a former Harbours and Marine Minister, the late John Goleby, had lied when he told Parliament he did not know Luton.

Luton said he had been told to ‘keep quiet’ about Goleby’s denial at the time and everything would be all right.

A photograph tendered to the court, which showed Goleby and his wife at dinner with Luton and his wife, proved the Minister knew him.”

That evidence to the District Court and particularly the photograph justifies the claims that I made in 1984.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr MENZEL (Mulgrave) (10.29 a.m.), by leave: Last week on the *7.30 Report* Senator Walsh made certain accusations against the Queensland Government and, in particular, he referred to Max Menzel, the member for Babinda.

Mr Scott: All of them true.

Mr MENZEL: They are not.

Might I firstly correct Senator Walsh and point out that I am the member for Mulgrave. It shows how badly Senator Walsh is informed.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order! On several occasions this morning I have called for order when members were endeavouring to make statements. I am becoming a little concerned that the Chamber is not responding. I now ask the Chamber to respond to my call for order.

Mr MENZEL: I take it that Senator Walsh quoted from a statement that I made some years ago in which I said that I had made representations on behalf of hundreds of people for Rural Reconstruction Board finance and Agricultural Bank finance, and I am proud of that fact.

Senator Walsh stated that I and others helped only National Party supporters or cronies and implied that the representations were based not on merit but on political affiliations. He said something about a slush fund. That is complete and absolute rubbish, and I challenge Senator Walsh to name the people who informed him that that in fact did take place and to name people who received the money. Senator Walsh claimed that I, after seeing a Minister, had every claim approved. Again, that is rubbish. I never said that; I said that on many occasions I was successful after my expert help and advice were used to make representations to the Minister and to the Rural Reconstruction Board.

By his implications, Senator Walsh is the greatest political muck-raker of all times. He claimed that he obtained his information from a State ALP member. As everyone knows, if it is the particular ALP member whom I understand it to be, he is known by his State ALP colleagues to be nothing but a dill. If members of the Labor Party have anything that they can prove, why do they not name the persons inside or outside Parliament? If Senator Walsh is only using those unproven implications and allegations to try to justify the Federal Government's not giving disaster relief aid in the future to victims of disaster, it shows that the ALP in Canberra does not care about victims of disasters.

I have made representations on behalf of people of all political colours about a lot of different problems, such as social security problems and the making of representations for Agricultural Bank loans. One group of people on whose behalf I have never made representations, but to which Senator Walsh regularly gives tens of thousands of dollars, is the homosexuals of Australia. I am proud that I can say to the Parliament of Queensland and to the people of Australia that I am not a poofter-lover like Senator Walsh.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Guide-lines on Foreign Investment in Queensland

Mr GOSS: In directing a question to the Premier and Treasurer, I refer to the publicity given last month to the development of a new set of State Government guide-lines covering foreign investment in Queensland, and to his comments on television last night, "We must have a foreign investment policy, and we do." Given that a foreign land ownership register does not amount to a foreign investment policy, firstly, I ask: will the Premier lay on the table of the House this morning the guide-lines or policy of his Government covering foreign investment referred to by him? Secondly, I ask: has that policy been approved by Cabinet and, if so, when?

Mr AHERN: In respect of the total matter of foreign investment in Queensland, I made a comprehensive statement yesterday to the Japanese Productivity Centre Mission, which is currently visiting Queensland. I lay on the table of the House a copy of the statement made and seek leave to have it incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

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

The Honourable M. J. Ahern, M.L.A.

Premier and Treasurer of Queensland
and Minister for State Development and The Arts

Speech notes for Japan Productivity Centre Mission

Monday, 6 March, 1989

8.30 pm (approx)

Parliamentary Annexe

I know that I have the full-hearted support of the Government and people of Queensland when I welcome you to our State.

The relationship between Japan and Queensland has developed significantly over the past few years: it is a relationship based on mutual trust and respect, and upon mutual benefits. It is also a relationship I like to think that is founded on open-ness and honesty.

I know that your organisation, a permanent economic research and advisory body, is widely credited with much of the economic restructuring that has over the past 30 years or so played a significant part in taking Japanese industry to virtual world domination. As well, JPC

has undoubtedly been a significant influence on the trade and investment decisions of Japanese firms.

In that latter respect, Australia, and I would say Queensland in particular, offers great potential. Queensland is recognised, both nationally and internationally, as this nation's fastest growing State . . . in terms of population growth, job creation, tourism development, exports, and other key economic indicators. Indeed, for most of the past two decades Queensland has consistently bettered the Australian national average in key economic areas. It continues to do so: indeed, the latest review by the prestigious National Institute of Economic and Industry Research shows that Queensland continues right now to lead the nation in economic terms; and that same institute predicts that that lead will be maintained for at least the next five years.

It would not be immodest to say that Queensland's economic success is due, at least in part, to the private-enterprise philosophies and economic policies long pursued by the Queensland Government. And whilst Queensland has many God-given advantages, not least its vast mineral resources and its magnificent natural attractions, its success in economic terms also owes much to significant injections of foreign investment.

You will be aware that there has been for some months now a running controversy surrounding the question of foreign investment. Let me make clear the Queensland Government's position: the Queensland Government welcomes foreign investment and recognises that without it, Queensland's progress to date would have been seriously impaired. Many of our most successful mineral and energy-related projects would never have eventuated without valuable foreign funds and indeed the nation's unemployment rate would be so much higher but for the jobs created, directly or indirectly, by investment from many overseas countries, including of course Japan.

In short, Queensland's much-envied life-style and generally high standard of living owes much to the funds invested, sometimes not without risk, of overseas consortiums and individual companies.

However, you will be aware that currently there is debate within Australia as to the extent and type of foreign investment; and, unfortunately, there are those in our community who would turn what should be a rational discussion on pure economics into one of racism. Again, let me state Queensland's case: as far as my Government is concerned there is and will never be any discrimination in relation to foreign investment on the basis of creed or colour or race.

All foreign investment is welcomed in Queensland, regardless of the source. There is but one over-riding qualification: benefit to Queensland and Queenslanders.

On this point, let me make it clear that Queensland should not be viewed as an "easy investment mark". Whilst foreign capital is welcomed and warmly, it is the strong view of my Government that all and any investment in Queensland must have direct and indirect benefits for Queenslanders . . . not just the investors.

Therefore, my Government is inclined to look more favourably upon investment in what might be called productive areas, areas that involve—say—technology transfer, the promotion of much-needed manufacturing and marketing promotion skills and value-added production.

I would urge the JPC therefore, when giving trade and investment advice to potential Japanese investors, to encourage them to consider joint ventures, greater Australian equity, and investment in those areas I have just mentioned rather than in real estate, an area that has caused—perhaps justifiable if, in some cases ill-informed—resentment amongst ordinary Queenslanders of late.

It is not generally appreciated amongst the citizenry that foreign investment is dictated by the Federal not State Governments; nor that there is no mandatory responsibility on the part of the Federal Government to even advise the States of proposed foreign investment or purchases. That is something I will be seeking to have changed; it is simply intolerable that decisions that can and often do have considerable social as well as economic impact in this State are made without even a courtesy call.

That of course is of no direct concern to the JPC; however, what may be of concern is my Government's decision to establish a foreign owned land register. Again, let me make clear the rationale behind this move. The decision to establish such a register was made purely and simply to give the Government factual information regarding the extent of ownership so that when the issue of foreign ownership is raised in the public arena, as it has been in the past and doubtless will be in the future, there will be at least some accurate basis for debate. I can assure you, and your clients, that the establishment of that register is not the fore-runner of

draconian measures to restrict or hinder investment from Japan or indeed any other foreign source.

I have already said, and it is worth repeating, that appropriate foreign investment has been warmly welcomed in the past and will be in the future. The creation of a foreign-owned land register will not alter that stance, but merely provide my Government with an up to date data base on which to make sensible decisions affecting the future economic direction of this State.

Indeed, my Government, despite its economic successes, is not complacent about the future, and has prepared a State economic development strategy designed to create new additional economic driving sectors within the Queensland economy that will complement those traditional sectors on which so much reliance has been placed in the past . . . namely agriculture and mineral resources.

That strategy, which I believe to be soundly based and quite achievable, aims to create the following new driving sectors: diversified manufacturing, traded services that can be exported, commercialisation of research, down-stream processing, product diversification, the creation of new markets and so on.

It also identifies investment opportunities in such areas as biotechnology, information technology, food processing, space technology, electronics, minerals processing and the like.

These are areas in which foreign investment would be most welcome; and I would urge the JPC to take that message back to Japan. Certainly, I will be making that point strongly in a forth-coming visit to Japan later this year.

Gentlemen: to sum up: you are most welcome here, and I hope during your all-too-brief visit you will get the opportunity to see for yourselves some of the remarkable achievements and successes of modern Queensland . . . some of which simply could not have been realised without the expertise, finance and good-will of our friends in Japan and elsewhere.

I trust you will take home with you the message that there is here in Queensland excellent prospects for appropriate future Japanese investment.

Thank you.

Sale by Qintex of Interest in Mirage Resorts to Japanese

Mr GOSS: In directing a question to the Premier and Treasurer, I refer to comments by the Minister for Northern Development, Mr Tenni, in which he was critical of the sale by Qintex of 49 per cent of its Mirage resorts to Japanese interests. I refer also to a reception that the Premier hosted at Parliament House last night for influential Japanese financiers and investors, at which it was reported that he would emphasise his Government's approval for joint venture investment. Given that Mr Tenni's comments seriously contradict the Premier's statements, I ask: will he clarify the position and advise the Queensland Government's position on the Qintex sale, particularly given the substantial investment by the Queensland Government of public money in that company?

Mr AHERN: I believe that in the statement that I made today I outlined the situation clearly. That statement has been incorporated in *Hansard*. As far as Government members are concerned, the issue is quite clear. As a Government, we support joint ventures. The whole issue is properly described in the statement.

Prime Minister's Offer to Queensland Government of Land for Housing

Mr FITZGERALD: In directing a question to the Premier and Treasurer, I draw his attention to the February manoeuvres by the Leader of the Opposition in his talks, as reported in the media, with the Prime Minister of Australia about commitments made by the Prime Minister to offer to the Queensland Government 7 500 blocks of land in and around Brisbane. I ask: when the Premier attended the Premiers conference on housing, did Mr Hawke make to him the offer of 7 500 blocks of land?

Mr AHERN: The honourable Leader of the Opposition must be very badly embarrassed by the events of the housing summit. I have in my possession the press statements that described his triumphant return to Queensland, in which he said that 7 500 home sites would be made available to Queenslanders by a "generous Federal

Government". He said that land would be made available in the areas of Enoggera, Belmont and Wacol and that it could all be sold to provide 7 500 home sites for Queenslanders.

Mr GOSS: I rise to a point of order. The Premier's statement is a misrepresentation and a lie. I ask that it be withdrawn. The Premier has lied to the House.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition suggested that the Premier misinformed the House and asked for the statement to be withdrawn. I believe that the Leader of the Opposition could make another statement at another time. At this stage I do not know whether there is any point of order.

Mr AHERN: I accept the Leader of the Opposition's embarrassment on the issue. The situation is quite clear. The Leader of the Opposition came back to Queensland claiming that, after talks with Federal officials, he had a generous package from the Commonwealth Government for Queenslanders. The truth is that, for a couple of days, the Leader of the Opposition attended a leadership school in Canberra where he tidied up and glossed up his image. I am not sure whether he had those talks. The Minister for Housing, the Deputy Premier and I went in and they laughed at us.

Mr Burns: Why wouldn't they laugh at you?

Mr AHERN: They laughed at those statements. Only two packages were offered.

Mr Burns: Remember the lessons now.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order! The member for Lytton!

Mr AHERN: After inquiries, it was found that one of the parcels of land had been sold to Singapore buyers.

Mr Burns interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order! The member for Lytton is making too much noise. He will desist.

Mr Burns: I'm reminding him of his lessons.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order! The member for Lytton will desist.

Mr AHERN: The only allotment of land which is not yet available—but might be available—is situated at Browns Plains. That land will be made available for \$45,000 per allotment.

Mr Goss: Coopers Plains—wrong suburb.

Mr AHERN: Wherever it is, the truth is that it may not be available at all. Hundreds of thousands of allotments were to be made available by the Commonwealth Government.

The Leader of the Opposition's inexperience has been disclosed in these matters. He was battered by the Commonwealth Government on the issue. I do not believe that he had those discussions at all.

Parliamentary Accountability

Mr FITZGERALD: In directing a question to the Premier, I refer to calls by the Opposition, and the Leader of the Opposition in particular, for more accountability by members of this Parliament. Will the Premier call upon Mr Goss for a full explanation of the public debate that is raging about one of his front-bench members and the Australian Taxation Office?

Mr AHERN: In recent times much has been said about parliamentary accountability. The Leader of the Opposition has spoken at length on the matter in all forms of the media. He has castigated the Government and particularly a former member of the

Parliament who was a Minister in this Government. Those allegations and this issue led to the resignation of that member of Parliament, namely, the member for Merthyr. The Leader of the Opposition must come clean on this issue.

Mr Goss: I'm prepared to do so.

Mr AHERN: I call on the Leader of the Opposition——

Mr GOSS: Mr Acting Speaker——

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition must not rise while another member is on his feet.

Mr Goss: I responded to the call.

Mr AHERN: Why has the Leader of the Opposition not done so to date?

Mr Goss: I have. It's fixed.

Mr AHERN: It is not just a question of saying, "It's fixed."

Why has this issue been allowed to run for so long? Why has an honourable member been allowed to sit on the front bench of the Opposition without his being stood down and his position being called into question? Much needs to be brought out about this matter.

For a long time the honourable Leader of the Opposition has talked about tax cheats. The issue which has arisen has led to a writ being issued by the Australian Taxation Office. When the issue was disclosed, was action taken by the Leader of the Opposition to stand down the member concerned? No! Why has it taken my standing up in this place today to incite the Leader of the Opposition to say that he is prepared to come clean on the issue? A full and proper explanation needs to be given, or the Leader of the Opposition stands condemned for protecting one of his own tax cheats.

Sale by Qintex of Interest in Mirage Resorts to Japanese

Mr BURNS: In directing a question to the Minister for Mines, Energy and Northern Development, I refer to yesterday's belated outburst by the Minister against the recent sale of 49 per cent of Qintex Mirage resorts in Port Douglas, Gold Coast and Hawaii to Japanese interests. I ask: is the Minister aware that, a month ago on 10 February, the *Sydney Morning Herald* printed a story on its front page and in the financial section announcing that Christopher Skase's Qintex was set to sell off half of its Mirage interests to Japanese investors?

As the Government, through its quango the QTTC, was instrumental in Qintex gaining control of public land at Port Douglas, as there is some financial interest in Qintex and as the Premier's financial adviser, Leo Hielscher, is on one of the Qintex boards, the Minister would have been forewarned. In the light of the Minister's apparent anger yesterday after the sale was obviously completed, what action did he take during the past month while negotiations were very clearly at an advanced stage? What media releases did the Minister issue opposing the impending sale, and when and where were they published?

Did the Minister at any stage contact or attempt to contact Skase to voice his doubts and displeasure? If so, on what dates? Will he now table details of such representations? At any stage did the Minister raise this matter in Cabinet? If so, on what dates and with what results?

Mr TENNI: I am pleased to be able to relate the events that occurred.

Mr Scott: You're scared of losing Barron River—and you will lose it.

Mr TENNI: The honourable member is a joke. The only reason why the honourable member for Cook is getting out is that he would have been defeated at the next election.

The National Party has a good candidate who could have done him over. He has taken the easy way out.

I heard the rumours and whispers. I read in the southern press that discussions were taking place in Japan concerning a sale or partial sale of Skase's developments not only in Port Douglas but also throughout Queensland. I made a phone call to Mr John Tabart, who is the assistant manager or manager, and asked him to check out the matter. I was told that the statements were completely wrong and that I would receive a letter from him, which I did. I accepted that as truthful.

Mr Burns: Will you table that now?

Mr TENNI: I do not have to table anything for the honourable member or any other socialist in this State. He has to take my word for it. If he does not believe me, that is his tough luck. I received that letter. I have made that statement very clear to the media.

Mr Burns interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order! I remind the honourable member for Lytton that if he continues to cross-question the Minister I will have to regard it as his second question.

Mr TENNI: As far as I am concerned, I regarded that as gospel. In the past two days, I have said very, very clearly that I am very disappointed that I received a letter from the Skase organisation, which stated that it was incorrect that that organisation was negotiating, suddenly to be told that 49 per cent of the Skase development had been sold to foreign investment.

I am sick and tired of the Opposition knocking the Japanese and certain people in foreign countries. I am talking about foreign investment. My belief is that the Federal Government, through the Foreign Investment Review Board, is falling down in its responsibilities.

Mr De Lacy: Ah, the Federal Government.

Mr TENNI: If Mr De Lacy is not aware of that board, I point out that it is run by the Commonwealth Government. He had better do his homework a bit better.

Mr Burns interjected.

Mr TENNI: Is that the honourable member's second question or not?

Mr Burns: Don't do his job, do your own. Answer the question.

Mr TENNI: The QTTC has no interest whatsoever in the Skase development. As far as the Foreign Investment Review Board is concerned, the honourable member should tell his henchmen in Canberra that if that board cannot do its job, the Federal Government should sack it and give it to the States, which will do a proper job. That is what he should be telling them. It is a board that does not have any ability. The Federal Government should get rid of the board and give it to the States, which will make the decisions on behalf of their people. The board is not worth two bob; the honourable member knows that. His henchmen in Canberra are backing it 100 per cent. He should get on to his socialist mates in Canberra and tell them to do their job properly.

Mr BURNS: Under the Minister's proposal—sunny today, Japanese tomorrow.

Auction of Brisbane City Council Land at Stretton

Mr BURNS: In directing a question to the Minister for Public Works, I refer to the recent auction on behalf of the Liberal Brisbane City Council of 15 blocks of land in the outer Brisbane southside suburb of Stretton and ask: is he aware that these blocks were part of a land package transferred to the city council by the Federal Government

for costs between \$5,000 and \$15,000 under the Whitlam Government for use as affordable housing blocks—and I understand that some of the deeds still carry the words “affordable housing”? Did these affordable housing blocks sell at the recent open auction for cash amounts up to \$162,000, without the usual provision for the 10 per cent deposit to help the battler get a start? Were these affordable housing blocks snapped up by Asian buyers from countries such as Hong Kong, Taiwan and Korea, with local purchasers virtually priced out of the bidding? Will he order an immediate investigation of this sell-out of valuable housing blocks that were obviously originally intended for Queensland home-buyers and tell this House now if he supports a policy that sees affordable housing land auctioned off to foreign interests outside the financial range of local citizens?

Mr GUNN: I am not familiar with this particular matter, but I will certainly have it investigated. The honourable member should be the last person to speak about selling land to Asian buyers. As the Premier said, the lot that was offered, which was at Boundary Road, Coopers Plains, which was the best block available, was sold to Asian buyers——

Mr Burns: Why didn't you tender for it? It was up for tender.

Mr GUNN: It was at Carseldine. It would not matter which one it was.

Mr Burns interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order! I have asked the member for Lytton not to ask counter-questions and enter into a debate. If he continues to do so I will be compelled to warn him. So far I have refrained from doing so.

Mr GUNN: Down at the housing summit, the funny thing was that the Federal Minister, Mr West, who was a walking disaster, had to appeal to one of his junior officers to find out that the block of land in question was already sold to an Asian buyer. Nothing was more embarrassing for Mr Keating and Mr Hawke, who hung their heads.

For the information of the honourable member, I will inform him what has happened in relation to the provision of Housing Commission finance. To 6 June 1988, the Housing Commission had approved 19 814 loans. Up to that stage, the amount advanced through the interest subsidy scheme was \$652.7m.

Mr Burns: How many loans did you say? Nineteen thousand?

Mr GUNN: In that particular scheme there were 19 817. The amount advanced was \$652.7m. Up to that date the amount of the interest subsidy was \$44.7m. This year, the estimated advances through the interest subsidy scheme will be in excess of \$125m. That is an indication of what this State is doing. It is now about to ballot out 100 blocks of land at cost, which will average \$20,000 each. That should be considered in contrast to the land that was offered by the Federal Government.

The State Government could have received a great bargain. The Belmont rifle range was offered to it for \$22m. The Federal Government expected to make \$360m from the sale of land. That is an example of how it helps first home buyers.

The figures that I have cited are an indication of what the Housing Commission has done and will continue to do for first home buyers in this State.

Involvement of Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation in Tourism Development Projects

Mr INNES: In directing a question to the Premier, I refer to the sale of the Qintex interests and to the opposition expressed by the Liberal Party in 1984 to the amendment of the Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation legislation which allowed a joint venture and which members of the Liberal Party said at the time would, in effect, compete with the industry that the QTTC was supposed to represent. The latest land sales have revealed that the money is to be used to finance the development of hotels

in the United States to further compete with the tourist industry in this State. I ask: do the developments which are taking place cause him to review and reassess his position in relation to the involvement of the QTTC and the giving of very desirable, very high quality and very valuable Crown land for such purposes?

Mr AHERN: The policy will not change. I am afraid that I am unable to follow the logic of the honourable member's statement.

Report of Local Government Department on Ministerial Rezoning for Gold Coast Shopping Centre Development

Mr INNES: In directing my second question to the Premier, I will try something a little slower. I refer to the indication that was given at the start of his administration that there would be no more controversial ministerial rezonings and to the Cabinet decision to set in train a process of ministerial rezoning of 200 acres of land at the northern end of the Gold Coast on which it is proposed that a shopping centre—stated to be the largest in Australia—together with a new town centre will be built, and I ask: why did he do that, despite the opposition from the properly elected planning authority, the Gold Coast City Council? Is it true that Cabinet received a special report from the Department of Local Government on the proposed rezoning? Is it true that that report opposed the development and that he ordered the destruction of that report?

Mr AHERN: The honourable member's whole premise is wrong. I have ordered the destruction of no report at all. I deny that allegation completely and I challenge the honourable member to provide substance for his allegation.

Mr Innes: Where is the report?

Mr AHERN: I beg the honourable member's pardon?

Mr Innes: Was there a report? Where is it?

Mr AHERN: Naturally, advice on the issue was given to Cabinet by the Department of Local Government, but no report was ordered to be destroyed. It is a total furphy, a nonsense, a falsehood, a lie.

The issue down on the Gold Coast is that approval has been sought for a ministerial rezoning. The proposal has been advertised in the usual way and people can object. It has been put to the people for their consideration, with all of the Gold Coast City Council's requirements and conditions having been met. I think there were 80 or 90 of them that have all been met.

The proposal can be considered. The development is obviously very extensive and worth while for the Gold Coast and it has been supported publicly by several Gold Coast members of the Liberal Party. However, the extent of objection will be considered by the Government before the development is further proceeded with.

PRIVILEGE

Premier's Comments on Taxation Default by Member of Opposition

Mr BRADDY (Rockhampton) (10.57 a.m.): I rise on a matter of privilege.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order! The member for Rockhampton has risen on a matter of privilege. I suggest to him that he raise his matter of privilege at 12 o'clock, when it can more appropriately be dealt with.

Mr BRADDY: I would suggest to you, Mr Acting Speaker, with respect, that a matter of privilege takes precedence over questions.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: If the honourable member wishes to raise a matter of privilege and insists on doing so now, then he may.

Mr BRADDY: My matter of privilege relates to the answer that the Premier gave to the member for Lockyer earlier when he stated, among other things, that the Leader of the Opposition was protecting a tax cheat. Clearly that statement related to a recent dispute between the Australian Taxation Office and me. The situation is that in discussions with the Australian Taxation Office it was conceded that it was a civil matter between that office and me; that the office at a senior level was unaware that a sum of money had been paid to it; and that if that payment had been noted, as it should have been because it was made quite some time ago, the writ would never have been issued.

If the Premier was on the ball—as members know he never is—he would have been aware that an announcement has been made that the writ has been withdrawn. The matter is a civil proceeding. I find the remarks made by the Premier offensive and I ask that they be withdrawn.

MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Mansard Properties Limited

Mr BURNS (Lytton—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (11 a.m.): The issue I raise this morning concerns the cruel rip-off of innocent Queensland home-buyers by a Perth-based building firm, Manfal Pty Ltd trading as Design for Living by Mansard. Young people have told me that it should be called “Design for Lying by Mansard”.

On Sunday, 26 February, at Alexandra Hills I attended a meeting of more than 100 very angry, very upset Mansard victims. Believe me, these decent, law-respecting young Queenslanders have every reason to feel cheated and abandoned. It seems that they are being both brutally betrayed by this company that they trusted and, even worse, ignored in their plight by the State Government that, suddenly, cynically pretends to have a interest in housing. Why would they not feel let down and abused?

I ask: where is the evidence of this National Party Government’s approach to the Trade Practices Commission to check if these Queensland home-buyers are the casualties of false advertising that guaranteed them a fixed price, free of rise and fall, during the life of their contracts?

What action has been taken by the Queensland Corporate Affairs Commissioner’s Office, which comes under the wing of the Attorney-General? This morning the Attorney-General said to these people who are being ripped off and robbed, “I issue to you a word of warning.” The only help that Mr Clauson can offer to these people who may have to sell up and be sent broke by these robbers from the west is a weak word of warning. What about the Builders Registration Board, which is supposedly the responsibility of the Deputy Premier and the Consumer Affairs Bureau? The Consumer Affairs Bureau is presided over by a Minister for Industrial Affairs who these days seems to not only run backwards but also look in that direction. The simple truth is that this unprincipled company that is trading and advertising as Mansard is ruthlessly fleecing dozens of very honest Australians and turning the dream of owning their own home into a nightmare.

On 16 February in Perth the Western Australian Minister for Consumer Affairs accused Mansard of “unfair conduct”. His Consumer Affairs Commissioner is at present investigating the prospects of legal action. This morning Queenslanders were given a word of warning, yet in the west Mansard has threatened to sue the Minister and his commissioner. Mansard will never sue over what this weak so-and-so has said this morning in Queensland. In fact, Mansard’s record in the west stinks so badly that earlier this month the Royal Australian Navy took the unprecedented step of warning its personnel against Mansard’s contracts. But what about this Queensland Government—this National Party Government—that launches almost daily into political sermons about its false concern for home-buyers? So far it has not said one word of criticism about Mansard, not made one threat of legal action and in fact, except for the word of warning given this morning, not sounded even one single note of warning or caution to unsuspecting home-seekers.

The Mansard strategy is simple. Under the heading, "Finance allocation—fixed price contract", it boasts—

"Every contract has a fixed price so you have no fear of price rises while construction is in progress."

What Mansard does not explain in these glowing advertisements is nasty little clause 6 in its building contracts, which makes home-buyers liable for extra costs if, for any one of a number of reasons, construction does not start within 60 days of the signing of a contract. From the evidence before me, Mansard is invoking this clause invalidly and without conscience. Queensland couples, already stretched to their financial limits, are being ordered to pay extra charges of \$6,000, \$8,000, \$11,000 or more because of delays caused by the Mansard company itself; for example, failing to submit the right plans to the council or not submitting plans until it is too late. One couple, who had already paid rent for months longer than they originally intended, were told to pay up before they could take possession of a home that was actually completed. The doors were boarded up and the locks were changed. Another couple had the 60-day clause invoked against them, even though Mansard had been responsible for a month's delay by not signing the contract. A third couple were instructed to cough up money that they did not have or work would stop on a home that was only a week away from being finished. That is extortion. It is blackmail.

I will cite three further case histories to warn Queenslanders what to expect if they deal with Mansard. I might add that this is happening in other sections of the industry. Case No. 1: the contract was signed in February 1988; the time given for completion was May 1988; it is still not finished in March 1989, and the extra costs involved total \$7,800. Case No. 2: the contract was signed in January 1988; the time promised was three months; it was finished at the end of September last year; and the extra costs involved were \$11,000. Case No. 3: the contract was signed on 29 May 1988; the time promised was October 1988; it is not yet finished; and the extra costs were \$18,000. If a couple buy a house for \$60,000 or \$70,000 and are up to their necks in debt, when they are given an \$18,000 bill at the time they are ready to move into their house, they are behind the eight ball. When the Attorney-General says, "I issue a word of warning", it is no help whatsoever.

It is not just me and the suffering victims who question Mansard's business tactics. In July last year Mansard's entire sales staff, including its State sales manager, Bill Burgess, walked out in protest against the blatant misuse of this 60-day commencement clause. Burgess said in a memo to Richard Lilley, Mansard's manager in Perth—

"You assured us the statement in the company's brochures which says the price is fixed once the contract is signed is genuine and no rise and fall clause existed."

Burgess continues—and here is the sting—

"But now you say that if the home is not able to start within 60 days of signing the contract then the difference between the price at signing and the price at the time of starting work will be charged to the client as an extra."

He continues—

"In almost all cases the delay is the fault of the company and we have many cases in which it has taken up to five months to get plans to council."

Burgess added in his memo that sales staff feared they could be charged with misrepresentation by telling people prices were fixed when in reality they certainly were not.

Manfal Pty Ltd, registered originally in Perth in 1980 and recognised in Queensland since 1984, lists three directors: Frederick Lilley—who I understand is a retired former builder—Richard Lilley—who I am told is his son and manager—and Roger Pratt—also named in Perth Corporate Affairs records as secretary. Mansard is either an incompetently managed, greedy sales entrepreneur cashing in on a building boom, accepting contracts on timetables it cannot meet and then unscrupulously charging

helpless home-buyers extras for its own deception, or it is a shonky rip-off merchant that has deliberately used a fixed-priced sales pitch and a small print contract to destroy young couples. That is rotten. It is commercial theft and this Government must act now to defend the innocent casualties by enforcing the law against misrepresentation. No Government with any heart whatsoever can avoid its moral responsibilities in such distressing and deserving cases.

Let me cite some gems of Mansard's treachery—

- Extra charges of \$11,000 or more on fixed price contracts because of delays caused by Mansard itself.
- Average Queensland couples, already hard pressed paying rent and mortgage payments, forced to pay thousands in additional rent over months because Mansard cannot meet construction timetables that it has promised.
- I emphasise the sheer terror and mental anguish of a young couple being told to suddenly find thousands to take possession of a home that they have borrowed to the hilt to pay for that is either finished or almost finished, and then, if they do not pay extras, Mansard slaps a caveat on their land.
- Defamation writs have been served on home-purchasers, whose homes are already finished, who dared complain to the media.

Those are not the kind of business ethics we want in Queensland.

As far as I am concerned, Mansard certainly is not the type of building firm that the young home-seekers of this State need or deserve. However, it is not Mansard that matters; it is the Queensland families that are going through hell. How this Government can remain inactive—indeed, uncaring and thoughtless—as these cases of distress and betrayal mount up day by day within its areas of administration is beyond me. Something must be done to both recover money already lost by unfortunate Queenslanders and to protect others from similar exploitation. If necessary, laws should be changed, and changed quickly and effectively. Just as importantly—and probably even more urgently—Mansard must be exposed as an unprincipled and unwanted commercial blood-sucker.

Long delays are causing more and more frustration and hardship to new home-buyers as the Government's incompetent handling of trade training and apprenticeships forces costs up and creates skilled trade shortages. The National Party's anti-worker and anti-union attitudes have been allowed to cloud its vision so badly that it is not only Mansard buyers who are being crucified by long, costly, and frustrating delays, but also people purchasing houses from other firms.

I do not have much time left, but I will try to give the House some idea of the complaints against Mansard. Without exception, everyone said that it was impossible to communicate with Mansard. The company will not return telephone calls and will not answer letters. In short, it gives no straight answers. People speak of rapid staff changes and consider themselves lucky if they had only one or two building supervisors during the construction; most people had three or four. There is a rise and fall provision of up to 15 per cent on all items from the day the contract is signed to the day the job is finished. Another complaint is that the plans went to the council months after the 60-day limit, although in most cases it was just before—four days or one day before. The plans submitted to councils were incomplete and were on application forms that were not properly filled out. One example is that the plans did not have slab details. Soil tests were not ordered for three months. Prices for add-ons and extras were given over the telephone. In one case a price of \$195 was quoted but the charge was \$1,500.

I am talking about true Queenslanders, happy young couples working hard for wages, paying their taxes, paying rent and saving together to buy their own homes. Suddenly, when this wonderful dream—this dream of a life-time—looks within reach, they find themselves trapped in the financial clutches of a merciless firm such as Mansard. That is nowhere near good enough and the Queensland Government and the National Party must do something about it. I am certain it is nowhere near good enough for all decent-living Queenslanders and it should not be good enough for any Government

member. We will see whether Mr Clauson, Mr Gunn, Mr Ahern and all those others who claim that they are worried about these young families and their dealings with the housing industry are prepared to stand on their behalf and be counted or whether they intend to let this blood-sucker rip the people off.

Proposed Sand-mining in Shoalwater Bay Area

Mr HINTON (Broadsound) (11.09 a.m.): I rise today to bring to the attention of the House concerns of central Queenslanders that should concern all Queenslanders. I shall speak about the proposal by the Pivot group of companies to conduct sand-mining operations in the Shoalwater Bay army area. Because that land is owned by the Commonwealth, the mining leases are issued by the Federal Government.

With State mining leases the usual practice is that appropriate infrastructure requirements attach to mining leases, which ensures that they are provided by the mining company and that the mining operation is in harmony with local government and State Government requirements and with the members of the community who are its neighbours.

Mr Innes: I thought you supported mining.

Mr HINTON: I still do. The honourable member should relax, wait there and he will hear it all.

The State Government has an excellent record in this regard, as is demonstrated most effectively in the coal-mining industry of central Queensland. However, as this has not been an area of Commonwealth Government responsibility, it has no record. There is enormous concern in central Queensland that the Federal Government will not ensure that the necessary infrastructure be provided, leaving the tax-payers of Queensland and the rate-payers of the Livingstone Shire Council to subsidise the company by footing the bill, particularly for roadworks.

In its environmental impact assessment to the Federal Government, the Pivot group outlined a program that seeks five lease areas in the Shoalwater Bay army area, with leases No. 1 and No. 2 being just north of the Byfield area; lease No. 3, south of Cape Manifold; lease No. 4, on the Freshwater Bay peninsula; and lease No. 5, adjacent to Pearl Bay. All are areas of magnificent scenic beauty, particularly the Freshwater Bay and Pearl Bay areas, where the scenic beauty rivals that in any other part of Queensland.

I am very grateful to the Minister for Environment, Conservation and Forestry, the Honourable Geoff Muntz, who led a National Parks and Wildlife Service delegation last week to inspect the leases and discuss at first hand with a company representative the company's plans for mining and the conservation of the environment.

Mr Smyth interjected.

Mr HINTON: I suggest to the honourable member for Bowen that he settle down and listen. It will all come to him.

Astonishingly, the company's appraisal of the mineral content of its leases, its proposed mining program and its restoration program appear surprisingly vague, as is the content of its environmental impact study.

The delegation also inspected the proposed trucking route for the minerals, which will be transported by road. The intention is to utilise the "dingo" road through the army area to the Byfield road, a State main road which is classified as rural local. That will be traversed up to the Woodbury road turn-off, which is a council road, and then the trucks will travel along council roads and a proposed private haul road to a proposed dry milling site on the railway at Yeppoon.

Up to 90 permanent jobs are expected to be created by the project, with the workforce being drawn from Yeppoon and creating valuable employment and an economic boost to the district. Bagged product of zircon, rutile and ilmenite will be railed to Gladstone for export.

For the edification of those who have questioned me, I wish to inform the House that after assessing the project I favour the project for the employment and the ongoing prosperity that it will bring to my district; but I want to make it quite clear to the House, the company and the residents of central Queensland that that support has the condition of four very clear provisos. The first is that the Federal Government's environmental assessment of the project be genuine and exacting to ensure that no environmental damage is done to the wetlands, particularly those adjacent to Freshwater Bay and Pearl Bay, where the wetland estuaries contribute to perhaps the most significant fish-breeding resource area in Queensland. This is of a great deal of concern to the fishing industry in my area. I believe there is reason to be concerned but I also believe that, if the proposals are put together properly, and a mining plan is put together with adequate safeguards, those wetlands can be safeguarded. It is particularly important that a requirement be attached to the leases that provides those safeguards. The reclamation proposals need to be far better detailed on the lease conditions than the very sketchy proposals outlined in the company's environmental impact record.

I turn now to my second proviso. Lease areas No. 1 and No. 2 provide a considerable run-off and seepage catchment to the area known as Dismal Swamp, which feeds Water Park Creek, the main water supply for the Capricorn coast. I believe that no mining lease should be provided without extensive additional research to ascertain whether or not sand-mining would detract from the filtration system of the water supply by the destruction of the hard pan layers in the dunes. At this time, I would not favour the granting of such leases. I point out that that should not interfere with the proposed program for some time, because the company does not propose to mine the area for approximately eight to 10 years.

The third provision is that the Byfield road would need to be completely sealed for its full length. At present, 15 kilometres are unsealed, and the proposed trucking program of 75 25-tonne vehicles on return trips seven days a week in a 100-inch rainfall area would rapidly destroy the unsealed road when it is wet and create an enormous dust nuisance when it is dry. I point out that tourists use the road. Because of the quiet life-style of the area, many people have settled there. It is also a well-used school bus route. In dry times, a tremendous dust nuisance will be caused.

At present, the road is in an appalling condition. It is suffering from the age-old problem that insufficient moneys are provided by the Federal Government for road-funding, particularly in local rural areas. That is a great problem in central Queensland. Its roads are in such a poor condition largely because of those factors. That situation would deteriorate dramatically if the proposed enormous trucking program were to eventuate.

Last week, Mr Muntz and I visited the Byfield State School. The trucks would pass within 30 metres of that school, creating a great noise problem. That school is at the top of a steep rise and that would cause a great deal of engine noise.

Mr Smyth: That is happening all over the State, because the State Government is not promoting the railway system. They're pulling up railway lines.

Mr HINTON: I am not talking about railway lines. I am talking about the infrastructure requirements in my district to complete the project. I will stick to that topic.

I will be insisting that a minimum infrastructure input by the company be the sealing of the 15 kilometres of unsealed road. I have done preliminary costings with the Main Roads Department, whose officers share my view. When it is considered that \$2m to \$3m will be required for strengthening and widening the existing sealed sections, which would be funded by the Main Roads Department and which would come under heavy traffic and pressure from the trucks, it is estimated that \$6m would be a reasonable contribution by the company. An amount of \$6m would provide a 6.5-metre wide dual carriageway with 1.5 metres on either side of the sealed median strip.

At Byfield, a cutting inset into the hill-top could be considered, with the road shifted eastward away from the school to alleviate noise nuisance and improve safety. The fourth requirement was that all Livingstone Shire Council requirements on road construction and maintenance of council roads requests should be met. At this stage, the company has put that before the council in writing; however, it is in vague terms.

I note a reluctance by the company to provide reasonable infrastructure input. Our district wants the jobs, the employment and the prosperity that flow from the project; but we have no intention of being environmentally raped or of providing a set-up in which the company can operate at tax-payers' and rate-payers' expense.

Radio Station 4ZZZ

Mr INNES (Sherwood—Leader of the Liberal Party) (11.20 a.m.): One cannot blame every large organisation for single occurrences or for single people who go off the rails. When substantial groups are involved, one can use the old adage: you can tell a person by the company he keeps. I will refer to the company kept by the ALP and by the Leader of the Labor Party, Mr Goss, and the issue of 4ZZZ, the community radio station which operates on the University of Queensland campus but which has severed its links with that organisation.

I, as a former member of the University of Queensland Union council, a chairman in the late sixties and a life member of the organisation, have watched with distress the clear evidence on television in the last week of criminal activity and anarchy. There has been break-in, trespass, the wilful damage of property and, last night on television, one saw assaults on the lawfully elected president and office-bearers of that union. I understand that there has also been theft. After forcible occupancy by members of the socialist and Labor students and their supporters and the parasites involved in the 4ZZZ organisation, there have been removed from those premises legal opinions—even the letter of support of 4ZZZ, no doubt because of its compromise, sent by the Leader of the Labor Party.

I will go back into history. When I was involved with the union council, negotiations took place with radio station 4IP, which gave an hour or two of student-inclined or oriented radio coverage each week. Later, that changed—

Mr Palaszczuk interjected.

Mr INNES: The honourable member does not believe that, because somebody close to him is involved.

The reality is that, approximately 15 years ago, with the intent of producing or creating a student-inclined radio station, \$250,000 was given to set up a community radio station. Since that time, that radio station has moved away completely from the control of the students union and support by the student body. The number of student listeners is minimal. Student participation in its programming is almost zero. From year to year, some financial assistance for and occupancy of the premises went on. However, the few people who listened to the show would have had to listen with concern to items covering gay waves, the Murr show, the IRA support group and other odd-ball activities. No doubt, they have attached the blame for that to the general student body.

At the fourth meeting of the union council last year, on 20 April 1988, one of the student representatives moved a motion in the union council that 4ZZZ comply with accounting requirements necessary for the function of a company; that it comply with the necessary requirements placed on the licence granted by the Australian Broadcasting Tribunal; that the union have equal representation on the body which determines the broadcasting and management policy of 4ZZZ; and that the 4ZZZ premises be improved to at least minimum standards required by fire safety regulations. That motion was carried, but searches have revealed that neither Media Facilities nor Creative Broadcasters had submitted company returns for three years.

Infringements of the Australian Broadcasting Tribunal's rules continue to take place. People are being interviewed and recorded without their knowledge or consent. Language infringements continue.

4ZZZ refused to comply with a request that equal representation be given to the union council with regard to matters of programming. It continues, of course, to occupy premises which could, if offered on the open market, provide \$50,000 worth of rental to the students union per year. In addition, of course, the presence of 4ZZZ has created extra demands for cleaning and other attention, and the probable cost is getting up towards \$100,000 a year.

At the seventh ordinary council meeting of 20 July last year a motion was passed that the union no longer permit 4ZZZ to conduct its market days on union property. That was immediately ignored and the proposal for a further fund-raising market day was broadcast by the radio station and took place despite the opposition and determination of the council.

On 2 March 1988 the issue of programming to fit in with the desires of the representatives of the students union was again raised. Finally, at the end of last year the representatives of the students union moved to set up a student breakfast show and radio club on 4ZZZ, which would have allowed student participation in some parts of the programming. This was voted against by the 4ZZZ supporters, who of course are predominantly members of the socialist Left and the Labor Club at the University of Queensland.

As has been seen on television in the last week, their actions have been those of anarchists. A lawful election took place at which a student president who happens to be a young National Party member was elected and a governing council which happens to be dominated by Liberal Party members was elected.

I happen to have been involved in union affairs with Victoria Brazil's father, who was a treasurer of the union in the mid-1960s. These responsible students, lawfully and duly elected by results which were very carefully scrutinised by the authorities at the University of Queensland, are absolutely ignored and contempt has been shown to that body, to the results and to the constitution of the University of Queensland Union.

I find pathetic the actions taken by the university authorities in support of the duly elected president and office-bearers, the motions that they have moved and the attempts that have been made over a year to establish some authority over the radio station, which owes \$250,000 and for 15 years has cost the University of Queensland Union tens of thousands of dollars. In fact \$19,000 is owed to the Queensland University of Technology Union.

Why have the university authorities not been prepared to prevent the commission of crime and to prevent the complete contempt for authority which has been shown by this rabble who have been seen on television? It is a matter of distress to the law-abiding students that those actions take place on union premises. It is a matter of concern to the parents of law-abiding students, who constitute the overwhelming majority, that they see these actions taking place on the union premises at the University of Queensland.

It seems that, despite the results of a democratic election, the supporters of 4ZZZ are demanding a re-election, which has absolutely no validation or basis. Nothing is being done in a determined way by the university authorities or by the university senate—on which this Government has a stack of appointees—to show the muscle and the will to support the properly held—not the whimsically held but the properly held—attitude, which increasingly has hardened over the last year, to get rid of this embarrassment, this cost, this creation which is totally out of control.

Mr Simpson: What about responsible media reporting?

Mr INNES: There is the question of responsible media reporting but, in the end, the will is there through the University of Queensland administration and the senate to

back the duly elected representatives, who it can only be said are acting consistently in respect of the obligations which should be imposed on a radio station by the broadcasting legislation and in respect of accountability, having regard to the overwhelming majority of student fee-payers at the University of Queensland who do not listen to the radio station and are opposed to its program content.

Only one political leader in this State has supported 4ZZZ—raced in to support it—and that happens to be Mr Goss. It is the Labor Party which constantly offers succour to these minority and fringe groups, these people who are prepared to ignore the standards and the laws of our society.

I will table a letter to Mr Goss from Ms Victoria Brazil which sets out the basis of the complaint of the students union, which sets out the reasons why Mr Goss should not have been involved and which calls upon members of the Labor Party to back their mouths with their purses in support of 4ZZZ, to offer premises in Labor Party headquarters for this activity that they consider such an important part of the democratic process and to take away from the law-abiding student body and their hard-pressed fees the obligation to make the annual contributions necessary for the sustaining of this fringe radio activity and excrescence on the face of democracy.

Whereupon the honourable member laid the document on the table.

Rectification of Damage Caused by Soil Subsidence at Palm Beach

Mr GATELY (Currumbin) (11.29 a.m.): I rise to speak about a matter that grieves me greatly——

Opposition members interjected.

Mr GATELY: Members of the Opposition can laugh. Because they have expressed such mirth, I will begin by mentioning something that I was going to leave till later in my speech.

I remember a Labor Party candidate for the seat of Currumbin making statements in relation to the subsidence of homes in Palm Beach. Members of the Opposition talk about people and their homes! The homes of those people are their castles. Well might members of the Opposition laugh; it is not their homes that are crumbling. It is time that they started to adopt a more responsible attitude.

The then Labor Party candidate made the comment, “I will make sure that the members of Parliament representing this area will be able to find a solution to the problem.” In the end, all he could say was, “I can offer little more than moral support.” That is all he did. He did not even convince the majority of the people down there that he was fair dinkum.

In one case, five years have elapsed since legal action was commenced, and in another, four years. The matter has still not been resolved. However, the Queensland Government has been criticised by a local alderman who uses that medium to project himself into this House. He was a dismal failure at his last attempt because he tried to use the people. They know that and they knew it when they went to the ballot-box. I intend to put on public record that it is not the responsibility of the Queensland Government to fix that problem. The developers who developed the site did not consolidate the land. They buried large amounts of tea-tree vegetation under approximately one metre of sand and expected people to build a house that would withstand the movements that obviously would take place.

To compound the issue, in 1983 the Gold Coast City Council installed sewerage to the area. In making the installation of sewerage, it used a pumping system to dewater the area. Mr Deputy Speaker, if you were to walk into the homes of some of those people today, you would be ashamed to learn that the problems have not been rectified. I lay the blame squarely at the feet of the council, which was told immediately it started the dewatering process that it was aggravating the problem. In fact, pathways and

driveways cracked before the eyes of the people who stood there watching what was happening.

An alderman from the Gold Coast City Council says that the Queensland Government should pay. He does not know the rudiments of what takes place when legal action is commenced. By doing what he did just recently, and by appearing on a TV program trying to sheet home the blame to this Government, he has shown his ignorance. He said that the Queensland Government should help the people of Palm Beach in the same way as it has attempted to help people in the Ipswich and Waterford/Kingston areas.

I highlight that I have been very, very busy in trying to bring this issue to a stage at which it would be placed before the courts. However, what has happened? Alderman Trevor Coomber, an alderman of the Gold Coast City Council, has made stupid statements that the Queensland Government must fix the problem and that it is the Queensland Government's fault. It is funny that he blames this Government, all of the Ministers and the Premier and former Premier, Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen. At my request, Mike Ahern visited the area so that he would be acquainted with all the facts.

I forced the situation with local residents and a group of solicitors who were talking with and acting for the residents to place a group writ on the council. That was done in early 1988. However, what did Alderman Coomber's council do? The council's solicitors have made an application to the court for an order that the group writ, lodged on behalf of the 53 plaintiffs, be struck out or, alternatively, 53 individual writs be issued. Does that illustrate the care of an alderman who is doing what he purports to be doing? My answer to that question is, clearly, "No jolly way." The alderman has done nothing other than frustrate the right of those people to have their castles repaired, replaced or put back in their former condition.

I highlight also the words of the town clerk, who said that residents should keep a record of costs and that the council would do certain things. The town clerk said that the council was prepared to help residents keep a record of costs to help them when their compensation claims were eventually heard. However, in the meantime the residents have been frustrated in having their compensation claims being heard. That is a despicable and uncaring action by an alderman and his council.

I have investigated the history of the matter. Through the Department of Land Management I have been able to obtain a large volume of background information, which pre-dates any development in the area. Base maps show nothing other than tea-tree vegetation. The maps show the levels prior to any development. The department has also provided a celluloid topography map to place over the existing map so that the estimated new levels can be seen. Honourable members would be amazed that there is only approximately one metre of fill in the area. The matter is one that must be decided in the courts. I want to point out the frustration of the people who have been affected. On a number of occasions I have attempted to get solicitors Collas Moro off their backside so that this matter is dealt with properly.

My concerns have been so great that on 9 March 1987 I wrote a letter to the director of legal aid, advising that I did not believe that the solicitors were acting swiftly enough in the interests of their clients. I make no apology for that because it is a fact.

The Barnetts have received a great deal of publicity, and rightly so, because they are concerned. Their Supreme Court action No. 1700 has been in the courts since 1984. If that is good enough for the solicitors, I am damned if it is good enough for me. It is certainly not good enough for the owners of that home and other homes.

I turn now to the Weeks case, which is Supreme Court action No. 3903 of 1985. Again, I point out that if it is good enough for the solicitors, it is not good enough for me. Recently, solicitors Collas Moro contacted my office. They asked if I would intercede with the Chief Justice of this State. It would be totally inappropriate for me to do that. However, I contacted the Attorney-General and I asked him to ascertain for me in the proper manner, without interfering with the course of justice, the attitude towards the

cases, the stage they had reached and the reason for their not being heard. I received the following reply from the department—

“The Chief Executive Officer has advised that no Certificate of Readiness has been filed in relation to either matter. Until such Certificate is filed the matter can not be listed for trial.

In the case of the matter of 1700 of 1984 (Mrs Barnett). As soon as the Certificate of Readiness has been signed by the Solicitor the matter will be listed for a speedy trial.”

The alderman to whom I referred has been making clearly inappropriate statements on television. He is doing absolutely nothing other than lifting the expectations of the owners by saying that this Government will interfere with the course of justice, which it cannot and will not do. As far as humanly possible, this Government will do everything to assist those people. I have given that undertaking and this Government will do that. It has provided and made available material that will be used in the courts.

That alderman should go and bury his head in the sand that is going down the drain. He should go down with it and not rise above it. I hope that the Liberal Party selects him as its candidate, because he will receive the same treatment as he received the last time around.

Proposed Radioactive Waste Dump at Redbank

Mr R. J. GIBBS (Wolston) (11.39 a.m.): I wish to bring to the attention of the public of Queensland and this Parliament an issue that is of vital importance to the people of my electorate of Wolston. I refer to the proposal by the State Government to build a radioactive waste dump in the suburb of Redbank.

Last year when Mr Ahern became Premier, he postulated on television and said words to the effect of, “Queenslanders are going to like it.” At the moment, in excess of 200 people who do not like it are outside Parliament House protesting. They do not like what the Premier and the National Party are attempting to do in the Ipswich area.

This Government has an appalling record of locating noxious industries, waste dumps, etc., close to suburban residencies. It appears that rural and industrial chemicals are to be dumped at the mouth of the Brisbane River. Honourable members have witnessed the absolutely calamitous situation that occurred at Marsden, where the chlorine plant was located, as well as the Kingston toxic waste problem. This Government has done nothing about the basic environmental problem, and now Ipswich is to be lumbered with a waste plant that the people of the area do not want.

When the Government made an announcement about the location of the waste dump, on two occasions it allowed me to bring delegations before it and two different Health Ministers. Both of those delegations, which comprised the very same people, placed before the Government and those two Health Ministers irrefutable evidence that the plant is being located on the wrong site.

The first Health Minister who was spoken to, namely, Mrs Harvey, refused to reveal the alternative sites that had been considered throughout Queensland. However, the Labor Party has ascertained that a proposal existed to locate the plant in the suburb of Nathan, which is in the electorate of the honourable member for Mount Gravatt, who is a National Party member. Of course, he did not want the plant located in his electorate, so it was decided to look elsewhere. Another site was considered, but we are told that it was unsuitable because the bedrock in which the foundations would have been located required blasting, adding to the funds to be found from the State Budget. Probably for less than a lousy \$50,000 the waste plant could have been located on that site, without causing the community concerns that are being expressed in Ipswich at present.

Geological information that has been placed before both Health Ministers shows conclusively that the area chosen at Ipswich is undermined. We have been told by so-called experts from the public service that it would be impossible for subsidence to occur

on the site. That is what the so-called experts said when they surveyed and built the Collingwood Park housing estate. They said that, because the mining shafts were located 160 metres below the surface and extraction was done with modern-day extraction methods of pillar mining, subsidence could not occur there. However, in November of last year a major subsidence problem was experienced in that suburb. As I speak, that problem is still continuing.

Nobody will convince the residents of Redbank and me that subsidence will not occur on that site at some stage in the future. As early as 1951 it was shown that subsidence problems were experienced in the area. That was supported by a newspaper article dated 5 November 1951 and a publication *Coal in Queensland* by L. Whitmore. That article shows conclusively that at some stage subsidence took place in that area. Local residents who have lived in the area for many years have advised members of the delegations that the area is honeycombed with mine workings and that in 1973, because of underground water pressure, a blow-out occurred in the area and water erupted from the ground because of pressure that was caused both by tidal influences from the river and, surprisingly enough, by some minor land movement in the area. I understand that it registered approximately 3 on the Richter scale and emanated from a slight earth tremor in the Brisbane Valley. Those are two reasons why the plant should not be located in that area.

During the great flood of the last century, the entire site was inundated with water.

Mr Sherlock interjected.

Mr R. J. GIBBS: I will reply to the honourable member's interjection because the Liberal Party has done absolutely nothing at all on the issue. It has been noticeable by its absence.

When the first delegation went to see Mrs Harvey, the members of her department had such a lack of knowledge of the problems in the area that members of the delegation had to provide them with a flood map so that they would know what happened in the past. The insolence of the public servants who attended those meetings was appalling. It is time that some Ministers started making decisions based on common sense and not on advice from public servants.

For the reasons that I have outlined, the proposed site for the waste dump is unsuitable. As well, it is located close to a suburban area. Even if it were proven that that installation will be the safest on this earth, no consideration is being given to the disastrous economic effects that it will have on house and land prices in the area. Already, real estate agents have indicated to me and other members of the community, on conclusive evidence, that land sales and home sales in the area have dropped significantly since the announcement was made.

If honourable members want proof of that, at the end of my address I will table a letter from the Stockland Trust Group, which is a housing and estate developer, which, apart from everything else, states—

“We wish to place on record our strong objection to this proposed Waste Dump and request that you take the strongest action possible to ensure that the establishment of this facility does not take place.

. . .

Since the intention of the State Government to create the Waste Dump was publicised, we have experienced a significant drop in sales enquiries and also, many proposed purchasers have indicated their desire to withdraw from contracts.”

They are sufficient reasons why the establishment of a waste dump should not proceed.

Today I make an appeal to the company that has accepted the State Government contract for the establishment of the site—Sommer and Staff Constructions, which is located at the Sumner Park industrial estate—not to go ahead and carry out the

Government contract. I appeal not only to the management of the company but also to its employees not to go on the site. I assure them of one thing: if everything else fails and they attempt to go on that site to construct that waste dump, the site will be picketed most strongly by local residents.

The site is already under observation by the union, which has a black ban on it. However, because of this State's archaic industrial laws, it will be withdrawn in the next couple of weeks. At that stage it will be my proposal, and the proposal of people in the community, to ensure that construction does not start on that site. I make that appeal to the decent people employed by that company. I am sure that, if they were in the same situation as residents in my electorate, they would be taking exactly the same stance. They would not want it in their back yard. If they are decent people working for that company, they will not be a party to the construction of that site.

I also acknowledge the excellent support that has been given to me on this issue by a number of people in the community. I acknowledge the excellent support given by the Ipswich City Council and Alderman Cathy Evans. I thank Mrs Robyn Anderson, who has done a lot of work preparing materials that were presented to both Ministers.

I finish on this point: it is time this Government started to listen to local opinions. It cannot locate radioactive waste dumps or toxic dumps of this nature close to suburban land sites. Throughout the State, within reasonable proximity to Brisbane, the capital, there are adequate locations for such dumps. They should be located away from settled areas and away from places where they will cause drama to people.

I have with me petitions which have been signed by 8 000 people. In approximately 30 seconds, when I have finished speaking, it is my intention to take them to the table and give them to the Clerk to have them presented to the Parliament tomorrow.

Time expired.

Criticism of Federal Government's Economic Policy

Mr LINGARD (Fassifern) (11.49 a.m.): The recent public exposure of the disastrous economic state of this country has really rocked the ALP. It has not only exposed the lies and deceit of the Hawke Government; it has also shamed many of the State and Federal members of the ALP, especially those in Queensland. Now we see how false many of the promises of 1988 were.

I intend to expose one of the real fakes that occurred in 1988, a fake which it is surprising that a Government would allow to be exposed and allow to happen. One of the greatest fakes of all time was the announcement in last year's May economic statement that the Federal Government would allow local authorities to collect rates from both Australia Post and Telecom. The Federal Government said that local authorities could collect rates from Telecom and Australia Post.

In a statement to the Senate, Senator Reynolds said—

“...the Government decided to remove the exemptions for Telecom and Australia Post from local government taxes, rates and charges.”

She continued by skiting—

“It is estimated that this change will be worth in the vicinity of \$20m to local government and will benefit almost every local government authority in Australia.”

Labor politicians hailed the decision. No more, they said, could local authorities criticise the Federal Government. No more, they said, could there be any criticism about the drop of 4 per cent in real terms in the amount of money distributed to local councils by the Grants Commission. No more, they said, could there be any criticism of the drop in road-funding to local authorities, because almost \$25m was to be gained from Telecom and Australia Post rates directly into the hands of the local councils. They skited about it.

Federal members wrote gleefully to local councils. One Federal member wrote to a local council stating—

“There will obviously be benefit to the local authorities by this decision...local authorities...have been generously treated by the Hawke Government in its term of office...”

State members trumpeted the gleeful news. The old story arose: get rid of State Governments; go back to a two-tiered system. They said, “Get rid of State Governments. We will deal directly with the local councils. We will treat you well.” Senator Reynolds said that \$25m would go directly to local authorities.

However, Federal and State ALP members were conned. They were conned by their own mates in Canberra; conned by a simple statement that was attached to the release of the economic statement in May. The statement simply said that the income received by local authorities would be partially offset by reductions in Commonwealth grants. After five months of trumpeting its glee, the ALP was hit by the embarrassing news that, for every \$10 that councils received, \$9 would be taken back by the Federal Government. Out of every \$10 received by councils from Telecom and Australia Post, \$9 would be deducted by the Federal Government.

Queensland ALP politicians heard their own Federal Minister, Senator Reynolds, admit that 90 per cent of the revenue received by local councils from rates on these properties would be deducted from general revenue grants to local authorities. Queensland ALP members went to water and ran for cover. I will read from a letter written by a Federal representative, in which he virtually apologised. The letter reads in part—

“I fail to see how local authorities ... could expect a windfall profit at a time of economic restraint.”

The embarrassment went further because it suddenly became painfully obvious that the Federal Government would receive a massive windfall; that, by devious means the Federal Government would get the additional revenue. Clearly, consolidated revenue would receive the additional revenue from the rates collected on properties occupied by Telecom and Australia Post. The Federal Government had sold local authorities and its own ALP representatives a pup. It had expected first of all to convince local councils that they would receive rates from Telecom and Australia Post, which was the intention of the May economic statement. The indication was that local government could levy rates directly on Telecom and Australia Post and keep that revenue, although a slight reduction would be made. However, the Federal Government did not say that 90 per cent would be the reduction and that it expected to prop up its own consolidated revenue with the saving. The Federal Government was saying to local councils, “Please collect the money. Please issue the rate notices. Then we will deduct 90 per cent from your grants that you receive from us.”

What was to happen to the 10 per cent of that revenue that local councils were allowed to keep? First of all, local government funding had been cut by 4 per cent in real terms. Secondly, local councils had to administer the accounts. Thirdly, it was forgotten that most of the buildings occupied by Telecom and Australia Post were located in the cities and that little benefit could be derived by country areas. Fourthly, there were differences in the distribution of Commonwealth Grants Commission funding and also in the ex gratia payments some local councils received already from Australia Post and Telecom. The Federal Government suddenly realised that, if Telecom and Australia Post did not make those ex gratia payments for services received from councils that would receive rates instead—which in some cases were very low—and if 90 per cent of those rates went to Canberra, some councils would in fact lose on the whole deal. Fortunately, it appears that even the ALP Federal Government has realised that its efforts to con people—even though successful with some of the ALP members—had been rejected emphatically by local government. Local government authorities bombarded Canberra with letters of protest. With a Federal election just around the corner, the Federal Government is giving in. The 90 per cent reduction in Federal assistance needs

a special law to be passed, and even the Federal Government cannot go ahead with its plans, especially if the necessary legislation is defeated in the Senate.

The real sham of this exercise is now obvious. What the Federal Government really wanted to do was raise \$25m for consolidated revenue. It said to local government authorities, "You can charge rates on Telecom and Australia Post." It indicated that local councils could keep the money but then decided that 90 per cent of the revenue would be deducted. Where would Telecom and Australia Post get the funds to pay the rates? The only way they could get the money for the extra charges that had not been paid previously was to increase charges for services provided to the public. The Federal Government's scheme was definitely an indirect tax to be imposed on Telecom and Australia Post. What a disgrace!

One other form of deceit on the part of the Federal Government that I must make reference to today concerns road taxes. Everyone is aware that, for every \$1 paid for fuel, only 45c is paid to the fuel company. Out of the 55c that goes to the Government, only 11c is spent on roads, which means that 44c per litre goes into consolidated revenue. However, there is another real problem in relation to road-funding that the public is not aware of and that the Federal Government has been reluctant to inform the public about. I will tell honourable members why the Federal Government has been so reluctant.

Under the Australian Bicentennial Road Development Program, it was recently indicated that 1c of the cost of every litre of fuel would be contributed towards the Bicentennial Road Development Program. That amount was increased to 2c per litre, and the public accepted that 2c of the cost of every litre of petrol would be allocated to the program, but what the public was not told—and has since not been told—is that the amount deducted was indexed. Instead of 2c per litre being deducted for the road development program, the amount is now 3.9c a litre. However, 3.9c a litre is not put towards the Australian Bicentennial Road Development Program. Instead, it is 2c or less than 2c. Because the contribution made by the public was indexed, it increased automatically; but the contribution that is made towards the Australian Bicentennial Road Development Program has never been increased. It is an absolute disgrace.

I have shown how the Federal Government has tried to take \$25m and get it into consolidated revenue and how it tried to divert the blame from itself and put the blame on local councils instead. The Federal Government also tried to get local councils to collect the money which would be put into consolidated revenue. I have also shown how the Federal Government has conned the motorist by taking 3.9c of the cost per litre of petrol for a contribution towards the road development program when in fact an amount of only 2c or less is directed to that purpose. It has been a con and, unfortunately for everyone, the people who have been conned the most are Federal and State ALP members.

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S HOUSING POLICIES

Hon. M. J. AHERN (Landsborough—Premier and Treasurer and Minister for State Development and the Arts) (11.59 a.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

"That this Parliament condemns the Federal Labor Government's failure at the Premiers' housing summit to provide any positive relief for Queensland first home buyers and expresses its disapproval of the disastrous economic policies which are further contributing to misery and hardship in the family unit."

The sad fact is that, under the Hawke/Keating regime, more and more ordinary Australians are doomed to live as though they are third-class citizens in a second-class Australia. The current Federal ALP Government has presided over the decline—indeed, the decay—of the Australian economy. During its five long years in power, it has turned reasonable public expectations—a house of one's own, for example—into an almost impossible dream. It has watched but failed to act as interest rates have climbed to their highest rate for a decade. It has dreamt up new taxes—for example, capital gains and

fringe benefits—to add to bigger existing taxes until the average two-income family with two children is today \$72 per week worse off than five years ago.

It has persisted—despite the clear evidence of wrong-doing—with policies that have resulted in Australia having a balance of payments problem that is of almost unmanageable proportions; it has stood idly by whilst the current account deficit—now 4.9 per cent of the gross domestic product—has reached a record peace-time level; and the lucky country's net external debt has climbed virtually through the roof to reach an extraordinary \$90,000m this year. As well, there is the intolerable situation where Australia's gross foreign debt as at September last year stood at \$56.3 billion, or, put another way, 40.2 per cent of Gross Domestic Product, against a mere 15.7 per cent of GDP in 1982.

The shortcomings and failures of the Federal ALP's economic policies are legend and would take the remainder of this session to detail. However, let me simply say that, whilst preaching restraint and indeed using legislative clout to impose such restraint on the States, the Hawke/Keating Government has not only failed to tame the Federal monster, but fed it willingly. Today the Federal Government outspends the rest of the nation. Australia under Hawke and Keating—aided and abetted by their Queensland agent, Wayne Goss—has quickly sunk low from a high point.

When the Federal ALP came to power in 1982, it was blessed with a series of fortuitous economic events. These included the breaking of the drought, the full impact of the Fraser Government's wages freeze, and the turn-around in the world economy, led by the USA. Consequently, economic growth in 1984-85 was above the OECD average. Since then, however, Australia's growth performance relative to the OECD generally has deteriorated dramatically, with dire consequences for ordinary Australians. From that high point Australia has fallen, and fallen hard, as I have already indicated, as a direct result of the dead-hand economic policies of Keating and Hawke—the vulture and the silver fox. Is it any wonder that Queensland's National Party Government is determined to quarantine this State—the one State that is doing demonstrably well—from the ravages of Federal ALP economic mismanagement?

I have moved this motion, not only to detail the economic atrocities of the Federal ALP that are threatening the standard of living and the reasonable expectations of ordinary Australians, but also to assure Queenslanders that my Government will do all it can to alleviate the plight of would-be home-buyers who are daily being thwarted in their efforts by those same Federal policies. The Queensland Government is not merely sympathetic to the plight of young first home buyers; it is pledged to help them attain their goal. Indeed, as recent State initiatives indicate, much has already been done at State level to help overcome the obstacles facing first home buyers and, rest assured, more will be done.

However, to quote Mr Hawke himself, the housing situation in Australia today is a tragedy. As I have amply demonstrated, that word could well apply to the national economy as a whole. Indeed, as with the economy generally, the villains of the housing tragedy—the perpetrators of this misery that has inflicted thousands of Australian families—are none other than Hawke and Keating. The one mouths platitudes and the other spews out economic gobbledegook whilst for thousands of ordinary Australians the prospect of a home of their own diminishes. The Hawke/Keating performance at last Friday's national housing summit said it all. It was pathetic, as indeed were the proposals that the Federal Government put forward. In particular, it made sure that Queensland got precisely nothing out of the entire exercise. Queensland Labor Party members opposite should be crimson with embarrassment and cowering with shame at the despicable and unwarranted treatment of this State's housing needs.

Let us look at what was offered. It will not take long. Queensland was offered two blocks of land, with the proposition that the State develop them at cost. One at Carseldine, it was learned—much to the Federal Housing Minister's acute embarrassment—had already been sold off to Asian interests. This says something about the Federal ALP's attitude to foreign investment. The other piece of land at Coopers Plains would take some two years to get on to the market as housing land and would cost about \$45,000

a block. Hardly the stuff of which first home buyers' dreams are made. That was it; nothing more. Out of 27 000 housing blocks in Australia, Queensland was offered a couple of hundred blocks clearly out of the reach of first home buyers. What a sick joke!

That little exercise must go down as one of the worst examples of political cynicism, the daddy of all insults and the most awful example of discrimination by any Federal Government to any State since Federation. As to the carpet-bagger deal on the Carseldine land—I have written to the Prime Minister demanding a full inquiry. I repeat that request here today for the benefit of those members opposite. To put it bluntly, the Federal Labor Government has duded the Queensland first home buyer. The Leader of the Opposition knows about being duded by the Federal Labor machine: that is exactly what happened to the gullible Mr Goss when he made his much-publicised trip down to Canberra recently. Honourable members will recall that Mr Goss returned with an armful of Labor promises, and we know what those are worth—promises about 7 500 blocks of land for first home buyers. Perhaps Mr Goss will think twice the next time he opens his mouth on this subject. Quite clearly his grasp of economic matters is equal only to his faith in Federal Labor promises.

What makes the Carseldine situation even murkier is that the mystery Asian buyer who has apparently exchanged contracts with the Federal Government may be planning to develop that land for expensive housing sites. If this is so then we have the shocking situation of the Federal Labor Government flogging off prime Brisbane housing land to Asian entrepreneurs; a scandal of the highest order that must be dealt with without delay.

I referred earlier to the State's commitment to first home buyers and the fact that already my Government has taken a series of moves to help them. One of those was the commissioning of a private sector housing task force that was commissioned after the Federal Government and its Queensland agents opposite had refused my original request for a national housing summit. That report was accepted by State Cabinet yesterday and I might add created considerable interest amongst other State delegations at the abortive housing summit in Canberra. I commend that report to honourable members.

Across the nation there is widespread public acceptance that the reason for the current housing crisis is clear: the Federal Labor Government's out-of-control economic policies. I call on this Parliament to join me in condemning those policies.

Hon. W. A. M. GUNN (Somerset—Deputy Premier and Minister for Public Works, Housing and Main Roads) (12.08 p.m.): It is my privilege to second the motion moved by the Premier and I am very proud to do so. If there is one issue that the Labor Party generally, and the Federal Labor Government in particular, has misread entirely, it is housing.

Look at the recent actions of the Opposition Leader on this issue. After missing the boat entirely on the housing debate, Mr Goss decided he had to go to Canberra in a bid to appear concerned and involved. We all know that the real reason he went was to tell the Hawke Government what damage its high interest rate policy was having on Labor's stocks all over the State.

No doubt he also informed him of the \$3m that has already been spent on the Labor machine. That was the real motivation behind the trip of the Leader of the Opposition. However, unbeknown to him, worse was to come because his Labor colleagues in Canberra actually sold him the dump in a big way.

Mr Goss came back and announced that some 6 000 housing blocks would be made available in Queensland by the Federal Government. The only problem for Mr Goss was that he had been briefed on the wrong plan. The one he came back and talked about was the plan Bob Hawke rejected. Apparently it was a fishy sort of a plan by Stewart West that Hawke did not like. This became quite clear at the housing summit.

So Mr Goss, in his desire to perform some political posturing on this housing issue, was well and truly given the wrong drum by his so-called mates in Canberra. All they

could offer Queensland was land that would yield about 250 blocks, as the Premier said, some with an estimated market price of \$45,000.

That estate is circled by grave road problems. As the Premier has said, one of the blocks on offer has been contracted to Asian interests—so much for the Federal Government's desire to assist first home buyers

It all just shows how ramshackle and disorganised Labor is on this housing issue. The Belmont rifle range is a classic example. It has been on the market for some time at a price of \$22m. So far there have been no takers. At the housing summit the Premier mentioned that it was one of Queensland's great sporting complexes. Mr West's response to that was that the housing problem was more important. However, at the luncheon break there is no doubt that the Prime Minister and Mr Keating told Mr West that he was on dangerous ground. When he returned after the recess, he informed the meeting that that land was not included in the range of housing estates offered to Queensland.

Even on Saturday, the Deputy Opposition Leader was reported as calling on the State to match Canberra's offer of land supply. He probably did not realise that this meagre offer of 250 blocks was almost matched by Queensland Housing Commission and Land Administration Commission advertisements that day in the same newspaper. He must have missed them. I do not know who wrote that article for him.

Mr Burns interjected.

Mr GUNN: The honourable member got a bum steer on that one. Obviously Queensland will have no difficulty in surpassing Canberra's lean offer, so Mr Burns can relax his concerns in this regard.

Labor's stop-go approach to key housing policies laid the very foundations for the problems being experienced in the industry today. Honourable members opposite can squirm in their seats and generally try to divert attention from their party's failings, but they cannot hide the bad policies and economic mismanagement that Labor has combined to produce today's housing affordability crisis.

Let me look at a few recent historic facts. The most notable one is that famous quote from Prime Minister Hawke back in 1985 that there will be no capital gains tax. We all remember it well. Unfortunately, when he said it, Mr Hawke had forgotten to consult with the members of the ACTU who were, and still are to a great extent, the de facto economic managers. The result of Mr Hawke's promise was, of course, a complete about-turn which saw not only a capital gains tax introduced, but also that other nasty called negative gearing abolished. This, of course, pleased all the Left Wing socialists in the ACTU, who were totally blind to the effect that such moves would have on the availability of rental housing and the housing industry generally.

I notice that the same stilted, myopic vision still emanates from this advisory club—that is, the ACTU—with its latest, recent call for a wealth tax on all homes valued at more than a million dollars. Obviously the socialists are still alive and well, because such a suggestion is based on the same ill-founded sentiments that produced Labor's capital gains tax. Naturally, not even Labor could wear the political smear of placing a capital gains tax on the family home. So the imposition of this Labor initiative placed the family home in an exalted tax-free status. This, of course, is as it should be, but even our proverbial friend blind Freddy could have told Labor that it misread the effect of such a tax. Labor's capital gains tax is at the very base of today's housing availability issue, because the family home became more than just a home, it became an investment haven. This factor, combined with the pent-up housing demand resulting from Labor's policies has contributed greatly to the level of housing affordability.

So the first message Canberra should get, loud and clear, is: abolish the capital gains tax. The effect of Labor's capital gains tax and its tampering with negative gearing stifled the housing industry in the mid-1980s. Rental demand became high and housing generally struggled along after private home building hit a three-year record low in December 1985.

In 1987 Messrs Hawke and Keating realised that the growing demand for housing was being stifled by lack of investment in the industry, so they were forced to do their about-face on negative gearing. The nation had had a period of "Stop"—now it was time to "Go". When Mr Keating delivered last year's Budget, housing was already on the move. The only people who did not realise it were the Labor politicians in Canberra. Keating's 1988 Budget strategy misread the economic situation entirely and, when the Federal Government eased back on interest rates last year, the pent-up demand for housing—stifled over more than two years of inept Labor policies—took off and the laws of supply and demand were reflected in price movements.

If ever there was an indication that the prime factor affecting housing is interest rates, the second half of 1988 was a classic example. Yet the Federal Labor Government did not consider the issue of interest rates important enough to put it on the agenda for its housing summit—a meeting it reluctantly called following a suggestion by the Queensland Premier.

Following some disastrous trade and CPI figures, Canberra again changed its mind. More stop-go again. While the Federal Government's interest rate monetary policy has been the key factor behind its housing affordability crisis, the first home buyer has been hit hardest by Federal cuts in the first home owners' scheme. It is like copping both barrels of a shotgun blast at once.

While first home owners have seen rising interest rates and home prices increase their deposit and affordability gap, the assistance made available to them by the Federal Government has been cut from under them. Mr Hawke actually admitted that last Friday. Labor has whittled away at the first home owners' scheme to the extent that it is now under review and may even be further downgraded. This is another historic fact that Labor members opposite cannot deny; not even the honourable member for Lytton.

Between August 1983 and May 1988, average weekly earnings, excluding overtime, rose by about 37 per cent. Over a similar period—June 1983 to 1988—the CPI rose by about 45 per cent. But between October 1983 and May 1988—and this is the rub—the maximum benefits under the Federal Government's first home owners' scheme dropped by up to 57 per cent.

Depending on the applicant's category, I repeat, benefits available under this Federal scheme were cut by between 29 per cent and 57 per cent. That is another key reason why first home buyers face a difficult challenge now. It represents another condemnation of the Federal Labor Government's housing policies, which have been shown to be a somewhat ad hoc series of decisions rather than any consistent stream of policy development.

The Queensland Government supports the aims and ideals of the great majority of people to buy and to live in their own home. This is in rather stark contrast to the Labor Party, which has placed its emphasis on rental housing. It is socialism at its worst.

While the Hawke Government has been cutting back on financial assistance to first home buyers, Queensland has been getting on with the job of housing. When the Federal Government rejected initial calls by the Premier for a housing summit, Queensland set up its own housing industry task force to investigate a wide range of problems affecting the industry. This report contained many recommendations which have been adopted in principle by the Government and will provide a basis for further housing initiatives.

We have already acted to reduce stamp duty costs to first home buyers on the principal home. We have raised the maximum loan available through the Queensland Housing Commission from \$60,000 to \$75,000.

The most recent initiative is the State Government's land ballot scheme for first home buyers which has been adopted as a pilot project. Since this project was announced, interest has been high. We look forward to the first ballot in mid-April.

Despite the high interest rate monetary policy of the Federal Government, this State Government has purposely held interest rates on its Queensland Housing Commission loan scheme at well below market rates. This stance will continue.

Last financial year, the Queensland Housing Commission paid out more than \$16m in the form of subsidised interest to help home-buyers financed through the interest subsidy scheme. In recent times, about 200 to 300 home-buyers a month have been financed through this excellent scheme which is aimed at helping low to moderate income earners into their own home. Last month, 304 home-buyers were assisted.

In the area of rental housing, this financial year, the State Government lifted spending by 40 per cent to more than \$100m.

Mr Burns interjected.

Mr GUNN: Even the member for Lytton admits that it is a damn good scheme.

This has allowed the commission to embark on a program which will provide an additional 2 300 units of accommodation comprising attached and detached houses, pensioner units and one-bedroom welfare units. Furthermore, honourable members should not forget the \$25m that was provided for units for the handicapped.

It is an indictment on the Federal Government that it could boast, at that time, a surplus in its Budget but could not see its way clear to increase funds to Queensland for public housing, despite the fact that on his last trip the greatest ballerina in Australia, Mr Hawke, could give \$25m to Cambodia for bridges and roads.

The Commonwealth's attitude to housing is reflected in its share of funding provided under the Commonwealth/State Housing Agreement. In the last 10 years, its share of this funding peaked at 29.8 per cent in 1984-85 and has since dropped back to about 23 per cent. In terms of the total spending on public housing in Queensland, its performance is even worse. In 1984-85, its contribution represented 24.8 per cent, but it has now dropped back to 21 per cent.

Labor has been caught out by the housing crisis. There is no doubt that the Federal Government is in a state of crisis.

Mr Davis: This is good stuff.

Mr GUNN: Well, it is good stuff. However, the honourable member would not understand it. The Federal Government's policies have been shown to be ad hoc. Some of Labor's decisions have been blatantly wrong and ill-advised. The summit demonstrated that Labor members did not have an answer to the problem and they were looking for a way out.

Now Australia must try to extricate itself from the housing problem which the Federal Labor Government has presided over. Labor has been found desperately wanting on the housing issue. It is fitting that the Parliament record that by supporting the motion moved by the Premier.

Mr BURNS (Lytton—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (12.22 p.m.): It is very sad to listen to the Premier and the Deputy Premier who have many quick-fix answers and are attempting to score propaganda points when people in the community are hurting badly.

Mr Ahern interjected.

Mr BURNS: They are. The Premier's Government is responsible for looking after the people of Queensland. He always tries to blame Canberra, the council or anybody else, but he does not do the job.

This Government has a few little quick fixes like needles in the arm—100 blocks here and a little leasing arrangement there—and it walks away. It will not be able to get away with that.

Fifty-five per cent of the people of this State cannot afford to buy a home. This Government has been in power for more than 30 years and has done nothing about the problem. The record of this Government over more than 30 years is so bad that it needed to have a special task force to tell it what was going on. This Government had

to have an inquiry to find out what was happening in regard to housing in this State. It had to set up a special task force to find out what was going on.

What did that task force find? It found out that there were 30 problems, almost all of which related directly to this Government, which has been in power for 32 years. It found an exhaustive jungle of red tape and a bewildering overlapping of ministerial responsibilities. That is what was found by the Government's own inquiry. It is this Government's red tape and the overlapping of responsibilities by this Government's Ministers. It is this Government that is responsible for the position in which local government in this State finds itself. That inquiry was just like all the other inquiries that have been ordered by this Government.

The Government had an inquiry into housing. It found the Government guilty. The Government had an inquiry into fire services. It found the Government guilty. The Government had an inquiry into prisons. It found the Government guilty. On every occasion an inquiry has found the Queensland Government guilty. In every case—prisons, fire services and now housing—the result of an inquiry has been that the fault lies with the National Party, after 32 years in Government. The fault lies with this Government's underperformance in areas such as the provision of essential public amenities and its visible disinterest until it sees a chance to play point-scoring on unproductive points.

Until its sudden preoccupation with housing, the Government gave a much higher priority to providing better accommodation for rapists and murderers.

Mr Gately: What about the \$25m the Federal Government gave to Cambodia?

Mr BURNS: Members of the Government talk about Kampuchea! Last year this Government spent \$80m on providing accommodation for prisoners—for rapists and murderers—in the gaols. The Government did not worry about the ordinary, decent people out there. If this Government can afford \$80m for the crooks in the community, Labor can find money for decent, honest people who are not in the gaols.

This Government has no policy whatsoever in regard to coastal land planning. It has totally ignored the need to provide accommodation for people in the work-force in developing regions. It has invited the Japs to take over the country and to own it. As a result of that the price of land has been pushed up. The Premier was out there last night kissing the Japs' backsides, asking the Japs to come and take the country. That is what he was doing last night. He was down on his knees, crawling to the foreigners to come and take this State away from Queenslanders.

Industries and developments with which this Government is associated are allowed to grow without any thought being given to worker accommodation. When did the Government ask the people who are developing these big industries to provide some worker accommodation in the towns? Never! The Government did it to the coal mine owners but it does not do it to Skase or the Japs, such as EIEIO, or whatever the fellow called himself the other night.

Members of the Opposition have seen casinos built under Government licences, with the Government—

Honourable members interjected.

Mr BURNS: Mr Acting Speaker has always got control of the Chamber. He has complete and utter control. He knows what is going on. He can always pull a member into line if he does something wrong.

Workers employed on round-the-clock shifts need accommodation relatively close to the workplace. The story is the same in regard to student accommodation. After more than 30 years of this Government, students still cannot find accommodation near the colleges and universities, and nothing is being done about it. This Government has let

the Rackman type landlords rip them off. It has let them rip off the kids who come down from the bush to live in the city so that they can attend university. This Government has done nothing about it.

Government members interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order!

Mr BURNS: Hello, he has woken up!

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order! Some of the interjections that are coming from the far end of the Chamber are not intelligible and are undoubtedly making it difficult for the Hansard staff to record the proceedings. I ask the Chamber to come to order.

Mr BURNS: The Government should have known that growing accommodation demands would be placed on the areas surrounding these workplaces, universities and colleges, but it did nothing about it. The Government neglected a problem faced by its own country people. Kids from the country come to the city only to be ripped off for accommodation around universities and colleges and there has been no offer of Government assistance. The Government has ignored those kids. It has run away from the problem. It is not interested.

Now this Government is pretending to be a champion of the home-builder and the home-buyer. This is the Government that has let young couples get ripped off by Mansard for the last six months. The only word of warning was a word of advice this morning. After more than 30 years, in every area of administration, the record of this Government is one of underperformance and neglect.

Today Mr Ahern talks about Carseldine land being sold by the Defence Department. Let us talk about the Defence Department and the Carseldine land, since the Government is so interested in it. Why does the Government not say that the land was on the open market for tender until April last year and that this Government's Housing Commission never tendered for it?

Mr Gunn: It was sold.

Mr BURNS: Just a minute.

In April 1988 no tenders were received—not one. So this Government was not interested—not one bit. Raine and Horne were the marketing agents. They hawked it around the place. This Government was not interested. A bloke from overseas came along and made an offer. Contracts were signed but no money changed hands. Do honourable members know what happened then? Not the Minister responsible for housing or the Minister responsible for child welfare or welfare services, but the Railway Department showed an interest in the land. This Government that is so worried about housing and about who is buying that block of land was not even interested in tendering for it. It did not put a buck in. It did not put a name forward. The land was on the open market from after the tenders closed in April right through to November—more than six months—and nothing came from the Queensland Government. I do not think anybody apart from the Railway Department showed any interest.

The Ahern Government is 15 months old. It is no longer in its infancy. For the great majority of its term, as the Carseldine example shows, the Ahern Government has been uninterested in acquiring land. The quick-fix answers that the Government has given are only short-term palliatives that mean nothing much in the long term.

Recently, under its new scheme, the Government offered some land for sale in Townsville. People can buy land privately nearby for \$4,000 less. The Government offered land under its new scheme and its own Land Administration Commission was selling blocks in a nearby suburb for \$1,000 less and offering a 10 per cent or 15 per cent discount for cash. The Government does not even know what it is doing. It is not even in control of the situation.

Last year, the Queensland Government, through its budgetary expenditure in various categories, spent more money per head of population in Queensland on museums than

it spent on housing—and I reckon that the Queensland Government would be the worst spender on museums. The Queensland Government spent more money on the Auditor-General and more money on the Valuer-General—

Mr Hamill: Half the Cabinet should be in museums.

Mr BURNS: I suppose the honourable member is right. Maybe when the Government builds museums, it is building them to accommodate its members. It is a quid pro quo.

I turn now to mortgage rates. Of course mortgage rates are hurting. Anyone who says that interest rates are not hurting is a fool. However, if the Government thinks that it is going to score a few points off the Federal Government and that that will help people who are trying to buy a home, the Government is wrong. Something has to be done about the problem. The Opposition has been making some submissions; it has not been touting around in the press. The submissions have been made by Wayne Goss on behalf of Opposition members. The Labor Party has 30 proposals, and I shall cite some of them to honourable members.

Higher interest rates and prices for established housing have affected many people other than home-buyers. The Government keeps talking about the first home buyer. What about all the families that are broken up and those that end up in divorce in the Family Court and those persons who, as a result of a decision of that court, cannot obtain any first-home finance whatsoever? What has the Premier done about that? He should answer that question.

Mr Ahern interjected.

Mr BURNS: The Premier has not done anything. He blames someone else. When the Merthyr by-election is over, the people of Queensland will throw another wimp on the barbie, and the Premier will be the wimp.

Three groups are being hurt really badly. One group comprises the people who are trying to buy a home—and not only first home buyers. Many families are being destroyed because of a bad marriage, and some of those families are in a worse position than young couples starting off for the first time. Consideration ought to be given to families affected by bad marriages, too. Many people who have to pay for the maintenance of their families and meet other commitments are still trying to get back into the home market. However, they are being ignored completely by the Queensland Government.

Let me deal with the Queensland Government's record. Queensland has the lowest rate of home ownership in Australia. The rate of home ownership in Queensland is 65.5 per cent, which can be compared with the Australian average of 68.1 per cent. A failure! One can mark an X against the Queensland Government. It has failed.

Queensland has the highest proportion of households living in private rental accommodation. Earlier, the Government attacked rental accommodation. A total of 21.5 per cent of Queenslanders reside in rental accommodation, which can be compared with an Australian average of 18.8 per cent.

A Government member: What's wrong with that?

Mr BURNS: I agree with it. Earlier, a Minister opposite me said that it was a socialist principle to rent accommodation.

Of all States, Queensland has the lowest proportion of households living in public housing. That is the Government's responsibility. Queensland's proportion of households living in public housing is 2.8 per cent, which compares with an Australian average of 5.3 per cent. People like to have a roof over their heads. The crazy idea that they worry about who owns the accommodation has nothing to do with the matter. People want a roof over their heads; they want a clean bed and hot water; and they want to be able to raise their kids in decent conditions that they can afford—not under bridges, not in caravans and not in shanty towns.

Somehow or other, Government members say that people should live in such circumstances because they have a dream that one day everyone will own a home. Not everybody wants to own a home and not everybody will be able to afford to buy a home. If that proposition is accepted, there is a dual responsibility. One responsibility is to help the people who want to buy a home. The other responsibility is to help the people who want to rent accommodation. The Government ignores its responsibility to those people who cannot afford to buy a home. As I said, 2.8 per cent of people in Queensland reside in public housing, whereas the national average is 5.3 per cent.

Queensland has the highest proportion of households living in caravans. Whereas the Queensland figure is 3.2 per cent, the Australian average is 1.5 per cent. The number of people living in caravans in Queensland is twice the number living in caravans in the rest of Australia. Queensland has the highest proportion of households living in informal tenancies, such as hostels, lodging houses and mobile homes. Whereas the figure in Queensland is 7 per cent, the Australian average is 6.3 per cent.

Why is Queensland doing so badly in every area? The answer is simple—lack of proper funding and appropriate housing policies. The Government has ignored the need for housing. It has looked at no more than a little bit of roll-over money from its sales of land and its rents, and it has used that money alone. The Government has not added any money to that.

The Queensland Government should look at what the South Australian Government and Governments in other States have done to help people in need. If it does that, it will realise that what it has done is a disgrace and that Government members should hang their heads in shame. Any time the Government wants to debate its record on housing, I will debate it anywhere that Government members want to do so. City Hall can be hired, we will invite the people who want to rent or buy a home, and Bill Gunn and I will debate the issue man to man. I will do that any time he likes.

Housing finance markets are undeveloped, land releases are poorly planned, public housing is mostly underfunded, emergency housing is overburdened, aged-person accommodation is inadequate and inappropriate, and large numbers of students have nowhere suitable to live. What are we going to do about it? Let me talk about what Labor will do, because Labor will do something about it. A Labor Government will act. Labor has a policy and at the end of this year it will start to implement that policy when the wimp is thrown on the barbie.

A Labor Government will expand Queensland's banking sector by establishing a strong State-based bank to provide more affordable housing finance to home-buyers by acting as a competitive brake on mortgage rates charged by the major banks, as occurs already in South Australia through the activities of the State Bank of South Australia.

A Labor Government will revitalise Queensland's secondary mortgage market, which has suffered three years of stagnation, by amending the relevant legislation to remove unnecessary impediments to the operation of the secondary mortgage market and by supporting the secondary mortgage market with public funds through the Queensland Treasury Corporation, thereby creating an effective mechanism for Queensland financial institutions to develop a range of financial packages for home-buyers, including lower cost and more accessible housing loans.

Labor will provide for the issue of Queensland Government housing bonds through Government and financial institutions, including banks and building societies, to add to the total amount of funds available for housing finance, indexed to provide a real return on investment over inflation. I am talking positively. To date, the Minister for Housing has only been a nark. He was negative. He went out to tip a bucket. He did not want to help anyone in need. He just wanted to score a few cheap political points. I am outlining what should be done and what the Labor Party will do when it is in Government.

A Labor Government will, with public and private financial institutions and the Housing Commission, develop land and financial packages including capital-indexed and

income-indexed programs, combined where necessary with subsidies, to provide the widest possible range of options for low-income home-purchasers.

Labor will establish a stamp duty rebate scheme to first home buyers based on assessable income levels and the average annual median house price of each local authority area up to an absolute ceiling price of \$100,000. A Labor Government will introduce a Queensland Crown land register. The Queensland Government does not even know what it owns or where its land is. Government departments in Brisbane have bought land that is half a mile from a school, half a mile from a shopping centre, half a mile from an electric train service—and what will it put there? In those areas it will locate stinking industries that will pollute the environment. Approximately 1 000 homes could be built there tomorrow. They would be adjacent to the Gateway Bridge and arterial roads and close to all amenities. However, this Government wants to develop land 40 miles out of town, build a railway line to the area, provide sewerage, water and electricity and build new schools and police stations when those facilities are already available in the city. The Government is allowing some of its departments to run roughshod over it. Those departments are making the decisions about the land that they are buying and are setting it aside for industry.

Robin Gibson, who is one of the smartest architects in this State, stood on the hill overlooking the land and said, "The cows have the best views." The Government bought that land to be set aside for industry, not for housing. It is some of the best residential land in this city. However, the Government has allowed that land to be purchased by its departments and to remain unused.

The Labor Party will introduce a Crown land register in this State and a co-ordinated strategy for the release of those lands for residential purposes in order to even out the highs and lows in the availability of land stocks. Labor will work in partnership with local government——

Mr Gunn: Bob Hawke is giving money away to communist countries.

Mr BURNS: Mr Gunn says "communist countries". The National Party Government is buying the land and using it for industry. It is giving industry big loans and saying, "Come here. We will assist you." But when the Government is asked to do the very same thing for ordinary people, it does not have the money. This Government is able to find \$80m for the construction of prisons and the provision of accommodation for prisoners, but it has no money for the decent, honest, ordinary battler. He does not count.

The Labor Party will work in partnership with local government to ensure the elimination of unnecessary and expensive barriers to the development of more affordable housing. It will boost apprenticeship training programs and related training schemes for the skills that are now in short supply within the building industry.

This Government should hang its head in shame because of the lack of training skills and the shortage of tradesmen. A special deal has to be struck for the laying of bricks. Brick-layers, who used to receive \$250 per 1 000 bricks that they laid, are now receiving up to \$1 for each brick that they lay. If they lay 1 000 bricks, they receive \$1,000. Do honourable members know why? It is because of the shortage of tradesmen. For many years this Government has been in charge of the training of all apprentices. Where are the workers? Where are the people who should be doing the jobs? This Government has done nothing about the shortage of tradesmen. It has ignored the problem. This Government hates the workers and the unions so much that, instead of training the workers, it spends all its time trying to rob them. If Government members could not foresee the shortage of tradesmen, they are dumber than I thought they were.

A Labor Government will suspend contributions by building societies to the special Building Society Contingency Fund and reinvest a substantial amount of the existing funds in building societies in return for guarantees of lower interest rates. It is nice to have something positive to contribute to this debate instead of the rubbish that Government members have been speaking.

For many years Labor has been saying that it will establish a system of leasehold title over housing blocks. This Government has now embraced that idea. I should consult past volumes of *Hansard* and locate some of the comments that were made in the past by Government members who said that encouraging people to take up leasehold land was a socialist and communist plot.

People who took up leasehold residential blocks in my electorate 50 years ago do not want to convert those blocks to freehold. However, if they need to convert them they should be able to do so. If blocks of land are being sold for \$100,000, \$90,000 and \$50,000, it is impossible for a battler to purchase one of those blocks and then find enough money to put a deposit on a home.

Recently Mr Gunn stated that those Housing Commission blocks of land that are to be released in the near future are worth \$20,000 and that the houses are worth \$50,000. Therefore, a purchaser would be required to provide \$7,000 deposit. Has the Minister ever tried to ascertain how many people have \$7,000 available for a deposit? People should be able to buy a block for the \$7,500 that this Government spent on its development. When people have enough money to buy the freehold title over that land, the Government will get its money back. At that time the Government can argue about the price. The land should be sold at its development cost, which would allow people to buy a block of land and start to build a home sooner than they can at present.

I ask the honourable member for Mourilyan how much the blocks of land at Kurrimine Beach sold for.

Mr Eaton: The top block was \$73,000.

Mr BURNS: The Government talks about development costs of \$20,000 to \$30,000 per block, but it sells them for \$73,000. How many blocks were there?

Mr Eaton: The average was \$52,000.

Mr BURNS: How will battlers ever be able to afford land at those prices?

The Government should not boast about what it is doing in the housing market. I am referring to a Government scheme. This Government is ripping off the battlers. It is a developer just like all the others. It is flogging off that land at the highest prices possible. The only way that the cycle will be broken is if the Government provides leasehold land in ballots at development costs. That is the only way that the little bloke will be given a chance. In the future, if that little bloke wins lotto or saves up enough money, he can buy his block of land. However, under the Government's present scheme, he will never do that.

A Labor Government will support the principle that public housing should be available as a just, adequate and affordable housing option for low-income households. It will apply Commonwealth untied funds available to Queensland through the Commonwealth/State Housing Agreement to public rental housing. The Government should do something about those untied funds.

Labor will meet its matching obligations under the Commonwealth/State Housing Agreement from consolidated revenue and internal sources so that housing stocks are substantially increased. It will ensure the effective operation throughout Queensland of the rental bond board to reduce or prevent disputes over bond money. A Labor Government will revamp the Queensland Housing Commission to expand its role into self-funding consultancy services for the housing, construction and architectural professions.

A Labor Government will provide direct tenure access to public housing for young people. The Housing Commission ignores single people. For some reason or another, it does not believe that single people exist.

Mr Gunn: No way. They're on the list.

Mr BURNS: The Government will put them on the list all right, but everybody will get priority above them. There is no chance for single people to obtain Housing Commission accommodation.

Mr Gunn interjected.

Mr BURNS: Single people with families do obtain Housing Commission accommodation. I ask the Minister to give me a list of the houses in Wynnum that have been given to single people. I would like to see that.

Mr Gunn: All right.

Mr BURNS: That is a deal.

A Labor Government will do something about direct tenure access to public housing for young people. It will provide youth tenancy officers to advise and assist young people who are in urgent need of accommodation. Someone has to help those country kids, whom this Government represents, when they come to the city and want to rent flats at Toowong, Auchenflower or near the Griffith University. The Government should provide a youth tenancy officer within the Housing Commission to confront that problem and discuss it with colleges of advanced education and universities. Something should be done about that problem at the commencement of each year. If the Government is doing it now, it is doing it badly. I do not think it is doing it now.

Mr Gunn: I have had kids go through university and they have all rented houses.

Mr BURNS: That may be so. Maybe the honourable member has put his kids through university and they have rented houses. I ask him: how old is the kid who has most recently attended university?

Mr Gunn: One is still there.

Mr BURNS: He would have started in the past four or five years. Earlier the honourable member spoke about the boom in the past six months and all the problems that occurred. I am talking about those problems that he raised. This is his debate, not mine. I do not want to talk about what happened four or five years ago. He should tell me what is happening now. Four or five years ago accommodation would have been rented. I am talking about the kids who are affected at present.

Minimum stock-building and acquisition targets have to be established to overcome the current shortage of stock that is appropriate for young people. A State Labor Government will co-operate with relevant church and community groups to acquire and build hostels, boardinghouses and self-contained flats to be leased to those organisations to provide supported accommodation. The Government ought to provide loans to some of those boardinghouses at West End, South Brisbane and the Valley so that they can be improved, so that single men and women who have no family would not have to live in some of the bloody hovels—excuse me, Mr Acting Speaker—some of the hovels that they live in today—and they are hovels.

In other States, funds are available to improve those facilities for those people. Such funds ought to be available here. It is a shame that the Government has done nothing about that. It has allowed some of the landlords to rip off some of the tenants because they are in a most disadvantaged plight. They have no-one to turn to. Their only chance is to find boardinghouse-type accommodation. That is all they can do.

Labor will maximise Queensland's participation in relevant Federal programs and access to available Federal funding for youth accommodation programs. It will provide direct tenure access to public housing for all supporting parents irrespective of age.

Why do the Housing Commission and the Housing Minister say that a girl who is 18 years of age and who has a baby can obtain a Housing Commission home but that a girl who is 16 years of age and who has a baby cannot? Why is there an age limit on kids who, fortunately or unfortunately, depending on their own set of circumstances, have a baby and who are looking for a home? Why is an age limit imposed?

Mr Gunn: You send them along to us, and we will accommodate them.

Mr BURNS: Righto. You beaut.

Mr Gunn: You send them along.

Mr BURNS: I will tell the women's shelter tomorrow. The Housing Commission might have a queue of people.

A Labor Government will provide appropriate housing under headlease arrangements to community groups to house supporting parents who are 18 or who require supporting accommodation. Labor will ensure that the victims of the increasing number of marriage break-downs in Queensland, both children and parents, are not discriminated against in the provision of public and emergency housing programs or other housing-related schemes. During its first term, Labor will build an additional 1 500 units specifically for age pensioners. It will provide funds to those community groups that provide community housing for the aged.

Labor will establish a joint student accommodation planning committee comprising the Federal Department of Education, Employment and Training, the State Department of Education, the State Housing Commission and the relevant tertiary institutions to estimate likely demand for student accommodation several months prior to the commencement of the academic year and to put into place measures to make up for any projected shortfall in supply.

Mr Innes: This has got to be the greatest bit of hypocrisy that has been spoken in this Parliament.

Mr BURNS: The greatest hypocrites in the Parliament are Mr Innes and those Liberals who have been part of this Government for three-quarters, or 80 per cent, of its life. All of a sudden, he is independent of it. He is keen to get into the Ministry. He cannot get the smell of ministerial leather out of his nose. He has the stink of the corruption of those former days hanging right over the Liberal Party. He cannot get away with it. He and Don Lane were a party to it. The honourable member introduced Don Lane to Parliament. He was the Liberal Party's man. He was the Liberal Party's man in Merthyr. The honourable member should not blame the National Party for Don Lane's actions. It only took him when he ratted on the Liberal Party, saying that it was not good enough for him any more. He decided to go over to the National Party, because he could make another buck or two over there. The honourable member should make no bones about it; Don Lane is a Liberal Party man. In the campaign before the Merthyr by-election, Labor Party members will be knocking on doors and reminding people that Don Lane and Mr Innes are of the same cloth; that they come from the same breed—the same brood. I am not too sure that if one were to look back into some of the ministerial performances of Mr Innes' colleagues one would not find the same results.

Labor will establish a student services section within the State Housing Commission. Each year, in the two weeks prior to the commencement of the academic year, it will establish a telephone hot line to act as a clearing house for rental vacancies, private boarding arrangements and share accommodation. People have to be aware of that. Recently, I was rung by a lady who had available for rental two cheap little units at Woolloongabba. She was not able to rent them, would you believe. She wanted 45 bucks a week for them but she could not rent them. I rang the Housing Commission, and it was able to rent them straight away. She did not know who to contact. Something must be done so that people are made aware of whom to contact.

Lastly, Labor will ensure that the implementation of its regional economic development strategy will guarantee the proper supply of public housing stocks throughout Queensland's regions.

I move the following amendment to the motion—

“Omit all words after ‘condemns’ in the first line of the motion and substitute—
‘the Queensland Government's failure to act positively to provide funds and policies to help Queenslanders obtain a home of their own and to help the

homeless, the aged, young people and those dispossessed because of the failure of the National Party over the past 32 years.' ”

When a Government that has been in office in this State for 32 years has to have an inquiry to find out what is happening to housing in this State and then has to launch into all sorts of propaganda tricks to try to cover up its deficiencies, we have reached a very sad and serious situation. Many people in the community are looking to this Government for help. They really do not care who is to blame. They really do not care whether it is the Federal Government, the State Government or the council. All they want is some assistance. It is about time that this Government gave them that.

Mr De LACY (Cairns) (12.51 p.m.): I have great pleasure in seconding the amendment moved by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. I am pleased to see that some people are present in the gallery and that members of the media are in attendance. I hope that they report a proper assessment of this debate and that they indicate the difference in the attitudes adopted by the Government and by the Opposition. I hope that they can contrast the positive contribution by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and the number of propositions that he put forward to solve Queensland's housing crisis with the carping, whinging, whining and negative attitude adopted by the Premier and the Deputy Premier.

Most of the instruments available to alleviate Queensland's housing crisis are in the hands of the Queensland Government, and the only response that the Opposition can get——

Mr Newton: What about interest rates?

Mr De LACY: I will come to interest rates in a minute.

The only response from the Government is a criticism of the Federal Government. I guess that is the oldest trick in the trade. When this Government is in trouble and does not know what to do, and when the opinion polls show that it is in deep trouble, it bashes the Federal Government.

Today a motion has been moved by the Premier but it offered nothing constructive, nothing positive and nothing to assist home-buyers, the people who are in trouble and the people who are being forced out of their homes. All that this Government did was launch a negative attack on the Federal Government. The Deputy Premier had the temerity to say that interest rates were not put on the agenda at the housing summit. Why would the Federal Government put interest rates on the agenda? What would be offered by the Deputy Premier that would be constructive? What response would the Federal Government have received from the Premier? This Government would have said only that there should be a reduction in interest rates. The situation reminds me of the story about the golfer who said, "What's wrong with my swing?" The instructor said, "You're hitting off the back foot." The golfer said, "What do I do about it?", and the instructor said, "Hit off the front foot." That type of simplistic advice really does not do anybody any good.

Does the Deputy Premier know one of the reasons why interest rates are high in Australia? It is because of Government spending. I wonder if the Deputy Premier knows which level of Government is spending the most? It is spending by the State Government and local government that is causing interest rates to increase—not Federal Government spending. The Federal Government has moved its Budget into surplus. In fact, the Federal Treasurer, Mr Keating, has said that the net public sector borrowing will be zero this year, but that will only occur because the Federal Government's budget has moved into a surplus position. What about the Deputy Premier? Would he have offered——

Mr Gunn interjected.

Mr De LACY: If interest rates had been on the agenda at the housing summit, would the Deputy Premier have offered to cut State Government expenditure? Would he have offered to do his job in trying to reduce interest rates?

Mr Gunn: We have the lowest interest rates in Australia—13.75 per cent.

Mr De LACY: But only for a small percentage of people. How many people obtain housing through the Queensland Housing Commission? What nonsense it is to state that Queensland has an interest rate of 13.5 per cent. There are other States in Australia in which an interest rate of 13.5 per cent can be found.

The reason why Australia is experiencing high interest rates is that State Governments are spending too much money. The Minister has been called away momentarily to try to sort something out, but I point out to him that he has been travelling throughout Queensland saying that the Federal Government ought to spend more money on roads.

Mr Gunn: Yes.

Mr De LACY: The fact is that if he visited the office of the Department of Main Roads in Cairns, he would see the propaganda video that is played day in, day out, saying that the Federal Government ought to spend more money on roads. Does the Deputy Premier know that if more money is spent on roads, that will push up interest rates?

Mr Gunn: You are taking it out of full context.

Mr De LACY: I am not taking it out of context. The point I make is that Federal Governments do not increase interest rates because they like to; interest rates rise as a consequence of economic problems that exist at the time.

Mr Goss: Hasn't the Premier called upon the Federal Government to cut Government spending without specifying what sort of spending should be cut?

Mr De LACY: That is right. The Premier has been calling on the Federal Government to cut its spending. However, every time a cut occurs in Federal Government spending, Mr Gunn starts to scream that the Federal Government is not spending enough on roads or on Queensland. Always his solution to any problem is to attack the Federal Government. The Deputy Premier has no idea of economic management, so why would the Federal Government put interest rates on the agenda when economic illiterates such as the Deputy Premier and the Premier give gratuitous advice even though they do not know what they are talking about?

The fact is that most of the problems affecting housing can be solved by the State Government. What has the State Government done and what should it do? The State Government looks as though it will reap a windfall from stamp duty during this financial year of the order of \$220m in excess of Budget estimates. It will receive that stamp duty as a direct consequence of the property boom. The Deputy Premier should not forget that the property boom is causing the housing crisis. The Government stands to gain an additional \$200m this year, but how much of that amount has it offered in return in an effort to solve the housing problem? It has offered approximately \$1m. How much will it cost this Government to increase the concession for first home buyers?

Mr Gunn: You did not listen to my speech.

Mr De LACY: Just answer my question. How much will it cost the State Government for the additional concession in stamp duty to first home buyers? Would it be more than \$1m?

Mr Gunn: Of course. It would have to be.

Mr De LACY: I am talking about the additional amount—the increase in the concession level from \$60,000 to \$80,000. I will bet the Deputy Premier that it does not cost the State Government more than an additional \$1m, yet the State Government stands to gain an additional \$200m. What a marvellous State Government! What a wonderful gesture it is making! Yet the Deputy Premier has the temerity to second a motion criticising the Federal Government. The Deputy Premier ought to be ashamed to stand up in this Parliament and do so.

Most of the other reasons for the housing crisis come under the control of the State Government. The basic reason for the housing crisis is that demand has outstripped supply. The Deputy Premier, through this Government's policies, is responsible for the supply of house blocks. What has he done? He did not even know that a problem existed until members of the Opposition and other people started talking about it. All that the Deputy Premier has done is make a few negative comments about the Federal Government. In a positive sense, what has he done?

Let me tell honourable members where the biggest housing crisis is in Queensland and the rest of Australia. It is to be found in Cairns and on the Gold Coast. What is the Deputy Premier doing about the supply of housing land in Cairns?

Mr Gunn: We have just bought a large tract of land in Cairns.

Mr De LACY: The Deputy Premier has done nothing in Cairns and has not put any land back on the market. He decided to put some land back on the market——

Mr Gunn: You don't even know what is happening in your own electorate, but that is no surprise to me.

Mr De LACY: Last week, when the Deputy Premier made his announcement about the blocks of land that were going on the market, he mentioned Brisbane, a few other centres and Townsville. The *Cairns Post* asked me whether any blocks of land would be going on the market in Cairns, and I said, "No, because they haven't got the land to do it. Ring the Minister and ask him." They phoned the Minister and a spokesman for the Minister said, "No, there's none."

Mr Gunn: There's none in the Cairns area.

Mr De LACY: Exactly. That is the point I am trying to make.

What about the Gold Coast? What is the Deputy Premier putting on the market on the Gold Coast?

Mr Gunn: There are no applications from Cairns at all.

Mr De LACY: Of course there are no applications, but what I am saying is that there is a housing crisis in Cairns. It is up to the Deputy Premier to respond to it; but he cannot respond to it, because he has done no forward planning and he has no appropriate policy.

Sitting suspended from 1 to 2.30 p.m.

Mr De LACY: There are a few more points I wish to raise before I allow others to join this debate.

Before the luncheon recess I made the point that in a couple of regions in Queensland where the housing crisis is at its worst, the Government has not responded in any positive way at all. I challenged the Minister for Housing to say what will be done in Cairns and he was unable to respond with a concrete answer. The fact is that the State Government is not putting extra blocks of land on the market in areas where there is a tremendous demand for housing.

The State Government is not aware of the magnitude of the housing crisis in Queensland and the way in which it is impacting on all sections of the community. The Government refers a great deal to first home buyers, but first home buyers make up a very small percentage of the people who are affected by the property boom. Most of the housing crisis has been caused by the property boom that has occurred in the last six months. Not only has the property boom pushed housing out of the reach of first home buyers and many other home-buyers, but also it has increased rents in most provincial areas and throughout the rest of Queensland. As a result of the increase in rents, many people who are on fixed or lower incomes have been forced out of their accommodation. For example, in Cairns people who were renting for \$70 a week have been approached by their landlords or agents and told that their rent would be increased. When they

asked, "How much?", they were told, "Up to \$170 a week." Most people cannot accommodate that kind of increase in their budget. Many are being pushed out onto the streets and are becoming a burden to the welfare agencies and other bodies. Half of the problems that are dealt with by my electorate office relate to housing.

The State Government is quick to accept credit for the tourism and development boom which has occurred in places such as Cairns and the Gold Coast, but it is much slower in coming to the party and rectifying the problems created by that boom. I put it strongly to this Government that the huge problem that has been created by the property and development boom in Cairns and other centres in Queensland is that the price of housing has increased and housing has been pushed out of everyone's reach.

I wish to stress the point that I made before lunch about the windfall taxes that the Government stands to receive this financial year as a direct consequence of the property boom.

Mr Austin: You've been reading the *Courier-Mail* again.

Mr De LACY: I was not reading the *Courier-Mail*. I was reading the financial reports.

Mr Austin: They said \$400m. That's a little out. I wish it was.

Mr De LACY: It will be anything between \$200m and \$300m. For the first half of the financial year the receipts were \$440m and the estimates for the year were only \$580m. It is a reasonable assumption—based on those figures—that it will come in at approximately \$200m over budget.

Mr Austin interjected.

Mr De LACY: I cannot understand why it would reduce in the second half-year. It is different from income tax.

Mr Austin: It may not.

Mr De LACY: The Government has benefited to a large extent, whether it is by \$100m or \$200m, and it is putting very little back in terms of hard cash.

My suggestion is that some of that money be spent on overcoming the supply problem. Perhaps the Government should embark upon a land acquisition program by purchasing land and making that land available as housing blocks in one form or another. I am not suggesting that the State Government must develop the blocks—that can and should be done by the private sector—but there needs to be an increase in the stock of land available for housing. At the moment the crisis is being created by an excess of demand over supply. If this Government starts fiddling on the demand side—that is, by doing a variety of things such as its proposal to increase concessions to first home buyers on stamp duty—if the Commonwealth Government improves or augments the first home owners scheme and if interest rates suddenly come down, all that will result in is an increased demand for housing and, in an ironic way, put home-ownership further out of reach of the ordinary person.

Recently I spoke with one of my colleagues who advised that as soon as the State Government announced its move to increase the total loan available from the Housing Commission to \$75,000, the general price of housing in the Inala area jumped from \$65,000 to \$75,000. When there is an area with an overheated demand, there is no point in making it easier for people to buy houses. Supply has to be increased, because every concession given by the State Government will be taken by those people who are selling homes.

In conclusion, I ask this Government to use some of the windfall profits that it has received as a result of the property boom to invest in a large stock of public land which could be released onto the market. The State Government must greatly increase expenditure on low-cost housing and crisis accommodation and urgently examine a variety of

options for higher density housing. This Government's response of simply blaming the Federal Government is a very poor response indeed. It indicates that this Government does not have a policy and is unable or not competent to deal with the housing crisis and respond to it.

Mr INNES (Sherwood—Leader of the Liberal Party) (2.38 p.m.): The Liberal Party opposes the amendment and supports the motion. The previous two speakers have spoken an extraordinary amount of nonsense on this issue. The suggestion has been made that, because there has been a windfall in State stamp duty, the State Government should bear the brunt of the cost of the provision of extra housing. There was also the illustration of walking into an office in Cairns and seeing a video about road-funding and the suggestion that, if in fact the Commonwealth responded to the claim for road-funding, it would be adding to inflation and a hike in interest rates throughout the nation.

Let us play even Stephen. There is not only a windfall to the State Treasury but also an enormous windfall to the Federal Treasury. Certainly this year the State Treasury is likely to have an excess of \$200m. The Federal Budget is heading for a \$5.6 billion surplus, which is almost exactly equivalent—I do not suggest that all the amount derives from it—to what the Federal Government makes out of the excise duty on petrol and diesel, which is some 31c of pure tax on every litre.

Mr De Lacy: What is that related to? What point are you making? I have never heard such a silly point.

Mr INNES: It is just a little matter of logic. If we are talking about the use that one Government can make of its excess, we can equally talk about the reasons for a far bigger excess that belongs to another Government.

Mr De Lacy: But they are not making it out of the property boom.

Mr INNES: The reality is that the Federal Government has a surplus and the honourable member for Cairns said that there was no surplus to be used.

Mr Vaughan: They planned for a surplus. They have budgeted for it.

Mr INNES: It does not matter where it comes from; we are talking about Government surpluses and about the ability of Governments to use surpluses to provide answers to urgent problems.

There is absolutely no question that the dominant responsibility in this case lies with the Federal Government. I was critical of the State Government's reaction. In the first place I thought it was not politically deft to appear to accept all the responsibility for finding some solution to the problem within the State and local government areas. When young people inquire about a home loan, the acid, crucial question is, "How much do I have to repay each month?" They are not worried about stamp duty exemptions; they are not worried so much about the percentage of real estate commission; but they are worried about the long-term cost of servicing the long-term loan—the hard facts that relate to the total amount of money borrowed and the term over which that loan has to be serviced. That is the sector that is controlled dominantly and overwhelmingly by the Federal Government.

We should not come around to talking about the land bank problem. The land component is about a quarter of the transaction; it is the smaller percentage involved in the transaction. People do not want to live on lumps of land, they want to live in houses on blocks of land, and the house is three-quarters of the cost. If the land costs \$20,000, the house will cost \$60,000. If the land component is \$100,000, the likelihood is that the house will cost \$300,000. There is a relationship that has been looked at by people who have done analyses, and that relationship is that about a quarter of the cost of a house and land package belongs to the land component. So just answering the land problem does not solve the total problem, which is the total amount of money that is needed to get into a house built on land.

It is that global figure that is the hurdle that has to be overcome. Most people can afford to finance themselves into a block of land; they cannot afford to finance themselves into a block of land plus a house. That, overwhelmingly, is the crucial area affected by Federal Government policies on interest rates and inflation.

I heard the Deputy Leader of the Labor Party recite the multipoint proposal for initiative in this State by the Labor Party. Of course, that contained no reference to Federal responsibility and Federal interest rates. That is the little gloss—or is it Goss—that was put in the motion this morning. Now the Labor Party has put forward a motion that will actually have some impact on the outside world. It was forced to do that because it was getting embarrassed about the reality that its arguments did not wash. Everybody out there understands that it is the Federal Government that is to blame and has the dominant responsibility for the economy and that it is the Federal Government's maintenance of high interest rates that is causing the housing crisis in this country.

Mr Goss interjected.

Mr INNES: Let me give an example. There are figures on the cost of housing in Australia and on the rates of interest that apply. In 1950, the median price of a house was \$4,670 and the rate of interest was 3.88 per cent. Ten years later—it was 10 years of Liberal/Country Party Government—the price of a house had doubled to \$8,450 and the rate of interest had a modest increase of 1.2 per cent to 5 per cent. Ten more years later, in 1970, the median price was \$17,610 and the interest rate had increased by 3.25 per cent to 8.25 per cent. In 1975, involving those crucial Whitlam years, which threw the finances of Australia off balance for a decade, the price had increased to \$32,700 and the rate of interest had grown by another 3.25 per cent—that is in five years—to 11.5 per cent. In 1980, when the much-reviled Malcolm Fraser and the Liberals were back in action, showing the general continuity of increase, the price had doubled to \$64,500, but the interest rate had fallen by a full 1 per cent. In 1985, the average price of a home throughout Australia was \$83,000 and the interest rate was 12 per cent. In 1987, after only two more years of Labor Government, the interest rate was 15.5 per cent. In only two years, the interest rate increased by 3.5 per cent. In other words, interest rates exactly parallel changes in Government.

Labor Governments are big Government, high-tax and high interest rate Governments. The Federal Government cannot jack up the spending program and the ultimate welfare system without cost. The cost is the impact on the ordinary people of Australia and the shattering of their dreams of a house. Of course, the underlying, secret agenda of the Labor Party is its ambition for the young couples of Australia that, if they are to get married—and Labor ambition is that they do not get married—they will live in welfare housing. If they live in welfare housing, they are more likely to be Labor voters.

Labor Party members try to jack up the Housing Commission components of their electorates, hoping to create a mendicant State in which people look to the State for all things. People who rely on the State for everything are more likely to be Labor voters. It is simple. The objective facts are contained in the analysis carried out by the Labor Government of the history of interest rates and values in Australia.

Mr Burns spoke in the debate. He stood in the Chamber with two newspaper cuttings and talked like a thrashing machine for 100 minutes. Logic does not have a great deal to do with it. He is full of folksy and amusing little tales. He spoke about the urgent need to look at student accommodation and said that we should be looking at co-ordinating accommodation around the universities, CAEs and TAFE colleges. He said that there is a crisis in that area. There is a crisis. I have been involved in the council of a university college for the past 21 years since I was the beneficiary of accommodation provided for people from outside Brisbane.

In 1982, the Federal Labor Government stopped all funding of college accommodation. Two years ago, the college council ran out of funds. Because it had a sense of obligation, the council was looking at ways of increasing the amount of accommodation to provide to other generations the service that we as former members of the college received. Only

this year, when a genuine crisis was recognised, was something done about it. The college council had less than two weeks—10 days—to make a submission about a major extension of the college for accommodation. It was not a reasonable period. The Labor Party Government is a Government that operates on all sorts of half-baked philosophical viewpoints. It believes that colleges are for elite people. It does not realise that Queensland is the most decentralised State in Australia and that any country kid who wishes to attend a university or a CAE must live away from home and requires accommodation. Instead of providing relief, it cuts funding to colleges. A desperate crisis then exists. The Labor Party then realises that all country kids are not sons and daughters of plutocrats, capitalists and the wealthy and that they are entitled to attend tertiary institutions and, therefore, require accommodation. Something needs to be done about the lack of accommodation. The poor deliverers in the system—the volunteers who have come together to provide those services—are given two weeks to lodge a claim for increased accommodation. It is unreal, but it is what happens when one deals with people who, underneath the veneer of modern acceptability and sophistication, are still in the same old business of the pushing of ideological viewpoints.

Despite the fact that a crisis exists in housing accommodation, it is not that bad. I accept that the Gold Coast and Cairns are two crisis areas and that the situation is not as satisfactory as we want. However, honourable members know that in Sydney and Melbourne—which were in Labor-controlled States—the prices rose more drastically—

Mr Hamill: Don't forget Mr Greiner is the Premier of New South Wales.

Mr INNES: He inherited the mess from the Labor Government.

So comprehensively did Labor manage to undermine the system that it will take years to unravel the mess that it created. That is the legacy left by the Wran/Unsworth continuum of socialist Government in that State.

The recent housing industry survey reported that affordability levels were the worst since the Great Depression. Those are the raw statistics of seven years of Labor administration of the economy of this country.

The only concrete proposal that Mr Goss has come up with is the creation of a State bank. It is supposed to be the answer to high interest rates. The fact that no other State bank in Australia can offer lesser interest rates than any of the private-sector banks seems to be a matter beyond his economic horizon.

Mr Goss: South Australia does.

Mr INNES: The Labor Party set up the Commonwealth Bank of Australia. It is directly under the control of the Federal Labor Government. Why does not the Commonwealth Bank offer cheaper rates of interest, if that is economically possible? That is the example. Why does not the Commonwealth Bank, which is a creation of Labor philosophy and which is totally under the control of the Reserve Bank and the Treasury under special legislation, offer cheaper interest rates?

Mr Schuntner: Is it the South Australian State Bank that is having trouble with the Oceanic Property Trust?

Mr INNES: It is. Of course, the South Australian State Bank recently has set up offices in this State to lend the money of the people of South Australia to the people of Queensland.

The reality is that what we have heard from the Opposition today is a load of economic twaddle. It is the porcupine approach. The new technique of the Labor Party is to come up with a superficial list of points such as a 10-point program for this and that.

Mr Henderson interjected.

Mr INNES: Gossamer or supergloss to gloss over the reality. There are 10 points on this, 6 points on that, 15 points on something else. All the points are of equal value. Every time a really hard issue arises, of course, the porcupine curls up.

The reality in relation to issues such as industrial relations is obvious. Honourable members saw the Labor Party postpone the policy that had been presented three months ago to its conference because it was not compatible with the superficial policy that the leader of the Labor Party attempted to sell in this State. It was more union power—union power involved in board rooms, union power involved in every committee of the Government of this State, union power everywhere. The Opposition hides that.

The reality is that there was no talk about Federal interest rates until the people of this State and this nation woke up to the con involved in State Opposition leaders' proposing 10-point lists demanding that local authorities and State Governments take the burden of finding the answer to the housing crisis. In the end, the truth will out.

Today, for the first time, the Leader of the Opposition in this State is attempting to pander to the majority of perceptive people and to place the blame——

Mr De Lacy: You're doing a lot of criticising. Give us something a bit positive. Tell us what you'd do.

Mr INNES: It is fairly clear what should be done——

Mr De Lacy: Blame the Federal Government.

Mr INNES: The predominant responsibility should be placed where it lies, that is, with the Federal Government. That Federal Government has to cut down its delivery programs and its spending to bring down interest rates and the rate of inflation. That will make the biggest difference of all.

Mr De Lacy interjected.

Mr INNES: The member for Cairns rightly made reference to the number of people today who, because of the enormous increase in interest rates, are caught and have to move out of the accommodation which they are buying.

People who had the deposit in the first place, found the house and land, moved in and were able to pay for it for the first few months or the first year or two have had to walk out. The member for Mount Isa told me of a young policeman and his wife who last year walked out of a \$70,000 house. They actually gave back the keys. They lost their deposit. They lost the lot. That was because of the rise in interest rates, not the cost of land. The land was there——

Mr De Lacy: You haven't told us what you'd do about it.

Mr INNES: The party to which the member for Cairns belongs is the centralist party. His is the party with direct lines of communications to the Federal Government. The member for Cairns should demand that the Federal Government reduce interest rates and inflation and stop people who are already buying houses or living in rental accommodation from being forced out of the accommodation that they presently have.

Mr De Lacy: But what would you do? You haven't told us what you'd do. Reduce spending? You just said that they should increase it.

Mr INNES: No. I said that spending should be reduced.

The second factor—and it is a much lesser factor—relates to State Government and local authorities. I said from the word go, as soon as the December figures were available and I saw the size of the windfall, that it is right to provide exemptions by way of stamp duty. What Governments can do they should do. If there is a windfall from property transactions, let us use it in relation to stamp duty exemptions.

I cannot solve the problem in Cairns overnight. However, I would have thought that the problems on the Gold Coast could be overcome. I do not suggest that that can

be done necessarily by creating new land, which is likely to be expensive to create. However, there is a large area of undeveloped land to the north in the Eagleby/Beenleigh area that has a large pool of people who want employment. If that money is used to accelerate the Robina to Beenleigh railway proposal, many people could travel in fast, modern transport from a place where there can be more affordable homes and where people are unemployed, to a place where employment is available but where accommodation and affordable housing is not available for a large number of workers.

The answer is the provision of a transport system. It is that simple. People who probably do not have a car—certainly not a second car—can be moved to a place where jobs are available. As a result of the retail and tourist development on the Gold Coast, a large number of jobs are available at, shall I say, the rate of ordinary Australian wages, not at a rate of wages that enables people to buy houses that are available on the Gold Coast. The two can be brought together.

Mr De Lacy: Can I just ask one question? When you give that concession on stamp duties, do you know that that immediately just increases the price of the houses so that the potential purchaser doesn't get the benefit?

Mr INNES: No. I do not agree with the honourable member's figures. I heard the honourable member say that it increases the price by \$500. I do not agree with him.

Last week in Townsville the State Government launched its new knee-jerk policy on land. Let us face it: the pressure is there; everybody is demanding that something be done. The instinct on the part of all Governments is to do something. I cite the example of the Federal Government releasing land that it apparently had for 25 years and which was already subdivided. There is a tendency for a knee-jerk reaction.

In Townsville 10 allotments were released under the new scheme. Within a few days it was revealed that there was other equivalent Government land available for \$4,000 less a block. There was private-enterprise land available for \$4,000 less a block. I think that the first land went on the market at \$18,000 and there was land available in Townsville for \$14,000 in both the private sector and the Government sector.

I think that everybody supports the response of reducing stamp duty. The response of increasing the amount that the Housing Commission is able to lend is a response that the Liberal Party supports. Local authorities and the State Government, in the sense that it can supervise local authorities to some extent, can make a contribution by reducing red tape and accelerating the time in which raw land can be produced. There is no doubt that holding costs caused by red tape and delays inflate the price of land. However, the total delivery of raw land is only a quarter of the cost of the house-and-land component, leaving the great bulk of the responsibility in the Federal area, in the interest rate and inflation area. The failure to adjust the first home buyer's concessions is a significant factor because that relates to deposit.

Perhaps some influence could be used in this country to do what happens overseas. In the United States and in the United Kingdom, interest paid on a home loan is tax deductible. That system seems to have commendable features because it has a built-in adjustment factor—the higher the interest rate, the greater the deduction; the lower the interest rate, the smaller the deduction. As a result of the vastly decentralised banking system in the United States, a person can obtain a 100 per cent loan. Short of a disaster, a subsidence or something unknown, it is very unlikely that the value of a house and land will reduce in any significant way. The recent history is all about inflation. In the United States it is common for people with reasonable expectations of permanency of employment to obtain a 100 per cent loan. That seems to have some commendable features. If such a system can operate in the USA, why can it not operate in Australia?

The final point I make relates to the enormous rate of inflation in the cost of building materials and labour. If the Deputy Leader of the Opposition was not a union-organiser, he was certainly a union member, and he is a member of a party that is committed to the power of trade unions. The institutionalised approach of the trade

union movement has stopped the production of skilled tradesmen in this country as much as anything else has.

Mr Vaughan: Cut it out.

Mr INNES: No. Take the cottage building area. The reason why the cottage building industry in this country has gone to subcontract gangs over the last decade is the intolerable interference and intolerable and stupid impositions of trade unions. That is why that industry has gone to subcontract gangs. Apart from the massive construction sites, the old building companies that had substantial work-forces working on cottage building gave away that work because of the unreasonable demands of the trade union movement. The subcontract gangs, which were formed to avoid the stupidity and the voraciousness of the union-controlled demands, could not afford to employ apprentices and did not employ them. A major shortfall in cottage building was the consequence. It is astonishing that brick-laying rates can be \$1 a brick. In the last 18 months, building and labour costs have blown out by over 50 per cent. The cost of building materials has increased by a slightly smaller amount. All of that has increased massively—about three-quarters of the factor—the cost of a house. That is something that the union movement can and should have addressed.

There still remains the issue of readjusting the apprenticeship scheme and looking at ways of preparing tradesmen outside the traditional apprentice and artisan-type situation. The preparation of apprentices at least to the later stages of their expertise in training schools, perhaps similar to those that operate currently in Europe, must be explored.

Last week in Mackay I was spoken to by a group of tradesmen who represented a variety of trades, none of whom could train their apprentices on the block-release program at TAFE colleges in Mackay. Everyone had to travel south. That is an indictment on Queensland's TAFE system. However, it is inextricably related to the unreasonable demands and inflexibility of the trade union movement that has attempted to impose unrealistic conditions on employers for the last several decades.

A great deal needs to be done by the Labor Party, and by the labour organisation to which it is wedded, as well as by Government at all three levels. In this House this morning, for the first time the Leader of the Opposition, by the concession contained in the first line of the motion that he moved, accepted that people see through the veneer and know that it is interest rates controlled by the Federal Government that is the dominant factor keeping people out of houses and other accommodation. That was a recognition of the truth and is the real factor. It is with the Federal Labor Government that most of the blame lies.

Mr GOSS (Logan—Leader of the Opposition) (3.04 p.m.): In rising to speak in this so-called urgency debate, I draw the attention of the House to the fact that after some three and a half months' recess, the champion of parliamentary democracy moved this motion on behalf of the Government and led the debate on an issue which he says is serious, and which he says is a crisis. However, he spoke for a mere eight minutes.

Mr FitzGerald: You walked out.

Mr GOSS: I was not even here. I had other commitments. The champion of parliamentary democracy gave members of the Opposition about 20 minutes' notice that he was going to spring this urgency debate on us. When I heard the debate on the television monitor in my room and realised how pathetic it was, I decided that it was not worth coming down to the Chamber at that time and giving up my other commitments because the Government had tried to spring a surprise debate. What did we get from the Government's leader, this champion of parliamentary democracy? We heard a pathetic eight minutes of whining, knocking and excuses. It was pathetic. I would have been embarrassed. I know that many National Party back-benchers are embarrassed about that sort of performance that they have seen month in and month out in recent times. I do not blame them for being embarrassed again today. Frankly, I was embarrassed to

have the Premier of this State behave in that way. It was a pathetic eight minutes of whining, whinging and moaning about the Federal Government. Not one positive initiative, not one concrete or firm move was made on his part to do anything positive to help those people in Queensland who are suffering as a result of the present housing crisis. It was a most shallow response from a shallow Premier with shallow policies.

I compare that approach with what I say is clearly the proper and responsible approach, which I think is embodied in the notice of motion that I moved this morning and which demonstrates and underlines what every fair-thinking person in this State understands, that is, that all levels of Government have a responsibility. The Federal Government has a responsibility, particularly in relation to the macro-economic situation and the way that is manifested in interest rates. The State Government has its responsibility, and I will deal with that shortly. Local authorities have a responsibility to standardise and streamline their procedures, particularly with regard to rezonings and building regulations. All of those issues need to be addressed. Yet the State Government, in this so-called urgency debate, trotted out a pathetic eight minutes of whining and moaning.

Let me deal with the three levels of Government and their respective responsibilities. The Federal Government has a responsibility in relation to interest rates. All Opposition members recognise that. For the Leader of the Liberal Party to say today that the Opposition recognised that for the first time shows how ignorant he is of the ongoing debate in this State, because members of the Opposition have made the point—and we will not back away from asserting the position—that interest rates are too high and that we want to see them come down. In terms of alleviating the housing crisis, it is important that interest rates be reduced.

Even though Government members will not admit it, I am sure that everybody realises that this country is facing a fairly delicate and difficult economic situation. Our monetary policy is being adopted for a specific reason and the need to dampen activity. However, the Labor Party believes that interest rates should come down at the earliest possible opportunity.

During this debate and over the past couple of weeks, the Labor Party has been endeavouring to make the point that the Government can be a lot more positive; that things can be done. At the State level, the supply side of the housing problems should be addressed.

As to the supply of land—a State Government can take responsible and positive steps. As to the supply of skilled labour—a State Government can and should take steps to increase the supply. As to the supply problems that are caused by local authority procedures and unnecessary red tape—a State Government can do certain things.

As the Deputy Leader of the Opposition pointed out today, this Government's own task force report condemned the Government and found it guilty of neglect and the failure of policy and administration of local authority procedures.

All that we have had from the Premier in relation to the problem of bureaucracy and delays is a cheap headline that appeared in the *Courier-Mail* a couple of weeks ago when he called on councils to straighten themselves out. The Premier has done nothing positive. No comprehensive approach has been adopted to the problems that exist throughout the State; just a cheap headline. That is the last that we heard from the Premier on that aspect.

As to the supply of land—there has been a knee-jerk reaction from the Premier and the Deputy Premier in relation to releasing a few blocks of land. This morning, the Deputy Premier prattled on about socialism. A couple of weeks ago he appeared on the front page of the *Sunday Mail* advocating a scheme that he described as a kind of socialism. What hypocrisy! Even worse—what confusion of policy abounds in the Government ranks! It has no policy at all. All it has is a series of press releases or knee-jerk responses to a serious problem that requires a serious response.

As to the shortage of skilled labour—everybody knows that that is contributing considerably to the cost of housing and the delays in construction, which, in itself, is a significant factor in increasing costs. That aspect of the supply side of the problem must be addressed.

Because of its low spending on education, training and TAFE, this Government has failed. Compared with what is happening in other States, Queensland fails to measure up in all of those aspects. As a consequence, Queensland is paying for it. Young people in this State are paying for it in terms of fewer educational opportunities. Because of the shortage of skilled labour in the building and construction industries, our economy is paying for it. Business people and companies who are involved in the building and construction sector in Queensland are complaining long and loud across the board about the shortages of skilled labour and this Government's attitude and neglect in that respect.

I turn now to other aspects of State Government responsibility. Reference has been made to the State bank, which will be a positive measure by providing some part of the solution. Furthermore, this Government has failed in the revitalisation or reform of the secondary mortgage market. This was the first State Government to introduce a secondary mortgage market, and it mucked it up. The secondary mortgage market is operating quite successfully in New South Wales, Victoria and the United States of America, where it is generating additional funds for housing finance. However, because of a mixture of cronyism, poor planning and a lack of public sector support for the secondary mortgage market, that is not occurring in Queensland.

Not one of those measures which are the responsibilities of either the State Government, the Federal Government or local authorities is a complete solution. All together, those measures are probably not a complete solution, but they do present an opportunity to change things for the better and to improve the situation in Queensland. But what do we get from this Government and this Premier—several minutes of whining and moaning. That is not a substitute for policy or action, but it is all we get from this Government. The people of Queensland will have that pointed out to them again and again and again by me and other members of the Opposition. Queenslanders are sick and tired of this Government's weak-kneed, wimpish, pathetic moaning. It is not a substitute for policy or action.

I turn now to some of the criticisms that have been made of the Labor Party's policy of a commitment to a higher level of public housing. The Labor Party stands by that commitment. Throughout this year right up to the election, it will be happy to go to the electorate with that commitment.

As to the measures that have been taken in this State in relation to housing—Queensland has the lowest rate of home-ownership of any State in Australia, the highest proportion of households living in private rental accommodation, the lowest proportion of people living in public housing, the highest proportion of households living in caravans, and the highest proportion of households living in informal tenancies such as hostels, lodgings and mobile homes. Queensland is way behind the other States. It does not matter whether it is private ownership, public housing, caravan parks or the like; Queensland is the worst off of all States of Australia. That has occurred because of 30-odd years of neglect, a failure of policy and a failure to measure up to what is happening in other States in the provision of public housing.

As for that insulting and elitist drivel that we heard from the previous speaker from the Liberal Party about the commitment to public housing—that was a disgraceful contribution which was demeaning of people who live in Housing Commission areas and insulting to people who have lived in or grown up in them. The honourable member assumed that everybody is like him and can and will eventually want to move to a flash western suburb to live in the style to which the members of the Liberal Party have become or would like to become accustomed.

A comparison of Queensland with the other States reveals that, because of the comparative low stock of public housing, Queensland has a problem. That lack of public

housing pushes more people out into the private sector, pushes up rents in that sector and pushes up the price of housing.

The Opposition is talking not about a dominant public housing sector—a dominant Housing Commission housing sector—but about a fair and reasonable mix—a balance. Under a succession of National or National/Liberal coalition Governments, that balance has been lost. Those Governments have not provided an adequate commitment and adequate funding to maintain a reasonable level of public housing. The Opposition will not pull away or withdraw from that commitment to increase the stock of public housing to alleviate some of the problems that exist, not just across the board but in particular in certain sectors that are neglected and in respect of which people such as those in the Liberal Party could not give a hoot. People such as the homeless youth, families in crisis and pensioners fall into the category of having a particular and desperate need for public housing. The Labor Party stands by its commitment to increase the availability of public housing for such people.

One more lie that I want to nail is the reference that was made twice today by the Premier to some alleged statement by myself that the Federal Government was going to provide some 7 000 housing blocks. I never said that. It is not true. The Federal Government did not make that offer. What happened was that certain media outlets mistakenly interpreted a Housing Industry Association report suggesting that that number of blocks could be available in Queensland as being some initiative adopted or approved by the Federal Government. That was not the case. That figure of 7 000 blocks includes blocks of land located in areas such as the Enoggera army base, Wacol and Belmont. Those areas are simply not available. For example, Enoggera is a functioning army base that could not, by any stretch of the imagination, possibly be regarded as being available in the short term. It probably may not even be available in the long term. If it is, it would be very much the long term.

I was talking to the Federal Government about the possibility of releasing perhaps up to a thousand blocks—effectively, a thousand blocks in the short term—and it said that it believed it could do something about that and it undertook to go away and do its best to come up with a proposition at the housing summit. What all that was about was trying to achieve a positive result.

In relation to interest rates—I have levelled the criticism at the Federal Government and the Opposition is prepared to stand by that. However, once those criticisms are out of the way, one has to move on to the positive alternatives, some positive initiatives and some action, and that has not been forthcoming.

Once again, the contribution by members of the Liberal Party was in keeping with that of their would-be coalition partners—would be if they could be, but they cannot be because they have been discarded by the Premier, and rightly so. A bit of quality control has come into the National Party at last. The Liberal Party had nothing to offer to the debate except this same cheap shot at the Australian Government. It is a good political point for the Liberal leader to make, to bash the Australian Government. However, Queenslanders can see through that. They saw the failure of Malcolm Fraser and the rest of the crew. I refer to the people who were appointed by Malcolm Fraser and who failed the mandate that they were given to do something constructive and positive during the period of their appointments. They failed miserably. The Frasers and the Inneses and all that kit and caboodle failed. Here today, many years later, what can the Leader of the Liberal Party do except criticise and lay the blame at the door of the Federal Government? As I said, the Federal Government can take its share of the blame. However, the Liberal Party, by its contribution, is exposed as having nothing to offer to this debate, and in having nothing to offer to the debate, it has demonstrated that it has nothing to offer the people of this State. When has the Leader of the Liberal Party made a public statement in which he has made one positive suggestion or led one initiative? Never! The Liberal Party has nothing to offer because it operates on the basis on which it has always operated, that is, that it is born to rule. It cannot understand and is mystified why nobody accepts that any more. The Liberal Party has to work for

and earn the respect of the electorate. It has forgotten that that is what politics is about. That born-to-rule mentality will keep the Liberal Party in the backblocks, where it belongs.

Various other vague and confused references have been made to macro-economic policies. The Premier and, as I recall, the Leader of the Liberal Party made claims and calls in relation to cutting spending. They say to the Federal Government, "Cut spending." But they do not want to say where that cut should be made. They do not want to say to the Federal Government, "Look, cut the pension. Cut education. Cut defence spending. Cut spending on roads." I ask the erstwhile Leader of the Liberal Party and the Premier: where are they going to cut spending? Unless they are prepared to pin their marker on those people whom they intend taking money off, they do not deserve to be listened to and they do not deserve to be respected.

What this debate needs, and what the Opposition has been trying to inject into it in its notice of motion, in the contribution from the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, from the other Opposition speakers and myself and in the two weeks leading up to today, is the focusing of attention on the areas in which something can be done. Perhaps each of those areas on its own does not make a dramatic contribution, but together they represent an opportunity to improve the situation in Queensland, which is a good starting point and something that will actually achieve something for those people who are missing out on the so-called good life that Queensland has to offer and that we in the Opposition believe can offer if the vast resources of this State are managed responsibly and for the benefit of all Queenslanders, not just a few elite VIPs.

Question—That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the question—put; and the House divided—

| AYES, 52 | | NOES, 27 | |
|--------------|-----------------|--------------|-----------------|
| Ahern | Lee | Ardill | |
| Austin | Lester | Braddy | |
| Beanland | Lickiss | Burns | |
| Beard | Lingard | Casey | |
| Berghofer | Littleproud | Comben | |
| Booth | McCauley | D'Arcy | |
| Borbidge | McKechnie | De Lacy | |
| Burreket | McPhie | Eaton | |
| Chapman | Menzel | Gibbs, R. J. | |
| Clauson | Muntz | Goss | |
| Cooper | Neal | Hamill | |
| Fraser | Nelson | Hayward | |
| Gamin | Newton | McElligott | |
| Gately | Perrett | Mackenroth | |
| Gibbs, I. J. | Randell | McLean | |
| Gilmore | Schuntner | Milliner | |
| Glasson | Sherlock | Palaszczuk | |
| Gunn | Sherrin | Scott | |
| Gygar | Simpson | Smith | |
| Harper | Slack | Smyth | |
| Henderson | Stoneman | Underwood | |
| Hinton | Tenni | Vaughan | |
| Hobbs | Veivers | Warburton | |
| Hynd | | Warner | |
| Innes | <i>Tellers:</i> | Wells | <i>Tellers:</i> |
| Katter | FitzGerald | | Davis |
| Knox | Elliott | | Prest |

Resolved in the affirmative.

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

| AYES, 52 | | NOES, 27 | |
|--------------|-----------------|--------------|-----------------|
| Ahern | Lee | Ardill | |
| Austin | Lester | Braddy | |
| Beanland | Lickiss | Burns | |
| Beard | Lingard | Casey | |
| Berghofer | Littleproud | Comben | |
| Booth | McCauley | D'Arcy | |
| Borbidge | McKechnie | De Lacy | |
| Burreket | McPhie | Eaton | |
| Chapman | Menzel | Gibbs, R. J. | |
| Clauson | Muntz | Goss | |
| Cooper | Neal | Hamill | |
| Fraser | Nelson | Hayward | |
| Gamin | Newton | McElligott | |
| Gately | Perrett | Mackenroth | |
| Gibbs, I. J. | Randell | McLean | |
| Gilmore | Schuntner | Milliner | |
| Glasson | Sherlock | Palaszczuk | |
| Gunn | Sherrin | Scott | |
| Gygar | Simpson | Smith | |
| Harper | Slack | Smyth | |
| Henderson | Stoneman | Underwood | |
| Hinton | Tenni | Vaughan | |
| Hobbs | Veivers | Warburton | |
| Hynd | | Warner | |
| Innes | <i>Tellers:</i> | Wells | <i>Tellers:</i> |
| Katter | FitzGerald | | Davis |
| Knox | Elliott | | Prest |

Resolved in the affirmative.

CONSUMER AFFAIRS ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 12 October 1988 (see p. 1240).

Mr HAMILL (Ipswich) (3.38 p.m.): Essentially, the legislation before the House this afternoon is a machinery Bill that amends the Consumer Affairs Act.

All honourable members would know that the Consumer Affairs Bureau is constituted under that Act. The amendments give the Consumer Affairs Bureau a pro-active role. After the passage of this Bill, it will be in a position to warn the public of a number of scams and innovative devices put forward by some of the less scrupulous entrepreneurs in the community and to advise the public as to the nature of these devices so that these scams do not get off the ground and hurt people.

The legislation before the House gives honourable members the opportunity to discuss in a little more depth matters pertaining to the operation of the Consumer Affairs Bureau. The Opposition certainly welcomes these amendments because they give the bureau the opportunity to fully discharge its responsibilities. The Consumer Affairs Bureau is in the business of endeavouring to warn the public about unscrupulous entrepreneurs, and this legislation legitimises a practice that the Consumer Affairs Bureau already indulges in.

The only reservation that the Opposition has concerning the amendments relates to the bureau's propriety. It is conceivable that unscrupulous operators within the Government or the bureau could use this power in a capricious way by playing favourites with particular businesses or operations in the community. I am sure that the Government will be keen to ensure that this practice does not take place. It is most important that the Consumer Affairs Bureau handles its responsibilities in the future in the same way as it has in the past. It has always adopted a very responsible attitude.

Mr Lester interjected.

Mr HAMILL: That was the point I was going to make, that the bureau has acted very responsibly. I ask for the Minister's assurance that should, in the future, it come to the Government's attention that certain persons—perhaps not those who are currently at the bureau—act in a manner ill-fitting their responsibilities, the Government of the day would come down very strongly to end such a practice.

I wish to direct some comments to the general operation of the bureau, because it performs a very important role for the protection of the ordinary people in the community. Certainly people in the community need protection from the Robert Clarkes of this world and those entrepreneurs who try to obtain some advantage over people who do not necessarily know their legal rights by falsely representing a certain circumstance in order to induce them into contracts which, of their very nature, would be unconscionable.

I will be raising another matter as it relates to other legislation on the business paper. Quite frankly, I am sick and tired of receiving documents that appear to be accounts sent to me for various telex and facsimile entries in worldwide directories. It is a scandal that these people can send around what purport to be accounts in the half expectation that unsuspecting small-business operators or indeed members of Parliament might take out bank cheques to pay hundreds of dollars for an entry in what may even be a fictitious directory. Consumer protection legislation needs to be strengthened to combat these sorts of activities and I am pleased to see that these amendments will go some way to providing added protection for the community.

Certainly what does concern me is the perhaps relative diminution in the resources that the Consumer Affairs Bureau has had placed at its disposal. This is the only conclusion that can be drawn from the allocations that are quite apparent in the Budget papers for 1988-89. From those papers it appears that the Consumer Affairs Bureau, now with the added responsibility of the supervision of weights and measures, has a budget that has in fact contracted since the previous year. The Minister is looking a little confused by these remarks, but I can assure him that the Budget papers are quite clear. In 1987-88, on salary and administration the Consumer Affairs Bureau spent slightly in excess of \$1.7m. On other administrative expenses for the Consumer Affairs Bureau and the administrative expenses of the Weights and Measures Branch, which has been subsumed into the general administration of the Consumer Affairs Bureau this year, last year the expenditure was slightly in excess of \$1m and this year the figure of \$900,000 has been budgeted for. So there has been not only a cut in monetary terms but also a real cut in the resources made available to the Consumer Affairs Bureau.

I find this to be a very disturbing feature. The Consumer Affairs Bureau has a staff establishment of 71, but a perusal of the scope of its operations gives an indication of the enormous demands that are placed upon its personnel. The role it performs is varied indeed. Apart from the community liaison role, the bureau handles a vast number of telephone inquiries about a whole range of matters that pertain to the operation of consumer affairs.

In fact, its last annual report reveals that, on average, 186 telephone calls a day came to the bureau in the nature of inquiries and that over the years more than 48 000 calls have been received. In itself, that is an enormous workload. There were also in excess of 5 000 written complaints, which is admittedly a lower figure than that for the previous year. In addition, in the same period the Weights and Measures Branch conducted almost 17 000 visits. That is an enormous workload and I am sure that, if additional resources were made available to the Consumer Affairs Bureau, just as in so many other cases when additional resources are made available, the workload itself would also increase.

The bureau has a role to play in the administration of a number of pieces of legislation. There is not only the Consumer Affairs Act itself but also the Door to Door (Sales) Act, the Mock Auctions Act and the Unordered Goods and Services Act, amendments to which will be coming before the House later in the session. In addition, there is now the Weights and Measures Act and, of course, the Travel Agents Act, which

is relatively new legislation, the implementation of which was given over to the Consumer Affairs Bureau last year.

As I said, the bureau plays a variety of roles, one of which is an educative role in the community. Certainly much of the time and effort of its staff goes towards getting the bureau's message out into the community and making the people in the community aware not only of the existence of the bureau but also of their rights, their contractual rights and the remedies that they can have against traders and others who have delivered unsatisfactory service. It is also a source of information and, as is highlighted in the legislation now before us, it plays an investigative role.

In the last year, matters that came before the bureau involved some \$10m worth of merchandise, with half that amount still in dispute. We must be cognisant of the fact that some consumers are less able to look after their interests than others. We often hear of the aged being singled out by some of the shonky operators as easy pickings. However, young consumers are often unaware of the rights that they have in law to seek redress when they have been badly dealt with by unscrupulous operators. Members of the ethnic community who have a language difficulty are particularly at risk. Those groups have been highlighted by the Trade Practices Commission in its research in that area. I have no doubt that, if similar research were conducted in Queensland, the same groups would be found to be most vulnerable in our community. As legislators, we have a responsibility to them and to the broader community to offer the protection that legislation such as this can afford.

It is also interesting to note that the most consistent area of complaint is that of service—service on contracts and, in particular, in relation to motor vehicles and consumer durables. For many people, those are the areas, apart from their home, in which individuals place their most significant personal investment. It is important to ordinary people that they receive a fair deal and that they be adequately protected in the purchase and in the subsequent service of such major household expenditures. Despite all the protective legislation, those areas continue to pop up as the areas generating the greatest number of complaints and the areas of greatest concern.

At the outset I mentioned that I wanted to make some general points in relation to the Consumer Affairs Bureau. I turn now to a couple of particular areas. The Consumer Affairs Bureau, which was established under this legislation, has been given a responsibility to administer the licensing and operation of travel agents under the provisions of the travel agents legislation. The Minister may recall that, in November last year, in this House I asked a detailed question concerning the Consumer Affairs Bureau's administration of that legislation. To remind honourable members, I point out that the Queensland Parliament finally legislated for protection for consumers—in this case, travellers—under the provisions of the travel agents legislation by coming into an agreement with other States for the establishment of a compensation fund. Certainly, there have been highlighted in the media a number of cases in which unscrupulous travel operators have taken their customers for a ride in terms of taking their money and not providing the travel that the consumers expected by way of contracting with the agents.

The legislation that was introduced and passed through this Parliament provides for protection; but protection is only afforded if the Consumer Affairs Bureau has licensed the operator. Under that legislation, quite hefty penalties were put in place to prevent unlicensed operators—operators who had not been approved by the Director of Consumer Affairs—from operating. Also of great concern to the consumer is that no protection is afforded to those who contract with unlicensed operators.

In November last year, when I asked the Minister the question concerning the implementation of this legislation, I asked how many applications for licences had been received by the Consumer Affairs Bureau. At that date, the number stood at 637. I asked him how many licences had been issued. At that date, the number stood at 549. I then asked the Minister to provide information as to the state of play in relation to a number of other travel operators who had gone through the motions of advertising their existence and their intention to apply for a licence in the newspapers. Of that list of operators at

that time, which included Campus Holidays Limited trading as Oz-Oasis Resorts, Flight West Airlines, Deluxe Holidays, Kontiki Travel, LITS Tour and Travel, Hover Mirage and Ansett Transport Industries—some quite well-known operators—the Minister revealed that Ansett had received a licence on 6 October and Kontiki received a licence on 11 October. Hover Mirage had not applied for a licence. The other businesses about which I had asked had applied but the licences had not been issued.

It is of concern to me that, at that time, when I made independent inquiries concerning the operation of a number of tourist travel operators, those people were trading after 1 October without having received their licence. That is of grave concern to me, it is of grave concern to other operators in the tourist and travel industry and it needs to be of grave concern to the travel consumer who is not, in that situation, afforded the protection which our consumer legislation has been enacted to provide. I want an assurance from the Minister that the area of travel agents licensing through the Consumer Affairs Bureau has been tightened up and that the bureau will crack down on the operators who have been flouting the law and trading without a licence in contravention of the legislation that this Parliament enacted last year to protect consumers. It is simply not good enough.

If these people are blatantly flouting the law, they deserve the punishment which the law provides and which honourable members agree to provide. However, if the Consumer Affairs Bureau is so inadequately resourced that it cannot fulfil the task which this Parliament delegated to it, that raises a number of other serious questions.

As I have said, the Consumer Affairs Bureau has a range of important tasks to perform. It performs those tasks creditably. However, the workload is great and, if it cannot discharge the responsibilities for which it was originally established, if it simply does not have the staff and the resources to fulfil the task required of it by this Parliament, it is futile for this Parliament to then place an additional burden of responsibility upon the Consumer Affairs Bureau.

In conclusion, I seek some further guidance from the Minister in relation to the Government's legislative program. In the annual report of his department last year, the Consumer Affairs Council was given as recommending a whole range of legislative changes in the area of consumer affairs in Queensland. Among those were recommendations to adopt the South Australian Fair Trading Act as a model for Queensland legislation and particularly to ensure that the operation of Part V of the Federal Trade Practices Act, which covers much ground which is similar to other Queensland legislation, was fully legislated in Queensland.

It was also suggested in the report that the Tasmanian Door to Door Trading Act, as modified for local conditions—presumably climatic—be adopted and substituted for Queensland's Door to Door (Sales) Act. It was also suggested that the Unordered Goods and Services Act be repealed in line with the coverage afforded by the Trade Practices Act. In addition, in that review of legislation, no major changes were recommended to the Auctioneers and Agents Act. Nevertheless, the bottom line was that there ought to be a move to amalgamate these pieces of legislation.

It was further stated in that report that Cabinet had approved that amalgamation. It would appear from the Government's legislative program, some eight to nine months after the publication of that report, that this amalgamation of legislation is still some way off. The Government is still approaching consumer affairs in a somewhat ad hoc and piecemeal manner in that a variety of pieces of legislation are each undergoing particular amendment to cover one or more practices which are socially undesirable.

It is certainly the view of the Opposition that the Government should move with haste and expedition to fulfil the promise which was contained in the publication issued by the Consumer Affairs Council and put its model legislation in place. The Government should amalgamate those various Acts into one piece of legislation that Queensland consumers could turn to, knowing full well that their rights are protected by it. The traders of this State also could refer to it so that they knew where they stood and the types of practices they are permitted to undertake.

The incorporation of all those pieces of legislation under the rubric of one Act would provide surety and the opportunity for greater awareness in the Queensland community as to the protection available to consumers, their rights and responsibilities and the responsibilities and duties of traders in this State.

Mr SMITH (Townsville East) (3.55 p.m.): I support the legislation because it is pro-active—I think that is the word that was used—rather than reactive. The need to educate the public on consumer matters is certainly great. I do not believe it is any less now than it has ever been. In fact it may well be that there is a greater need.

The particular consumer matter that I wish to speak about relates to motor vehicles and, in particular, the registration of motor vehicles. I acknowledge that in recent times a system has been put in place that significantly reduces the likelihood of people buying a vehicle which is financially encumbered or which has been stolen or is in some other way not the property of the seller. I give this Government, and any other Government that has undertaken those measures, some credit.

In addition, some months ago a system was put in place which allowed new motor vehicle dealers to issue the registration plates for new vehicles sold by them. Again, given the volume of the work and given the functionary nature of registering a new vehicle the engine number and chassis number of which are clear, superficially it would seem that there was no specific reason for that not to go ahead.

The third element is that most new car dealers are people of some substance, some credibility. It therefore seemed to me at the time to be a reasonable initiative by the Government. Unfortunately, the motor trade being what it is, there has proved to be scope for misuse, and I think the Minister will be quite interested in what I have to say.

I will outline what can happen with otherwise legitimate new car dealers. I bring it to the Minister's attention in the hope that this scheme will not be extended to used car dealers, which I understand is a move that is being considered. I believe that there will be great scope for misuse should that occur. I urge the Government to give consideration to the matter.

What I am about to outline occurred prior to the introduction of the scheme under which dealers issued the registration plates. The fact of life is that motor vehicle dealers can be beneficiaries of a range of incentives which are put in place by manufacturers, importers or dealerships. That is a very legitimate method of operation. As far as the dealers are concerned, the key is that the sales are awarded or credited to a particular dealership on the basis of the postal address of the buyer and, all importantly, the postcode as taken from the official registration certificate.

I am simply saying that the manufacturer or the importer does not award those incentive points on the basis of the number of vehicles he has supplied to a particular dealership or on what that dealership has said that it has sold; it is worked out on the basis of the registration returns. It seems in some instances that dealers are not credited at all with sales that occur outside their designated postcode areas and, in other instances, that the credit points are reduced if those sales occur outside their accredited area.

The small scam, which is probably practised by quite a few otherwise respectable dealers, is to record the address of a buyer outside their designated areas correctly in all respects except the actual postcode. That can easily be passed off as a mistake. By and large, when the renewal notice is issued, it will probably find the buyer, anyway. Although it is not a terribly serious matter, it is a little scam that ensures that a dealer picks up a few extra points. Quite a few otherwise respectable dealers do that occasionally. If they have a target to reach and they need 50 registrations for a month, they might use that little scam for three or four vehicles. I am not saying that it is done on a wholesale basis, but it is done, and it is done widely.

For the purpose of accumulating sales credit points, the less-scrupulous provide an entry with a completely incorrect address. In the event of a fault, the effect on the consumer can be very severe in terms of the application of the warranty. It has been

brought to my attention that the consequences can be equally as severe or more severe. Recently, a person from Hughenden was prosecuted for driving a unregistered vehicle. Most people who buy a new car usually have funds available to re-register their vehicles when the time comes for renewal of registration, so I am not talking about the bottom end of the market. The person who was prosecuted maintained that he had overlooked renewal of his registration. He admitted that the vehicle was not registered because he had not received a renewal notice. On inspection of the paperwork, the reason for the non-receipt of the renewal notice was that the original address was in a fact that of a Townsville motel at which the buyer had stayed during the period that he was negotiating the purchase and the taking of delivery of the vehicle. There is no doubt whatsoever that an incorrect address was used purely for the purpose of accumulating points. The dealer said, "Where are you staying?" The purchaser named the motel, and that was inserted on the registration papers.

I raise this matter today because my inquiries revealed that one major dealer in the Townsville area is well known to Main Roads police and to the trade for adopting that practice. I will not actually say who it is, but to let off the hook those people who are not adopting this practice I will say that the dealers who are not involved are the Ford, the GMH, the Mitsubishi, the Nissan and the Mazda distributors. Anyone who has any interest in that particular area can very quickly work out the dealer who is involved in the practice. I have no reason to believe that the offending dealer is any less respectable or responsible in terms of the local citizenry. In other words, I am saying that if a person lives in Townsville there is no reason why he would not go to this particular dealer. I do not think that there is anything to suggest that that dealer's prices are worse or that he has fewer sales. The dealership obviously achieves a large number of sales outside the Townsville area.

The problem is not confined only to Townsville. The Minister must consider that the problem can apply equally to a person from north Queensland who travels to Brisbane, as many people do, and buys a vehicle from a Brisbane dealer. For the sake of incentive points, that dealer could work exactly the same sort of scheme. He could be credited with the points and, depending on how the registration papers were addressed, a person may not receive his registration renewal. As I have said, it could apply equally to someone who has come to Brisbane from north Queensland as it could to someone who has come from western Queensland to Townsville. Those are the type of activities that can take place.

In one way it could be said that a large number of people may not be affected because eventually they will receive their renewal notices. However, in the circumstances that I outlined, a person who pays his initial registration fee and who depends on receiving his renewal notice could finish up being prosecuted and lose licence points. It is a serious matter. I bring it to the attention of the Minister responsible for consumer affairs because I believe that at present a move is being made to extend the scheme. The scheme has just recently been extended to Townsville so that dealers can issue number-plates. There is nothing to say that that will increase the problem. I have been alerted to what can happen. I am simply saying that once one moves into the area of second-hand car dealers, one is dealing very often with people of less repute and less substance and the opportunity for scam or misuse of the system is much greater. I believe that, should the Government allow that to happen, it would be opening a Pandora's box.

I am sure that each and every member of Parliament has dealt, as I have, with complaints from people who have had their vehicles repossessed. It must be remembered that the purchase of a motor vehicle is probably the second-largest purchase that a person will make in his life, unless he is lucky enough to buy a caravan or a boat. Only last year I became familiar with the circumstances of a Townsville couple, Mr and Mrs Edwards, who had bought a car two and a half years earlier. Before the new scheme was introduced, they went to the trouble of checking the registration with the police. They checked that the vehicle was not the subject of a hire-purchase agreement or that it was a stolen vehicle. Mr and Mrs Edwards were told that the vehicle was clear.

However, later it turned out that the vehicle was encumbered to a Sydney finance firm. By the time that they went through all the legalities and the Sydney company repossessed the car, Mr and Mrs Edwards were \$15,000 out of pocket. The matter did not end there. Quite correctly, the couple pursued the matter as a civil action. The fraudulent person who sold them the car was brought back to Townsville. His case went before the court and he was told to report to the police station every second day. That person then applied to the magistrate on the basis that the conditions imposed an unreasonable burden upon him. He was allowed to return to Sydney, but he has never been heard of since. Of course, Mr and Mrs Edwards have absolutely no prospect of getting their money back.

I am using that case as an example of what has gone on and how careful we must be with the ownership or registration of motor vehicles. I trust that the Minister will take on board what I have said, be alert that that scam is on and be very careful with the introduction of any new scheme that will in any way provide greater scope for less than reputable dealers to defraud the public.

Mrs GAMIN (South Coast) (4.08 p.m.): On behalf of consumers and small businesses, I welcome this Bill. In the interests of fair trading, it is essential that a consumer agency operates under effective legislation.

While the ethics and integrity of the vast majority of traders are unquestioned, there are inevitably a number of unscrupulous operators who wish to make a quick and unearned profit for themselves. They are rogues. Somehow they manage to keep up a constant succession of schemes and scams that are intended to part consumers from their money. Granted, the appeals are sometimes to the foolish or the greedy, but equally they may be to the disadvantaged, the desperate and, quite commonly, the average person.

As honourable members are no doubt aware, it is hard enough in these times for most people to provide for the necessities of life without being induced into wasting money through dishonest promotions. The Honourable the Minister has an excellent record of alerting the community to the nefarious activities of various mail-order cons, door-to-door scams and get-rich-quick schemes, among others. Recently, the Minister had considerable success at the Gold Coast in alerting residents to a particular scheme.

Consumers should be warned at the earliest opportunity of any potential or existing hazard in the market-place. Any restrictions on the capacity of the Consumer Affairs Bureau to become involved prior to the purchase of goods or services is not in the best interests of consumers or reputable traders. By extending the functions of the bureau under the Consumer Affairs Act, consumers will be provided with a more effective early-warning system and the bureau will be able to become actively involved prior to purchases and complaints.

Mr UNDERWOOD (Ipswich West) (4.10 p.m.): I am pleased to join in this debate. I hope that the Minister will continue to mention people such as Peter Foster, Robert Clark and company in press releases warning people about shonky operators. I hope that the Minister will not appear on television a few days later, although it is nice to see him on television.

As to consumerism and ministerial involvement in the media—there is a tendency to take up issues that promote the Minister rather than getting down to the nitty-gritty issues that consumers face every day of the week. In terms of the general population, only a few people have dealt with Mr Clark or Mr Foster. I wish to address a few other problems that people face every day of the week in relation to real estate or the goods that they buy.

Some time ago in this House I raised the issue of real estate agents who were operating in the Ipswich area, namely, Dixon and Eaton Precision Homes. They were a bunch of shonks, if ever I have seen one. They were using dubious practices to sell expensive finance to people who generally could have obtained Housing Commission finance. However, those people were never run out of business. Mr Dixon is now

operating from swanky offices selling real estate around the city. In the mean time, because of the way in which his company operated, people in the Ipswich area have lost their homes and families. Mr Dixon is now operating under another name. The people who worked for him are still in the business. AMEV Finance is continuing to prosper from the poverty of those people in the Ipswich area with whom Dixon and his company dealt.

The media is afraid to take on companies such as that. However, the local newspaper, the *Queensland Times*, took on that company and published articles on its front page and page 3. Dixon and his group of companies contacted that newspaper and said, "Hey, we put a lot of money into you people through advertising in the real estate section." The advertising department contacted the editorial department, and that put the kibosh on any further publicity. At that time a few writs were issued.

As to the real consumer issues—in general the media and, particularly, the newspapers, which can handle these matters better than other sections of the media, lack the courage to give adverse publicity to organisations on which they rely for revenue.

Some years ago, another newspaper, the *Toowoomba Chronicle*, published an article on motor bike accidents in Toowoomba. The local motor bike shops said, "Hey, you are costing us business." As a result, that newspaper went quiet on that issue. Where is the courage that we often hear about from the media, namely, that it exerts pressure to expose shonky operators? When it is pointed out to them who is really financing their operations, I do not believe that it exists.

I am concerned that this may be show-piece legislation for the Minister. Reports have been made to me that, under this Minister, the industrial inspectorate has been deliberately reduced in resources, finance and manpower. That is of major concern to me. With the attack on unionism in this State and the reduction of the power of unions in this State to look after their members, the one thing that was left to the workers to receive some justice in the maintenance of industrial law in this State was their ability to appeal to the industrial inspectorate, which was already overloaded. Government policy is now reducing the resources and staffing of the inspectorate. That means that the workers have even less protection. I am suspicious that this legislation may be just another show-case for the Minister to help his publicity push for the Deputy Premiership. If the Government is so concerned about helping consumers, why is it reducing the industrial inspectorate? I hope the Government is concerned about helping consumers. We will just have to wait and see.

The Minister's responsibility also relates to safety in the workplace, another area in which problems have been experienced. Because this legislation deals with consumers, who are my concern, I hope that the Minister tackles some of these issues.

I have a proposition to put to the House and to the Minister which I would like to see him take up. If he did, he would do himself a lot of good. If my proposition were adopted, this State could actually lead the way, because I have not seen such a proposal in place in any other part of the world. I propose the setting-up of a shoppers prices databank. The computer databanks of the various shopping chains could be linked together by landline, satellite or whatever other means are available, to enable people with personal computers at home to use their television sets to hook into that link so that before going shopping they could actually see the prices that are being charged by the various stores in the town in which they lived. They could then decide whether they wanted to go to Brisbane, Toowoomba or Rockhampton.

The technology is available. Someone has only to take the initiative to put it in place. It could be managed by a Government instrumentality, under the auspices of the Consumer Affairs Bureau, or the Government could initiate its establishment by a private operator. I envisage such a proposal would be paid for by the stores themselves. I am sure the consumers would want to be involved in it. For example, I understand that Seventel is reasonably successful. If a person buys the service, he can use his television set to find out various pieces of information. The Commonwealth Bank has a system

called Telebank, which is utilised through a TV set, and enables a customer to find out about his accounts.

As I said, the technology is available. Someone—and I suggest the Government, and this Minister in particular, because he does take initiatives in certain areas—has only to take the initiative and set it up. I can remember that not so long ago we used to laugh and chuckle about what we thought were science-fiction stories about plastic money and how it could be used for shopping or for the purchase of petrol. We were told that the piece of plastic would be zipped through a fancy machine and the purchase would be paid for; that there would be no need for any money. We used to laugh about that; it was science fiction. Now it is reality. We used to laugh about how robots would stack our shelves and run our storehouses. Scanners were science fiction as well. Now it is all reality. I suggest to the Minister that the shoppers prices databank could be a reality if someone had the will to do it. I suggest that these days consumers are really up against it.

The Australian market-place has basically two conglomerates that provide groceries. If people want to use market forces, they should do it. One way in which that could be done is for the conglomerates to compete against each other on a much fairer basis than their spending enormous amounts of money on expensive TV ads that say, "We are the cheapest.", and then display a few specials, most of which are luxuries that are not needed, anyway. One can go to the Cut Price deli or the Harvest Markets fruit shop next door to Woolworths and see that the Woolies specials are more expensive than similar items at the deli or the fruit shop. Sometimes the specials are not really specials at all.

This proposal is one way in which shoppers could get a fair deal again. Through their personal computer and a TV set they would be able to gain access to such data. If they do not have such things now, I suggest that in a few years' time everyone will have them, in the same way as almost everyone has a telephone these days. There was a time not so long ago when most people did not have a telephone. The time is coming when everybody will have a personal computer in his home. As our children become older, they will need a PC on which to do their high school homework. That will happen. People will have those facilities. Queensland should lead the way and implement this sort of proposal.

I have suggested one way in which the databank could be paid for, depending on how it is set up. Another task of a databank would be the provision of a public facility in a shopping centre where people who did not have their own facility at home could come along and buy a print-out of the prices for the day. For example, in Papua New Guinea I have seen public TV in the market-place, where people crowded around to watch, just as in the fifties people in Australia crowded around TV sets in shops and watched. New Guinea established a public facility so that people could watch television. Queensland could establish a public prices print-out system. The authority in charge of the databank could publish in the newspaper a list of the day's prices, just as the casket numbers are printed regularly in the back pages of the newspaper. People would then be able to check out the day's grocery prices, just as they are now able to check out their winning numbers in the casket. They would be able to compare prices.

Many times people go shopping at Woolworths, Coles or Franklins and they find that the prices are similar. In fact, in recent times when people who conduct prices surveys have gone into a Franklins store, the person in charge has harassed them and asked why a check was being carried out on the store's prices. When that aspect is mentioned to Woolworths, the person in charge will say that that is because the prices at Franklins are not any different from those at Woolworths. Yet one chain advertises that its products are cheaper than those of the other. People need to be able to compare prices. Once a person enters a shopping centre, he is usually committed to doing most of his shopping there. Therefore, people need to be able to make their decision before they go shopping. By using the high technology that is available to people right now, people will be able to exert some pressure of their own on the various stores.

I suggest also that the corner stores and the smaller purchasing groups could be competitive with the big operators. I think they would love to buy into such a system. Sometimes the local newsagent can provide school stationery at a much cheaper price than the Woolworths, the K marts or the Targets. Of course, that could be called good shopping; but, if a person travels by car from one shopping centre to another, he could spend on petrol more than the amount he might have saved. I put forward that suggestion as a way in which people could fight back against shop-owners who are using high-tech equipment to beat them. I can think of many examples of the ways in which stores use high technology to their advantage, but I will not go into that now.

I would like the Minister to seriously consider the propositions I have advanced because I believe that they would revolutionise shopping. The Federal Labor Party set up a price-watching scheme which has been as successful as could be expected. However, I believe that my suggestions would have an even greater impact in the market-place and would benefit the consumer. Because of the decline in world prices for Australian commodities, the Australian economy is becoming weaker and the dollar has to go further than ever before. Ordinary workers have less money to buy food to put on the table or clothes for their children to wear. I believe that my suggestions present a major way in which consumer problems can be overcome.

Another problem that affects all consumers is shop-lifting. Last week an article appeared in Brisbane newspapers about the introduction of new high-tech tags in Melbourne as a means of combating shop-lifting. I first noticed this system in Sydney some time ago and I have noticed a similar system operating in the larger libraries around Brisbane. A surveillance system operates to pick up books that are being taken out without having been properly registered. Such a system should operate on a widespread basis throughout stores in Queensland. I believe also that the Consumer Affairs Bureau should actively promote the installation of anti-theft, high-tech surveillance equipment in all stores. Although it is very easy for stores to add the cost of such a system onto the price of the goods, because the value of goods lost through shop-lifting is so significant, a saving could be made.

Policies adopted by stores are directly to blame for shop-lifting being so common. The design of the stores, lay-out and placing of goods under the noses of people present a temptation to consumers. Basically, retail trading is all about tempting people to buy goods and, in some instances, people are tempted to take them. The environment in some stores is conducive to shop-lifting because very few people actually work in the aisles to load the shelves. I believe it would be possible for a person to get undressed and dressed again many times without even being noticed; so it would be easy for people to conceal goods and take them out of the stores. The high-tech tagging system is a way to overcome that type of problem.

Major stores employ store detectives to keep an eye on shoppers. I believe that they operate on a "kill" system—that is, if they do not get a certain number of "kills" during the week, the store will not employ them for very much longer, and pressure is on the store detective to deliver the numbers. It would be immaterial to the store detective whether a person was entitled to a second chance or whether a person was innocent of an allegation of having deliberately engaged in shop-lifting.

I believe that many people who are accused of shop-lifting are completely innocent of deliberately taking goods out of a store. Statistics indicating the personal problems suffered by people in this modern, high-pressure age are enough to satisfy me that people are preoccupied when they go shopping. One of the boom industries is psychology, which also indicates to me that people are caught up in a whole series of problems that prey on their minds to an unprecedented extent. People make mistakes when they go shopping and simply do not remember having either picked up an item or having put it in a pocket; yet they are the very people who tend to be selected by the store detective; they appear to be suspicious. The store detective will say, "I had been watching that person for some time and he appeared to be suspicious." A person could probably appear to be suspicious because of an inability to control his psychological responses or his nervous

system. The reason he appears to be suspicious is that he has a mental problem, not because he is trying to steal something from a shop.

A recent case that was brought to my attention in the Ipswich area concerned a person who had been accused of shop-lifting who was undergoing traumatic personal experiences. That person is as honest as the day is bright, yet the store detective alleged that theft had occurred. The police investigated the matter and found that there was no case to answer. The store detective referred the matter to the head office in Brisbane and wanted to press charges, despite the fact that there was no evidence to support the case. The person concerned was definitely innocent, but the store wanted to proceed with the charge, to prove that the person was a criminal. I believe that there would be many similar instances of that type of treatment of consumers.

I suggest that the Minister should promote the concept of challenging people who go through a turnstile with goods that have not been paid for and asking whether they wish either to purchase the article or to return it to the shop. I believe also that high-tech, anti-theft equipment combined with the adoption of a reasonable approach could make shopping a much better experience for the consumer. Whatever happened to the old adage "innocent until proven guilty"? In the case of shop-lifting, it is often "guilty until proven innocent".

I believe that the Minister and his officers should also promote the use of calculators as an improved shopping technique. People are often seen using calculators in supermarkets to make sure that they can afford the goods they wish to purchase and meet their family budget commitments. Because many similar items are offered in stores these days, people need a calculator to work out which product is their best buy. A variety of products is presented—either tinned or packaged—in slightly different quantities under different brands for slightly different prices. Some products are on special; others are not. Without calculators, people would need to be able to do major multiplication and division sums in their heads to avoid being at the shopping centre all day, trying to work out which product is the best value.

What usually happens is that people grab the first product they see—which is probably the product that was recently advertised on television, or the product that has the colour and design that appeals to them—and off they go. Often, the product they have chosen is not the best value, in spite of the fact that, when they came into the store, they wanted the best buy for their money. I suggest that a system of hiring calculators should be operated in those stores that have sufficient initiative. The Minister might say, "Who would want to hire a calculator? How could such a system be operated?" Why not impose a \$20 deposit? Surely \$20 would well and truly cover the price of a calculator. A person could go into a store with \$20 in his hand and shop in the store using the calculator. The Minister could use advertising to promote the use of a calculator to ensure that people get the best buy. When a person has finished his shopping, he returns the calculator to the check-out and the \$20 is either credited to his total bill or is returned to him by the check-out operator. It is a simple way of giving people another chance to beat the massive confusion of brands, prices and colours that meet them when they go into a store.

What sort of information should be available to people when they access the prices databank through their computer or television? Not only should the price and brand name be available to them, but also the weight, contents, use by date and the place where the product is actually made should be available. In other words, all the information that is contained on the label should be available. All the things that people consider when they are standing in the shopping aisles should be available to them at home through the use of modern technology. I ask the Minister to seriously consider these matters and once again be a leader in consumerism.

Hon. Sir WILLIAM KNOX (Nundah) (4.32 p.m.): This Bill is supported by the Liberal Party. The legislation was first introduced in 1970 and was the result of an investigation by a committee that reported to the Parliament on a hundred different

cases and submissions that it had considered. Since that time there have been a number of amendments to the legislation. There will continue to be amendments made to the legislation because it is concerned with changes in modern society. For hundreds of years the cry was, "Caveat emptor."

Mr Davis: Let the buyer beware.

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: I am pleased that the honourable member for Brisbane Central is so learned.

Mr Casey: He's a good catholic, and has studied the language.

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: I am delighted that he is spending his pre-retirement leave on such useful occupations.

This legislation strengthens a principle that is in the hands of the consumer. Sometimes consumer protection legislation is criticised and people say that it should be laissez-faire. If a consumer does not have available the aids that are available to the supplier of the goods, it is an unequal contest in terms of bartering in the market-place. These days bartering in the market-place is more formalised than it used to be, but some still exists. It gives the consumer an opportunity to be on an equal footing with the other partner involved in the transaction. The Liberal Party supports legislation assisting the consumer.

There are two major amendments in the Bill. One important amendment relates to the charter of the Consumer Affairs Bureau, which is substantially changed. Honourable members may not be aware how big the changes are, but they are complementary to section 33 of the Act and relate to the possibility of events occurring. Queensland has always been a leader in consumer affairs legislation and will continue to be so because of the enthusiasm of the Minister. Caution needs to be exercised in this area and I am sure that the Minister's advisers have brought this matter to his attention.

When consumers are advised of the possibility that things may not be all that they seem, then dangerous ground is being trod. I do not know what protection the bureau and its officers have in the event of giving advice to consumers that may ultimately prove to be incorrect. I would be pleased to hear the Minister's views on this matter. There is a danger that in forecasting an event that may be prejudicial to a consumer, the information that is supplied to the Consumer Affairs Bureau may be false, incomplete or misleading. That could lead an officer of the bureau to advise a consumer incorrectly. I am not suggesting that he would do so deliberately. What I am saying is that he might do so simply because all the information is not available at the time.

All honourable members support warning consumers about the likelihood of events occurring that might be prejudicial to them, because very often consumers get the information too late to be effective in looking after their interests. Before proceeding in this area, the Government must ensure that misleading or false information is not given to consumers. I hope that some protection will be given to the bureau and its officers in case that situation should arise. At the same time, if consumers are given information from the bureau which may lead them to make a decision which might be prejudicial to them, then the consumers' rights must be protected in regard to their relationship with the bureau. In other words, if a consumer is given misleading information by the bureau, that consumer may see an opportunity for recourse against the bureau if that information led to a decision which was ultimately prejudicial to the consumer. Nowadays, because consumers are not only private individuals but also firms, possibilities exist which previously did not have to be considered. I take it that the Minister has looked at this matter and has the answers to these problems.

The Liberal Party supports the legislation and wishes it well. I am quite sure that, although the circumstances that I have mentioned will not be a regular feature, there may be the odd occasion on which they might arise. I hope that, as a result of this legislation, consumers will be even further protected and given more information on which to base their decisions.

Mr FRASER (Springwood) (4.38 p.m.): In view of the nature of certain complaints being received from small business and consumers about publishers of spurious journals selling advertising space, this amendment to the Consumer Affairs Act is most timely and appropriate. Why do small businesses that can ill afford to waste money on totally ineffective advertising fall for this con time and time again?

Firstly, the promoters of such schemes commonly use names that imply affiliations with charitable or other community associations. This is generally done with sufficient care to avoid any charges of misrepresentation. Secondly, representations are often made that the advertising will be good value because up to 20 000 copies will supposedly be printed and distributed or that every business premises in the area will receive a copy of the so-called journal.

Reality often turns out to be far different from the claims made at the time of selling the advertising space. When all of the advertising space has been sold and the printing is arranged, commonly only enough copies are made to send a copy to each of the advertisers, with perhaps 100 left over for general distribution in the area. That does not conform with the story that was told to the people.

Mr Hamill: Are you using the page that Judy left on the desk?

Mr FRASER: No, but if she has a page there, I might use it.

Mr Hamill: She had only one.

Mr FRASER: Did she?

This amendment of the Consumer Affairs Act 1970-1987 is necessary to make the type of conduct to which I have referred misrepresentation within the terms of that Act. It is not acceptable that the perpetrators of such scams should be allowed to thumb their noses at the community while remaining inaccessible to the reach of the law. That is the main purpose of the amendments that the Minister has brought forward. I commend him for his initiative in attempting to close this loophole in the Act. The amending legislation has my complete support.

Hon. V. P. LESTER (Peak Downs—Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Affairs) (4.40 p.m.), in reply: Firstly, I wish to thank all members who took part in this debate. All of them have done their very, very best to put forward positive views for the better administration of consumer legislation. I thank everybody for that. For once politics have been kept out of a debate and we have got on with the job at hand. That is very, very good.

Mr McElligott: That is always the case.

Mr LESTER: No, it is not always the case, on either side. The honourable member knows that.

I believe that the member for Ipswich was quite genuine in his efforts. He spoke about consumer education and being pro-active. It is a fact that we are endeavouring to educate people as much as possible. Some programs are run in schools and there are various types of far-ranging consumer education programs, whether they be by way of printed material or advertising. I should add that we do not go overboard with advertising. At the same time our officers travel around Queensland continually, talk on radio and have contact with the other sections of the media. Jan Taylor, Norm Richardson and the rest of us do a lot of consumer affairs work on talk-back radio.

Mr Comben: You have recently found consumer affairs—all those press releases protecting the public. Good publicity, isn't it.

Mr LESTER: I do not do anything different from the Federal Minister for consumer affairs or a good friend of mine, the Labor Party Minister in Victoria, Mr Spyker. I can assure the honourable member that he makes a lot of press statements. They are just part of the job. Much of the time Jan Taylor makes the statements in Queensland.

However, under the ALP Government in Victoria, Mr Spyker does not allow his officers to make statements. If the honourable member for Windsor wants to be fair dinkum about it, he should realise that I am the one who is trying to keep a balance and to keep politics out of it.

Mr Comben: Oh, no!

Mr LESTER: I have just given the member the instances. I am not knocking Mr Spyker, but there is no way in the world he would allow any of his officers to make a statement. The honourable member knows that as well as I do.

The Consumer Affairs Bureau is trying to become even more efficient. Offices have been opened at Rockhampton and the Gold Coast and the bureau will be moving into Townsville, Nambour and Cairns in the not-too-distant future.

The member for Ipswich also mentioned the recent acquisition of the Weights and Measures Branch. That is not correct. That branch has been within my department ever since I have been the Minister.

Mr Hamill: I was not suggesting that it was any other way, but I am saying that the budget has now been integrated so that it includes the Weights and Measures Branch.

Mr LESTER: That is fair enough.

The bureau has tried to become far more efficient and I believe that that has been achieved, particularly with decentralisation. We have tried to use every available avenue and have placed more responsibility on our industrial inspectors, who in recent times have been taught more about the administration of consumer affairs.

The member for Ipswich made some little mention of travel agents. I believe that, generally speaking, the travel agent legislation is working well. It is something that the Government was asked to do by travel agents to protect consumers. The Government has linked Queensland with the national body. Our efforts there have been at least comparable with, if not better than, those of the other States.

Mr Hamill: Why were operators allowed to operate without having their licences?

Mr LESTER: They had been operating before. Those problems were overcome very quickly once I got to hear of them. In my opinion there was no real problem.

I have put the fair trading legislation before Cabinet and have approval to proceed further with it. I am sure that everybody will be quite happy with it. The other questions raised by the honourable member will be answered in writing.

The member for Townsville East, Mr Smith, spoke about the registration of motor vehicles. Some of the questions that he asked were a little complicated and need consideration rather than loose comment in Parliament. Where we see fit, we will answer those questions in writing.

I thank the member for South Coast, Mrs Gamin, for her contribution to the debate. Obviously, she is aware that a great need exists for further consumer representation on the Gold Coast to augment the work that is already being done there. We are endeavouring to overcome those problems.

The member for Ipswich West, Mr Underwood, made a sincere effort. He commented about my appearing on television. I have debated with Peter Foster twice and I have held my own with him, if not beat him. Many people believed that I beat him, which was good. He had never previously been taken on by anybody in a public debate. It caused him to leave the country. He blamed me for that, which I believe is a compliment. I might add that some members of the ALP thanked me for taking him on, which was good to see.

The honourable member spoke about the use of a database with a TV monitor so that consumers would know what the prices were. I would like to investigate that matter further. The honourable member made a fair effort to cover his tracks in almost everything

that he said. My initial concern is that that system could go against the small operators and the poorer people who would not be able to afford the equipment. He went on to say that it is a bit like a telephone and that after a while everybody gets one. I do not believe it is quite like that. It would play into the hands of the larger operators. Because their articles are dearer, the smaller business people would need to be protected. It is not until one enters a shopping complex that one suddenly notices that the presentation is better or the quality of goods is better.

Mr Underwood: Are you talking about corner stores?

Mr LESTER: No. I am talking about specialist stores within shopping complexes.

Mr Underwood interjected.

Mr LESTER: I am not knocking in any shape or form what the honourable member is saying. I want further investigations to be made. The matter is worth further thought.

The honourable member spoke also about shop-lifting and some of the preventive devices that can be installed. That would impose a cost on the smaller business operators. However, they can generally keep better control over the shop-lifters. The department is embarking upon a policy that will encourage people to be more honest. I take the point also about people being accused of wrong-doing and no allowance being made for the state of their health at that time. A person may steal an item for many reasons. I do not disagree with what the honourable member said. It is a matter of finding a way to deal with the problem. However, everything worth while requires some consideration. I thank the honourable member for his sensible comments.

The member for Nundah, Sir William Knox, who was the Consumer Affairs Minister at one time, spoke about the accuracy of warnings by the Consumer Affairs Bureau. I believe that the warnings have been accurate. Once or twice, my warnings have been challenged by some shonky operators who have threatened to do all sorts of things to me. However, they have never been able to substantiate any of the accusations that they have made. Our warnings are accurate and we do not make them unless we have to do so. We also give the odd warning in Parliament. However, we are very careful about warnings that we make. We want to be sure that they are correct and we do not want anybody named stupidly. It would be awful to name somebody in the House and then find that he did nothing wrong.

I thank each and every member who contributed to the debate.

Motion agreed to.

Committee

Clauses 1 to 4, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

Third Reading

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

MINING TITLES FREEHOLDING ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 7 September 1988 (see p. 647).

Mr EATON (Mourilyan) (4.53 p.m.): The Opposition supports the manner in which this Bill has been presented. In fact it is a Bill that perhaps should have been introduced many years ago because, as the Minister acknowledged in his second-reading speech, there have been many anomalies regarding the differences between miner's homestead perpetual leases and miner's homestead leases.

The Government is going to allow the amalgamation of miners' homestead leases with other forms of tenure. I am wondering whether that will include tenure leasing or freeholding without the miner's homestead lease being converted to freehold.

Mr Glasson: They are now valued at one unit. In other words, land under similar ownership in close proximity.

Mr EATON: Yes, I realise that. This will allow that amalgamation to take place, similar to the amalgamation of blocks now for rating purposes——

Mr Glasson: Primary production. This is purely to allow a separate valuation for individual blocks of land which are now all under one valuation.

Mr EATON: I see.

I do not know whether that will be such a good thing. If blocks are already amalgamated, I think the valuation should take place. However, I can see the Minister's point. There can be two or three titles in the one area of ownership. There could perhaps be a need there for separate valuations.

However, the Lands Department will not allow amalgamations of different tenures. If a person has a perpetual lease block, he cannot amalgamate that with other forms of leases or even with freehold, which the Opposition can fully understand.

As the Minister pointed out in his second-reading speech, most of the anomalies have occurred in the past. I am sure that the Minister would be aware that my electorate includes two mining towns, Mount Garnet and Herberton. A few years ago, when the Minister first introduced legislation regarding miners' homestead perpetual leasing and freeholding, it caused a lot of concern and distress in many areas.

People applied to have their miners' homestead perpetual leases converted to freehold. As a result of the introduction of that Bill, for a few hundred dollars some people were converting their residential lots or their homesites to freehold. However, because their residences were miners' homestead perpetual leases and had a different valuation, the people of Mount Garnet and Herberton had to pay \$7,000 to \$9,000 for freeholding whereas other people had their land converted for a few hundred dollars. That was simply because of the date the Act was passed.

The Opposition agrees with the Government's bringing a bit of standardisation and regulation to the Act, which I am sure will make life easier not only for the people in the system but also the Minister's departmental officers because a great deal of time is spent ironing out these anomalies. I hope that it works very well.

I do have one concern. The administration of the legislation is now under the one department, the Lands Department. In the past people had to continually go to the Mines Department and back to the Lands Department. People could not get something approved without consultation with or permission from the other department. If a person wanted to convert a miner's homestead perpetual lease, he had to have permission from the Mines Department. In fact, that still applies today. If a person wants to apply for the freeholding of a miner's homestead lease or a miner's homestead perpetual lease, he has to get permission from the Mines Department to show that he is not cutting off mining operations or——

Mr Glasson: That applies to any freeholding of any land.

Mr EATON: I think there is less conflict now than there was some time ago.

Many of the residents of Mount Garnet and Herberton have miners' homestead perpetual leases. When people apply for freeholding, they find that because the market value is taken into consideration it is just as easy to continue paying the lease. There is not a great advantage in converting to freehold.

For many years I have argued that the Government has had a freeholding syndrome. It has wanted to get rid of land——

Mr Glasson: It's not the Government, it's the people of Queensland who have got the freeholding syndrome.

Mr EATON: Over the years the Government has made it easier for people to freehold, and the Government gets the money to put into consolidated revenue or wherever——

Mr Glasson: The ultimate title desirable for anybody is freehold.

Mr EATON: But in some cases it is not as advantageous as many people are led to believe. In some cases it is good and in other cases it is not so good.

In regard to mining-fields—in some cases the area of a mining field has been reduced to allow certain people to freehold land and to cut it up for rural residential blocks. I personally know of one instance in my electorate in which the area of a mining-field was reduced. The person in question had land held under several different tenures. He had a plan for making it rural residential. One of the areas he wanted to convert to freehold was near a river. He was unable to freehold that area because it was in the mining-field. I agree with the Government's policy in that regard. However, that problem was overcome by reducing the size of the mining-field, which took this person's property outside the field. He was then able to convert it to freehold. Now he has cut it all up into rural residential blocks, and he will probably make a fortune out of it.

For some time it has been a concern of the Australian Labor Party that in some communities that are dependent on a rural industry this policy is going to have a detrimental effect. For the sake of simplicity, I will cite as an example the sugar industry. The mills have become more efficient, as have the farmers. So now mills are actually looking for throughput. The first few thousand tonnes of cane go towards covering the cost of operating the mill. However, every tonne of cane that is crushed after that point is reached is profit. So the mills do not want to see these rural residential blocks developed because it will cut down on their throughput and their profit. It is quite an expensive business running a sugar-mill today.

Those comments apply to other industries, such as the dairying industry, particularly in areas in which milk or cheese factories have been set up. If areas are allowed to be subdivided for rural residential purposes so that people can buy a five-acre block or, in some cases in which the land is fertile, one-hectare blocks, an industry can be affected. That, in turn, can create problems for the community.

Mr Glasson: That's got nothing to do with this Bill.

Mr EATON: I am using that as an analogy to show the Minister how in the past the Mines Department or the Government has operated in mining areas by converting a title from miners' homestead perpetual leases or, in city areas, miners' homestead leases to freehold. The difference that has existed has been eliminated.

In general, the Opposition agrees with the Bill and supports it.

Mr BEARD (Mount Isa—Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party) (5.01 p.m.): The Liberal Party supports the Bill. It contains straightforward, administrative amendments to the Mining Titles Freeholding Act and there is no problem with them.

I take this opportunity to state that I am all in favour of correcting anomalies and ironing out some of the complexities in the various types of land-holding tenures in the State. On several occasions I have communicated with the Minister and his staff on this matter. For example, in the town of Mount Isa and on the adjacent mining-field, seven different types of leasehold can be found. There is not a great deal of freehold on a mining-field. One needs to be a Rhodes scholar or a Philadelphia lawyer or a combination of both to follow the different types of leasehold.

A lot of the constituent work that I am called upon to do is to try to help people to sort out some of their problems. One of the major problems during the last couple of years was with the State Housing Commission perpetual town leases. People who have bought Housing Commission homes must pay a Crown rental, which in Mount Isa at present is over \$300 a year, on top of the second-highest rates in the State. Although with the payment of their rates they can see garbage trucks going past, sewerage being fixed up, parks and gardens being looked after and dogs being kept off the streets, they do not see anything for the payment of the Crown rental. When they live alongside people who live on miners' homestead leases or miners' homestead perpetual leases who pay far less in Crown rental, it is a real burden and a real irritant to them. It certainly creates a lot of work for me. I write many letters to the Minister about that. I hope that some day in the process of rationalising and cleaning out anomalies something can be set up to simplify this whole matter.

I compliment one of the Minister's staff in the Land Administration Commission, Mr Bill Albrecht. He has been a tremendous help to my secretary and me in expediting matters that have been the subject of delays that were not of his making. Many of the delays were caused by many matters being passed over from the Mines Department to the Department of Land Management. When I have pointed out cases of hardship caused by delays, Mr Albrecht has been most obliging. I would certainly like my thanks to him to be recorded officially. He is a most helpful public servant. He has done a lot of good for us.

Without taking up too much time, it is interesting to look back for a moment to the old miners' homestead leases to which Mr Eaton referred. Those leases were a marvellous idea. In the old mining towns, many of which are now deserted, such as Ballara near Mount Isa, all the leases were MHLs. If lease-holders kept their MHLs for 30 years, they had to pay no more. The beauty of that was that as the mines were worked out and as the towns became deserted, if the Crown wished to resume the land it just sent a demand for the 10c rental to the last-known lessee at the last-known address. If there was no response, the land was simply resumed.

If the land is freehold, the Crown has a bit of a problem. I understand that at the old town of Selwyn a small problem of that sort exists. There is no easy way to resume land which was freehold and the Crown has to resort to trickery, such as getting the local council to levy rate notices for three years and then resume the land when the rates are not paid. Of course, no MHLs have been issued since the thirties because the old MHLs were, in effect, de facto freehold tenures. MHPLs, which were genuine leasehold, were far more attractive to the Labor Government at the time because Labor has always opposed the freeholding of land.

Having given that preamble, it might be appropriate now to ask if and when the embargo on the application for MHPLs in the Cloncurry/Mount Isa mining area will be lifted. It is understandable that in the city area no more MHPLs would be granted. However, pressure has been applied to me when people have asked why they cannot obtain some MHPLs in the adjacent bush areas.

There is one other comment that I would like to make. Although my arithmetic could be faulty, I carried out an exercise with a local surveyor. We estimated that last year the miners' homesteads would have earned the Crown about \$580,000 in rents and fees and that they cost maybe \$650,000 to administer. My figures could be wrong. However, it seems that the Government is losing a little bit in administering the scheme. It leads me to suggest for the Minister's consideration that the Mining Titles Freeholding Act be amended so that all homesteads are automatically freeholded on payment of next year's rent and that the administration of that land then fall upon the Department of Freehold Land Titles, which can easily handle the further 24 000 titles in addition to the 930 000 already managed, thereby saving the Crown about \$70,000 a year and getting rid of one particular problem of lease-holders who pay Crown rental in mining towns such as Mount Isa.

I am pleased that I have had an opportunity to make those comments. I repeat that I wish that the whole system of land tenures could be simplified so that simple souls like me could understand it and feel that they were being really helpful to their constituents who come to them with problems.

Mr Hamill: It is a Herculean task.

Mr BEARD: As Mr Hamill says, it is a Herculean task, but it is very hard not to sympathise with Joe Blow who is paying \$330 a year in Crown rental when Bill Smith, who lives next door, is paying \$60 a year. I pay about \$60 a year because my home is on an MHPL. It is just not fair and it is very difficult to explain to people why that should be so. I wish that the Minister could rationalise the whole system.

Inasmuch as the Bill seeks to settle some of the anomalies, the members of the Liberal Party of course support it.

Hon. W. H. GLASSON (Gregory—Minister for Land Management) (5.07 p.m.), in reply: I take this opportunity to thank the member for Mourilyan and the member for Mount Isa for their contributions. As the member for Mourilyan, the Opposition Land Management spokesman, has left the Chamber temporarily, I shall deal first with the comments made by the member for Mount Isa, who referred to mining tenements under the miner's homestead perpetual lease.

As to the cost analysis of the MHPLs and their administration costs—if the honourable member for Mount Isa wishes to put his request in writing, my department will provide him with the exact figures.

One matter that has been discussed in this House on many occasions is the valuation of a parcel of land, the rent payable on that land and the enormous differential between housing land and LAC land. That is one aspect that many people find hard to accept, and I could not agree more. In all country areas and many urban areas the differential between parcels of land in the very same street is almost impossible for people to accept. Unfortunately, the Department of Land Management has not been able to come to grips with other departments that administer land and charge rent, particularly the Housing Commission.

As the member for Mourilyan has returned to the Chamber, I shall now answer his question. The member asked whether this Bill will allow for the amalgamation of lands. The Department of Land Management operates under a different Act from this legislation. At present the Valuer-General is required to give one valuation to parcels of land that come under one ownership in a similar area. This legislation allows one parcel of land to be isolated and a separate valuation obtained for it. As well, a freeholding figure can be obtained for MHPLs for business, residential or mining purposes.

The honourable member for Mourilyan raised the issue of the Mines Department allowing people to use mining land for other purposes. That is a natural course of events. If a person wishes to obtain freehold tenure over mining land, a decision must be made by the Minister for Mines and Energy as to whether any mineral-bearing deposits exist below the surface.

During recent debates I have heard the honourable member for Mourilyan favour whatever anyone wishes to do to purchase a piece of land for development. I am bitterly opposed to rural residential subdivision, because it represents the denigration of land. I have often stated that rural residential allotments are too big to mow and too small to run a cow on. They produce absolutely nothing. They allow people to enjoy the country way of life and to own a cow or a pony, but they produce nothing for this State and this country. The subdivision of land into rural residential allotments in cane-growing areas is a most detrimental move.

The Government hopes that these amendments will address some of the anomalies and make it easier for people who have difficulty understanding the present situation. I thank both honourable members for their contributions.

Motion agreed to.

Committee

Clauses 1 to 5, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

Third Reading

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

NATIONAL TRUST OF QUEENSLAND ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 13 October 1988 (see p. 1373).

Mr McELLIGOTT (Thuringowa) (5.14 p.m.): I notice that the Minister is not present in the House at the moment. I intend to address a number of questions to him.

As the Minister said in his second-reading speech, this is a small Bill, and it is one to which the Opposition raises no objection. The Opposition has no problems with the first amendment, which relates to the superannuation scheme. A further amendment relates to the provisions that deal with the publication of by-laws that are made by the council of the National Trust, which the Opposition does not question.

The more important amendment relates to the giving of by-law-making powers to the trust, the offering of rewards for information relating to the damage or theft of trust property, etc. As the Minister said in his second-reading speech, this power will be a valuable tool in preserving the important historical material under the control of the trust. I have no argument with that. It is clearly desirable that the trust have whatever powers it feels it needs to protect its valuable assets throughout the State. It is also true that National Trust properties tend to be in relatively isolated areas, which renders them liable to be vandalised, or robbed of important artefacts. The Opposition supports and welcomes this provision.

However, on reading the amending legislation, it seems to me that the Bill provides that a person responsible for an incident in relation to which a reward is offered becomes liable to pay to the National Trust the amount of that reward. That creates some practical difficulties, the most obvious one being the difficulty that I assume the trust would have in recovering those amounts. The sort of person who is likely to cause unauthorised damage, injury or removal, etc., is unlikely to be the sort of person who is able to repay to the trust the amount of any reward that might be offered.

It seems to me that the Bill envisages acts of hooliganism by, presumably, younger people and also anticipates that the amount of reward that might be offered would be relatively small—for example, in the hundreds of dollars. Therefore, I wonder what protection is offered by the Bill to perpetrators of major vandalism.

I want to refer to a couple of examples of the sort of thing I am talking about. The Bill also refers to instances in which the vandalism, or what I would term somewhat loosely the vandalism, is caused by, in the first instance, the State Government and, in the second instance, a major mining company. The first example relates to the former northern Supreme Court building in Townsville, which is some 111 years old. Following the building of the new court complex in Townsville some years ago, the old building has been used as the temporary offices of the Department of Transport, thereby continuing to come under State Government control. During that time it has been allowed to deteriorate very severely. As I said, that comes under the heading of vandalism caused by the State Government.

At present there is considerable community support for moves to retain and preserve the building and for it to come under the control of some sort of community-based

organisation. The first priority seems to be its use as a music centre. However, I understand the State has made a counter-offer that the building might be handed over to the National Trust on condition, I understand, that it be restored, but also that it be removed to another site. In this situation, that is impossible. There is a very strong belief that, first of all, the State Government should accept responsibility as owner of the building—and it has always been the owner of the building, so it is the one that has allowed it to deteriorate to its present condition—and, secondly, that it should pay for the complete restoration of the building—as indeed the State has done, using tax-payers' money, of course, around the city of Brisbane. Those of us who are concerned about the preservation of valuable historically significant State Government buildings would applaud the Government for what has been done in the Brisbane area.

Mr Davis: Let's never forget the Bellevue.

Mr McELLIGOTT: As the member for Brisbane Central has pointed out, that is with the monumental exception of the old Bellevue hotel, for which this Government will always remain infamous.

The point I want to make is that at this stage the State Government's policies in regard to the restoration of historically significant State Government buildings do not appear to extend beyond Brisbane. This legislation does not cover the situation in which, in this instance, the State Government has allowed an historically significant building to deteriorate to the extent that its future has to be under real threat. Thus far it has refused to meet the cost of restoring that building. I suggest that the powers contained in this legislation will not allow the people of Queensland, and certainly not the National Trust, to recoup any sort of financial return from the State Government for allowing that deterioration to happen.

The most recent suggestion is that a cost of some \$750,000 would be involved in restoring the building. As I mentioned earlier, a group of local people who want to operate that building as a music centre have made a certain commitment. I give credit to my colleague the member for Townsville, Mr Burreket, who, at least on the surface, appears to be an enthusiastic supporter of the move to have the building restored and retained. At various public meetings in the town he has suggested that the Government is prepared to offer money. But so far, neither he nor the Premier's Department has been prepared to divulge the size of the proposed grant. The rumour around the city is that the grant will be \$100,000, which will not go any way towards the cost of restoration. Apparently, tied in with that offer is a condition that the building be removed.

The second instance to which I want to refer relates to what I would regard as vandalism being perpetrated in the National Trust township of Ravenswood by Carpentaria Gold Pty Ltd. That gold-mining company is reworking the old diggings around Ravenswood on an open-cut basis. Apparently, under the Mining Act there is no provision to require the company to rehabilitate the area when it has reaped whatever rewards it takes out of those workings. In fact, it is interesting that in the application for a mining lease submitted by Carpentaria Gold Pty Ltd, the extent of the mining lease referred to covers Ravenswood township, reserve R20. In the application form, in the column headed "Name and address of owner or occupier" appears the word "vacant". So, the mining company in this instance is trying to suggest that the township of Ravenswood is deserted, which of course is not so. In fact, the town has some 40 or 50 permanent residents as well as a significant number of tourists who appreciate the heritage value of the old gold-mining town. The proposal is that the company will be leaving open-cut mines reaching a depth of 300 feet scattered around the township. Of course, the mullock heaps will also remain at the completion of the main mining operation. Again I wish to quote from the mining lease application, which states—

"Mining will produce an open cut and this and the mullock heaps will remain at the completion of mining."

Under the heading, "Rehabilitation methods proposed", the application states—

"Removal of all plant and machinery. The open cut and dumps will be left in a safe condition."

I do not think it takes a great deal of common sense to appreciate that it would be very difficult to leave an open-cut mine with a depth of 300 feet in a safe condition on a permanent basis. Obviously, such significant holes in the ground will fill with water and become health hazards. Whatever fencing is erected to prevent people getting access will deteriorate in time. In my opinion, it is clearly vandalism of the highest order to suggest that a mining company can move into a township that has been listed by the National Trust and render it a danger to the local community.

I wish to quote reports that have appeared in a number of newspapers which indicate that this is a classic case of a big company overriding the wishes of a very small community. As I said earlier, Ravenswood has 40 or 50 residents who are very determined to ensure that the company does the right thing. I mention this matter in the context of this legislation because I believe it is the responsibility of this Government to ensure that this sort of vandalism cannot occur. I suggest that the provisions in the Bill being considered today certainly do not cover those aspects. The newspaper items to which I wish to refer indicate that the people of Ravenswood accept that they live in a mining community. They also understand that the township's economy is enhanced by the mining activity that is taking place. Moreover, they are prepared to put up with the dust, noise and heavy trucks and machinery that are operating in the area for the duration of the time it takes Carpentaria Gold to extract gold from the area. The people have objected very strongly to this township being disadvantaged by these mining activities, and in that respect I give them my total support. The people want this township, which has been listed in its entirety by the National Trust, to be left in a condition that will enable them and visitors to enjoy its heritage value. One of the articles contains the following comment—

“The issue has created a rift between the community and the company with the locals swearing to protect their town against any further intrusion of mining activity.

A petition signed by 289 residents, ratepayers and regular visitors has been presented to Dalrymple Shire Council asking it to object to the lease applications and not consent to any further road closures in the town.

Mr Jeff Lambert said the two lease applications covered much of the town.

One took in 121.6 ha of the northern and eastern parts of the township.

If approved, it would allow the company to mine within a few metres of buildings ‘so they are left out on islands’.”

The picture that was painted for me when I visited the town last week is that buildings of historical significance will be perched on land between these 300-foot, open-cut mines that will be left by the mining companies. The article continues—

“There is also concern about the second application to mine underground.

Locals are worried about bore water supply and the effect on underground blasting on the early buildings which give Ravenswood its distinctive charm.

‘The buildings in this town are early 1900s vintage and they are not going to take much shock treatment . . . Ravenswood belongs nationwide.’ ”

I believe that that last point is very important. The article continues—

“‘We don't want to see any more of it fenced off and we don't want to see it become a hole in the ground.’ ”

The statements in that article set the seal on what I have been saying. This very large mining company—a subsidiary of Mount Isa Mines Limited—is in a position to take profits out of Ravenswood through some deficiency in the Mining Act and leave the townspeople and the heritage-listed township in a very poor condition.

I want the Minister to comment on how he sees the legislation that is being considered today coping with the problems I have outlined. If the Bill is intended to suggest—as I believe it is—that rewards will be payable if people are prepared to give information on any unauthorised damage that is caused to land or buildings, clearly a

large number of people will be prepared to give information about what is happening at Ravenswood. I also suggest that if the reward is intended to be meaningful, the amount would have to be significant—hundreds of thousands of dollars. I do not believe that such an amount is contemplated by this legislation.

The two questions that I wish to raise in relation to this Bill are: first of all, does this legislation protect buildings of national trust significance that are vandalised by actions of the State Government or by any other level of government? Secondly, does it also protect buildings and lands, etc., that are vandalised by large companies—in this case a large mining company?

Mr HYND (Nerang) (5.25 p.m.): I am delighted to speak in support of this legislation. I acknowledge the comments made by the previous speaker.

At the outset, let me say how pleased I am that the Government has been able to place this State's heritage within the Department of Environment and Conservation, which is being so ably administered by the Honourable Geoff Muntz. I know that the Minister is already well down the track in restructuring the department to take on board these added responsibilities. It is personally pleasing for me to see the promotion of the Director of Environment, Graham Cleary, and the Director of National Parks, Herb Bonney. Both these gentlemen will meet the challenges offered by their added responsibilities in their usual professional manner, which will bring credit not only to their departments but also to the Government that had the foresight to take a broad view in dealing with the challenges facing Queensland's heritage, the environment and the conservation of this State.

As honourable members are no doubt aware, the National Trust of Queensland has its headquarters in Old Government House and was incorporated for the specific purpose of promoting the conservation of Queensland's heritage in all its aspects. The trust has many functions. Many of its historic properties have been beautifully restored and are open to the public. The trust has also developed a classification system to identify properties that are worthy of preservation for the benefit of Queenslanders.

Important roles of the National Trust are those of environmental voice, public advocate, community conscience and professional adviser. Conservation advice is offered to owners of all kinds of properties. More and more Queensland property-owners are availing themselves of this excellent service offered by the National Trust.

It is of great benefit to Queenslanders that the Government recognises the importance of heritage properties as part of Queensland's natural and constructed environment. It would be remiss of me if I did not acknowledge the great debt of gratitude that all Queenslanders owe to members of the National Trust who so generously and enthusiastically give of their time to assist the trust in the preservation of Queensland's heritage. The Government already funds much of the administrative costs involved in operating the trust.

Mr Comben: Rubbish!

Mr HYND: It does. The honourable member should pay attention.

Under the direction of Geoff Muntz and his able Under Secretary, Stan Wilcox, the Department of Environment, Conservation and Tourism will lead Queensland into a new era of excellence in the protection of Queensland's environment and heritage and the conservation of Queensland's land, fauna and flora.

Mr Comben: I am after you.

Mr HYND: That is all right.

It is a pity that the Commonwealth Government does not desist from its obsession of taxing Australian workers to the poverty line and put its money where its mouth is in the area of conservation, environment and the protection of Australia's heritage.

I have pleasure in endorsing and fully supporting the National Trust of Queensland Act Amendment Bill currently before this House. The amendments proposed to the Act are very minor in nature. For example, the Bill provides that the council of the National Trust may establish and maintain a superannuation scheme for its employees, provided that the approval of the Governor in Council is obtained. This will ensure that any superannuation scheme will not exceed the accepted standards for public sector employees and that it is legally constituted. These superannuation benefits will be for the benefit of some workers employed by the trust at its very successful Currumbin Sanctuary.

In addition, there are to be some small machinery changes to the Act. Legal opinion was obtained to the effect that a trust by-law relating to rewards for information concerning damage to or theft of trust property that was included in the previous by-laws was ultra vires, or beyond one's legal authority, and an amendment to the National Trust of Queensland Act was required to remedy that situation. Consequently, this by-law was not included when the previous by-laws were replaced. The by-law relating to rewards for information given concerning damage to or theft of trust property is necessary to ensure that prosecutions can be pursued against offenders who damage valuable property or exhibits. The offering of rewards for information is simply good business logic and means that the areas within National Trust control are guarded by visitors as well as the normal security personnel.

The proposed amendments are very minor in nature and certainly do not need intensive debate. I support the Bill and ask all honourable members also to support it.

Mr COMBEN (Windsor) (5.35 p.m.): It would be remiss of me if I did not comment upon remarks made by the previous speaker, the member for Nerang, that Stan Wilcox and the Department of Conservation, Environment and Tourism protect flora and fauna in this State and that the Federal Government does nothing and has a high-tax, attack-the-working-man attitude. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Today the truth in Australia is that the Federal Government is leading the fight for conservation and is the one Government that is really preserving Australia's world heritage. The Federal Government is leading in every way. It is the chief advocate of the national estate grant that over the last few years has provided some \$15m in grants to Queensland properties. The Federal Government led by Bob Hawke has much to be proud of. Already it has given large tax cuts and on 1 July it will give Australians further large tax cuts. At the end of this year, the Opposition will be fighting an election and, out of the two long-term Governments in Australia—the Federal Government and the Queensland Government—only one will change, and that is the Queensland Government.

The previous speaker stated that the Queensland Government funds most of the costs of the National Trust of Queensland. Nothing could be further from the truth. From memory, each year a grant of some \$110,000 is given to the National Trust. The trust, with its very professional team, is an efficient organisation. It operates from Old Government House, it is led by its president, Noel Hobson, who is a very competent executive director and a qualified accountant, and it is carrying out a massive multi-million-dollar job on a shoe-string budget. The trust is not helped at all by this State Government. The Minister says that he is streamlining his department. All he is doing is ensuring that there is no real money for National Trust activities such as conservation in this State. The Minister and his department stand condemned in every field, whether it be the National Trust, the Queensland National Parks and Wildlife Service that is presently being disembowelled or the noise abatement and air pollution authorities that have recently been merged into one environmental council.

Mr Ardill: And emasculated.

Mr COMBEN: Yes, totally emasculated. This Government has disembowelled one organisation and emasculated another. It has closed the mouth of the Queensland National Parks and Wildlife Service. Every area of environmental concern in this State is being downgraded and attacked by this Government and this Minister.

Mr McPhie: That's not true, and you know it. You stand up there and tell these stories to people. Nobody takes any notice of you. Why do you persevere?

Mr COMBEN: The media gives me a fairly good run. When speaking about a front-page article in a Toowoomba newspaper about the polluted waterways up there, editorials in the honourable member's area have been to the effect that the Opposition spokesman on the environment got it right. What did the Minister and his mate do—nothing! They are poisoning the people up there.

Mr McPhie: It would do you the world of good to give a bit of credit where it is due. You have never done that.

Mr Davis interjected.

Mr COMBEN: The member for Brisbane Central says it quite correctly. The honourable member for Toowoomba North, Mr McPhie, is complaining about the Opposition's stand on these vital matters concerning the water quality in Toowoomba, which was a front-page story up there. The whole town was up in arms complaining about his lack of representation. He is never in the Toowoomba *Chronicle*, unless he is placing a classified advertisement.

Mr McPhie: You come up there and have a look around. I will take you around and show you these things.

Mr COMBEN: I was up there last year.

Mr McPhie: You have never been there in your life.

Mr COMBEN: I have to take objection to that. I was up there last year looking at the sewerage works. I expected to find him down there stirring the pot. All I found was colossal pollution problems for which the Minister stands condemned. For years the Opposition has been complaining about the sewerage up there. I took part in an on-the-spot live debate with the Mayor of Toowoomba.

Mr McPhie: What about your coming up and showing me these problem areas? I will go around with you because I know they are not there. I know you are making things up. You come up there and show me these things.

Mr COMBEN: I accept the honourable member's challenge and his request. I will issue a press release tomorrow saying that I have accepted his challenge to come and see the problems. I will show the honourable member the Minister's own departmental water-quality readings showing that there are 800 000 "orgasms" in every cup of water up there.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr COMBEN: I will return to the matter of this debate.

Mr Simpson: Your wife will kill you when you get home.

Mr COMBEN: She will if I bring a cup of that water home!

What I wish to do is compliment the National Trust for its work under the leadership of Noel Hobson and its very competent executive director. Any of us who were recently at Currumbin to see the opening of the large open-area aviary there, which covers more than a hectare of ground, can compare it favourably with the best in the world, the Jurong sanctuary at Singapore. It really is of world-class standard, yet very little Government support went into it.

Any of us who can remember back to our youth can remember visiting the Currumbin Sanctuary, which was then "the" attraction on the Gold Coast. I am speaking about the very early years of our youth when we saw the birds coming in. For a number of years the sanctuary was in decline, but when Mr Griffiths handed it over to the National Trust, he was given a very good deal. Every so often Mr Griffiths complains about the

deal that he got from the National Trust and of his treatment by it, but in a number of ways he has benefited considerably. He benefited initially with the purchase and at present he benefits from the maintaining of his life-style by the voluntary giving to him by the National Trust of what can be stated only as extremely generous benefits. It is about time that Mr Griffiths went back to doing whatever he wants to do in his retirement, leave the bird sanctuary to the National Trust and let it get on with its excellent management job.

When the new bird sanctuary becomes the magnificent rainforest area that it will be in the future, the sanctuary will be of world class.

Mr Hamill: There is a railway line there.

Mr COMBEN: Yes, there is a little railway line there, which is to be upgraded, I hope, although I know that it is the normal standard of the Queensland Railways.

Mr Ardill: As long as the Queensland Railways don't get hold of it.

Mr COMBEN: Queensland Railways would think it was high technology.

Mr Hamill: No, Queensland Railways would be amazed that it actually has a passenger service left.

Mr COMBEN: That is right. It is probably the Gold Coast railway link about which we keep hearing so much.

It is unfortunate that, under the trusteeship from Mr Griffiths to the National Trust, the very substantial benefits that are received from the entry fees are not able to be applied to its other runnings. The member for Nerang said that at present the Government meets most of the costs of the National Trust. I would like to know who wrote that brief for him. Certainly it is about time that the Government got its act together and realised what a pittance the National Trust receives from the State Government.

What is really needed is a major boost to the funds of the National Trust from the Government. The trust does excellent work. That brief from which Mr Hynd read—he read it quite well, considering he had never seen it before—referred to professional advice being given by the National Trust to other people and to a whole range of educational facilities. These days a mass of schoolchildren seek advice and assistance from the National Trust for projects, yet no money is given for that. A full-time teacher should be made available. Seaworld has recently been able to obtain free from the Government for nine months the services of a teacher to play an educative role. That sort of thing should also be done down at Old Government House.

In many cases the National Trust is doing the Government's work in this State. For that reason the Government should at least double the grant that is given to the National Trust. The trust is badly in need of more researchers and more administrative staff. The restoration of its building needs to be finalised. All of those things take money.

In Queensland today the National Estate grants from the Federal Government, which I think now total some \$15m, are really what keep the National Estate going. The State's heritage buildings are maintained, preserved and saved by the Federal Government. Nothing that the State Government does assists in that way at all.

If the Minister is taking his responsibilities seriously, he ought to be taking on board the need for more money. The National Trust needs more money for maintenance and restoration of its buildings. I am a member of the National Trust. I have stood in this debate today to support the National Trust, so I should have obtained one of its handbooks. However, I believe it has 25 properties in Queensland, some of which are of excellent standard. Wolston House, at Ipswich, is a fine example of early colonial architecture. On some celebratory days, if one visits some of these places and sees the pageantry that goes on, one can really return to the days of the 1840s and 1860s. That standard should be seen and repeated throughout the State. However, the reality is that the National Trust does not have the money. Where will it find approximately \$250,000 to spend on the main street of Charters Towers? That money is needed.

My colleague Mr McElligott has raised the matter of the old Supreme Court building in Townsville. We should be examining a host of other buildings. However, the National Trust does not have the resources to carry out the assessments necessary throughout the State. For those reasons, more money should be allocated to the National Trust.

I turn now to what the Brisbane City Council is doing in terms of the by-laws concerning the heritage legislation which appeared last week in the *Queensland Government Gazette*. Sixty sites were listed. Through some legalistic jargon, it will be able to have the planning and building rights transferred from a site to another site within the Brisbane central business district. However, of those 60 sites, more than half were already Government buildings or church buildings and under no threat whatever. The legislation is meaningless.

I am being followed in this debate by the Liberal spokesman on these matters, a former deputy Lord Mayor of Brisbane. I point out that the Liberal Party is just like the National Party; it has no policy and it has no concern for or direction on heritage legislation. The Liberal Party was in coalition for approximately 24 years, yet where is the real heritage legislation in this State? My colleague Mr Hamill will address that question and will point out very well what should be contained in the heritage legislation. At present, there is a shonky Cultural Record (Landscapes Queensland and Queensland Estate) Bill which does not even include the term "heritage". In the second-reading speech of the Minister then in control of the Bill, Mr Bob Katter, he did not use the term "heritage" once. However, all the press releases talked about new heritage legislation. It is Mickey Mouse stuff and typical of the direction of the Government. It puts something forward and says, "Aren't we wonderful?" But it is like a balloon of hot air which is easily pricked and which explodes immediately. It has no substance.

In Queensland, we do not even have tree preservation orders. Every other State has some ability to let some local authorities have tree preservation orders. However, in keeping with the lack of concern for heritage legislation and with the National Party Government's desire to see Queensland sold off, its coast raped by developers and not preserved for national parks, what do we see as far as tree preservation orders are concerned? Absolutely nothing! The Government does not make provision for power to preserve.

Mr Burreket: We have got sacred trees on Magnetic Island.

Mr COMBEN: The honourable member would not know what to say about Magnetic Island. He is supporting the rape of Florence Bay. He is supporting a small minority of his constituents. That support saw the eviction of one of his predecessors, Mr Max Hooper, from that seat. He said, "We've got to develop Florence Bay." The reality is that Florence Bay is the only undeveloped bay left on Magnetic Island. The honourable member has taken on a fight that he cannot win, he will not win and which he does not understand. He is whistling in the wind.

Mr Burreket: I am looking forward to the next election. I am more confident than you are.

Mr COMBEN: The only reason the honourable member looks forward to the next election is that he knows that his superannuation contributions will be doubled when he leaves because of the changes that his Government made to the superannuation legislation.

Mr Burreket: This is only my first term.

Mr COMBEN: Yes, but under the new legislation brought forward by his Government, if he is not re-elected, he doubles his pay-out. Previously, he would have received 4 per cent. It has been done to help the Ian Hendersons, the Leisha Harveys and the Beryce Nelsons.

Mr Henderson: You supported the legislation in the House.

Mr COMBEN: I am sure we did. However, it is still legislation to protect National Party members and to give them a sop.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Windsor will return to the Bill.

Mr COMBEN: I was talking about legislation concerning the National Trust. The only thing that the National Party ever protects is its back-benchers and their superannuation schemes. It doubles the contributions by the members. I have no doubt that the lack of National Trust legislation in this State will be one of the reasons why the city-based back-benchers of the National Party will be the first people to lose their seats when the election results go up in early December. Mr Henderson well knows that, if a real swing occurs, seats like his go. The next ones to go are seats such as Whitsunday, where I was campaigning only last week.

Mr Muntz: Come again; you are good for me.

Mr COMBEN: It was a very good trip to Whitsunday to support our local candidate, Lorraine Bird. I had not realised that the Minister was so on the nose in that area. I could not find anyone who would admit voting for him. I was at Proserpine, which is in his electorate. I will note with interest the result of the next election in that electorate.

In every area of his administration, the Minister is not looking after anyone. In this legislation, he is not looking after the heritage buildings in the city. In his other portfolio responsibilities concerning the environment, he is not looking after the country areas. The National Parks and Wildlife Service is being destroyed. His departmental officers have the lowest morale ever. A feeling of total depression exists in his department. His department has lost direction. What honourable members should be seeing they are not seeing from the Minister's department. I think it is a very sad state of affairs.

I want to raise some matters concerning the Minister's responsibility for noise, air and water pollution control. Last week I was privileged to attend a seminar—I might say at tremendous cost to me—at which one of the Minister's departmental officers spoke about the amalgamation of those control divisions. I asked why it was that there was no public representation on the Environmental Advisory Board. The people at the seminar were business representatives. In front of 200 people the departmental officer answered, "The Minister says that one member is a representative of the public." I asked, "Which one?", and she answered, "I think you had better ask him."

Those representatives include someone from the Chamber of Mines, someone from the Chamber of Commerce and someone from local government but not one person who is really representative of the public in any way. In the old days there was a total of 36 people on those advisory boards. That number has been reduced to four.

The people of Queensland want the protection of the noise, air and water pollution legislation. Yet the Government is just saying, "We are doing it all administratively. We are streamlining it. We are cutting red tape." What it really means is that people have no protection whatsoever these days, just as historic homes and historic buildings have no protection whatsoever.

The Opposition certainly supports this Bill in the short way that it goes——

Mr Burreket: Are you finished yet?

Mr COMBEN: No. I am just returning to the Bill.

I was interested to hear the Minister say in his second-reading speech that the Bill contained a second minor technical amendment. He said—

"...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."

With that, the Minister commended the Bill to the House.

It is a fairly poor state of affairs that this National Trust of Queensland Act Amendment Bill amends an Act that has been in force in Queensland for more than a decade, yet only now is the Minister given the power to really be able to protect property, to look to the future and to be able to offer the proper rewards for information.

It is a sad state of affairs in Queensland that the Government does not provide enough police officers to properly police these offences. Vandalism is an increasing problem because of this Government's education policies, which do not properly equip people to enter the mature world. What they do for entertainment is damage National Trust property, which is often isolated and not properly protected. So the Government now has to introduce this sort of amendment.

The Government should have amended the legislation substantially. It should have given the National Trust the proper powers, a subject which my colleague Mr Hamill will address. The Government should have given the National Trust more money. Those are the issues that should have been addressed rather than putting forward these two or three minor amendments which really would normally not attract any attention at all because the amendments that should be introduced would be so far-reaching and far-ranging.

In concluding, I certainly support the Bill as far as it goes——

Mr Hamill: It does not go very far.

Mr COMBEN: No, it certainly does not go very far. However, there is little else that honourable members can support in regard to the Minister's approach to the administration of the National Trust and the environment in this State.

The Opposition is certainly happy to support this Bill. It could have been expanded in various areas. In November the Labor Party in Government will be enacting the sort of provisions that my colleague Mr Hamill will outline. Then the people of Queensland will see what real heritage legislation is, not this Mickey Mouse stuff, not the sort of revisionist comments that are made by Mr Muntz and his "Muntzters" from Brazil. What the Opposition would hope to see is Queensland properly preserved, Queensland properly protected and Queensland as a decent place to live.

Sitting suspended from 5.58 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr BEANLAND (Toowong) (7.30 p.m.): The Liberal Party supports the legislation. I cannot help referring to the statements made by the previous speaker, the member for Windsor. I need to refer to his comments on the Federal Labor Government's role in conservation. Firstly, its role could be compared only with the way that it has managed to push up interest rates, with the resultant effect on small business, the housing sector and families generally. They have been decimated by the Federal Labor Government. That is what is happening with conservation in this country under the control of the Federal Labor Government—it is decimating the environment and conservation. Putting the Labor Party in charge of conservation is like putting the fox in charge of the fowlhouse. The same result can be seen in other areas of responsibility.

The legislation covers two major areas: firstly, the issue of Government approval of the superannuation scheme for employees of the National Trust of Queensland. Before changes can be made to the scheme, the Government's approval is required. That is self-explanatory, quite fair and reasonable. No doubt the Minister and the Government are concerned that there could be differences between the National Trust's superannuation scheme and other Government superannuation schemes.

I take a brief moment to refer to the second aspect of offering rewards for information about damage to and theft from National Trust properties. All honourable members are aware of the magnificent work that is carried out by the National Trust to its properties throughout Queensland. A great deal of effort, time and money is spent on refurbishing those properties and opening them to the general public so that everyone has an opportunity to go through those properties and avail themselves of some of Queensland's

heritage that otherwise would not be available. The National Trust should be congratulated on that work.

A great deal of advice and assistance is provided by the National Trust to the community generally. Private individuals seek that advice when refurbishing their own properties. The fairly simple exercise of allowing the National Trust to offer rewards is like giving the National Trust a sledge-hammer to crack a few nuts. It could be that the National Trust offers some very large rewards. I am interested to know whether any limit will be placed on those rewards. Will the National Trust require those persons found guilty by the courts of causing damage to National Trust property to pay compensation for the damage as well as the amount of the reward? That could be a costly exercise, because in some cases damage can run into hundreds or thousands of dollars. That is a particularly important point that was referred to briefly by one of the previous speakers.

It was pleasing that on 25 February the Government gazetted the city of Brisbane's heritage ordinances in the city of Brisbane town plan. Those ordinances were before the Government for between 12 and 18 months. They are designed to protect significant buildings within the Brisbane City Council's jurisdiction. The people of Brisbane are probably fortunate that this city still has quite a large number of heritage buildings. Over the years, a number of those buildings have been lost. Honourable members are well aware of those buildings that have faced the demolisher's hammer. However, the ordinances encourage private enterprise to play a role. Incentives are given to private enterprise to retain heritage buildings, to keep them up to scratch and to keep them refurbished.

The council should be congratulated on what it has done. I hope that the Government will encourage other local authorities to preserve their heritage buildings. A number of local authorities throughout Queensland have only a handful of buildings; nevertheless, they have them. If those buildings are to be protected, I trust that the Government might consider some similar legislation that will benefit other cities and towns so that those buildings are preserved.

Earlier I asked the Minister whether any limit would be imposed on the amount of rewards. I hope that he will reply to my question.

I turn now to the funding of the National Trust of Queensland. As can be seen from the trust's annual report, a limited amount of funding is provided by the State Government as well as some sums of money by the Federal Government. However, those funds are very limited indeed. There are ways in which the National Trust could raise far more money than it receives by way of Government funding. I hope that the Minister and his departmental officers are looking at those avenues and considering amendments to the National Trust of Queensland Act to allow additional funds to be raised.

If one examines the accounts of the Currumbin Sanctuary, one will see an enormous generation of income. I am sure that that activity has not been missed by the Minister and that he is well aware of the funds that are generated in that area. In years to come, one cannot help thinking that the generation of funds at the Currumbin Sanctuary will be far in excess of those required for that particular undertaking by the National Trust and that some of those funds might be used to assist in the provision of other trust activities that are beneficial to the citizens of this State.

All the avenues of National Trust activity are beneficial and worth while and should be encouraged. It must be accepted that the Government cannot always meet all the commitments in those areas. I believe that ways and means can be found within the current trust operations to enable the National Trust to become more self-funding and that some assistance can be provided by the Government. Having gone through the history, I know that that might be a rather delicate matter. However, I believe that certain avenues are open to the Government. I am sure that, handled properly and appropriately, any assistance would be appreciated by the people of this State.

In conclusion, I congratulate the National Trust on the work that it has done at the Currumbin Sanctuary. I know that one or two criticisms have been made. However, the work done by the National Trust is exemplary and clearly something of which we can all be very proud. I congratulate the president of the National Trust of Queensland, Mr Noel Hobson, the council and members of the trust. I am sure that many members of this House are members of the trust and have participated in the various activities that have been conducted by the National Trust over a long period. We can all be proud of the National Trust. If more organisations like the trust existed, it would benefit the people of this great State of ours. I look forward to the Government's assisting the trust by providing the funding which I have outlined.

Mr HAMILL (Ipswich) (7.38 p.m.): I join other members in congratulating the National Trust on the job that it does on behalf of the whole community to preserve our heritage. However, some trust members feel that they have a thankless task, and some of them feel that they are fighting a losing battle. National Trust members have often complained that Queensland lacks adequate legislation and adequate legislative protection for our heritage and other parts of the national estate in Queensland.

For many years successive Queensland Governments—coalition Governments in the days when the Liberal Party was chummy with the National Party, and even now when there is a bit of a rift in the family—have repeated promises that the Queensland Government will legislate to protect Queensland's heritage. However, like so many other promises that have been made from time to time, the words have not been backed up with actions.

Although the Queensland Parliament debated and then enacted legislation covering the cultural sites of the Aboriginal and Islander peoples, and although this legislation was purported to be the long-awaited and much talked about heritage legislation, because it was not that heritage legislation which the community has been demanding for so long, it fell far short of what the community had come to expect.

Quite frankly, there is very little legislative protection in Queensland to cover our heritage. Furthermore, local authorities have little power to protect the heritage in local communities. Many local authorities are well placed to know what aspects of those local communities ought to be preserved for future generations. Through legislation, by-laws and protection orders, local authorities should be given the power to ensure that our heritage is not whisked away by night-time demolition and other vandalistic activities that have been the hallmark of heritage in Queensland.

The whole question of heritage legislation falls within three categories. Firstly, in order to determine what ought to be preserved, a register of our heritage should be established. Secondly, enforcement provisions should be set in place so that, whether it applies to local authorities or State Government authorities, what is actually included on the State heritage register can be protected with the full force of the law. Thirdly—and this recognises the difficulties that are experienced by some people who from time to time have had the dubious honour of holding title to a heritage property—taxation benefits or some other financial inducements should be given to those property-owners to preserve that property and perhaps restore it, but certainly not to allow the wholesale destruction of our State's heritage. It is only fair that, if a property is included on some sort of heritage register in Queensland, the property-owner receives that sort of consideration.

It has often been claimed by property-owners that heritage legislation would be manifestly unjust if a protection order were placed upon a property that had been destined for some other form of dealing. Competing interests exist. In this case, Queensland's interests and the interests of the entire community should receive the greater priority.

Our heritage is important in terms of seeing how people lived in the State in years gone by. There has been a great awakening in heritage in Australia and across the world. Heritage is an important inducement to tourism. All honourable members know that

the Queensland economy relies heavily upon the tourist dollar. At times it is probably overreliant on the tourist dollar. Nevertheless, heritage can be a real money-spinner. It can be a real industry; a productive industry generating jobs and opportunities in Queensland. We should not find ourselves in a situation in which we wantonly bulldoze the future of our community, whether it be through the tourist industry or our roots or connection with our past.

It is in that context that I am most concerned about some developments that have been occurring in my home city of Ipswich. As honourable members would be aware, Ipswich is the oldest provincial city in Queensland. It is blessed with a fine array of colonial residences and, sadly, not so many public buildings as once existed in the city. Over the years the bulldozers have ravaged Ipswich and other provincial centres throughout the State. I am concerned about what I regard as nothing more than the predatory action of some prospective home-buyers who come to a city such as Ipswich where there are very fine examples of colonial architecture. Admittedly some of the homes are run down and in need of renovation. However, those people come to the city and treat it like a self-service real estate market. They come along, select what they want, purchase it, whack it on the back of a semitrailer and cart it off to somewhere else.

Mr Hynd: Like a relocatable home.

Mr HAMILL: The member for Nerang says "like a relocatable home". The problem is that our heritage should not be relocatable. It would be absolutely intolerable if the pyramids of Giza were relocated as a tourist attraction on the coast of Florida. It would be absolutely unconscionable. But why do we tolerate a similar sort of activity here in Queensland?

People do not want to visit Charters Towers to see where its buildings once stood. They do not really want to travel to the Gold Coast to have a look at Charters Towers. However, it seems to be okay, given the laissez-faire attitude to heritage, which is the hallmark of this State Government, that our provincial centres such as Ipswich are losing their heritage because some smarties can come in, select a property they like, purchase it, put it on the back of a semitrailer and relocate it in perhaps some more idyllic Arcadian surrounds in Brookfield or some other place in the western suburbs of Brisbane.

One case that readily comes to mind relates to a property that is located in the electorate of my colleague the member for Ipswich West.

Mr Underwood: Tivoli.

Mr HAMILL: It is at Tivoli. Three homes had been built by a pioneering coal-mining family in that area.

Mr Clauson interjected.

Mr HAMILL: Someone, probably a friend of the Minister for Justice, from down Cleveland or Ormiston way, came up——

Mr Underwood: White-shoe brigade.

Mr HAMILL: A member of the white-shoe brigade. It might have been better if he had built a new place at Raby Bay instead of ransacking Ipswich's heritage.

As I was saying, someone came up to Ipswich, selected the house in the middle and took it away. Not only has the house been taken away, but the fence has gone, too.

Mr Underwood: I hope they didn't leave the cockroaches.

Mr HAMILL: I suspect that the cockroaches could not afford to go where the house was being taken. As I was saying, even the fence was taken. It was not a Cyclone or chain-wire fence, it was actually a very old fence, the original fence that was erected at the same time as the building.

Mr Clauson: You had your eye on the fence.

Mr HAMILL: Certainly, I had my eye on the fence, because the last time I saw it, it was lying in a heap by the side of the house. It was an outrage. The Minister for Justice is probably the sort of person who would go to the Great Wall of China and try to take it home and rebuild it in his back garden. That is the sort of appreciation of heritage that we have come to expect from National Party Ministers.

It is a serious situation that ought not be tolerated. For many years the Greek Government has decried the removal of the Elgin Marbles from the Parthenon to grace the British Museum. To take up an analogy with Egypt, I point out that very strict laws have been enacted by a number of countries in the Middle East, particularly Egypt, in relation to the removal of artefacts, because it recognises that it is a part of the Egyptian heritage that is being taken away.

We may not have that depth of history in the public consciousness in Australia, but what little history we can claim to be our own, we ought to cherish. We ought to cherish it because it is an integral part of the communities in which we live, and that integral part of the towns and cities in which we live consists of the buildings and the surrounds and the streetscapes. I find it appalling that local government in this State has no power to protect our civic buildings and our residential homes that are fine examples of the architecture of an earlier age, and that the Queensland Government does not give any support to local authorities and those groups which would try to protect similar parts of our heritage.

Maybe Mr Deputy Speaker does not really consider this to be an all-important matter; maybe he is the sort of person who would prefer to see marinas at the other end of the Flinders Mall in Townsville. I suggest that by the recognition of its heritage, a city such as Townsville has developed for itself a major attraction. Our towns and cities have much to offer the local communities who live there and much to offer the visitors to our State. We ought to be taking advantage of our heritage.

Mr Ardill: A very progressive city, Townsville. It has gone ahead in leaps and bounds.

Mr HAMILL: The Labor council in Townsville has done a great deal to preserve and fight for that city's heritage. However, legislative support is needed.

This Government has a responsibility to honour the promises that it has made repeatedly, election after election, year after year, to introduce and implement proper heritage legislation. I would be very interested to hear from the Minister for the Environment and other portfolios the initiatives that he is prepared to bring before this House before we go to the polls, whether it be in May or June. What is the current bid? The Deputy Leader on the Government side has a smirk on his face. Maybe it is June or July.

Mr Braddy: It depends on Merthyr.

Mr HAMILL: It depends on Merthyr.

Let the Queensland Government give an example of its commitment. Let it introduce heritage legislation at last and let it once and for all give the National Trust the legislative support for which it is yearning and which it deserves in order that it can maintain its battle on behalf of the whole community.

Hon. G. H. MUNTZ (Whitsunday—Minister for Environment, Conservation and Forestry) (7.51 p.m.), in reply: I thank honourable members for their comments and contributions. Firstly, I reply to some of the comments that were made by the member for Thuringowa. I indicate that this legislation is a constructive effort to control vandalism right throughout the State. At present the northern Supreme Court building is under consideration. I appreciate the honourable member's comments in regard to that, but I particularly appreciate your comments and support that you have given that project, Mr

Deputy Speaker. Some months ago I had an opportunity to inspect that site. I appreciate its value. In the very near future this Government will make a constructive decision.

The Government has a Statewide responsibility, not just a responsibility to the capital city, as some might have portrayed. The Government will ensure that this department, under the new administration, addresses those responsibilities right across the board.

The member for Thuringowa mentioned the mining operations at Ravenshoe.

Mr McElligott: Ravenswood.

Mr MUNTZ: Ravenswood.

That is not really a matter for this particular Bill. Last year National Estate funds of \$10,000 were given to a local group to undertake a town study for a restoration plan. I will be considering that very closely. I am aware of the honourable member's concerns. They have been brought to my attention. I will be having discussions with the Minister responsible for mines to ensure that that valuable part of our heritage is protected. I think all members join me in those concerns.

As usual, the member for Nerang made some very constructive comments. He outlined this Government's policy in relation to heritage. The Government is particularly concerned about the matters raised by the honourable member and will address them in due course.

As it has always done in the past, the Government will give total support to the National Trust of Queensland. At present, I believe that this Government gives \$100,000 towards the cost of preservation of buildings as well as total moral support. I am very appreciative of the work carried on by members of the trust in supporting community groups, and confirm the support of this Government for that organisation.

The member for Toowong addressed some of the issues concerning this legislation. I note that he also appreciates the role played by the National Trust. I can only say that the extent of rewards is best left to the good sense of the trust because it is not so flush with funds that it can offer rewards that are too generous. The Government will leave the amount of rewards up to the trust, but I point out that no limit has actually been set on the reward that might be given.

With his usual rhetoric, the member for Windsor embarked on an exercise of criticising members of this Government and the administration of this portfolio. Honourable members have heard it all before. The honourable member is not in the House at present. He has said his piece and has moved on, as he usually does. I have taken what he said with a grain of salt. His speech was full of untruths and misstatements and contained not one shred of evidence. His speech was an example of his usual waffle. His media stunts, such as the trespassing antics at Mount Etna, are well known. However, at least he agrees that the National Trust does a fine job. In all other respects, he has been totally discredited and really has no credibility in the wider community.

As my predecessor, the Minister for Local Government and Racing, said, 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. Obviously, superannuation benefits offered to the staff of the National Trust should not exceed generally accepted standards for public sector employees. The provisions of the Bill will in no way affect benefits under any existing scheme operated by the trust.

The opportunity has also been taken to make other mechanical amendments to the National Trust of Queensland Act. In accordance with modern practice, provisions dealing with the publication of by-laws made by the council of the National Trust have been repealed and replaced by a more appropriate reference to those sections of the Acts Interpretation Act dealing with that subject. In addition, the council of the National Trust has been given an additional by-law to allow the offering of rewards for information

relating to the damage or theft of trust property, etc. This power is necessary in preserving the important historical material under the trust's control.

Mr McElligott: What level of resources are you thinking of? What sort of funds are you looking at?

Mr MUNTZ: That matter is entirely up to the trust, but rewards can only be offered in proportion to the amount of funds available to the trust. The Government does not intend to go overboard, but I certainly hope that the rewards will be an incentive to those who are contemplating vandalism to use more common sense. I hope that that provision will act as a deterrent to people who contemplate that kind of action.

I should point out that from its earliest years the trust has depended on the willingness of people to support its work. Besides members' subscriptions and the generous gifts of its benefactors, voluntary assistance in many forms has been given, with no expectation of reward beyond the satisfaction of taking part in a vital enterprise. The National Trust now has over 6 000 members in 12 branches scattered throughout Queensland.

I believe that conservation is a major key to Queensland's well-being. For the National Trust, the gathering strength of the conservation movement offers both encouragement and opportunity. Under the banner of my new department, and with the full and enthusiastic support of the Government, these opportunities will be expanded.

As I said earlier, the amendments as now proposed are only minor in nature and I do not want to waste the time of the House in lengthy debate. I feel that the matter has been well debated and I thank the members for their contributions. I thank all parties for their support for the legislation.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Motion agreed to.

Committee

Clauses 1 to 5, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

Third Reading

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

REGISTRATION OF BIRTHS, DEATHS AND MARRIAGES ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 9 November 1988 (see p. 2382).

Mr WELLS (Murrumba) (7.59 p.m.): The legislation which is before the House is a Bill to alter in certain respects the provisions relating to the registration of births. Honourable members might appreciate the reminder that the Bill contains two major changes. The first relates to the registration of still births to enable parents of stillborn babies to register them as having been born and having died in Queensland. I understand from the Minister—and I know from the constituency—that this is a compassionate move which is designed to assist people in that situation to cope with grief. The Opposition welcomes that change.

The other major change involved in the Bill is a provision to dispense in certain circumstances with a spouse's consent to change a surname when marital arrangements have changed and it is desirable to change the surname of a child of a previous marriage. Again, the Opposition welcomes that change. I note that in some circumstances the

consent of the previous spouse can be dispensed with, and those circumstances outlined in the Bill seem to be adequate.

The Opposition welcomes the initiative and the Attorney-General's compassion in the introduction of this legislation. There are some small details that the Opposition will raise during the Committee stage, but during this second-reading debate I simply state that the Opposition welcomes the Bill.

Mrs GAMIN (South Coast) (8.01 p.m.): The Bill is a response to many representations that the Government has received from parents who have experienced the tragedy of losing a baby at birth. These representations have indicated that these parents desire to have a birth and death certificate registered for their lost child. It seems that registration of these certificates will enable the parents to better accept the finality and reality of their loss and thus more readily overcome their grief.

There is nothing sadder for a mother than to carry a child to term, or almost to term, go through labour and then find that the child is stillborn or dies within a very short space of time. It does not matter whether it is her first baby or a later child of a larger family; the pain of loss and the grief are very real. The pain and grief are made more poignant when the mother and father discover that to all intents and purposes their child simply did not exist.

Over the last few months I have been involved with a group called SANDS, Stillbirth and Neonatal Death Syndrome. This is a caring and supportive group of parents who have suffered such losses and who have got together and sustain each other. Recently I attended a very touching ceremony at Allambie Garden of Memories, the lawn cemetery at the Gold Coast, where a garden seat was dedicated and will be used by those mothers and fathers who like to visit that beautiful spot. This legislation is warmly welcomed by this little support group and others like it.

The legislation shows a responsible and caring attitude by this Government towards these social issues which are important to ordinary people. It means that a much-loved child—no matter that its life had scarcely begun—will be recognised as having had form and existence. There are many people who will take advantage of the five-year period for application. Registration certificates for the birth and death of stillborn and neonatal babies will acknowledge for parents the existence of much-loved children, who were carried to term, born after labour, dead so soon, but very much a part of their lives and families.

I congratulate the Minister on his introduction of this caring and responsible legislation.

Mr SCHUNTNER (Mount Coot-tha) (8.03 p.m.): It is very proper and humane for the Government to bring forward this Bill in response to representations made by parents who, naturally enough, wish to have birth and death certificates for a baby who died at birth. I welcome that amendment as well as the other amendments contained in this legislation.

The general thrust of the changes ensure that there will be greater flexibility in the administration of this Act, which is highly desirable. However, I wish to draw the attention of honourable members to one area where there is need for change which is not covered by this legislation. I refer to the section dealing with the entry of a child's surname in the register. I am referring to section 27A of the Act, which has been changed slightly to allow for the situation in which a court has made an order for the surname that is to be used for the child. However, it does not cater for one very important circumstance that has been brought to my notice by a constituent of mine. Despite representations to the Minister, the change is not proposed in this legislation.

I urge the Minister to give very careful thought to bringing back to this Parliament in the near future a legislative proposal to amend the Act to incorporate ways of improving the circumstances that I will now outline to the House. Say, for example,

that parents who have each retained their original name have a child in the Australian Capital Territory and give that child a hyphenated surname. The position is that the mother has one surname, the father has another and the child has a hyphenated surname. If that particular family comes to Queensland and a further child of that marriage is born, the law in Queensland says that when those parents go to register the name of that child, that child must be registered in the name of the father. As a result, brothers and sisters in the same family and with the same parents are not able to have the same surname. The only difference is that the children were born in different parts of Australia. Queensland is either the only State or one of the very few States in Australia where this circumstance could arise. It is inhumane, unkind and archaic.

The general thrust of this legislation is to update the provisions of the Act and to provide greater flexibility. In this particular example that I have given, greater flexibility has not been provided. This has caused particular hardship in one case that I am aware of, and there must be many other cases where similar circumstances have arisen.

I congratulate the Government on the introduction of this legislation. It constitutes a very welcome step forward, but I ask the Government to take note of the points that I have raised and urge it to come back to this Parliament with further amending legislation as soon as possible to accommodate those points.

Mr STEPHAN (Gympie) (8.08 p.m.): I have much pleasure in supporting the Bill and complimenting the Minister for finally bringing it before the House. The legislation spent some time in the discussion stage. My mind goes back to when Mr Harper was Minister for Justice and Attorney-General. I led several deputations both to him and the current Minister on this subject. The birth of a stillborn child causes a great deal of trauma to the parents. Although I have not experienced it, I can understand the trauma and concern they would suffer under those circumstances. Even though parents felt that a part of them and a part of their family had been born, previously they had been left with nothing at all, no registration of the birth or the death. That was a tremendous burden for the parents to carry.

It is for that reason that those parents and I feel that this piece of legislation is very important. It gives me much pleasure to see the processing of this legislation and to know that children born in these circumstances will be recognised.

I also applaud the joining together of a family when a mother has remarried and there is a child from the previous marriage. When a mother remarries and the child of a previous marriage does not have the same surname, serious problems can arise. Of course, the child's surname can be changed only with the approval of the other natural parent. If the woman's former husband wants the child's surname retained, he has the right to object to the change of name. So, if there is still contact and love and affection between the child and the father, that protection is there. If the other parent is not available, a guardian can give that approval.

These things have concerned many people for some time. This legislation will relieve pressures that have been placed on many parents, who I am sure will be well pleased with the Bill. I compliment the Minister on the passage of the Bill.

Mrs NELSON (Aspley) (8.11 p.m.): I rise to join in this debate and to add my voice to those of members who have previously addressed the House on the amendments to the Act and to congratulate the Minister on the foresight, sensitivity and compassion he has shown in a number of areas of concern to constituents not only in my electorate but also in many other electorates.

I wish to draw the attention of the House to a number of aspects of the Bill that have not been raised as yet. The point needs to be made that, where previously there was just a death certificate or a perinatal death certificate, there will now be able to be obtained both birth and death certificates. The importance of that is that any future birth certificates or extracts for the members of the family will contain the registered name and details of that stillborn child, who is just as much a child to that family as any of the children who have survived. That is a very important aspect of the legislation.

One point that needs to be made is that from the commencement of the operation of this legislation it will be compulsory to register all births in Queensland, whether they are stillborn or live, and that the onus is on the parents to fill out the necessary forms and to lodge them with the Registrar-General. That will allow simultaneous registration of the birth and the death, which will take away some of the terrible pain and anguish that parents of stillborn babies have felt. A particular point on which the Minister ought to be commended is the retrospective nature of the legislation. That is not something that is often boasted about in parliamentary life; in fact, there is certainly a horror of retrospective legislation, but in this instance the Minister is allowing for a five-year period prior to the commencement of operation of the legislation to enable the parents of a stillborn child to register it. In addition, the Minister retains a discretion to register children who were not born alive prior to that date.

I shall now deal with the aspect of the change of surname when there has been a change in family circumstances. When a newly married couple wish to give their name to the child of a former marriage it is very important that the child's security is protected. Tragically, in some circumstances in Australia today, because of a violent pre-history in the previous marriage and the threat to that child and to the family generally, sometimes it is not in the best interests of the child to locate the other parent to obtain permission. For that reason, the Minister's concession is an excellent one. If there has been no contact with the other parent for two years and if there is a parent of the new marriage who wishes to take full responsibility for that child and give him or her a new name and home, that is to be commended.

Clause 7, which amends section 26, allows for the late registration of births. That is a very, very important provision. The Act provides that, if the parents of the applicant are not married, a person may only be registered in the father's name if there is a joint written request by both the father and the mother. That section will now be amended to enable the court, when making an order for late registration of birth, to order in its own discretion under what name the person should be registered. It is proposed that, where the court has ordered a name to be entered as the surname of the child, that name will be able to be varied only if there is a subsequent registration of a person as the father of the child and an application is made to the Registrar-General to change the child's surname to that of the father. That has been a particular problem with late registrations.

I commend the Minister for introducing the Bill, which deserves the full support of honourable members. I am pleased to see that it has received all-party support. Because of representations to me from parents—the Minister is aware that representations have been made from all electorates—I am particularly pleased to see this legislation finally pass through the Parliament.

Hon. P. J. CLAUSON (Redlands—Minister for Justice and Attorney-General and Minister for Corrective Services) (8.15 p.m.), in reply: I thank all honourable members for their generous support for the legislation. The honourable member for Murrumba and the honourable member for South Coast were both supportive in their comments. The honourable member for Mount Coot-tha was also supportive in his comments, with the qualification that he felt that allowance should be made for the registration of hyphenated names. He suggested an amendment to the Act to alter the procedure under section 27A of the Act to permit the use of hyphenated surnames. However, in the circumstances, although I appreciate the reasons behind the proposal there are several good reasons why an amendment of that nature has not been prepared. For example, if a person by the surname of Schuntner-Sherlock married a person with the surname Innes-Knox, we would have children with the surname of Schuntner-Sherlock-Innes-Knox. That is without christian names preceding the name. On a more serious note—many reasons exist as to why the status quo has to be maintained. Firstly, there is the distribution of estates; there is the genealogical research aspect, which is important in this day and age; there is the medical research aspect; and these are also conditional

notions of the certainty of approach when it comes to the registration of births, deaths and marriages.

The honourable member for Aspley is also supportive of the legislation. She mentioned its retrospective aspect, which allows for the registration of a still birth to date back five years. Beyond that, should a reasonable reason be shown for registration of the name, the Minister has a discretion. As well, when there has been no contact and a new marriage has been entered into, an application can be made for the registration of a new name for the children.

In all the circumstances, the Bill is well supported by the House. I commend it to the House.

Motion agreed to.

Committee

Hon. P. J. Clauson (Redlands—Minister for Justice and Attorney-General and Minister for Corrective Services) in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—

Mr WELLS (8.18 p.m.): When I a few minutes ago on behalf of the Opposition graciously congratulated the Attorney-General on his initiative in introducing the Bill, I did not realise that he would have a large number of his back-benchers getting up and throwing around bouquets and garlands as if they were going out of style.

Mr Hamill: Caesar needs a triumphal march.

Mr WELLS: I thank the honourable member for Ipswich for his usual pertinent comments. I would not have wanted to be so churlish during the second-reading debate as to make a point of such a detail as this. However, since we are looking at the clauses in detail, I draw the attention of the Chamber to the first clause which, as interpreted under the Standing Orders, reads—

“This Act may be cited as the *Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages Act Amendment Act 1989*.”

I repeat “1989”.

In Victoria in 1985 and in New South Wales in 1975, similar initiatives to this were taken. Although it is appropriate for the Chamber to congratulate the Government on introducing these humane and compassionate amendments—

Mrs Nelson: It says “1988”.

Mr WELLS: I thank the honourable member for Aspley for her kind interjection. I said “as interpreted under the Standing Orders”. It is now 1989. Although the Bill before the honourable member reads “1988”, when it is published it will be called “1989”. However, I thank the honourable member for Aspley for her ideas on the subject.

As I was saying before that small interruption, the compassion and humanity that has been displayed by the Government has been delayed somewhat longer in this State than in other States. That fact needs to be drawn to the attention of the Chamber and to the people of Queensland.

Clause 1, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 2 and 3, as read, agreed to.

Clause 4—

Mr UNDERWOOD (8.21 p.m.): The clause deals with the definition of “Child” and “Child not born alive”. I ask the Minister: in the unusual circumstances of a child or foetus being aborted at 20 weeks or later, does that mean under the definition in the amending Bill that the child will be registered?

Mr CLAUSON: Yes, that is quite correct.

Clause 4, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 5 to 7, as read, agreed to.

Clause 8—

Mr SCHUNTNER (8.22 p.m.): In his reply to the second-reading debate, the Minister made the point that a hyphenated name should be avoided. A rather exaggerated example was given in order to make the point. However, it seems to me that if Smith and Jones were married and they used the hyphenated name Smith-Jones and wanted to call the youngster Smith-Jones, that is not allowed. However, if the male's name is Mr Smith-Jones, that is allowed.

There must be many cases in which in taking the name of the father a hyphenated name is used. Therefore, I say that to deny the point that I made before on the grounds of hyphenation is not really very logical. If one pursues that argument further, there could be a multiplication by two with every generation, and certainly there could be an unlimited number of names. I think it must be accepted that common sense would take over at some point.

A couple of other comments were made very briefly by the Minister. I would like to think about those. I think the Minister referred to medical factors. I am not quite sure of the relevance of that to the name. Perhaps there is a point that I have missed. However, I do contest that point in relation to the provision regarding hyphenation of names, which I think is quite illogical.

Clause 8, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 9 and 10, as read, agreed to.

Clause 11—

Mr WELLS (8.23 p.m.): Clause 11 reads—

“The Principal Act is amended by repealing section 46.”

Section 46 is the last section of the Act. For the interest and enlightenment of honourable members, I will read the general outline of it—

“46. (1) Every Proclamation and regulation made under this Act shall—

(a) be published in the *Gazette*,

(b) upon its publication in the *Gazette*, be judicially noticed . . .”

and so on. Basically, it is a section about the publication of regulations and proclamations made under that Act in the *Queensland Government Gazette*.

The effect of this amendment will be to take away that legal liability to publish in the *Queensland Government Gazette* the proclamations and regulations made under this Bill. I would be grateful if the Honourable the Attorney-General could advise honourable members of the thinking behind this removal.

Mr CLAUSON: In response to the honourable member for Murrumba, I point out that this section is in fact being amended on the recommendation of the Government's legal advisers on the basis that the Acts Interpretation Act covers the situation of proclamation and regulation. So the section is in fact superfluous to the Acts Interpretation Act, which covers the matter.

Clause 11, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

Third Reading

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

STUDENT EDUCATION (WORK EXPERIENCE) ACT AMENDMENT BILL**Second Reading**

Debate resumed from 27 October 1988 (see p. 2115).

Mr BRADDY (Rockhampton) (8.27 p.m.): This Bill, which relates to work experience, is unexceptional and is supported by the Opposition. Work experience, of course, is now long established in Queensland and is a vital part of the progress of our secondary students through to Year 12.

The Opposition is pleased to support legislation which continually updates the legislative basis for work experience and enables that work experience to be conducted in as wide an area of industry and commerce as possible and also in the safest possible manner. The provisions contained in the Bill are therefore welcomed. There are no provisions which the Opposition finds in any way objectionable, and the Opposition believes that the legislation stands in need of its support.

However, this legislation does raise a few ancillary matters which I believe should be canvassed in the Chamber. Firstly, as mentioned by the Minister in his second-reading speech, this legislation and the program set out by it needs the support of the Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Affairs and the Minister for Family Services. I believe that this legislation is therefore well organised. However, I do not believe that the implementation of the Government's program by the Minister for Education and the Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Affairs is generally as well organised.

Honourable members continually see the Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Affairs—he seems to have been given a greater licence than the Minister for Education, Youth and Sport has to go round this State pork-barrelling—spreading his largess throughout parts of Queensland in a way which clearly relates to the election that will be held in 1989.

I do not believe that that is the way in which the programs for the commencement of TAFE should be announced. Honourable members should not be seeing the calling of country Cabinet meetings and the sudden announcement of a temporary TAFE here or a temporary TAFE there, particularly when there has been consistent underspending by this Government on education.

It is clear that a greater liaison between the Education Department and the department responsible for TAFE is long overdue. I do not believe that the split that this Government brought about in that area has been for the benefit of the education of Queensland people. Some of the bad actions taken by the Government have been exposed. Although the Government does some of the small things well, it does some of the big things badly. The same comments can be applied to higher education. It seems that some of the advisers of the Minister for Education are taking on too much. Too many decisions smack of bureaucratic politicking and are not for the good of the State.

I refer to the announcement yesterday by the Minister for Education that the establishment of the three new universities will be delayed until 1993. As I understand it, the reason given is that all three of them will be established at the same time. There is no justification for all three of them being required to march in step like an army section. They are totally separate institutions. There is no prospect of or reason for their being amalgamated. The situation that applies to the Darling Downs Institute of Advanced Education in Toowoomba is totally distinct from that of the Capricornia Institute of Advanced Education in Rockhampton. Each of them, in turn, is distinct from the Brisbane College of Advanced Education. However, politicking is taking place behind the scenes. I challenge the Minister to table in the House the reports of the three committees looking into university status for those three institutions.

I issue a further challenge to the Minister. I understand that the Darling Downs Institute committee in Toowoomba recommended that the Darling Downs Institute of

Advanced Education should proceed to university status in 1990, not in 1993. Why should the Darling Downs Institute of Advanced Education or the Capricornia Institute of Advanced Education be shackled because more problems are occurring with the Brisbane College of Advanced Education, which has many campuses? If the Darling Downs Institute of Advanced Education is ready in 1990, it should go ahead in 1990. If the Capricornia Institute of Advanced Education is ready in 1990 or 1991, it should go ahead accordingly. Under a Labor Government, that is what will happen; they will go ahead accordingly. They will not be held back by a weak-kneed approach where something is foreshadowed four years down the track. Of course, all those institutions will gain in funding and in research capacity when they become universities. To make the announcement that they are required to march in step like a small army section until 1993 is not good enough. I challenge the Minister to give better reasons why that should be done.

The Labor Party indicates that a perusal of the reports shows that it is very likely that the timetable for the institutes, certainly those at Rockhampton and Toowoomba, could be advanced considerably. I am aware that problems have been encountered with the BCAE, which is a multicampus institution in Brisbane. Pressure is being applied around the country for the amalgamation of certain colleges. The Minister has pulled back his committee and its previous amalgamation process. No doubt further discussions can take place. It would be in the interests of regional Queensland, the Capricornia and the Darling Downs institutes, to go ahead as soon as possible. There is no justification for their being held back.

On behalf of the Labor Party, I reject the Minister's assertion that all three must march together and wait for 1993. The people of Toowoomba and the people of Rockhampton and the regions that they serve are already disappointed by the Minister's statement. The initial pleasure from gaining university status has been more than cut back by the realisation of the long delay. It is not good enough. Under a Labor administration, that certainly would not occur. A Labor Government would not be in a position in which advisers in the Department of Education would be making these decisions that should be made by the Minister. The Minister should be saying to his department, "What is the justification for holding up the three of them? Let us get on with it in Toowoomba and let us get on with it in Rockhampton." The Minister knows that he could well have both of those institutions up and running as universities by 1991 at the very latest. That is certainly what should be done. I challenge the Minister to give to the people of Queensland some information about his position that he has not yet given.

In this age there should be more openness of Government, particularly in relation to reports. The shadow Minister for Education should be able to see those reports. The Opposition is planning ahead. There is a Government and there is an alternative Government. These matters should not be shown briefly to some people in the various institutions without copies being made widely available. Open government on many issues in this State is long overdue. That remark certainly applies to education.

I am aware of the great benefits that will flow to central Queensland from an accelerated advancement of university status to the Capricornia Institute of Advanced Education. I am sure that the members in and around Toowoomba share the same view about the Darling Downs Institute of Advanced Education. Therefore, it is long overdue that these important areas of education receive decisive treatment from the Minister for Education and that advancement which can be made in the larger areas will be made so that no longer, because of the educational politics of this State, will the Minister be putting off important decisions. For too long the educational politics of this State have determined education issues. It is about time that the Minister put that behind him, got on with the job and made decisions. To delay university status for those organisations for four years is not good enough.

This is a chicken and the egg situation. Until an institution achieves university status it experiences problems with research funding. Will the Minister provide additional

funding for institutions during the waiting period? If those institutions are required to attain more research capacity or ability, I ask the Minister to inform the people of Queensland whether he will provide that.

These important decisions should not be a matter of an expressive announcement simply because a Cabinet meeting is held in a country centre such as Yeppoon or somewhere else in the State. Very detailed answers and details should be given in this Parliament through ministerial statements. If the details are not provided in that way, they should be provided in reply to questions.

This Government is always making important announcements for the media at country Cabinet meetings around the State in a pork-barrelling exercise. This Parliament is the place where great detail should be given to the people of Queensland and the institutions. People are interested in this matter. Institutions are large employers of people and they contribute much to the economies of different regions.

The Darling Downs institute at Toowoomba is ready for university status. It should achieve it in 1990 and should not have to wait until 1993. The Capricornia institute should be ready by 1991 at the latest.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: I rise to a point of order. The honourable member is not speaking to the Bill.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member will speak to the Bill.

Mr BRADDY: That is obviously a sore point with the Minister. I have expressed a very important opinion.

The work experience that is undertaken by many students in Queensland is relevant to the tertiary and higher education that they will undertake. In my electorate—and, I believe, in Toowoomba—the very same situation applies. Those students who undertake work experience are crying out for a tertiary institution that expresses their needs.

I know that I have the support of many National Party back-benchers in what I am saying. If the National Party back bench and the Opposition together can apply pressure to the Minister, this bureaucratic decision to hold things up for four years can be reversed. I urge the Minister to listen to his back bench, the Opposition, education administrators and leaders of the communities in Rockhampton and Toowoomba. He should put aside the bureaucrats who are running his department and start running it himself.

Mr LINGARD (Fassifern) (8.41 p.m.): In working out his material for a speech on a work experience Bill, it is a pity that the member who spoke before me wrote the story of the Toowoomba and Rockhampton colleges of advanced education.

If ever anyone could be blamed for the pressures to amalgamate any of our colleges, it is the Federal Government, which has applied pressure to us to undertake a great rationalisation program. It would be a mistake to immediately give those colleges university status and adopt the American system. That is not the system that we want in Australia. It is not the system that we want in Queensland. We must ensure that all of the colleges that achieve university status have an excellent reputation and excellent courses. A typical and relevant example is the former QIT, which is now the Queensland University of Technology.

This Bill is part of a package of five education Bills. I am pleased that it relates to education at all levels. It represents education for the masses rather than education for the elite and the academics. With the present TE system we must ensure that we are not catering solely for that academic group of people who are not looking at a wide education including sport, drama and similar activities. We must ensure that the pure academics are not the only group who receive very high TE scores and go on to study law, medicine and courses of that type.

Whilst numerous people will argue over the aims of education, many will argue whether the aim of education is to get a good job. When honourable members were

going to school, the decision that was made when we left school was what job we were going to choose. Plenty of jobs were available, and all of those jobs were available to us. However, the question is whether our children can get jobs when they finish their courses. Students who attain degrees at universities are not assured of a job when they graduate.

In the past, if a young person became a carpenter and subsequently realised that he did not like it, he could quickly get a job as a plumber or change his job. That option is no longer available. If a person can get a first job as a carpenter, he should consider himself very lucky.

Because work experience has ensured that students are able to obtain some practical experience in a particular job so that they can decide whether or not they really like that job, it has been magnificent.

The Education Department must be congratulated on the work that it has done in providing officers such as guidance officers to high school students as well as entering many programs. Not many people have heard about the RAZZ program, which commenced last year within the Education Department through the Understanding Future Options or UFO program. That project is concerned with better decision-making processes, the changing nature of the job market, the implications of technology and what the future might hold for all students who are on the threshold of subject and career choices.

Another program that has been introduced is the Job Seekers Kit, which is a combined program between the Education Department and the Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Affairs. That kit is a joint venture involving the State Government, Bridging the Gap and the combined Rotary clubs of Brisbane and the surrounding areas.

In a number of areas the Department of Education has worked with industry, giving students knowledge of the workplace and the production of resources. The Job Seekers Kit, which will be distributed to many of our schools, is another example of industry and community organisations working with Government in education.

In addition to that is Project Pay Packet, a combined program of the Education Department and the Minister for Industrial Affairs. It is an excellent program aimed at getting extra jobs for students. It is not just a matter of transition-type education. The Ministers concerned have established a program in order that students can find extra jobs.

In 1981, when the work experience programs commenced, I was a principal. I must admit that at that time I doubted whether work experience would survive. I doubted whether employers would accept the scheme. I did not know how employers would cope looking after students for four or five days. However, I have been absolutely amazed at the co-operation of employers and industry in taking students into work experience. I wondered how the students would ever be controlled. I thought that some of the scallywags who misbehaved in the schools would embarrass me when they were sent to employers for work experience. However, that was not a problem. I wondered how enough teachers would be available to supervise the students undertaking work experience. I worried about the teacher/student ratio. Once again, that aspect has been covered very well. I wondered how students would even get to work, because some of the times they had problems getting to school. However, that in itself, catching a bus and going to work, is part of a work experience program.

As the second-reading speech explains, it is now desirable for sections of the Act to be modified. All of the changes proposed are really of a machinery nature and are designed to improve the operation of work experience. Obviously, I support the semester system, which was introduced into Queensland schools and which has now been adopted by some of the southern schools, even though it was ridiculed initially. It is obvious that a change must be made to the semester system.

I support the establishment of a ceiling of 30 days' work experience. It must be ensured that students are not continually travelling away from school on excursions and

work experience. It is also clear that the Act needs to be changed to allow the Department of Family Services to participate to the fullest. Therefore, it is pleasing that the Act has been rewritten to cater for those who are involved in family services.

One of the most worrying aspects of work experience was workers' compensation. Therefore, I am pleased that the Bill provides for up to \$2m for workers' compensation. That figure is a more realistic coverage in view of the escalating civil damages awards being made by the courts. Furthermore, the amendment proposed to section 11 deletes the requirement that Suncorp be the mandatory provider of such insurance coverage.

The proposal to remove the need for the Director-General of Education to approve each work experience application reflects the growing acceptance and participation in work experience. It also reflects the role that teachers are playing at this time. I commend the work of the work experience program, which is probably one of the best-known programs that provides students in centres across Queensland with valuable experience in a variety of occupations.

Industry also is involved through membership of the work experience advisory committee.

Mr Casey: Why don't we just put them on workers' compensation? You're talking about insurance.

Mr LINGARD: I must admit that most of the Labor Party supporters would be on workers' compensation. However, it is fortunate that in Queensland there is another group of people of a larger proportion than ALP supporters who do not believe in workers' compensation and all of those particular programs. It was interesting to go to Korea and look at the programs existing there. When the Koreans are asked what happens if a person is injured at work and is unable to continue working, they indicate that no workers' compensation is paid. It is about time that a little bit of that crept in. As the honourable member knows, workers' compensation in Queensland is an excellent program that works very, very well.

It is certainly my pleasure to support this work experience program and to say that the Minister should be congratulated on the success of the implementation of the recent education legislation. When one realises the turmoil that we went through in the last 12 months, it is pleasing to see five pieces of education legislation being passed with little turmoil.

Mr SCHUNTNER (Mount Coot-tha) (8.50 p.m.): In speaking to this Bill, in common with the previous speaker, I shall actually talk about work experience rather than the amalgamation of colleges of advanced education, their applications to be universities or any other aspect of education. I pay tribute to a number of people who have been involved in the development of work experience over the last decade or so.

In speaking to the Bill, I will be drawing on my experience as acting principal of Toowong high school in 1977 and subsequently as president of the Queensland Teachers Union when the first piece of legislation in this series was passed. The previous speaker made reference to 1981. However, some work experience was implemented well before then. In the mid-1970s some schools were actually implementing work experience programs. When I think back, I consider that those people were doing a pretty daring thing, because the legislation was not in place at that time. Therefore, it speaks volumes for the goodwill of all concerned that such a successful start was made to the work experience program.

I want to canvass some of the difficulties. In many cases, employers were very, very concerned about whether to take on youngsters from schools and let them loose in their places of work for a couple of weeks. They thought they would get nothing useful out of the students and they thought that damage might be done. To many of the employers, by and large, the whole thing was just a pain in the neck. To their credit, they overlooked those short-term concerns and they found that it was not as bad as they thought it would be. In fact, the employers derived many positive benefits from

their participation in the scheme. For the students, it represented something very, very new and different. As the honourable member for Fassifern said, the youngsters had to travel to different places at different times, using different methods of transport. To many of them, this represented a considerable trial. In observing youngsters who were undergoing work experience, I found that the discipline of arriving at a place of work—be it at 7.30 a.m., 8 a.m. or whatever—and having to be on time at that earlier-than-usual hour was in itself very worth while and of lasting benefit to them.

The schools had doubts, which were outlined by the previous speaker, and were concerned that some employers might try to exploit the youngsters and have them performing a good deal of menial work without pay. It was possible that menial work could be foisted on the youngsters whereas the employer ought to have been giving them a range of meaningful work to be involved in. As the previous speaker mentioned, doubts were expressed about what some of the youngsters might get up to in an environment of relative freedom, both in travelling and in their places of work. Although I will not say that everything in all circumstances across the State has turned out to be 100 per cent successful, the facts are that the youngsters responded very well to the challenges presented by work experience. Great credit is reflected on them and on their families for the way in which they participated in the scheme.

It should also be pointed out that severe doubts were held by the trade union movement. When I say that, I suppose I am referring to my role as President of the Queensland Teachers Union when the legislation was originally introduced. At that time, many people in the union movement thought that this scheme was the thin end of the wedge for the introduction of a type of slave labour in Queensland. History shows that those fears were unfounded, but it would not be difficult for anybody to realise how people in the trade union movement could understandably harbour those concerns. Credit is also reflected on those members of the trade union movement who overcame those concerns, gave the scheme a go and found that it worked very satisfactorily.

I pay tribute to the enormous task undertaken by teachers when work-experience programs are implemented. Although the standard pattern of work-experience programs that began in earlier years is not necessarily repeated all the time, the type of work-experience program in which young people go out into the work-force for a couple of weeks during Year 10 involves an enormous amount of preparation and time. Very few people in this Chamber would recognise how much time is involved in placing 200 people in a work environment in a relatively small community so that every student is placed on an individual basis. The time that is taken in establishing a work-experience program of two weeks for 200 people dictates that preparation has to begin many months before the program actually commences. It is therefore a pleasure to be able to record a tribute to the teachers who have put an enormous amount of effort into this scheme over the years, and continue to do so.

Recognition must also be given to the contribution made by employers. It is overwhelmingly the case that employers ensure that youngsters have meaningful experiences during the work-experience program. It is easy to neglect these youngsters, and it occasionally happens that a youngster will virtually sit on the sidelines watching what is happening, but will have no real participation in the work. However, I emphasise that that circumstance is the exception rather than the rule. It is a great credit to employers who have participated in these schemes that the outcome has been so satisfactory.

Administrators in schools and class teachers derive great satisfaction when youngsters about whom teachers have had doubts regarding employability return from a work experience program with a job in hand. After those youngsters finish Year 10 approximately three or four months after the program, they are able to go straight from school into a job, for example, at the local bakery or chemist shop. In my opinion, the offer of full-time employment is an enormous spin-off for both the youngsters and their parents.

Given the benefits that I have outlined from my knowledge of the work-experience programs of the last decade, I think it is high time that work experience was provided

for teachers. I am not saying that it would be possible to take a maths teacher out of the class room and find relevant work experience in that particular field, but if a teacher is involved in teaching, for example, accountancy in Years 11 and 12 and has to rely on training and background derived from workplaces as they existed 15 or 20 years ago, obviously the education that is being provided is not as relevant as it could be. I suggest that the Department of Education take on board the suggestion that in certain subject areas it may be appropriate to find ways and means of updating the knowledge, skills and relevance of teaching in the class room through the provision of some form of work experience for teachers in certain fields.

The provisions of the Bill ensure greater flexibility in terms of the school year, which is very desirable. When one considers the senior colleges and the wider range of institutions that are involved, it becomes obvious that links with the school year are no longer appropriate. Similarly, references in the original legislation to a maximum of 10 days' work experience per term were drafted when a three-term year existed. Of course, schools operate on a four-term year now and have done so for many years. Obviously, those changes are desirable and should be supported.

The increase in insurance coverage from \$500,000 to \$2m has already been commented on and I support that move. I have many complaints that I frequently make about education, but I will give credit where credit is due. The Liberal Party is happy to support this Bill.

Mr NEWTON (Glass House) (9 p.m.): It is pleasing to note that the Opposition supports the Student Education (Work Experience) Act Amendment Bill in general terms. This is another forward step by the Minister for Education.

The Bill clarifies and qualifies the meaning and wording of the legislation and explains the definition of "school", which includes special education units administered by the Department of Education, State technical and further education colleges and State and senior colleges administered by the Department of Employment, Vocational Education and Training and institutions for the training of children administered by the Department of Family Services.

A wide variety of people are involved. Children under the care of the Department of Family Services have suffered conditions that will not broaden their knowledge and that department's involvement in this initiative is a great step forward. I am a family man with four children who have all attended school. My last two children were given the opportunity of attending work experience, which has broadened their knowledge. I pay credit to the people who accept students on work experience and help out with their education and the improvement of their skills.

The honourable member for Fassifern, Mr Lingard, referred to the protection of employers from liability and the increase in the amount payable to \$2m. At least 14 days' notice must be given prior to the commencement of any work experience arrangement.

My youngest child participated in work experience and last year was asked to return during the Christmas holiday period. She was given full-time employment at the place where she carried out work experience. Her employers were happy with the work that she performed for them and asked her back, which shows that work experience can assist employers.

This Bill provides for an increase in insurance and, as all honourable members know, personal accident insurance is costly. My daughter is now studying home economics at tertiary level and is looking forward to carrying out work experience at a high school. Work experience is a great opportunity for students to build on their knowledge.

Much has been said about education facilities. I pay tribute to the Department of Education and the Works Department for the construction in my electorate of what is probably the most modern high school in Australia and possibly the world. This high school, costing \$5m plus, has been built on Bribie Island and is a show-piece. The design has been much sought after by overseas interests and won the Australian design award.

If students are given good surroundings, they will learn to present themselves well. When students attend work experience they learn from workers who are qualified in the field and the students can put this knowledge to good use throughout their careers.

The Opposition has knocked this Bill in certain areas, but this Minister knows what is involved in education. I support the Minister and the amendments contained in the legislation and look forward to better things to come as a result of work experience.

Hon. B. G. LITTLEPROUD (Condamine—Minister for Education, Youth and Sport) (9.06 p.m.), in reply: I thank all honourable members who have contributed to this debate and note that all honourable members are very much in favour of this very worthwhile initiative that has been continuing for years.

Mention has been made of the great contribution made to work experience by the teaching profession itself in facilitating such a mammoth undertaking. I pay tribute also to the employers in various workplaces who are doing a tremendous job. There has been feedback from the workplace concerning the work ethic of young people, and the honourable member for Mount Coot-tha commented on the number of students who have a job lined up after that work experience and their contact with the workplace.

My colleague the honourable member for Fassifern referred to some of the other initiatives that this Government is undertaking to complement what is happening already regarding work experience. He mentioned the magazine called *RAZZ* and "Understanding Future Options", which is a program advising young people what to expect when they leave school and are out in the workplace. The honourable member mentioned the great work done by Rotary in assisting this Government with the Job Seeker's Kit and Project Pay Packet, which was initiated by the Honourable Vince Lester.

The honourable member for Glass House is a man with wide experience and practical knowledge of youth affairs. Recently he undertook a review of Rural Youth and reported back to me on the needs of the young people of Queensland. He has pointed out that Rural Youth should have a closer liaison with TAFE because there is a need for work experience and the gaining of knowledge. It is very important for these young people to go out and play a worthwhile role in society.

The honourable member for Rockhampton chose to commend the Bill and then raised another topic. He took the opportunity to make a few points. The ALP is rather upset about the progress being made in tertiary education in Queensland and he saw this as a chance to have a dollar each way.

For the first time now, Queensland has a forum in which the vice-chancellors and the directors of tertiary institutions get together and discuss all sorts of matters. It was this forum that provided the very first guide-lines for the formation of universities anywhere in Australia. Because they are seen to be so relevant, those guide-lines are now being used and considered by other States. It was within that forum that those guide-lines were drawn up. The three institutions that chose to become universities were part and parcel of the putting together of those guide-lines. They agreed with them.

I then had committees of review go out and apply those guide-lines to those institutions. Because the reports had to be made to the Minister, they subsequently came back to me and I discussed them with the respective chairmen and directors of those three institutions. We all agreed that, if they were to become true universities, there had to be a change from the restriction that was in place under the old Act, under which they were teaching institutions. A university has not only teaching facilities but also research capacities. They agreed that some time would be needed to make the change, to go out and advertise for senior staff, put that staff in place and get enough research going in all of the various schools of the institutions so that they would truly be universities.

My friend the honourable member for Rockhampton would have the Government rush in and make a quick decision. If that had been done and all of a sudden the Australian academic movement made claims that Queensland had rushed in and thereby devalued the name "university"—that is, devalued the currency—the honourable member

for Rockhampton would have been on his feet being very critical. What he tried to do was to steal a little bit of the glory, but he got none of it, because in the last 12 months or so it has been the Queensland Government that has gone a long way down the track to help these institutions to adopt the set of guide-lines and apply them. After serious consultation with these committees, they all understand that there needs to be a period to recruit new staff and to get research under way. It is well understood that that will not be done in six months or even 12 months; it will take a while.

In the interim, a panel of visitors who are eminent academics with past experience in universities will be able to be called upon as consultants to the councils of these institutions to help them in their reprogramming and restructuring. It is not a matter of one being ready earlier than the other. In fact, it will take time for all of them to go through that reorganisation of getting staff, etc. This week in Yeppoon the Cabinet of this State made the decision. It was not made by the public service, although I certainly take advice from some of the people I have working with me because they have lots of experience. I also took advice from the directors and the vice-chancellors of the Queensland institutions, one of whom, Professor Brian Wilson from the University of Queensland, happens to be the chairman of the Australian Vice-Chancellors Council. All those people had an input and upon that the Government made its decision. The final decision was taken by Cabinet.

Therefore, I am quite proud of the decision that has been made. I am especially proud of the progress that has been made to allow those three institutions finally to become universities with a standing that is equal to that of any university in the world. That is so because Australia, particularly Queensland, currently has the reputation of ensuring that the word "university" really means what it says. It would be completely irresponsible on my part to hasten the process, which would devalue the currency and put at risk the standing of universities in Queensland.

I am delighted that members of the House have supported this work experience legislation. I look forward to its passage through the House.

Motion agreed to.

Committee

Hon. B. G. Littleproud (Condamine—Minister for Education, Youth and Sport) in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—

Mr LITTLEPROUD (9.13 p.m.): I move the following amendment—

“At page 2, line 4, omit—
‘(1).’”

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 1, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 2 to 7, as read, agreed to.

Clause 8—

Mr LITTLEPROUD (9.14 p.m.): I move the following amendments—

“At page 4, line 7, omit—
‘(a)’

and substitute—

‘(i) ’;

“At page 4, line 11, omit—
‘(b)’

and substitute—

‘(ii)’.”

Amendments agreed to.

Clause 8, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 9 to 11, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, with amendments.

Third Reading

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

FAUNA CONSERVATION ACT AND ANOTHER ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 20 October 1988 (see p. 1698).

Mr COMBEN (Windsor) (9.31 p.m.): This evening we debate amendments to the Fauna Conservation Act and another Act, the National Parks and Wildlife Act. I will make some general comments about the record of conservation of the Government. Essentially, according to the Minister, the Bill is an important part of the conservation strategy of the Government. In closing his second-reading speech, the Minister said—

“This Bill is an important piece of legislation in that it seeks to ensure that the unique fauna of this State and indeed, of this nation, continues to be effectively protected by law. The Bill will ensure that the valid interest in, and concern for, this fauna by the Government and by the people of this State is adequately respected while still having full regard to the guarantees that are afforded to interstate trade and commerce under section 92 of the Constitution.”

He commended the Bill to the House.

A major part of the Bill is about the technical questions of section 92 of the Constitution, dealing with interstate trade. All honourable members would be aware of the Tasmanian crayfish case last year in which the High Court said that, after multitudinous litigation, section 92 was still confused and that one thing which it did not do was to free interstate trade. It is a lawyers' nightmare.

Mr Ardill: A lawyers' meal-ticket.

Mr COMBEN: As Mr Ardill said, it is a lawyers' meal-ticket. However, I have relied on the Government's legal advisers to get it right. I hope that in some way the provisions dealing with section 92 of the Constitution are correct.

This evening, I will deal with the general thrust of the Bill and its attempt to claim to be a fauna conservation Bill. All members would be well aware that the Bill contains a grave defect in that it does not in any way protect habitat; nor in any other legislation in Queensland is habitat protected. Every modern scheme to protect fauna and our natural wildlife is about habitat protection. The Minister well knows that this legislation is effective if someone manages to catch a koala and kills it, because he can probably be convicted. But in real terms the Bill does not address the problem of fauna conservation, because the real threat to fauna in this State is habitat destruction.

I will look back over the fauna conservation record of the Government. I go back to 1 April 1975, which is an appropriate date. A front-page article of the *Courier-Mail* stated—

“An observer said yesterday the State Government was starting the greatest conservationist movement of any Government in Queensland's history.”

That article dealt with the setting-up of the Queensland National Parks and Wildlife Service and the intentions of the then Premier to create massive areas of Queensland national parks.

On 1 May 1975, an article in the *Courier-Mail* stated—

“The new National Parks and Wildlife Service would make Queensland’s national parks network among the largest and best in the world,” the Premier Mr Bjelke-Petersen said last night.”

The reality today, 14 years later, is that Queensland has the poorest set of national parks of any Australian State. In Queensland, 2 per cent of our land is allocated to national parks. The Australian State average is 5 per cent. Queensland has 211 plant communities, 52 per cent of which are preserved in Queensland’s national parks. Last week, the Minister issued a press release to the effect that 44 per cent were preserved. He could not even update the figures of his own National Parks and Wildlife Service.

In 1978, the *Courier-Mail* again reported—

“The Premier said yesterday this would triple the present national park area. He said Queensland’s aim was to have the highest percentage of national parks in Australia. This must be done now while the land is available.”

What a mockery!

On the same day, Mr Bjelke-Petersen was reported as saying that the aim was to back every existing and new city and town in Queensland with an adequate area of national parks or recreational reserves. That statement was made 11 years ago, and the Government is still not doing it.

When we moved into the eighties, the attitude changed. We find that the defrocked Minister in this place, Mr Tony Elliott, was reported on 22 October 1981 in the *Queensland Country Life* in the following way—

“‘It is untrue and unfair to describe the National Parks and Wildlife Service as land-grabbing,’ Mr Elliott said.”

He went on to say—

“Our department gets the land only after every other department has rejected it.”

That is the sort of priority the Government has on fauna conservation in national parks.

On 4 March 1986, Mr Peter McKechnie said—

Mrs Nelson: Why don’t you say something nice for a change?

Mr COMBEN: Because I tell the truth, and the truth is not nice to Government members. If Government members did anything good, I would say, “Good on you.” Can the Minister show me anything he has done for environmental protection in this State? The only sort of fauna that he is interested in conserving is “faunacation”. Peter McKechnie referred to Dr Keto and the goats on Lindeman Island. After your comments the last time I was on my feet—

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member will address the Chair.

Mr Hamill: The back bench reminds me of Lindeman Island.

Mr COMBEN: Yes. I will move on to Lindeman Island because Dr Keto was referred to by Peter McKechnie on 4 March 1986. He said—

“Dr Keto may or may not know that there are thousands of goats on Lindeman Island. It is not a significant island as far as national parks are concerned.”

What a back-down honourable members saw then!

There is one thing one can say about Peter McKechnie—at least he had the guts to move on from the Environment portfolio, whereas this Minister and his “Muntzters”,

who wander around with a few Brazil nuts, still holds the portfolio. He is still trying to hang on. The only reason why he has his portfolio is that he supports Mike Ahern. He is scared to move the Minister on. The Minister is a mockery; he is a shambles; and he is a shame to Queensland. The environmental record of this State is indeed a shame——

Government members interjected.

Mr COMBEN: I will move on to 1983. The *Telegraph* contained a letter to the Wildlife Preservation Society in which Mr Elliott said—

“Areas within the Palmerston National Park proposal which would not be included would remain vacant Crown land until it was proved they had no further potential for rural settlement or as a State forest reservation.”

What the Government does is declare an area a national park when it is degraded and no-one else wants it.

Mr Hobbs: What year is this?

Mr COMBEN: That was on 26 May 1983.

Mr Hobbs: Could I perhaps suggest that you are living in the past?

Mr COMBEN: I am indeed living in the past. I have moved from the days of there being some great vision in 1975 when the Government talked of the “greatest conservation movement” and the “highest percentage of national parks”. What went wrong between 1975 and 1981? Something went badly wrong. The Government had a great aim then.

Mrs Chapman: I think you look better without your moustache.

Mr COMBEN: I think the honourable member looks better without hers, too.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order!

Mr COMBEN: I was provoked, Mr Acting Speaker.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order! Facetious remarks are not relevant to the Bill and will not be tolerated by the Chair.

Mr COMBEN: Thank you for protecting me from inane interjections.

The record in Queensland is, as I have said, that this State has the lowest percentage of plant communities preserved in national parks. Although representation of plant communities is high in national parks in regions such as the wet tropical coast, the central coast, Cape York and south-east Queensland, two regions—the Mitchell grass downs and the desert uplands—have no national parks whatsoever. Five regions—the north-western highlands, the gulf country, the channel country complex, the mulga lands and the north New England Tablelands—have less than 30 per cent representation. National park gazettals have dropped dramatically in the past eight years.

So the scene that I am setting is that between 1975 and 1980 the Government had great intentions and moved the right way. However, it has gone bad since then, and it is getting worse. It has got a lot worse in the last three years under Minister Muntz.

Mr Newton: You're living too much in the past.

Mr COMBEN: I do not know whether I am living too much in the past, but that is the record which this Government has to live with. It is a record of shame, a record which no other Australian State has. Even this Government's conservative partners have a better record. A third of the New South Wales coastline is protected by national parks and reserves.

I will return to general criticisms of the record of the National Party. I will examine the record of this National Party Government and the record of the National Party in

Queensland. I have been told that I am living in the past. I will take as an example September 1988. Do members of the Government think that the National Party was doing a good job of protecting the environment then?

Mr McPhie: Hear, hear!

Mr COMBEN: The honourable member thinks that it was.

The *Sunday Sun* of 4 September 1988 carried the headline, "Kill park roos, says Senator." The article states—

"Queensland National Party Senator Ron Boswell has called for the culling of wildlife, including kangaroos, in all national parks."

That is fauna conservation? That is protecting the State's fauna? The Minister and his National Party stand condemned.

That particular article goes on to report that Senator Boswell spoke in Parliament in the week ending 4 September 1988 about a report handed down by the Senate Select Committee on Animal Welfare. The article states—

"Senator Boswell said it should give a clear message to parliaments around the world that animals must be kept within manageable proportions."

Has Senator Boswell not heard of the balance of nature? Does he really believe that the animals will not look after themselves, that the Government has to go out and manage it? That is the typical attitude one expects of the National Party—if it moves, shoot it and skin it. That is all members of the Government know about.

Government members interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order! There are too many continuous and multiple interjections from the Government side of the Chamber. They are doing nothing to enhance the debate. I ask honourable members to refrain from interjecting unless their interjection is taken and responded to by the member who is speaking.

Mr COMBEN: Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker.

The main thrust of the legislation is stated by the Minister in his second-reading speech as follows—

"The Fauna Conservation Act presently makes all dealing in permanently protected fauna an offence. This provision is not always in the best interests of such fauna as it serves to hinder the development of self-funding establishments that are dedicated to the captive-breeding of such species. By clause 31 of the Bill it is intended to permit trading in permanently protected fauna, such as the koala, with respect to captive-bred animals only and under strictly controlled conditions. For instance, before an Order in Council permitting trading in a species may issue, the Director of the National Parks and Wildlife Service must submit a report in writing to the Minister responsible for the administration of the Act indicating that the conservation of the species will not be prejudiced by the order. In submitting such a report the director must be satisfied that a person or organisation intending to trade in captive-bred fauna will comply with requirements relating to the care of live animals of the particular species."

I wish to address that matter. The trade in live koalas has been objected to by a whole range of organisations.

Mr Ardill: It is a recommendation for life or death.

Mr COMBEN: It is indeed a recommendation for life or death for koalas.

In the middle of 1987, in the *Courier-Mail*, a report was written by the environmental reporter, Roslyn Murray. She said that under the proposed changes, koalas would be

bought and sold. That was attacked by every conservation organisation of any standing. The article stated--

“The Queensland Wildlife Preservation Society director, Mr Don Henry, said koalas were difficult to keep alive, as seen in recent deaths in Japanese zoos. This could sponsor smuggling animals from the wild.

‘It will foster an illegal smuggling trade in koalas,’ he said.”

Mrs Chapman: Gee, he’s having a lend of himself, that guy.

Mr COMBEN: I would take the interjection if I could understand it. However, I cannot understand it.

Mrs Chapman interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order! The member for Pine Rivers!

Mr COMBEN: I take objection to that. I am an Australian and I have a piece of paper to prove it.

Mr Don Henry said that we should be directing our efforts towards keeping koalas in their natural habitat rather than locking them up in cages to beat up the tourist industry. That is precisely the objection that the Opposition has to this provision. For years the Fauna Conservation Act has provided for the protection of koalas kept in captivity. However, suddenly, for a handful of dollars—for 30 pieces of silver—the Queensland Government will trade in our State emblem. That is what the Opposition would expect from the National Party.

Mr Hobbs: What rubbish!

Mr COMBEN: If Government members received a good enough fee, they would trade in their grandmothers. The Government is trading in koalas.

Under the National Parks and Wildlife Act the Queensland Government does not have enough fauna rangers or wildlife rangers to check up on what is happening.

Mr Elliott: Give us some specific examples.

Mr COMBEN: The honourable member should hang on. He should interject from his correct seat.

Mrs Nelson: Substantiate your claim.

Mr COMBEN: Does the honourable member want one example down on the coast that is connected with the Minister? She should be careful.

The Government will have 30 tourist destinations at which koalas can be found. Two wildlife rangers will check up on them. If a koala turns up its toes somewhere up on the coast, they will go out and pull it down from a tree. That is what will happen because the officers will not be able to check up on them. A shonky system of brands in the ear, which can be duplicated by any means, will be used.

Mrs Nelson: You believe your own propaganda.

Mr COMBEN: I do, because it is true.

I think that we should be concerned about koalas in captivity. The Government will allow the export of koalas. In 1986, four-year-old Tom-Tom was the fifth koala to die in Japan. It had been suffering from kidney trouble since it was mated last month. It was one of the three koalas at the zoo. The truth is that koalas are dying in captivity. All that the Government has done is bow to the tourist trade. The tourist trade has approached the Government and said, “We want some koalas.” The Government has said, “Give us enough money and we will give them to you. We will not even watch what is happening to them. We are not going to have a system by which we can undertake proper supervision.” The Minister will stand up and say, “Of course they are

going to be supervised. My officers will have a look." The problem with the Government's wildlife service at present is that because insufficient staff are provided on the ground it will not be possible to provide the necessary supervision.

Objections have been taken to such a provision by a whole range of conservation groups. A host of articles have been written on the subject. I obtained some articles from the Parliamentary Library in which reference is made to the fact that survival for koalas is not easy. There is certainly a very legitimate argument about chlamydia and the other problems faced by koalas, which will affect their survival rate and their numbers. Other people say that today the koala is not facing extinction. In the past, in places such as the Gold Coast, Cleveland and Ormeau, koalas have been a nice little adjunct to fairly rural living. Increasing numbers of koalas are disappearing as land is cleared. The Act does not allow the land to be preserved. As long as the koalas are pulled down out of the trees and placed on the ground, the trees knocked down and the koalas allowed to die from starvation, that is allowed under the Act.

Mrs Nelson: That's rubbish.

Mr COMBEN: Mrs Nelson says, "That's rubbish." Under the Fauna Conservation Act it is not an offence to knock down all the trees, allowing the koalas to starve. It is not rubbish. There is no habitat preservation. As long as the animals are not killed—unless, of course, they are little bent-wing bats, which can be killed with impunity, as I found out in the Supreme Court today——

Mr Muntz: No bent-wing bats were killed at all, and you know it.

Mr COMBEN: I think they were horseshoe bats. There were three dead bats. Wes Hall looked at them.

Mr Muntz: They might have found one sick one.

Mr COMBEN: They found three with their eyes popped.

To return to the Bill, which Mrs Nelson says is rubbish—I ask her to show me anywhere in Queensland where there is any habitat preservation. That is the real need of this legislation. The Gold Coast koalas are facing extinction.

In the *Sun* in September last year there was the pathetic sight of a solitary koala clinging to its tree as bulldozers moved in. Anyone who saw that picture had to feel concern for the koalas. As long as the koala was not killed——

Mrs Chapman interjected.

Mr COMBEN: I am talking about koalas.

Mrs Chapman: I am talking about humans, too.

Mr COMBEN: We were talking about housing at 11 o'clock this morning. I think that the honourable member has been asleep since then. We have now moved on to the debate on the Fauna Conservation Act and Another Act Amendment Bill.

Honourable members must feel concern about any Act that does not protect the habitat. Don Henry has said constantly that, because of badly planned development, koalas could become extinct in Brisbane and other cities. He has stated that local authorities should provide increased environmental protection in town-planning decisions to protect native animals living in urban areas.

The local service club in the Cleveland area is creating a wildlife corridor and planting trees. However, we do not know whether that will be done quickly enough or whether the bulldozers will cause the koalas to starve to death.

Mr Newton: How many trees have you got in your back yard?

Mr COMBEN: I am told that I have a few more than 73. It is hard to move out there. There are a lot of trees and a few possums.

Mr Newton: I've got thousands in my back yard.

Mr COMBEN: They are all papaws. Honourable members have seen lots of them whenever the honourable member has tried to get a promotion.

I turn now to the Government's views on fauna conservation. Honourable members witnessed what happened with the crocodile farm plan, which has become a farce and has probably been shelved. Not many press releases have been issued about that project. Has the Government finally realised that it would be unworkable in different zones in Cape Tribulation and near Babinda?

Mr Muntz: It is working very well.

Mr COMBEN: Is the Government saying to the people, "We have cleared the crocs. You can go bathing."?

Mr Muntz: I said the program was working very well.

Mr COMBEN: How many rangers are involved in that project? How many wildlife officers are there?

Mr Muntz: Enough to make the program very effective.

Mr COMBEN: Not one wildlife officer has been appointed to the project. If someone sees a crocodile, an officer is sent into the area. The same thing applies with the koalas. If somebody reports a dead koala, a wildlife officer is sent out. This Government has insufficient staff to monitor the crocodile program. It will not have enough staff to monitor the sale of our State emblem.

The crocodiles which the Minister is so concerned about and so quick to move on are a tourist attraction in the Northern Territory. People are visiting the region to see the crocodiles. Yet in Queensland we say, "We will remove them from their natural habitat and make it safe for you." It is a farce.

I turn now to other animals that are facing extinction.

Mrs Chapman: Labor Party politicians in Queensland.

Mr COMBEN: I beg the honourable member's pardon?

Mrs Chapman: Forget it.

Mr COMBEN: If the honourable member intends to interject, she should interject properly. That was probably her swan-song. She will no longer be a member of this Assembly after the next State election. I understand that she has applied to join the Labor Party. However, we draw the line a long way above her.

I turn now to this Government's record of protecting animals that face extinction. In December of last year one of Australia's well-known and well-loved wildlife zoologists—

Mr De Lacy: There are a few facing extinction over there.

Mr COMBEN: There are seven in the city and six at the Gold Coast—

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member will come back to the Bill.

Mr COMBEN: I was talking about wildlife and extinction and what was happening at the Gold Coast.

At the end of last year, Dr John Winter, who is a leading zoologist, warned that the brush-tailed bettong could be in danger of extinction. Dr Winter, who is based at Ravenshoe in north Queensland, said that his early field trips into some known sites had been more successful than expected. However, he warned that the bettong might still be vulnerable. Dr Winter said—

"It's obvious now that in certain places, they are quite common.

But these sites could be quite small areas, and that would make the populations vulnerable to changes in conditions.”

The point that I am making is that those animals exist. Under the Fauna Conservation Act they have permanent protection status, but their habitat is not protected. As long as the bulldozers go around the brush-tailed bettong, the Government sees no problem at all. However, within a week the bettong could be starved to extinction.

The list of endangered vertebrate fauna in Queensland contains about 12 animals, including the bilby and the lesser bilby in the channel country. Their habitat is unprotected. The research program is going ahead with a grant from a mining company, but that habitat is still unprotected. The brush-tailed bettong in the wet tropical rainforests is endangered. The desert rat-kangaroo in the channel country is included on the list of endangered vertebrates. Its habitat is unprotected. The bridled nailtail wallaby in the brigalow belt has a population of approximately 300 or 400. It is all very well for the Government to protect the habitat of a small colony of animals in a limited area such as that. I understand that that colony was found by a fencer who had seen a television program or read an article in the *Sunday Mail* colour magazine and said, “Hang on. They’re all along the fence. I shoot three of them every evening for the dog.” At least that colony has been protected because its habitat has been protected. But as soon as a species is sparsely distributed on the ground, the Government does nothing because it does not protect the habitat. Some of the habitat of the Proserpine rock wallaby in the central coast rainforest is protected. Some of the reserves of the northern hairy-nosed wombat in the brigalow belt are protected.

As to rodents—the false water rat, the white-footed rabbit-rat, the dusky hopping-mouse, the northern hopping-mouse——

Mrs Chapman: Are you sure you are not making all these up?

Mr COMBEN: No, I am not. That demonstrates the quality of the honourable member’s environmental concern. Those are endangered species. The honourable member knows only about the danger to her own seat.

All that we hear from the Government is about the sale of koalas and how that will help to preserve the species. What about the species that are in real danger? I challenge some of the animal welfare supporters who criticise kangaroo culling to get into the real issue and consider what species are really facing extinction. That is the level at which we should be debating this issue. Why are we not considering those western areas?

Mrs Nelson: Changes in species are a vital part of the survival of various species. You never talk about that in the House.

Mr COMBEN: I was about to mention the changes in the species, which are vital to the preservation of some species.

In the old days when species were spread across the entire State and when there were many reserves, that was a brilliant argument. Now, when there are such limited numbers and there is no longer the genetic diversity, that argument does not apply. For someone who heads the National Party caucus committee on the environment, the honourable member is showing remarkable ignorance. That ignorance will result in her going on to extinction. I would like to continue without the static in the background, which comes from the other side of the Chamber. It is probably her swan-song, because I do not think we will be seeing too many more appearances from the honourable member for Aspley.

More than a dozen species are facing extinction, yet nothing is heard about habitat preservation. Much is heard about the Fauna Conservation Act, but what does it really do? What is necessary to preserve our wildlife and our diversity in this State is an assurance that the environment becomes the essential part of planning.

In conclusion, I will quote from the Labor Party's land and environment policy, which was passed late last year. I want to examine a number of points that it raises. The policy talks about administrative changes. Environmental planning decisions must be based on a co-ordinated and coherent approach to environmental protection with provision for informed public input—not the sort of input that has been displayed tonight by those on the other side of the Chamber—into the planning process. Public access to information is a pre-condition to meaningful participation in these decisions.

The Labor Party will make the public its partner in its plans for the environment. It will not thumb its nose at them; it will not refuse to listen to them. People such as Don Henry from the Wildlife Preservation Society, Liz Bourne from the Queensland Conservation Society and Dr Aila Keto will be the Labor Party's advisers. It will be listening to them. From the time when the Labor Party wins Government, it will put into place certain administrative changes, which will mean that the environment will have to be taken care of in a number of forms. The Labor Party will establish a planning and environment court having full jurisdiction over planning and environmental matters. It will write into the legislation that those environmental matters have to be taken care of and that cognisance has to be taken of them. It will establish an environmental protection authority, not the Mickey Mouse environmental protection agency which was set up under the new State Environment Act and which really has no powers whatsoever.

The Labor Party will pass legislation to allow access—locus standi—to relevant courts and to interested persons and organisations to ensure compliance with environmental laws. That legislation would not result in the situation that has occurred in the two recent cases in the State Supreme Court in which the speleological society told the court that it had an interest in the matter and that it wanted to ensure the preservation of Mount Etna. The court effectively said that, because that society has no financial interest, it had no standing. The Labor Party will remove that stigma. When the Labor Party amends the legislation, people will not have to prove a financial standing. The conservation groups will be able to enforce the Act in such a way that it will not be up to the Minister's discretion as to what happens about actions taken under the Fauna Conservation Act and under habitat preservation legislation as well.

The Labor Party will provide a freedom of information Act, which will allow people to have access to departmental documentation. At present the Department of Environment—the old National Parks and Wildlife Service—is too secretive. People do not know on what basis decisions are made. The Minister can stand in this place and say anything. He has already shown his ignorance about the number of officers working on the crocodile program. Information about how many officers remain with the program will be able to be obtained. I refer to those people who these days do little more than clean out toilets—who are glorified rubbish-collectors—and who should be essential professionals doing the job for which they are trained and for which they applied.

Labor will introduce legislation requiring environmental impact statements on all development projects having a significant impact on the environment to be made available for public review and comment prior to final Government decisions. At present the Government says that it looks at the environment, but the reality is that it does not take any notice of it. It has only to look at the ore-loading facility at Townsville or the Trinity Point development outside Cairns. There is no need for the Government to look at that sort of environmental legislation. A Labor Government will also provide legislation to protect important environmental and cultural sites.

Overall, Labor will introduce an administrative change under which it will be able to protect the environment. This, coupled with a real conservation strategy that will be prepared in consultation with conservationists, developers and other interested parties, will result in the Queensland environment being protected.

I do not intend this evening to divide the House on this legislation. I think it has many defects. The Government is signing the death warrants for koalas that will be exported to Japan in order to keep a few people happy there—the people whom this Government seems willing to sell our State to and is now selling our faunal emblem to.

The Opposition does not support legislation that allows that to happen. The Bill contains many defects, some of them technical. The overall thrust of the Bill is so far off the mark that it is not worth talking about. I have made general comments about the legislation.

Mrs Chapman interjected.

Mr COMBEN: I will keep going for 60 minutes, Mrs Chapman.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order!

Mr COMBEN: General comments have been made. The two hearings that have occurred in the Supreme Court concerning Mount Etna have shown the Fauna Conservation Act to be a farce, because it does not protect our fauna. It contains loopholes, which means that, if a person destroys the habitat and starves the animals, he is treated with impunity. That sort of legislation is unacceptable. It is one of the first legislative changes that the Opposition will make when it wins Government. It will be one of the changes made to properly protect the environment.

The Labor Party looks forward to having an environment that is protected. It is one of the richest environments in Australia. It contains the greatest living thing on this planet, namely, the Great Barrier Reef off our coast. More birds and animals are found in this State than in any other. This State has the greatest diversity of wildlife that this nation has to offer; yet Queensland has the poorest conservation laws, the poorest conservation Minister, and a National Party Government that does not care. In November, that Government will be extinct, and I look forward to that day.

Hon. W. D. LICKISS (Moggill) (9.52 p.m.): The Liberal Party supports the thrust of this legislation which is fairly simple in intent. A few introductory lines of the Minister's second-reading speech state quite succinctly what this legislation is all about. The Minister stated—

“The primary purpose of this Bill is to ensure that Queensland's fauna conservation legislation does not conflict with section 92 of the Australian Constitution, which provides certain guarantees in regard to interstate trade and commerce.”

The Minister went on to state that because the Act had not been substantially revised since 1974, he was taking the opportunity, by the introduction of this legislation, to introduce a few new principles, which at face value the Liberal Party accepts and would not regard as cause for complaint.

It is essential that the laws of Queensland should not conflict with the Constitution of Australia because the laws of all the States have to comply with the Constitution. If some parts of Queensland's legislation were found by the High Court to be invalid in terms of the Constitution—which has been the case—Queensland would find itself in quite an awkward position. The Minister is taking this opportunity to correct sections 63 and 64 to bring them into line with the provisions of section 92 of the Constitution.

It is interesting to note the two cases quoted in the Minister's second-reading speech. One case related to the High Court's deliberations in relation to interstate trade, commerce and intercourse of trade between the States. In that case, it was found that section 64 of the Act did not comply with the Constitution; yet, for another reason, the High Court found in the Tasmanian crayfish case that too much intrastate trade was protected which, equally, did not comply with the provisions of the Constitution in relation to the legislation of that and other States and the spirit of section 92 of the Constitution.

This legislation also deals with the question of captive-bred animals. I have heard a number of opinions expressed by various serious-minded professionals in this field and I have listened to arguments for and against the proposition. Personally, I cannot see much against the proposition that animals bred in captivity could be exported, subject to conditions of control. One can think very quickly of very solid and sound reasons why the proposal should be supported.

Other matters mentioned in the legislation are mainly of a machinery nature, primarily because the legislation has been open to amendment in respect of the major matters for which it was designed—that is, to bring it in line with section 92 of the Constitution. The Liberal Party does not find that there is much to complain about and, all in all, supports the Bill before the House.

Hon. G. H. MUNTZ (Whitsunday—Minister for Environment, Conservation and Forestry) (9.56 p.m.), in reply: I thank all honourable members, particularly the member for Moggill, for their contributions. Most of the comments made by the member for Windsor should be ignored. As far as I am concerned, most have been ignored, but I will make a few comments on some of the points that he has made.

Because much of the honourable member's information was based on habitat and the protection of habitat, I refer him to various clauses of the Bill, in particular clauses 36 and 38. It is proposed to amend clause 36 to improve fauna refuge provisions.

The honourable member made quite a noise about clause 31 particularly as it relates to koalas. I believe that this amending legislation will improve the koalas' lot and the handling of them. I also point out to the honourable member that of all the koalas that have been exported, those that have originated from Queensland have fared best by far. Very few problems have arisen with Queensland koalas compared to the problems experienced with koalas from New South Wales. Most displays of koalas feature captive-bred animals, and the proposed amendments will enhance their chances of survival. For the honourable member's information—the tagging system works well and is an excellent method of control.

The policies of this Government and its record in nature conservation are without doubt some of the best that can be seen in this nation. This Government has a proud record in this field—a fact that is never mentioned by the member for Windsor. The member did not mention what this Government has done through its declaration of national parks—such as the Bayfield, Bribie Island and Moreton Island national parks—to protect flora and fauna in various regions throughout this State.

This Government can be very proud of what has been achieved by departmental officers who have done a terrific job. Although those officers might be low on numbers, they are certainly high on quality in the performance of their duties. I point out to the honourable member that every Government department has a limited budget but that this Government is doing the best it can, and will continue to do so in the interests of all Queenslanders.

I thank all honourable members for their contributions to the debate. I foreshadow that during the Committee stage, I will move a minor amendment to clause 36, which is being proposed at the request of the Solicitor-General to tighten up the legislation following a recent High Court decision.

Motion agreed to.

Committee

Hon. G. H. Muntz (Whitsunday—Minister for Environment, Conservation and Forestry) in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 35, as read, agreed to.

Clause 36—

Mr MUNTZ (9.59 p.m.): I move the following amendment—

“At page 17, omit lines 25 to 28 and substitute—

‘(a) each item of fauna or bird, mammal or reptile of any kind that is not fauna to which the application relates—

(i) was lawfully obtained;

(ii) is lawfully kept;

- (iii) may, in the case of a proposed movement of any fauna or bird, mammal or reptile of any kind that is not fauna, from a State into Queensland, be lawfully moved from that State, at the time of making the application;’.”

Mr COMBEN: The Opposition supports the amendment. The Opposition’s legal adviser, Mr Wells, has advised that this amendment is necessary.

In the Minister’s closing remarks in the second-reading debate he stated that he is proud of his Government’s record of national park declarations and he referred to the recent declaration of a national park on Bribie Island and the Byfield national park. I point out to him that both national parks are one-third the size of the original proposals, that is one-third of the original recommendations that came from his department to Cabinet some years ago. The Bribie Island national park has an esplanade around the outside and massive areas of environmental park - not national park - are included in it. That is not a very proud record and the Minister could have done better than stating that this Government is going great.

Mr De Lacy: Do you think he will go down in history as a conservationist?

Mr COMBEN: He will go down all right. I do not understand why he is still there. Peter McKechnie did the honourable thing and got out of it. This Minister is much worse and yet still continues to hold this portfolio.

Mr Scott: He is a supporter of the Premier.

Mr COMBEN: Yes, this says something about the Premier. The only reason Mr Muntz holds this portfolio—

Mr Muntz: One thing is for sure: you’ll never be on this side of the Chamber.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr Booth): Order! Clause 36 refers to the transport of fauna interstate. It would be foolish to allow the debate to deteriorate.

Mr COMBEN: I am referring to clause 36 and the amendment to section 63.

Finally, the Minister, in defence of his environmental record, stated that the national park estate that has been declared is little in size but that it is good quality. He cannot overcome the fact that this State has a national park rate of only 2 per cent compared with the Australian State average of 5 per cent. The diversity of plant communities in national parks in this State is only 54 per cent and several per cent of those communities are not adequately protected. It is one thing for a plant community to be in a national park; it is another for it to be adequately protected by sufficient size.

It says something about the Minister that this was the best record that he could produce for his department. The true record of his department is that this Bill is another move towards the reduction of environmental protection in this State, whether it be through environmental legislation or through the Queensland National Parks and Wildlife Service. It is indeed a sad state of affairs.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 36, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 37 to 51, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, with an amendment.

Third Reading

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

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. G. H. MUNTZ (Whitsunday—Minister for Environment, Conservation and Forestry) (10.05 p.m.): I move—

“That the House do now adjourn.”

Government Action on Crime in Queensland

Mr GYGAR (Stafford) (10.05 p.m.): This evening, on behalf of the people of Queensland, I make a heartfelt plea to this Government to come to grips with the crime wave that is sweeping this State. By every statistic, every standard and every method of judgment crime is getting out of control in Queensland whilst the policies of the Government are a mixed amalgam of confusion, indecisiveness and broken promises.

The Government cannot decide what action it will take on crime and the people of Queensland are paying the price. In recent weeks the Government has been dancing from one foot to another in trying to decide whether it will accept or reject the Arthur Anderson report on police efficiency. As a result the Government has adopted the standard National Party approach; it has referred the matter to a committee. When will Queenslanders see some action on crime and less reference to committees making decisions on issues that the Government itself is afraid to face? What will the Government do about community policing? Will it reaffirm its stated policy, its intention to put police back into the community, on the beat and into local police stations, or will it accept the proposition put forward in the Arthur Anderson report and state that it wants an efficient police force but not necessarily an effective one?

There are many reasons why the Government might want to reject the Arthur Anderson report on police efficiency—despite the enormous amount of tax-payers' money that was spent on producing it—and one of them is the indictment on the Government that is contained in the report. I will quote one aspect from the Arthur Anderson report which illustrates the failure of this Government to come to grips with law and order. That report states—

“...external decisions have influenced manning levels to the extent where stations in busy, high crime areas have been staffed at reduced levels.”

Let us translate that out of the bureaucratic language and put it straight on the line. It is a massive indictment of the National Party for the way it has interfered in the proper allocation of police to meet its own political ends in the State of Queensland. Not only are the police undermanned, underequipped and undersupported by the Government, but also they are transferred willy-nilly from area to area, with scant regard for the interests of the people of this State, to look after the political interests of the National Party Government.

In recent months, and in fact in recent years, the Government has come out very strongly about the war on drugs. If there is a war on drugs, I ask the Government one question: where are the soldiers? In the last four years there has been no increase in the State's Drug Squad. There have been fancy PR campaigns and there have been vicious and violent headlines in which Ministers have declared that they intend to close down the drug barons, but why is it that in the last four years this Government has failed to allocate even 30 police officers out of nearly 6 000—that is one half of 1 per cent of the strength of our police resources—to this so-called war on drugs?

The war on drugs in Queensland is not even a skirmish, because there is nobody fighting it and because the Government has failed, failed, failed completely to meet the promises in its own bombastic press releases, which claim that it intends to do something about the greatest crime problem in this nation. Members of the Government have sat still on their hands and done nothing. When will the Government join battle in this war on drugs by providing at least enough police resources—at least 1 per cent of the police force—to fight the greatest crime problem that the community has ever faced?

In New South Wales the Liberal Government has shown the way by instituting a drugs task force of 135 police supported by barristers, researchers, criminal intelligence experts, computer experts and other civilian experts to provide the force that is necessary to do something about this scourge on our nation.

Is it any wonder that the drug arrest figures in this State are lower this year than they have been since 1983? It is not because the drugs are going away, it is not because there is less crime; it is because the inadequate resources that the Government has given the police and their war on drugs have amounted to a craven surrender to the forces of disorder and unlawfulness in our community.

Time expired.

Mount Gravatt Labor Candidate's Allegations of National Party Misuse of Public Funds

Mr HENDERSON (Mount Gravatt) (10.11 p.m.): Late last year the Premier launched his "Quality Queensland" campaign, part of which involved the production of a number of booklets, one of which is titled *Where does Queensland go from here?* Basically that is a precis of the "Quality Queensland" concept. Many members will recall that the Government made available to members of this House multiple copies of these books for distribution to interested parties in electorates. As I am one of those who conscientiously does that sort of thing, naturally I took advantage of the copies that were given to me and put a sticker on the front of some of them and interleaved others with one of my small pamphlets. When I call on people who are not home, my pamphlet explains that I have called and I interleave it in the booklet and leave it at the house.

Members can imagine my surprise when I picked up Monday's *Courier-Mail* and read some comments attributed to the Labor Party candidate for Mount Gravatt, a Mrs Judy Spence. Under the heading "Nationals raiding the till to boost vote, says candidate", I read the following—

"The National Party was raiding the Treasury till to boost its failing electoral prospects, the Labor candidate for Mount Gravatt, Mrs Judy Spence, said yesterday.

She said she would ask the Public Accounts Committee to investigate public funding of 'blatant political advertising' in Mount Gravatt.

The National Party member, Mr Ian Henderson, had appeared in a seven-page color pamphlet distributed in Mount Gravatt promoting Premier Mr Ahern's 'Quality Queensland' strategy."

The following is the very important part—

"The Nationals were squandering thousands of dollars of taxpayers' money to save Mr Henderson's political skin, Mrs Spence said."

That statement is absolute garbage and nonsense. The Labor Party has come up with a person with no knowledge of reality. She does not even have the nous to check the facts. One thing is certain: I do not have to worry about the Labor candidate for Mount Gravatt at the next State election. In fact, if she maintains her track record and continues to show that she has no knowledge of reality, and even less about the truth, clearly she is not a worthwhile person even to be in the ring.

A claim that a couple of booklets given to members which they conscientiously distribute around their electorates amounts to thousands and thousands of dollars is typical of the type of gossip that we hear from the Labor Party these days. Her statements are so far from reality that she must not have her feet on planet Earth at all; she must be way up in orbit. I do not mind people engaging in worthwhile debate, but when they come out with blatant lies and such complete nonsense, it makes one wonder exactly what the individual is worth. I have concluded that this individual is worth nothing.

For the information of Mrs Spence, I state that not only did I distribute some of these booklets around the electorate but also I will be distributing a number of my

speeches. Every member of this Parliament, be he or she Labor, Liberal or National, as part of the parliamentary privileges can have speeches printed, and I intend availing myself of that opportunity. Once again I presume that Mrs Spence will open her big mouth about the money being spent in Mount Gravatt to promote the candidate.

I do not doubt that she has also noticed that all members of Parliament get 10 diaries at the end of the year to distribute to schools and so on. No doubt Mrs Spence will claim that tax-payers' money is being used to promote members of the National Party, but she needs to be reminded that all members of this House are extended that privilege. Not only that, the fact of the matter is that from time to time we receive various news releases from Ministers. If I receive a good release, I am one who distributes it to the people in my electorate, which means that each year hundreds of news releases go out. That means that thousands and thousands of dollars of tax-payers' money are being used to promote me in my electorate. If Mrs Spence finds that objectionable, it would be interesting to ask, "How come she does not criticise her own Labor colleagues?" I do not doubt that they distribute their speeches and diaries around their electorates. All we are doing is keeping our electorate informed. I do not need Mrs Spence to tell me what I should do; I am capable of doing it quite well myself. One thing is for certain: she was wrong in this instance. She made an even bigger mistake in nominating as a candidate for the Labor Party.

Red-back Spiders in Murrumba Electorate

Mr WELLS (Murrumba) (10.16 p.m.): Mr Deputy Speaker, if you go to my electorate of Murrumba and go down Nightingale Drive, you will come to a quiet little court called Loane Crescent. In that area, a community of battlers, honest families and working people live in a Housing Commission estate. Those people work hard in order to give their children a good education and to make ends meet. However, they have been visited by a quite unexpected and unpleasant plague—a veritable plague of red-back spiders. In that area, red-back spiders are everywhere. They can be found in the back yard, in the house, in the children's bedrooms, on the children's play things—they are everywhere. The people of that community are most concerned about the threat that that poses to their children.

Mr Scott: What bit Mr Austin?

Mr WELLS: I thank the honourable member for reminding me. If one of those spiders bites the likes of Mr Brian Austin, it is touch and go as to who will survive; but if it bites a child, there is absolutely no doubt that what is contained in the bottle I am holding could kill the child.

I contacted the Minister about the matter, and members of the community contacted the Housing Commission to ask that some action be taken. The advice that was received from the Housing Commission and from the Minister was, "No. It's up to you to look after the place yourselves."

I have written to the Minister again. I made the point to him that it is not a matter of individual initiative, because, if somebody sprays his own housing block, the red-back spiders will retreat to another area.

Mr Beard: We've had them in north Queensland for 50 years and we clear them ourselves. We pay for it.

Mr WELLS: The honourable member is showing signs of that.

If someone sprays one block in a tightly knit Housing Commission area, the red-back spiders retreat to another part of the estate and return subsequently. So I wrote to the Minister again asking for a response from him. These spiders pose a threat to life. The honourable member for Mount Isa might not accept that this threat is sufficiently real to justify action. However, I urge upon the Minister that he should, out of compassion for the risk that the spiders represent to the lives of the children in that area, consider

co-ordinating the spraying. These people are not asking for it to be done at Government expense; they are asking the Government, which has the resources to do a co-ordinated spraying of the Housing Commission estate, and which is the owner of the property, to co-ordinate that spraying. The people are prepared to do in and make a contribution themselves.

The red-back spider that I have here in this container, together with its young, came from the Housing Commission estate. It is a very large specimen. I would like to place it on the table so that honourable members can peruse it.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Booth): Order! If the honourable member tables it, he can only display it for a short time. He will have to remove it immediately the House adjourns.

Mr WELLS: I understand that. I wish to place it there for the perusal of honourable members who might be interested.

Mr FitzGerald: Don't take the lid off.

Mr WELLS: I notice that a certain amount of fear and trepidation is coming from the National Party ranks. I do not know whether that is due to their arachnophobia or due to the imminence of the next State election. However, one way or the other, they have the jitters.

For the benefit of the honourable member who said, "Don't take the lid off", I point out that the Labor Party has taken the lid off a few things in this House previously that will do him much more damage than those red-back spiders will do while the lid remains on. I suggest that if he keeps the lid on that jar and a few other things he will be all right.

I make the point that the shadow Housing Minister, Tom Burns, has made it clear that a Labor Government will take responsibility in Housing Commission areas for life-threatening vermin such as red-back spiders and venomous snakes.

Government members interjected.

Mr WELLS: Not everything such as cockroaches, which Government members mockingly suggest, but for things that threaten the life particularly of children, the Labor Party Government will take responsibility. I repeat that the red-back spiders which are now on the table of the House do pose a threat, not to an adult but to a young child. The area from which they came is absolutely chock-a-block full of young children. For that reason, I draw this problem to the attention of honourable members and I commend a more humane attitude with respect to the eradication of this vermin.

Commonwealth Government Policy on Social Security

Mr STEPHAN (Gympie) (10.21 p.m.): Honourable members have just heard a nature study lesson from the honourable member for Murrumba, who spoke about red-back spiders. However, by far the greatest problem in this country at present would be his own colleagues and those in Canberra. He fails to realise and to highlight the bad points of his colleagues. The damage that the red-back spiders would do would be minimal when compared with the problems that his Labor colleagues are dishing up from Canberra at present.

Australians have always had the ability to put their shoulders to the wheel and to contribute to the productivity of this land. However, at present, because of the attitude of the Federal Government and the hand-outs that are available, it is better for Australians to sit down and do nothing rather than to do some work. That is of real concern to me and to many of my constituents, who rely on the ability of Australians to do a fair day's work for a fair day's pay and to be able to look after their families, the community and the country in which we are privileged to live. The correspondence which I have here is an example of a number of concerns that have been expressed to me. It refers to the serious problem that I have just mentioned.

Welfare payments are particularly high. I just wonder whether people have an expectation in relation to welfare payments that is far in excess of what they are intended for and what they should in fact be. As a result, in some instances people who have been working for many, many years are leaving work to go on these benefits.

I will mention five different cases. In the first case the gross wage is \$400, the take-home wage is \$327 and the welfare payment is \$351. In the second case, the gross wage is \$332, the net wage is \$284 and the welfare payment is \$255. In the third case the gross wage is \$307, the net wage is \$267 and the welfare payment is \$231. In the fourth case the gross wage is \$302, the net pay is \$264 and the welfare payment is \$303. In the fifth case, the gross wage is \$302, the net wage is \$263 and the welfare payment is \$303. One must add to that the extra assistance that is received by welfare recipients in the form of medical, dental and optical benefits and the fact that they do not have to pay travelling expenses for travelling to and from work, whether by car or public transport—

Mr Prest: What you're saying is that Queensland workers are being ripped off in this State.

Mr STEPHAN: What I am saying is that what is needed is productivity. This country must be able to compete in the market-place. It is about time members of the Opposition were prepared to accept the fact that, unless this country is able to improve productivity, it will go further downhill. Members of the Opposition claim that Queenslanders do not receive adequate wages, while businesses continue to go bankrupt. If that is their idea of productivity and being able to compete in the market-place, I do not think very much of their attitude. If that attitude continues to be adopted, I do not hold much hope for the future of this country.

The reality of the situation must be faced. It takes time to train people. In some instances months and even years go into the training of a person for a particular job, whether it is in a factory or out in the field. Years of experience are needed to produce an article that will be competitive and will meet the standards required on the export market and even on the Australian market.

If this country is to produce articles of the required standard, people must be encouraged to stay on in a particular job for the length of time it takes to learn the necessary skill. That is not happening if people are being encouraged to stay at home, if neighbours are being encouraged to say to the fellow next door who is going out to work, "You are an idiot to go out to work. You are an idiot to put your shoulder to the wheel. You are a clown if you take that attitude."

Time expired.

Roadworthiness Certificate Issued by BP Warrina Service Station

Mr SMITH (Townsville East) (10.26 p.m.): Tonight I intend to further expose unscrupulous behaviour in the used motor vehicle industry. I intend to outline the experience of an 80-year-old constituent in my electorate, Mr Herbert Henry Bagnall, of 209 Bayswater Road.

Mr Bagnall, who is an active and lucid man, noticed a Daihatsu van at the BP Warrina Service Station also in Bayswater Road, a short distance from his home. He approached the proprietor and was told that the vehicle belonged to a city used car dealer. A deal was subsequently struck, with Mr Bagnall paying a deposit of \$1,500 on the delivery of the vehicle to his home on 17 January by the dealer's agent.

Next day, the 18th, as instructed by the dealer, Mr Bagnall took the vehicle back to the BP Warrina Service Station for a roadworthiness certificate, although subsequent investigation showed that the service station was not an authorised inspection station. I will return to that later.

The vehicle was not made available to Mr Bagnall until two days later, on Friday the 20th, even though the roadworthiness certificate indicated that it had had a first and second inspection on the 18th, and the Main Roads Department record shows a transfer of ownership on the same day.

Mr Bagnall is prepared to sign a statutory declaration that at no time did the vehicle leave the BP Warrina Service Station. The roadworthiness certificate was issued by a person whose licence number was 3914 and whose address was not at Warrina.

Mr Bagnall was not satisfied with the condition and suitability of the vehicle and entered into discussions with the dealer about a possible refund of his deposit. On 2 February he was so concerned that he complained to an officer of the north Queensland office of the Transport Department about the condition of his supposedly roadworthy vehicle.

The vehicle was subsequently inspected by departmental officers, who found six defects, including engine oil leaks and a fault with the steering. In other words, the vehicle was in no condition to have been given a roadworthiness certificate by licensee No. 3914 or anybody else.

Following the Transport Department inspection, Mr Bagnall sought legal advice on 9 February through the Legal Aid Office, and correspondence took place between the dealer and the Legal Aid Office, during which the dealer, in a letter dated 14 February, indicated a preparedness to rectify faults but initially declined to offer a refund.

What is particularly interesting is that the dealer, in his letter of the 14th, said—

“The B.P. Service Station subsequently carried out the R.W.C. and Mr Bognall (sic) took delivery.”

That statement appears to indicate that the dealership was under the impression that the BP service station was authorised to issue roadworthiness certificates when in fact it was not. The end of that side of the story is that after a discussion with me the dealer offered to refund and in fact refunded the \$1,500.

I turn now to the more serious aspect of my investigations. As a result of inquiries among industry sources, I was told two things. The first was the disquiet felt about the BP Warrina Service Station and the second about authorised roadworthy station licensee No. 3914, who turned out to be one Sydney Ronald Dart, proprietor of the self-styled The Auto Clinic located at 14 Langton Street, Garbutt.

The story circulating in the industry is that the Transport Department was about to take action against Dart because, although he employed only one mechanic, he had become a roadworthiness certificate issuing station with one of Queensland's highest through-puts of inspections.

Quite clearly, Dart had been allowing wide and indiscriminate use of his signed certificates by second parties, including the operators of the BP Warrina Service Station. Certainly he did not see Mr Bagnall's vehicle, unless he left his place of business to inspect it at Warrina, some distance from his premises, which is an extremely unlikely circumstance.

What type of person, one might ask, would engage in such a dubious practice, especially when there is such carnage on the road? The answer is the type of person who frequently has had published pontifical and hypocritical letters in the *Townsville Bulletin* and signs them “Syd Dart, Langton Street, Garbutt”. Mr Sydney Dart does not have the intestinal fortitude to give his home address, which is 1 Dingah Street, Rasmussen.

What is all the more amazing and hypocritical is that Mr Dart's home is a Housing Commission rental property, where he has lived for some years, presumably on a welfare rent of some type, in spite of the fact that he is actively engaged in business and constantly critical of welfare programs.

I certainly call on the QHC to investigate that matter. The respect that Mr Dart has for the free market and free-enterprise system can also be shown from correspondence

dating back to late 1982 and early 1983, when Mr Dart approached the QHC through me in an attempt to purchase a home at its original considerably lesser value when he had commenced renting some years previously, rather than its established value at the time, namely, \$50,000.

I have established tonight the profile of a man who would cheat the Queensland Government and defraud the public. I have also established the profile of a man who has been, or has certainly publicly described himself as, a north Queensland National Party organiser.

Time expired.

Road Toll

Mr McPHIE (Toowoomba North) (10.32 p.m.): In the brief time available to me, I wish to refer to the road toll, which is a matter of great concern to all members. During the Christmas recess I read a letter written to the *Sun* by the member for Toowong, who I note has gone to bed already. In his letter he provided a simple solution to the road toll. In his letter, which was well written, he offered the solution that all that was needed to reduce the road toll was to provide more police on the road and more money. It is not as simple as that. Many problems are involved in the road toll. Perhaps more police and more money would contribute to a reduction in the road toll. However, neither each of them alone nor the two of them together will solve the problem of the road toll. The road toll is a huge problem.

Statistics have shown that over the years the road toll has increased steadily. I am pleased that for the first two months of this year the road toll in Queensland was significantly lower than it was for the same two months of the previous year. Perhaps the Government is beginning to get its message across to the public. Roads are getting better, cars are getting better, but people are driving faster. The new cars that are being produced enable motorists to drive significantly faster than they could in the past.

Members often hear in this House blame being levelled on our Federal counterparts for not providing Queensland with its share of road funds to build more roads. Queensland is a large State with many kilometres of roads. For that reason extra money is needed to carry out work on those roads. The design of roads is improving. Money that is provided for roads is being well used and better roads are being built. However, the fact remains that, annually, in almost every major State in Australia more lives are lost through road fatalities than were lost in the whole of the Vietnam war. A terrific outcry occurred about the casualty rate in the Vietnam war. However, Australians are blasé about the road toll and tend to ignore it. They certainly accept it.

Surely the whole crux of the matter is the attitude of drivers. In many cases speed is a contributing factor to road deaths. Some drivers have contempt for the speed limit or they are ignorant of the capabilities of the car and the capabilities required of the driver to control and operate his vehicle. Many drivers show contempt for the road rules. Impatience on the part of drivers is another cause of accidents. A lack of road courtesy results in accidents. Some drivers have a plain disregard for common sense. Drivers are ignorant of the conditions under which they drive and the results of excessive speed and inattention. The problem of drink is ever present.

One matter that contributes to the attitude of many drivers is the type of rubbish that can be seen on many television programs. Cops and robbers programs depict stunt drivers driving brilliantly, wrecking cars all over the place at high speed, allegedly in heavy traffic conditions. Very often, high-speed racing competitions are televised. Honourable members would be familiar with the efforts of Dick Johnson at Mount Panorama in the touring car championship. Lately, members have seen the Thunderdome type races where souped-up standard sedans on a circular track are driven to their absolute limit. That must have an effect on many people as well as on the drivers. It is exemplified in the attitude of many drivers.

The police should not be blamed for the road toll. Police officers have many other jobs to perform, including the supervision of traffic. The Government should not be blamed, either. It has a tremendous area of responsibility, including the provision of safe conditions for drivers. The ones who should be blamed are the drivers. What is needed is an education and an enforcement area which is pepped up, if possible. Increased penalties need to be imposed on drink-drivers for second offences. The current points system is a good one. The new doppler radar system that the police have just received enables them to record the speed of a vehicle in a closing situation. It is an excellent system that is long overdue. Our highways need to be further improved so that the congestion is reduced. The speed limits need to be kept at their present level. On the open highways, the speed limit should be kept down, especially in places where congestion does not occur but where accidents still occur.

Time expired.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 10.37 p.m.