

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 28 SEPTEMBER 1989

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

PANEL OF TEMPORARY CHAIRMEN**Nomination of Mr T. J. Perrett**

Mr SPEAKER: Pursuant to the provisions of Standing Order No. 13, I nominate Mr Trevor John Perrett, member for the electoral district of Barambah, to fill the vacancy in the panel of Temporary Chairmen of Committees following the appointment of Mr Gilbert Alison as a Minister of the Crown.

USE OF MINISTERIAL AIR UNIT**Return to Order**

The following paper was laid on the table—

Return to an Order made by the House, showing (1) total flying time, (2) total number of passengers carried and (3) names of Ministers who travelled on either of the aircraft.

PAPERS

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

Reports—

Department of Mines for the year ended 30 June 1989

Queensland Electricity Commission for the year ended 30 June 1989

Port of Brisbane Authority for the year ended 30 June 1989

Queensland Fire Brigades Employees' Superannuation Plan for the year ended 31 March 1989

State Stores Board for the year ended 30 June 1989.

The following papers were laid on the table—

Orders in Council under—

State Development and Public Works Organization Act 1971-1981

Grammar Schools Act 1975-1984 and the Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Act 1982-1989

Bi-yearly report on the Curriculum taught or to be taught in Queensland schools for Year 1 to Year 10

Associations (Natural Disaster Relief) Act 1976

Statutes under—

University of Queensland Act 1965-1989

Griffith University Act 1971-1989

Reports—

Board of Secondary School Studies for the year ended 31 December 1988

Queensland University of Technology for the year ended 31 December 1988

Rockhampton Girls' Grammar School for the year ended 31 December 1988.

COMMITTEE OF SUBORDINATE LEGISLATION

Appointment of Mr L. E. Newton

Hon. N. J. HARPER (Auburn—Leader of the House) (10.05 a.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

“That Mr Lyell Edward Newton, member for the electoral district of Glass House, be appointed a member of the Committee of Subordinate Legislation to fill the vacancy caused by the resignation of Mrs Beryce Ann Nelson.”

Motion agreed to.

PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

Annual Report

Mr ELLIOTT (Cunningham) (10.06 a.m.): I seek leave to table the annual report of the Parliamentary Committee of Public Accounts for the year ended 30 June 1989, and I move that it be printed.

Leave granted.

Whereupon the document was laid on the table, and ordered to be printed.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Comments of Secretary of Transport Workers Union on Appointment of Minister for Transport

Hon. Y. A. CHAPMAN (Pine Rivers—Minister for Transport and Ethnic Affairs) (10.07 a.m.), by leave: In last Tuesday's *Sun* newspaper the secretary of the Brisbane sub-branch of the Transport Workers Union, Mr Hughie Williams, was quoted as saying that he was “less than thrilled” by my appointment as Minister for Transport. He is further reported as saying—

“Nothing can happen without transport and yet we are given a Minister who has absolutely no knowledge of it.”

Honourable members will understand that I was terribly distressed by Mr Williams' less than charitable remarks, given the fact that I was a member of the Transport Workers Union in the 1970s when I had to have a ticket to drive a truck for my family business. It occurs to me that, if being a member of Mr Williams' union provides expertise in transport matters, as he was apparently suggesting, then he should be truly overjoyed by my appointment.

Honourable members will be interested to know that today I received a letter from Mr J. Penhallurick, the acting secretary of the Queensland branch of the TWU of Australia. I shall quote briefly from that letter, which refers to the article in the *Sun* of last Tuesday—

“Please be advised that Mr. Williams holds an honorary position within our Union and does not have the authority to make statements on behalf of the TWU Queensland branch.

The only people who can make statements on behalf of our Union are the Branch Secretary, Allan McPaul, or a person authorised by him.

This Union has no hesitation in dealing with you in your position as Minister for Transport and we look forward to open and frank discussions with you in the future.”

Certainly I look forward, as the Transport Workers Union Queensland branch does, to working in closely for the betterment of Queensland. It must be a matter of great

concern to the officials of the Queensland branch of that union that their renegade honorary Brisbane sub-branch secretary so deeply embarrassed them.

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

Leave granted.

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

Transport Workers Union of Australia
QUEENSLAND BRANCH

SUB-BRANCHES
Brisbane, Rockhampton, Ipswich,
Warwick, Toowoomba, Roma,
Kingaroy, Wide Bay
and Northern Queensland.

All correspondence to:—
A. McPAUL
Branch Secretary,
92 Commercial Road, Newstead,
Brisbane, Q. 4006.
Telephone: 252 9644 Fax.: 252 2922

S.10746.15/40(01)
26 September 1989

Hon Yvonne Chapman
Minister for Transport
PO Box 1429
BRISBANE QLD 4001

Dear Madam

We refer to an article in the Tuesday, 26 September 1989 edition of the Sun Newspaper under the heading "Lonesome Bob".

In this article the TWU was quoted as saying "it is less than thrilled by the appointment of another recycled Minister". This quote was attributed to the Brisbane Sub-branch Secretary Hughie Williams. Please be advised that Mr Williams holds an honorary position within our Union and does not have the authority to make statements on behalf of the TWU Queensland branch.

The only people who can make statements on behalf of our Union are the Branch Secretary, Allan McPaul, or a person authorised by him.

This Union has no hesitation in dealing with you in your position as Minister for Transport and we look forward to open and frank discussions with you in the future.

Yours faithfully

J. PENHALLURICK
Acting Branch Secretary

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Queensland Police Force

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the Honourable the Minister for Police.

Opposition members interjected.

Hon. V. P. LESTER (Peak Downs—Minister for Police and Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Affairs) (10.08 a.m.), by leave: Opposition members should listen; it might be good.

Last night—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Honourable members might miss something.

Mr LESTER: Last night I had the very great pleasure of attending the police variety concert.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr LESTER: I intend to circulate this ministerial statement to all of the police stations in Queensland.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr LESTER: The absolute contempt of Opposition members for the police of this State will be recorded.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr LESTER: These police officers have shown very clearly that they are prepared to give in the public interest. The variety concert was put on by police from all over the State. They, their wives, their families and helpers have given their time to prepare for it. The way the ALP members have chosen to laugh and snicker at these comments is contemptible. Might I also say that the proceeds will go to charity. If ALP members feel that they can redeem themselves in any shape or form, may I also say that further concerts are being held at the Suncorp Theatre at 1 p.m. this coming Saturday and at 7.30 o'clock that evening. The tickets cost \$10, and information can be obtained from any police station.

Mr Mackenroth: Did you pay?

Mr LESTER: That is a stupid comment—an absolutely stupid comment—from the shadow Minister, which shows his contempt for the police.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I ask all honourable members to observe the dignity of the House.

Mr LESTER: I really do not know what the police will think when they hear of the contemptible attitude of the ALP and when they see these comments.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr LESTER: Thank you, Mr Speaker. They provoked me.

This afternoon, with the help of the Honourable the Premier, we will be launching a joint coaching scheme. The police and the Broncos will go to Rockhampton, Mackay, Proserpine and Bowen. Matches will be played there. Time will be given in a joint effort between the Broncos and the police to coach young footballers in this State. That is another very commendable thing that our police are doing.

Tomorrow afternoon, various types of bravery awards will be given by His Excellency the Governor. One will be a posthumous award of the Star of Courage to Peter Kidd, who was tragically shot. Others who will be receiving various bravery awards are Sergeant Strong, Senior Constable Turner, Constable First Class Frost, Constable Monley and Detective Powell. This indicates the great effort that these people make and how they put their lives forward to try to save and protect us all.

Mr Mackenroth: Without bullet-proof vests.

Mr LESTER: Might I also add that that matter is being attended to very quickly, as everything else is being attended to since I became the Minister. I have put my stamp on the show since becoming Minister and all of this is happening. If the honourable member sits back and listens, he will find that everything will happen very quickly. The police will be given good leadership by this particular Minister.

Might I also add that on Saturday night we will see the induction of two new squads of policemen and policewomen, who will give excellent service to the State of Queensland. On Sunday we will have further voluntary activity by the police at Oakey. It is a biathlon type of competition with the dogs that the police use in sniffing out various forms of drugs and various forms of trouble.

It is clear that a lot is happening in our police force, and very much of it is done in a voluntary fashion. I am sure that the people of Queensland can be very pleased

and confident with the efforts that our police, supported by their families, are giving to our State of Queensland.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Drought; Natural Disaster Relief Scheme

Hon. M. D. STONEMAN (Burdekin—Minister for Primary Industries) (10.15 a.m.), by leave: I rise today on a matter of the gravest concern to me in my capacity as Minister for Primary Industries, the person who has the responsibility to maintain the support processes for the nation's largest single export-earner and backbone of this State's economy—primary production.

Today, the *Courier-Mail* has treated millions of livestock, thousands of families and a huge sector of the economy of Queensland with absolute contempt by giving exposure and credibility to a blatant political misuse of the parliamentary process. In its headline styled "Axe Harper over \$30m drought aid waste: MPs" and the following story, not a single reference is made to the unbelievable deprivation, animal suffering, human trauma and suffering, economic disaster and national tragedy that accompanies drought. Not once have I read where those who are using the front page of a newspaper to try to crucify the man previously responsible for the welfare of millions of starving, dying, irreplaceable animals have acknowledged the incredible problems a Minister faces in the administration of a drought across a range of circumstances that make it virtually impossible to be precise while at the same time sustaining the major objective of maintaining the national herd and the capacity of the rural economy to recover under the increasing harsh economic times in which we live.

The administration of drought aid is not a simple process, such as dispensing a few pills, shuffling a few accounts or theorising economic good times. Drought means the cruel reality of stock going from a happy, contented state to dying the most tragic death in some dried up waterhole, stock by the road searching for food or having a premature meeting with the slaughterman—assuming they are strong enough and in a condition to attract a buyer.

Drought is about broken-down machinery that owners cannot afford to repair; it is about huge maintenance bills in times of economic starvation for the particular unit involved; it is about using every possible facility to try to maintain herds built up in some cases over generations to such an extent that their importance is always placed by their owners ahead of human comforts in order that losses are reduced to a minimum. Drought is about seeing the work of generations wiped away in one single, cruel blow. Drought is nothing less than all-out war with the elements in the most cruel and one-sided battle man or beast can possibly endure. Drought is about children's pet sheep and cattle dying; it is about domestic animals such as the old milker, the kids' pony and the old pensioner horse that has served so well for so many years, all loved ones fading away in circumstances in which nothing can be done. Yet Opposition members make jokes about it.

Those were the circumstances facing the Minister for Primary Industries during the widespread droughts of recent years. They are the pressures the Minister has to grapple with, in the same way as a person whose home is on fire has to make the decision to get the children out of the house as having a priority over other precious possessions that suddenly in the face of danger become meaningless. Those are the circumstances that set the scene that thousands of people face in such desperate times in the grip of drought, with their only hope being the compassion and understanding of Government, through the Minister for Primary Industries. Those people have no hope of maintaining their operations in isolation and cannot possibly survive without calling on the Government of the day.

In that instance, the Government has to administer the drought aid package in accordance with general guide-lines determined by the Commonwealth as part of the

Natural Disaster Relief Scheme. However, in a move to clearly spite Queensland farmers, from 1 July the Commonwealth is no longer prepared to pay its fair share of drought relief as part of the Natural Disaster Relief Scheme. That is despite the fact that the same Government has only in the last few weeks made available \$60m in direct subsidy to Kodak, a major US corporation. Perhaps the difference is that Kodak operates in Labor States, supported by bureaucrats who are cloistered in the comfort of their ivory towers and who have never had to face the trauma of pulling an animal out of a bog and then having to shoot it, drag it away and burn it—an animal which may have taken years to breed to the degree of productivity at the time of its death, an animal which has become part of the family, not merely an object from which to earn an income or to treat with the contempt that has been exhibited by the comments of a few bitter, vindictive and inexperienced people.

Those are the type of people Ministers such as my predecessor have been trying to convince of a need to change the guide-lines to more accurately reflect the support processes as well as the requirements demanded by the public in the use of their taxpayer dollar. I understand that Queensland's Ministers for Primary Industries have been trying to achieve that break-through for a number of years. In the future I will be making a definitive statement on that matter.

As a grazier who has lived through the horrific drought of 1965, when the district in which I lived was almost wiped out, only to see a minimal return to season in 1966, then further droughts in 1967, 1969 and 1971, I claim to understand that a drought does not occur on just a single occasion. Nor does it mean that, with the first rains, all is suddenly back to normal and one is able to make a profit again. That profit is years away. Having lost the income source, one has then to try to find the financial resources, which is always extremely difficult, and face the virtually impossible task of rebuilding a herd. If the breeding herd in the global sense has not been able to be moved in part or whole to other areas, the people who have suffered total loss have no hope of rebuilding their herd. If the large properties with large herds are not able to be similarly assisted and sustained, the thousands of small family operations that are the backbone of our economy simply disappear, because where else would they find replacement stock?

Above all, the suffering that those millions of animals have to face prior to a usually inevitable death is the paramount concern of their owners, and therefore the Government—particularly the Minister for Primary Industries. He has to make decisions that are expected to stand the most minute scrutiny years down the track—scrutiny by people who clearly have no understanding of the animal and human suffering contained within every drought.

Finally, I must say that in these instances human suffering is a fact of life and, sadly, there is little that can be done about it. However, the suffering of millions of animals and the economic threat, which can be measured in billions of dollars, cannot be ignored by the Government.

I know that I have the support of all thinking members of this House. However, I issue a sincere plea to organisations such as the RSPCA and the Animal Liberation movement to use their resources to support the Queensland Government in the drought aid debate so that the real issues of that aid and what it is all about can be properly assessed and addressed. I have no doubt that these organisations will be most positive in their understanding of what animal suffering is all about, and I have nothing but contempt for those who are attempting to prolong and extend that suffering in order to sell a few newspapers and score a questionable political point.

Mr R. J. Gibbs interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I warn the member for Wolston for the first time.

PRIVILEGE

Attitude of Members of the Opposition

Hon. N. J. HARPER (Auburn—Leader of the House) (10.24 a.m.): I rise on a matter of privilege. I was personally distressed and I found most offensive the attitude of members on the opposition benches, particularly the member for Redcliffe, the member for Bundaberg and the member for Caboolture, while the Minister for Primary Industries was addressing this House. They feigned concern; they took handkerchiefs out of their pockets; they feigned tears; and they expressed their true attitude to primary producers in this State. I find that personally offensive, I find it offensive to the primary industries of this State and I ask that they apologise to this House for their actions.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The House will come to order. I will not accede to the request by the Leader of the House.

PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE OF PUBLIC WORKS

Report

Mr McPHIE (Toowoomba North) (10.25 a.m.): I lay upon the table of the House the report of the Parliamentary Committee of Public Works in relation to the proposed construction by the Brisbane and Area Water Board of a dam on the Albert River at Wolffdene, as referred by Order in Council dated 27 April 1989, and I move that it be printed.

Whereupon the document was laid on the table, and ordered to be printed.

QUESTIONS UPON NOTICE

1. Intervention of Deputy Premier in Arrest of Mr N. G. Bryant

Mr MACKENROTH asked the Premier and Treasurer and Minister for State Development—

“With reference to a Queensland Police Department internal memorandum dated 25 July, 1989 from Detective Sergeant J. P. Reynolds, written in response to an inquiry he ordered as Police Minister, into how information had been obtained from the Victorian Police in relation to Justice Vasta (I understand a copy of the memo was supplied to the now Premier as the then Minister for Police) and particularly to one section of the memo which states: ‘I wish to also point out that a complaint was made to the Fitzgerald Inquiry in relation to the Honourable Mr Gunn, when a request was received by me alleged to have come from Mr Gunn who at the time was Minister for Police for me not to arrest a person named Neil George Bryant who was being investigated for major drug cultivation and supplying offences for a period of two weeks.’—

(1) What action did he take as the Police Minister in relation to this memo?

(2) Has he discussed this matter with the Special Prosecutor?

(3) Who has the ongoing responsibility of investigating complaints made to the Fitzgerald Inquiry?”

Mr COOPER: (1 to 3) The document that the honourable member has tabled is an internal police memorandum. I do not believe that I ever saw it before it was tabled. However, I will say this about it: it is certainly a disgraceful document. There is no doubt about that. It is full of unsubstantiated and offensive innuendo and gross inaccuracies.

That document is not, as the honourable member describes it, a response from Detective Sergeant Reynolds to the inquiry by me when I was Police Minister into

Reynolds' own conduct. Rather, it is an obvious and pathetic attempt by Reynolds to hit out at those whom his friend the former Justice Vasta blames for his own inevitable dismissal—this Government, Mr Gunn, who instituted the Fitzgerald inquiry, and the recently retired Chief Justice, who very properly suggested to Vasta that he not sit as a judge until after the inquiry into his conduct was complete.

I have just learned that Mr Mulholland, QC, from the commission of inquiry investigated the so-called complaints contained in Reynolds' memorandum. Indeed, on the 26th of this month Mr Mulholland, QC, advised the Acting Commissioner of Police in the following terms—

“It would, in my view, be a waste of the resources and time of the Police Department to investigate further any of the incidents referred to by Detective Sergeant Reynolds.”

I need only point out further that one of the persons relied on and referred to in Reynolds' memorandum, Mr Noel Kelly, is now serving a term of imprisonment for perjury committed at the Fitzgerald inquiry and was forced at that inquiry to admit to his own long-standing corrupt conduct as a policeman.

2. Hoop Pine Logging, McIlwraith Range, Cape York

Mr INNES asked the Minister for Tourism, Environment, Conservation and Forestry—

“Has the Forestry Department, or any part of it, given recent consideration to the logging of hoop pine in the McIlwraith Range of Cape York and, if so, (a) why has consideration been given to logging, (b) is the area virgin forest, (c) wouldn't logging seriously damage the forest because of accessibility problems, (d) hasn't the area been used by forestry officers for hoop pine seed gathering, (e) what is proposed and at what time, (f) what benefits would directly accrue to the Government if logging took place and (g) isn't the McIlwraith Range an area of outstanding natural values, of extremely rare fauna, and one over which there was a national park proposal for many years?”

Mr HARPER: I provide the following answer, which clearly demonstrates the traditional responsible attitude of this Government to conservation and forestry—

- (a) An approach was recently made to the Department of Forestry to allow logging of timber on the McIlwraith Range. This approach was rejected by the Department of Forestry on both conservation and economic grounds.
- (b) Yes. There has been no logging.
- (c) Logging has never been considered.
- (d) Yes. Hoop pine seed was last gathered from this area in 1982.
- (e) Further collection of hoop pine seed is being considered for 1990.
- (f) Any benefits which would accrue to the Government would have to follow the assessment of all factors relating to the cost of logging.
- (g) A national park proposal was considered over an area to the north of the hoop pine timber stand.

3. Gold Coast Waterways Authority Land Rentals, the Spit

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

“With reference to a recent decision that all land leasing on the Spit is being brought under the control of the Gold Coast Waterways Authority (GCWA)—

Will he instruct GCWA to limit land rental increases to CPI increases, over and above what has previously been payable by Crown lessees in 1988-89, for the period to 1991?”

Mr NEAL: The Government has been giving consideration to the involvement of the Gold Coast Waterways Authority in future leasing arrangements of Crown lands on the Southport Spit for commercial purposes with a view to increasing the revenue obtained by the authority from this source.

Any proposal to increase rentals above the levels previously payable by Crown lessees would, however, be related to future negotiations of rentals as they become due for review. The renegotiated lease conditions will be subject to ministerial approval.

The rentals in respect of certain of the leases are due for reappraisal before the end of 1991, and it would defeat the purpose of the proposed arrangements if the authority were to be limited in its negotiations.

4. Motor Vehicle Brake Specialists, Regulation

Mr VEIVERS asked the Minister for Police and Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Affairs—

“(1) Is he aware that there are no formal regulations governing the operations of motor vehicle brake specialists in this State, and that as a result of this lack of regulations any unqualified person can set himself or herself up as a ‘brake specialist’ in Queensland?”

(2) Will he consider bringing this area of motor vehicle operations under appropriate regulation, particularly in matters of qualifications of the tradesmen involved, and of the equipment used?

(3) Will he consider the establishment of special courses within the State apprenticeship framework so that people can be comprehensively trained in this important aspect of the motor vehicle industry?”

Mr LESTER: (1) Persons who work as brake specialists in Queensland are classified and paid as motor mechanics under industrial awards. It has been the policy in Queensland to train apprentice motor mechanics in all aspects of the trade so that they can move between employers and segments of the industry. Apprentices do receive training in brakes servicing.

(2) It may be difficult for an employer specialising only in brakes to train an apprentice in all aspects of the trade. However, at this point I believe that we have to specialise further in training in brakes servicing. Over the years, a number of accidents have occurred. More specialised training should be given on that particular aspect. I intend to meet with the motor traders and discuss the matter further. I would like the honourable member for Southport, who asked the question, to co-ordinate meetings with persons he thinks could make a contribution to the discussions and take the matter further down the track. Over 20 group schemes in Queensland allow apprentices to be rotated among employers in different industry segments. They also allow brake specialist employers to engage apprentices. In other words, we are giving apprentices training in various garages and other places, and that does help a little.

(3) If, in the process of industrial award restructuring, classifications of brake specialists are established, with appropriate promotional opportunities leading to a fully skilled mechanic, my Department of Employment, Vocational Education and Training will be only too willing to develop appropriate courses in this new type of apprenticeship. We have to consider the issue further and try to do the job properly.

5. Public Accounts Committee Report on Drought Relief; Criticism of Hon. N. J. Harper

Mr CASEY asked the Premier and Treasurer and Minister for State Development—

“With reference to the report by the Parliamentary Committee of Public Accounts, into drought relief efforts, which occurred under the administration of the former Primary Industries Minister the Hon. N. J. Harper and, in particular

to page 35 of the report which clearly exposes Mr Harper's political interference in the removal of Mr Dan Daly as head of the drought secretariat and also to page 33 of the report which makes it plain Mr Harper by-passed local drought committees when using his ministerial discretion to approve payments outside the guidelines—

In view of this indictment of Mr Harper's behaviour as Minister will he now sack Mr Harper from Cabinet or are we to see a continuation of Bjelke-Petersen standards in relation to ministerial responsibility and propriety where the person who exposes rorts gets the chop instead of those rorting the system?"

Mr COOPER: In no way can this report be considered as an indictment of Mr Harper.

I might add that, just as it would not be right for a public servant to be disadvantaged as a result of actions carried out in good faith, neither should a Minister or a member of Parliament be censured or sacked for acting in equally good faith.

6. Public Accounts Committee Report on Drought Relief; Criticism of Hon. N. J. Harper

Mr CASEY asked the Premier and Treasurer and Minister for State Development—

“With reference to the report of the Parliamentary Committee of Public Accounts into abuses of drought relief funds which shows tens of millions of dollars in public funds have been wasted through overpayment or abuses in the last five to six years—

(1) Will he give a guarantee that the 20 specific recommendations of the Public Accounts Committee will be implemented in full?

(2) Does he stand by the attitude he expressed on the concept of a Public Accounts Committee in this House on 17 September 1987 where he said (and I quote): ‘. . . it would be completely and utterly ineffective . . . what would be the point of having one?’

(3) In other words, will he act on the recommendations or will he ignore them and allow cronies to continue to rort the system while genuine battlers miss out?”

Mr COOPER: (1 to 3) What the honourable member obviously is not aware of is that, during the course of the Public Accounts Committee hearings, the then Primary Industries Minister made available to the committee documents relating to a lengthy review which he and his officers had undertaken into the drought relief funds process.

I understand from the Minister, who is now the Minister for Land Management, that the specific recommendations referred to by the honourable member for Mackay appear on the face of it to be largely based on Mr Harper's own recommendations. Obviously the Government will be giving these recommendations the most serious consideration. I point out, however, that any decision to change the guide-lines must be taken in consultation with the Commonwealth Government.

7. School Administrative Assistance

Mr SLACK asked the Minister for Education, Youth, Sport and Recreation—

“With reference to the State Budget in which it was announced that additional administrative assistance would be provided to schools—

(1) When will this additional assistance be available to schools?

(2) Which schools will be entitled to a full-time administrative officer?

(3) When will schools be advised of the details of the program?”

Mr LITTLEPROUD: (1) The administrative assistance enhancement program announced in the State Budget will be introduced from January 1990. The aim of the

program is to increase the level of administrative assistance to all schools and to ensure an equitable distribution of that assistance.

(2) Administrative assistance will be provided to schools in the form of full-time employees and a cash allocation which can be used to employ casual administrative assistants or to employ administrative services on a contract basis.

All primary and secondary schools with an enrolment in excess of 600 will be entitled to an administrative officer, as will primary schools with secondary departments to Year 12 with a total enrolment in excess of 450.

(3) Detailed information relating to the provision of administrative assistance to schools in 1990 will be made available to all schools before the end of October 1989.

8. **Budget Allocation for Computer Education**

Mr BOOTH asked the Minister for Education, Youth, Sport and Recreation—

“Will the \$10.5 million allocated in the budget for computer education be spent on the purchase of additional computers and not on administrative costs?”

Mr LITTLEPROUD: Of the allocation, \$10m will go towards the Government's three-year learning systems project. Virtually all of this amount will be spent on providing hardware and software for schools and professional development for teachers in order to optimise the benefits for learning.

Administrative costs for managing Statewide implementation of the learning systems project will comprise only a small proportion of the allocation. The extra \$500,000 will be used for maintenance of computers and other technical equipment in schools. A further \$1m has been allocated to provide grants to non-Government schools for purchasing computing hardware and software. This funding will undoubtedly maintain Queensland's place as the leader in technology education in Australia. In fact, I am pleased to say that, in a recent survey published in the *Australian Business* magazine, the Queensland Department of Education is listed as seventh in the nation's top computer-users, with only Telecom, four banking companies and the Department of Social Security ahead of it.

Let me assure the honourable member that Queensland schoolchildren will continue to get the best in computer education.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Effect on Fitzgerald Report Agenda of Establishment of Independent Commission for Change and Reform

Mr GOSS: In directing a question to the Premier, I refer him to one paragraph on page 7 of the Fitzgerald report, which states—

“There are many ways in which the agenda for reform could be delayed or subverted by political or bureaucratic opponents. This has happened previously. If such people are allowed to form committees of review, to draft or introduce superficially innocuous changes to the necessary legislation, or to select those who must carry out the subsequent stages of what is recommended, then the process of reform will undoubtedly falter, especially once the hubbub dies down.”

I ask: by establishing his so-called Independent Commission for Change and Reform suddenly, arbitrarily and without reference to Mr Fitzgerald, QC—a commission which has been given full authority and responsibility for handling the Fitzgerald report's recommendations—has not the Premier acted in a way which Commissioner Fitzgerald has expressly warned could happen and which could subvert the agenda for reform?

Mr COOPER: The short answer is “No”. As I said at length yesterday, this Government is determined to let the implementation of these recommendations be taken

away from the political arena in the best way possible to stop the recommendations and the results of the inquiry from being used as a political football and to give those recommendations the very best chance possible of being implemented in the public interest.

Adoption of Quality Queensland as Queensland's Economic Development Strategy

Mr GOSS: I ask the Premier: does his Government adopt Quality Queensland as the State's economic development strategy? Are there any elements of this strategy that will be discarded, or does he embrace it completely?

Mr COOPER: There is no change in the Government's stance on Quality Queensland.

Home Loan Interest Rates

Mr STEPHAN: In directing a question to the Premier, I refer to statements in today's press that Australian families are paying an average of \$1,000 a month on their home-loan repayments and that, as a percentage of household income, home repayments are the highest ever reached in the history of this State. I now ask: is there any sign that the pressure on home loan interest rates will ease in the short term?

Mr COOPER: No, there is no sign that the pressure will ease. In fact, all the signs indicate that the pressure will increase. It is an absolutely shocking indictment of Labor Party policies that 36 per cent of the average Australian family's income is spent on home-loan repayments. If people were to stop and listen and get a feel for that, they might realise the shocking damage that the economic policies of the Opposition's counterparts in Canberra are doing. At least we are getting onto the real issues of the matter, not talking about the hog-wash and red herrings that the Leader of the Opposition goes on about. These are some of the real issues that worry the people out there, and so they should.

As I said, there is every sign that interest rates will increase. Things can only get worse. The Hawke/union Government has presided over the worst housing crisis that Australia has ever seen. In 1983, when the Hawke/union Government came to power, only 19 per cent of the average household income was needed to purchase a home. In Queensland that figure is now 36 per cent, but in New South Wales it is 44.5 per cent of the average family's weekly budget. That is absolutely disgraceful. There is no question that families are desperate. At the moment the banks are considering another 1 per cent increase in interest rates, which will take them above 18 per cent. Honourable members and the Federal Government know that young people and the traditional family unit cannot afford that. However, they are doing nothing about it. What is Hodder's little boy doing about it? Why does he not try to get some of the important matters under control? He concentrates on rhetoric, superficial appearances and theatrics, instead of trying to solve the real issues that are worrying people not only in his electorate but also all around the State.

Introduction of Petrol Tax by Brisbane City Council

Mr STEPHAN: In directing a question to the Deputy Premier and Minister for Local Government, I refer to a report that appeared in yesterday's *Courier-Mail* pointing out that the Brisbane City Council is considering a tax on petrol. I ask: bearing in mind that other local authorities may be enticed to act in a similar fashion, which could result in widespread differences in fuel prices within the State, is such a tax feasible?

Mr GUNN: I am in possession of a copy of that report. At this stage the petrol levy is simply a recommendation of a council committee and it is destined to go no further. Frankly, it is not on. Unlike the Labor and Liberal Parties, this Government is dead against any fuel tax. That levy would require special legislation, which would not be supported by this Government because it would lead to a ludicrous situation in which local authorities would impose different fuel levies.

Because of the fuel tax and excise duties that have been imposed by the Labor socialist Government in Canberra, motorists are already paying too much for their fuel. That is where pressure needs to be applied. Because local authorities have been very forceful in putting forward their case for the motorist, I have to give them full marks.

According to Federal Government publications, for every litre of petrol that is sold, 28c goes to the Federal Government by way of fuel excise. In 1988-89, that excise returned to the Federal Government revenue of \$5.64 billion, which is more than it received in income tax revenue and represents an increase of 480 per cent since 1983 when the revenue totalled \$970m. However, in real terms funding for roads has decreased by 30 per cent. Queensland receives only 5c per litre from that fuel excise and it has had a major problem in getting that excise indexed. Since 1983 Queensland has suffered an accumulated loss of almost \$300m for road-funding, which could have provided 1 000 kilometres of new roads throughout the State.

This is a terrible situation. I appreciate the Brisbane City Council's point of view; in common with local authorities throughout the State, it is desperate for new roads. However, a fuel tax is not the answer. The answer is to apply pressure to the Federal Government and to make it an election issue.

Public Accounts Committee Report on Drought Relief; Criticism of Hon. N. J. Harper

Mr CASEY: In directing a question to the Minister for Primary Industries, I refer to the Public Accounts Committee report into drought-relief rorts which clearly showed that the former head of the drought secretariat, Mr Dan Daly, was shifted from his post as a result of political interference by the former Minister, Mr Harper. I refer the Minister also to the Premier's comments in the House this morning in answer to one of my questions on notice when he said that it would not be right for a public servant to be disadvantaged as a result of actions that were carried out in good faith.

I ask: will the Minister take action to reinstate Mr Daly to his former job, which he obviously did so well and in an efficient and caring manner?

Mr STONEMAN: Unlike some members of this House, I am not about to make judgments without a full and detailed study of the document. I assure honourable members that consultations have been held with Mr Daly. In fact, consultations with all staff members of my department are ongoing.

Mr Casey: Will you give him his job back?

Mr STONEMAN: He has a job.

As I indicated earlier this morning, I will be making a definitive statement on that report, which contains many good features. I am not about to condemn it, the former Minister or the people involved in any way, shape or form. What I am about is moving forward with the Primary Industries Department to support the process of primary production in this State.

Administration of Drought Relief

Mr CASEY: Because the Minister for Primary Industries is keen to move forward, I ask a second question of him: now that the Public Accounts Committee has delivered its long-awaited report into drought-relief funding in Queensland, which recommends enormous changes to the way in which the scheme has been operating in this State, with all of the rorts being confirmed—

Mr Gately interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I warn the member for Currumbin for the first time under Standing Order 123A.

Mr CASEY: I refer also to the Premier's comments in relation to another question that I asked this morning when he said that it would appear that some of the recommendations of the Public Accounts Committee are based largely on Mr Harper's recommendations. If that is the case and if the Government has already discussed them, will the Minister immediately enter into discussions with the Commonwealth Minister for Primary Industries to negotiate an alternative responsible and accountable drought-relief scheme for Queensland so that the farmers in this State who are in genuine need can receive assistance, especially from Rural Adjustment Scheme funds?

Mr STONEMAN: When the Commonwealth has wiped out drought aid totally, one wonders about the capacity for meaningful discussions with it about drought matters. I wonder whether the Commonwealth has any intention at all of supporting primary producers, not just in Queensland but anywhere in this nation.

I also note that the Opposition is using selective references to the Public Accounts Committee report. I emphasise again that that document has to be considered in totality. I will be doing that. I will not be hurried into it by the screaming and bleating from Opposition members, who would not have a clue about primary producers in this State, or any understanding of or support for them.

Overpayment of Victorian Teachers

Mr HYND: I ask the Minister for Education, Youth, Sport and Recreation: can he assure the House that a fiasco similar to that of the Victorian Government of a \$4m overpayment of teachers' salaries has not occurred in Queensland?

Mr LITTLEPROUD: I am aware of the recent newspaper article indicating that a management mistake in the Victorian Education Department resulted in teachers in that State being overpaid by \$4m. I can assure the honourable member that a similar instance has not occurred in Queensland, nor do I expect that it will happen.

Earlier this week the Premier and others made reference to the Victorian Government's mismanagement. Unfortunately, that has had some effect on that State's Education Department. That is to be deplored.

I also take this opportunity to mention that the Leader of the Opposition and the Opposition Education spokesman have been trying to play down the great benefits that the recently announced Budget has provided for education in Queensland. As good as those comments are, they are a long way from the truth. Treasury figures show that education-funding has increased by 14 per cent. Allowing for inflation and other adjustments, that still represents a very significant increase in real terms.

If a comparison is made between what is happening in Queensland and some of the Labor States such as Victoria and South Australia——

Mr Simpson: It's negative down there.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: I am about to refer to that.

When allowance is made for inflation, it is found that the funding in the education budgets in both Victoria and South Australia has decreased in real terms, whereas in Queensland a significant increase has been made. The Opposition has been trying to talk down this State's Budget. The Budget has been very well received by Queenslanders. It is indicative of the fine administration by the senior officers of my department.

Shortage of Drug Squad Personnel

Mr INNES: I direct a question to the Premier. In view of his Government's commitment to the fight against the foul drug trade, and with reference to his recent experience as Police Minister, I refer to the answer given to the member for Stafford yesterday about personnel, in which it was revealed that, with regard to Drug Squad strength in Queensland, Brisbane has an establishment of 51 personnel, but as at 3

September 1989 only 29 personnel were available. The statistics show that no personnel were available for specialist drug work in the Sunshine Coast area, the Maryborough/Bundaberg area, the Rockhampton/Gladstone area or the Mackay/Whitsunday area. I ask: in view of the high priority that the Premier says is—and the Liberal Party believes should be—given to this area, why is there such a shortage of personnel? What steps will he take to increase the fight against the drug trade?

Mr COOPER: I thank the honourable member for the question. It seems that the Liberal Party certainly concurs with the views expressed on this side of the House about the war against drugs. It is not merely the smaller people involved in the drug trade about whom the Government is concerned; it is also frightfully concerned about the Mr Bigs, the people who are constantly spoken about. Yet it seems that it is very difficult to bring them to book.

Although I might have said this before—and I do not want to divulge too much—very substantial measures have been taken to attack the drug trade from the very top right down to the very bottom. That has been done by the implementation of legislation—and further legislation will be introduced—to assist police in their fight against drugs all the way up the line.

An endeavour has been made to increase the overall number of police personnel, because out of that increase will come the officers who will go into the specialist squads such as the Drug Squad. To that end it is necessary to increase numbers across the board.

As honourable members know, since last year measures have been taken to increase the number of police officers by some 600. The Police Academy at Oxley is chock-a-block. It is working at full capacity. The Government is aware of the need to increase the number of cadets attending that academy. The action that has been recommended to the Government, and which is being taken, is to increase the force more rapidly by allowing lateral entry. Other measures allow people from other countries to enter the force to deal with the problems of the drug trade that are coming into this country from other countries and with crime in general.

Much has been done. I have instructed the Police Minister to reassess the requirements of the police force. Judging by the comments that the Liberal Party has made and the indications it has given, I have no doubt that it will be fully supportive of this Government in the moves that need to be taken in order to continue to combat the drug trade.

Supervision of Custody of Drug Exhibits

Mr INNES: In directing a question to the Minister for Police, I refer to the extraordinary revelations during the last 24 hours of the extent of hard drug removal by a Federal police officer from an exhibit custody area controlled by the Federal police that contained large quantities of hard drugs. As this is not the first time that there have been allegations and proof of the removal of drug exhibits by corrupt police officers from storage and placement of the drugs back in the market-place, I ask: is he prepared to investigate the storage of drugs as exhibits in custody in this State? Would he consider such devices as the setting-up of an independently supervised drug storage area—particularly with regard to hard drugs or large quantities of drugs—under the control of either some independent persons or else jointly supervised by the State and Federal authorities so that some check and balance is provided to stop the extraordinary occurrences and repetition of them at some time in the future?

Mr LESTER: At this stage I really do not even need to investigate what the honourable member is asking about because action has already been taken. The Government has agreed to refer the matter to the National Crime Authority and to work very, very closely with it to overcome the problems. To that end, the State Government has already committed \$400,000.

Appointments to Senior Positions in Queensland Police Force

Mr MACKENROTH: In directing a question to the Minister for Police, I refer to his statements suggesting that he will begin appointing senior officers to permanent top-level positions immediately, and I draw the Minister's attention to page 342 of the Fitzgerald report. Mr Fitzgerald states that it would be calamitous to make significant and inappropriate appointments in the transition period. I ask: will he explain why he is acting in direct contravention of Mr Fitzgerald's recommendation, and that of his implementation unit, by proceeding with the appointment of senior officers at this stage? Does the Minister support the comments made by the very highly regarded former Police Commissioner, Ray Whitrod, on the ABC's *World Today* program when he said it would be a retrograde step to proceed with these appointments before the appointment of a Police Commissioner, as the new commissioner must know and trust his immediate subordinates?

Mr LESTER: I perceive that question to be yet another attack on Queensland's hard-working police officers. The situation is that a number of people have occupied acting positions for up to two years. Fitzgerald made it very clear that, provided these people had been properly vetted by the implementation unit, there was absolutely no reason why they could not be promoted.

Mr Mackenroth: Have they been?

Mr LESTER: Of course, yes.

Furthermore, the people who will be promoted have been vetted by the implementation unit. In addition, I might tell the honourable member that there is another vetting process, which stops with the head of the Criminal Justice Commission, Sir Max Bingham. It provides an additional check and balance. It is Sir Max Bingham's very definite advice that the Government should go ahead and appoint people to the positions because there is no reason why they should not be appointed.

This action will greatly boost the morale of the police force. The effect of that will go from inspectors through to senior sergeants and sergeants, and spread right throughout the police force. It will give them stability. It will show that somebody has confidence in them.

I have even taken a step further with checks and balances; I have appointed these people for a period of 12 months only. They will then be judged on their performance by the new commissioner. At the end of that 12-month period, they will be reassessed. If ever there were checks and balances, Queensland has them. The Government has also addressed the superannuation problem.

Checks and balances and vetting will apply to every police officer in the police force before promotion, not just to senior officers. The action taken by the Government is totally in line with Fitzgerald's recommendations. The Government is taking this action to build up the police force and give confidence to police officers. The people of Queensland will know that those who are promoted in the future will be promoted with an absolutely clean record.

Police Superintendent G. Early; Appointment of Commissioner of Police

Mr MACKENROTH: In directing a question to the Minister for Police, I refer to reports that Superintendent Greg Early—former right-hand man to sacked Police Commissioner Sir Terence Lewis—has been interviewed as part of the short-listing of applicants for the commissioner's job, and I ask: does the Minister consider Mr Early to be a suitable applicant for the job?

Mr LESTER: His application will be considered together with everyone else's.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! As this is a day allotted for Estimates debate, question-time has now concluded.

At 10.59 a.m.,

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

SUPPLY

Estimates—First and Second Allotted Days

Estimates-in-Chief, 1989-90

Mines and Energy and Northern and Regional Development

Hon. R. C. KATTER (Flinders—Minister for Mines and Energy and Minister for Northern and Regional Development) (10.59 a.m.): I move—

“That there be granted to Her Majesty, for the service of the year 1989-90, a sum not exceeding \$395,000—Office of the Minister for Mines and Energy and Minister for Northern and Regional Development (Consolidated Revenue).”

I move—

“That \$29,234,000 be granted for ‘Department of Mines’.”

Queensland has a world-class mining industry; an industry that earns the bulk of Queensland’s export earnings, competes fiercely on world markets against significant tariff barriers and seeks no subsidies. It is a mining industry that is resilient, innovative and high-tech. This industry is a corner-stone of the Queensland economy, directly employing more than 20 000 Queenslanders.

The value of mineral production in this State in 1988-89 was estimated to be nearly \$4.3 billion, and in that year mining contributed in excess of \$600m in direct revenue to the Government through mining royalties and rail freights. Royalty revenue is expected to grow again in 1989-90 from more than \$177m to \$204m, an increase of 15 per cent. This increase reflects higher world prices for minerals, increased mining production and exchange rate adjustments.

In 1987-88 the Queensland mining industry’s foreign export contribution was \$4.6 billion, 56 per cent of the State’s total. I add that if the value of the Australian dollar was allowed to float where it should, those figures would be 50 per cent, or close to 100 per cent, higher than they are at the present time.

Mr Scott: What’s preventing it from floating?

Mr KATTER: What is preventing the floating of the Australian dollar are the interest rates imposed by the Federal Government.

The amount the industry has committed in capital expenditure since the beginning of this decade averages \$602m per annum, more than 21 per cent of annual average expenditure in this State over the same period. However, it would be remiss of me not to add that it takes money to keep on making money. If our mining industry is to maintain, or even expand, its present level of activities, we must ensure that the Department of Mines is allocated adequate financial resources so it can provide the mining industry with the services it needs to help it achieve its maximum potential.

Appropriations to the Department of Mines have traditionally been lean and belie the fact that the department is responsible for the facilitation and regulation of an industry which is a driving sector of the State economy. Despite the decreasing amounts, in real terms, allocated to the department in recent years it has, under the present Director-General, Mr Kevin Wolff, managed to make itself more accountable, more relevant and—it goes without saying—more cost effective. The Department of Mines has highly committed staff, including mining and petroleum engineers, geologists, geophysicists, information specialists, administrators, technical experts in the mechanical

and electrical fields, surveyors, ecologists, cartographers, fuel technologists, economists, chemists and computer scientists. Their goal is to continue to raise service standards and assist the growth of the mining and mineral-processing industries in this State. Through them, this Government has been working to a strategy to improve service to the mining industry, improve miner/land-holder relationships and encourage multiple land use. The department is also working to provide the right climate for the acceleration of mining developments, whilst at the same time ensuring adequate protection for the rights of land-holders in the environment. The first part of this strategy was a complete overhaul of mining legislation and procedures.

Mr Scott: When will that come before the Chamber?

Mr KATTER: I hope that will happen early next week.

The mining industry in this State is currently working with nineteenth century legislation, albeit considerably amended since it was first introduced in 1898. After an exhaustive two-year process of consultation with major mining and rural organisations, including the Queensland Chamber of Mines Ltd, the Queensland Producers Federation, Cattlemen's Union, Graingrowers Association, Canegrowers Council and the United Graziers Association, as well as conservation and legal bodies, the Mineral Resources Bill was prepared. My department is endeavouring very strenuously to make contact with the Small Gougers Association of Queensland, but have had some difficulty in contacting the executive members of that body.

The Mineral Resources Bill that is now before this Parliament is the linchpin of the Government's strategy for the Queensland mining industry. This legislation will set the scene for the responsible growth of the mining industry into the next century and determine the direction of the Department of Mines, not only for this financial year, but also for the decades beyond. I emphasise that, like all legislation, it is simply a document that one hopes will be changed and modified to meet changes and necessitous circumstances as they arise. People will be able to have computerised searches performed on the official register of mining tenures and will be given a graphic representation on a topographic and cadastral background of the locations of the tenures they are seeking information on. This will take place at a number of decentralised locations. If any people have any strong feelings about the rearrangement of these decentralised locations, I assure them, the people of Cloncurry and people in my own electorate, that there will be no changes to the present arrangements. The regional offices will speed up processing-time on all mining and exploration tenures; improve liaison with the mining and exploration industry, other land-users and the community in general; monitor compliance in the field by the mining and exploration industry with the provisions of mining legislation, including environmental management; promote and supervise tourism in the mining environment; and provide accurate and current public information. This move to regionalisation is linked to an ambitious \$2m computerised mining tenures database system, which will connect all regional offices with Brisbane. The mining tenures database will bring unparalleled benefits to the general public, the private sector and the Government. This computerised system will facilitate the administration of mining tenures by providing complete, accurate and current information, including, as I have mentioned, the graphical portrayal of mining tenures and their locations. It will also provide information on land availability for exploration and mining. More importantly, the mining tenures database will speed up the process of granting and dealing with mining and exploration tenures and the collection of Government revenue.

It should always be borne in mind that delays in issue or grant of titles can cost the applicants market opportunities and sales, and cost the Government much-needed development and revenue. It is expected that a considerable increase in revenue through fees for service will now be generated as a result of the provision of services at regional offices. These three initiatives, the Mineral Resources Bill, regionalisation and the computerised mining tenures database are all complementary. As long as I am Minister for Mines and Energy there will be an up-grading of the positions in regional areas and a down-grading or elimination of a number of positions in Brisbane. The reason for

that is that although I have wandered around Brisbane many times, I have never seen any mining operations in the city area.

These initiatives have all been developed simultaneously and will put Queensland at the forefront of mineral resource management in Australia and will service the needs of the mining industry well into the twenty-first century. Any attempt to graft the department's high-tech mining tenures database and regionalisation initiatives onto nineteenth century mining legislation would be a patch-up job. The resulting hybrid would not have the ability to meet the needs of a high-tech industry racing into the twenty-first century, nor would it have the ability to adequately safeguard the basic rights of all Queenslanders in the area of natural resource development. A high-tech, speedy industry needs the same sort of service from Government. A world-class industry deserves legislation and a Government department that will match its standing.

The most significant feature of the Mineral Resources Bill is that it breaks the mould of either/or land uses and introduces a policy of multiple land use, accepting that our wealth lies not just in the biosphere but deep in the earth. Great care has been taken to balance the needs of competing land-users and to afford greater protection to all land-holders in respect of land adjacent to major improvements.

I must point out to the Committee that, having lived all of my life in two old mining towns, I believe that one of the greatest excitements in life is living in mining towns where the old mines and holes in the ground still exist. Under my management of that department, there will be a change of attitude to the filling in of those holes because in a shaft lies one of the great advantages and one of the most exciting resources available to a community. We are about to build a whole mining town around one of the shafts in Charters Towers. That will be a great boon to the economy of that city. Many of the farms in that area operated out of those old mine shafts and many of the watering points on many of the stations round Cloncurry are old mine shafts. While there are certain areas in which reconstruction must take place, a different attitude will be taken to the actual shafts in the ground, which are a great natural resource.

Mr Smith interjected.

Mr KATTER: If there are specific problems, I advise honourable members to most certainly bring them to my attention. There are very great difficulties with alluvial workings such as those on the Palmer River. The work of restoration in the area is very important and needs to be undertaken in a very professional and properly conducted manner. It would be just the opposite of the sort of approach that would be used with shafts in the ground.

Compensation provisions have been greatly improved and in the case of mining claims and leases the owner of land will, under the new legislation, be able to apply for loss of profits as well as seek an enhanced valuation in respect of certain classes of land. Unfortunately, the concomitant side of that provision is that larger amounts of money will have to be provided up front. That is something that will have to be looked at in respect of small miners if they are to be kept successfully in this industry. Also existing compensation provisions will be retained.

As an aside and with multiple land-use policies in mind, the State Government supports the Commonwealth Government proposition of a resources assessment commission which would, subject to its being properly constituted and truly consultative, provide a mechanism for objective analysis of the implications of various land uses.

At the moment there is a very subjective and ad hoc approach to land use, with polarised and ill-conceived views tending to dominate the Commonwealth's actions in this area.

I expect environmental considerations will form an ever-growing proportion of land-use conflicts, particularly as the Commonwealth Government is continually trying to intervene where it is not wanted—and I might add that it is really the intervention of one Federal department; most of the other Federal departments have acted with some

sense of responsibility but have been unable to in any way restrain the excesses of Senator Richardson and his ilk—nor even asked, and continued to use its constitutional powers as de facto environmental legislation; for example, its use of Foreign Investment Review Board approvals to halt mining projects, its exercise of export controls on sand-mining and uranium, and its use of international treaty powers and race powers to halt certain developments, such as the benign Shelburne Bay silica sand project. Multiple land use policies are the key to sustaining our Queensland lifestyle.

The discussions which led to the Mineral Resources Bill indicated a great degree of commonality between our farming and mining groups. Of course, no-one will ever be 100 per cent happy with any legislation, and often trade-offs are necessary. However, the Mineral Resources Bill has detailed substantial areas of agreement between mineral-producers and rural producers.

Once the new legislation, regionalisation and the mining tenures database are all in place, Queensland will be in a better position to tap into its investment potential, and Australian and international investment managers will no doubt rank us high in terms of our competitors.

As I said before, this Government, through the Department of Mines, is working hard to provide the right climate for the acceleration of mining and downstream processing developments, and to attract new investment. At the same time it is ensuring that the rights of land-holders and the environment are protected by putting more ecologists in the field and continuing to develop effective and comprehensive land management plans.

Four new staff were recruited to monitor environmental compliance last year, and more time is now being spent in the field by the department's ecologists. The department now has ecologists in Cairns and Rockhampton, and their presence provides closer interaction with mines inspectors, resulting in enhanced management of environmental issues.

During the last few years, the department has greatly improved its services to industry by fast-tracking industry requirements through the Government; strengthening its advisory and advocacy roles; co-ordinating services to industry through a one-stop-shop arrangement; and servicing industries' highly-technical information needs. For example, as part of a total land-use plan for the coastal belt and the islands of central Queensland, the department provided significant assistance to proposals to mine the heavy mineral sand deposits at Agnes Water and Byfield.

Continuing assistance has also been given to a number of ventures dealing with gold in north Queensland, with base metals at Thalanga and Balcooma near Charters Towers, and with coal.

Six new gold mines commenced operation in 1988-89: Belyando near Clermont, Camel Creek near Ingham, Blackjack, Disraeli and Hadleigh Castle near Charters Towers and Ravenswood. Horn Island in the Torres Strait poured its first gold in July 1988.

A carbon-in-pulp plant was commissioned at Mount Leyshon near Charters Towers, and Stage 2 development of Red Dome was committed to proceed.

In April this year, full-scale mining commenced north of Mount Isa at MIM Holdings Ltd Hilton mine. Full-scale processing will occur in 1990 when the concentrator and Isasmelt Smelter are commissioned.

During 1988-89, commitments were made to expand the Blair Athol thermal coal mine at an estimated cost of \$100m and the Ebenezer coal mine at an estimated cost of \$30m.

Construction commenced on a second longwall mine at German Creek southern colliery at an estimated cost of \$100m, while excavation of development headings commenced at the Oaky Creek longwall coking coal mine at an estimated cost of \$100m.

This Government has provided the infrastructure necessary to support a surge of investment and industrial projects in Gladstone by taking the decision to go ahead and construct the State gas pipeline from Wallumbilla to Gladstone. The \$110m State gas

pipeline will underpin further industrial development in the State and encourage further downstream processing, adding value to our exports.

The initial demand for gas will exceed 14 petajoules a year. However, additional compressor stations in the future could double the capacity of the pipeline.

The State gas pipeline will mean a massive boost in the appeal of Gladstone as a centre of industry and development, particularly in the field of downstream mineral processing. I might add that we hope that the existing pipeline will enable the methane drainage systems of north Queensland to supply to the south as well as to the north.

Queensland Alumina Limited has signed a multimillion-dollar contract to receive 130 petajoules of natural gas over a minimum 10-year period, with the provision for a further 10 years' supply, eliminating its dependency on oil. Our natural gas resources will help to markedly reduce our crude oil import bill at a time when Australia's balance of trade last month approached the critical bench-mark of \$2.58 billion. Gas from the pipeline will also be used by ICI to manufacture sodium cyanide at its \$80m chemical plant, drastically reducing imports of that chemical by the gold-processing industry.

The extension of the line from Gladstone to Rockhampton and Yaamba will lead to the development of rich magnesite deposits at Kunwarara and Yaamba and associated downstream processing. The State gas pipeline will not only deliver natural gas but will also deliver import replacements of crude oil, chemicals and mineral products, greater industrial capability and a big signal to potential markets that we can do business, concentrating in the Gladstone area not only cheap electricity, an ample water supply and a harbour that will take 100 000-tonne ships——

Mr Prest: 200 000-tonne ships.

Mr KATTER: I stand corrected; 200 000-tonne ships. It will also provide a considerable amount of very cheap energy in the form of gas from the gas pipeline.

Mr Scott: And cheap electricity.

Mr KATTER: I said that previously.

In view of the fact that Australia's oil import bill is likely to grow from its current \$9m a day to nearly \$10m a day by the end of the century, the State gas pipeline and the Department of Mines' continuing work with private enterprise in an endeavour to establish a major oil-shale industry in Queensland should be applauded by all Queenslanders. A detailed evaluation has been made of a proposal to establish a semicommercial scale shale-oil demonstration plant at the Stuart oil-shale deposit near Gladstone.

Extensive investigations are also continuing into the economic viability of establishing an ethanol industry in this State, while the viability of extracting methane from coal seams in the Bowen Basin to supply Townsville is still being examined. Curtain Bros, the operator who holds the authorities to prospect over those areas, claims that its reserves of natural gas are 20 times higher than the reserves on the north-west shelf, which is one of the largest energy sources anywhere in the world.

Mr Smith: What are you doing about the easements so they can put the pipeline in?

Mr KATTER: I think that the arrangements that exist at present are reasonably adequate. I have not heard any outcries about it. However, if there are some problems, I would appreciate it if the honourable member could bring them to my attention and I will see what can be done about them.

Queensland's large and high quality coal resources provide a potential comparative advantage for the State. Major expansion of coal exports, primarily steaming coal, is predicted and will lead to further strengthening of the central Queensland and State economy.

The Government is well aware of the development potential of the coal industry and has recently acted to give an important stimulus to the industry through the latest rail freight rates offered for new mine developments and major expansions.

During 1988-89 expressions of interest were called for coal exploration at Goonyella North and Jellinbah East in the central Queensland coal area. Development of Jellinbah East is proceeding rapidly and a mining lease has been granted.

Because of the improved outlook for the industry, further areas have been identified for release in 1989-90. These are Burton Downs, north-east of Goonyella, with proven resources of 115 million tonnes, with potential for steaming and coking coal, mineable by open-cut methods and Moranbah North, an underground mining prospect with proven resources of around 210 million tonnes of coking coal and indications that other significant resources may exist.

This Government is determined to free up more land for mineral and petroleum exploration. Authorities to prospect are now being progressively decreased in area each year on renewal, sometimes by as much as 50 per cent per year, and the Department of Mines now requires companies to clearly demonstrate their technical and financial capabilities and intent on renewal. I might add that we have retained the cooling-off period in the new Act so that small miners have a fair go, which they were not receiving under the old continuous ATP arrangements that existed some years ago.

Applicants are vetted before authorities to prospect are renewed and the progress of their exploration program is thoroughly checked. That policy is being pursued to encourage companies to explore their areas, identify the mineral deposits and move quickly into mining without tying up land for unnecessarily long periods.

I add that difficulties exist with the enormously complicated methods required at present for pegging. I will be examining that and I give an undertaking to the Committee that I will consider ways of attempting to reduce the complexity of the present pegging arrangements.

We are now working towards establishing in Brisbane a new CSIRO centre for advanced technologies but with particular emphasis on minerals and energy research and have committed \$20m towards this project. Direct responsibility for the project rests with the Department of Mines, with special funding arrangements being provided. The aims of the centre will be consistent with the Government's policy of increasing the level of advanced technological activity in Queensland. Research carried out at the centre will also have major benefits for the mining industry and the economy and will encourage an exciting range of new ventures to be developed around our strong resource base.

The exploration and mining industries have indicated that one of the factors that sets Queensland apart as an investment target is availability of, and access to, information. Our leading position in this respect will be maintained and heightened when the mining tenures database is further enhanced to eventually include all mineral, coal and petroleum resource information. Keeping this resource and geological information up to date will require the steady injection of ever-increasing funds.

This year, the department's funds will be directed towards completing the regionalisation initiative and the first stage of the mining tenures database.

Next financial year it is proposed that the major funding priority be the accelerated updating of Queensland's geoscience mapping with emphasis on computer database development.

Geoscience knowledge and quick access via databases are essential to stimulate resource development, to formulate mineral and energy policies and to administer the use of natural resources. This knowledge is also essential for land-use planning, conservation and economic development in general.

The department's regional geological mapping program, which was established in 1984 as a new Government initiative following the Commonwealth Government's

withdrawal from this area, will continue to concentrate its efforts this financial year in the Cairns and Townsville hinterland areas, where there is believed to be a high potential for further mineral discoveries. I will correct that statement by saying that Charters Towers will be the centre that is involved. I have strong beliefs that the offices, the staff and the administration should be where the mining takes place, not where it does not take place.

Since its initiation, the regional geological mapping program has stockpiled a large amount of information on the State's high-potential mineral-bearing regions. That information has been channelled to the mining industry through the release of information from a number of departmental databases, and that has prompted and sustained exploration.

Similarly, the department's studies of sedimentary basins provides support for the exploration of energy resources—mainly petroleum.

The department's core role in providing geoscientific, technical and commercial information to industry and other clients, and its role in promoting the mining and exploration industries in this State, will be supported this financial year by a number of other initiatives. It will continue its information support to the petroleum industry by undertaking further stratigraphic drilling in the northern Eromanga Basin.

This drilling will assist petroleum explorers to evaluate this prospective, but as yet unproductive, region. Information from this drilling will be incorporated into the Queensland energy resource database, which is arguably the most advanced of its type in Australia.

A detailed review of the geology and petroleum prospectivity of all sedimentary basins in Queensland will be published later this year and will no doubt be welcomed by the petroleum exploration industry. Work will also proceed on computerised databases for mineral resources and coal and oil-shale data, providing rapid access and enhanced information services to industry on these resources.

The department's central information services specialists will continue to transfer material onto a new computer system which will provide industry with dial-in access to integrated one-stop information on authority to prospect company reports, the Queensland mineral index and the department's library catalogue. This system recognises that the Queensland mining industry is part of a global industry that needs information around the clock.

In response to the growing demand for information, the department will produce an education resources kit, a comprehensive package of information, videos, maps, graphs and photographs which, in co-operation with the Education Department, will be offered to every primary and secondary school in Queensland. This kit will encourage students to come to grips with the realities of what the mining and energy industries contribute to Queensland. How they affect the environment and how the mining industry in this State can sustain close scrutiny.

It is very important to get across to the people of Queensland that it is possible to improve this State dramatically and improve the biosphere—to use the word that is so often bandied around these days—rather than just accept what is as being perfect. Of course, if we adopted that sort of philosophy, we would still be living in the Stone Age.

The information provided will also allow students to reach their own conclusions on the debit and credit aspects of mineral extraction and processing.

This year the department will continue to actively pursue its responsibilities in regard to mining safety and health.

A major impact on the department's resources will be the need for increased inspection of quarries and of machinery at mine sites following the transfer of this responsibility from the Department of Industrial Affairs.

Mr Scott: What about electricity supply? Are you going to get onto that?

Mr KATTER: I will get to that very soon.

Greater emphasis will also be placed on environmental monitoring in regard to water quality management.

The development of guide-lines for the prevention of water pollution due to losses of cyanide from gold ore processing operations will continue, with the involvement of the Queensland Chamber of Mines and other State Government departments. Last year a cyanide safety manual and cyanide safe working guide for industry were developed with the National Safety Council of Australia—Queensland Division.

It is disappointing to note that the overall safety performance in the coal-mining industry has not improved in the last five years, even though there have been good performances at some mines, and recent statistics indicate that there may be a slightly improved trend.

In August the department organised a seminar titled "Focus on Improving Coal-mining Safety in Queensland" in order to improve safety performance within the coal-mining industry.

Following on from work initiated last financial year, progress is being made towards the reorganisation of the Queensland Mines Rescue Brigade. As a result of legislative changes, the separate regional brigades of northern, central and southern Queensland have been amalgamated and operate under a new manager at Rockhampton.

The department's Safety in Mines Testing and Research Station—SIMTARS—established at Redbank at a cost of \$10m, continues to break new ground in improving safety and health in hazardous industries and in enhancing the development and application of new technologies.

SIMTARS is an exciting concept in that it provides commercial research, testing, calibration, laboratory services and information management expertise and services for the mining industry on both a fee-for-service and general support basis.

The SIMTARS facility was officially opened in September 1988 and was recently successful in acquiring National Association of Testing Authorities, Australia (NATA) registration. It received full registration in the fields of electrical testing, instrument calibration, metrology and chemical testing. This makes the SIMTARS operation one of the most extensive of such NATA-accredited facilities in Australia.

This financial year SIMTARS will develop and implement the next stage of a formal business plan and complete a five-year capital development plan. It will also be aiming to obtain formal quality management accreditation to enhance its NATA registration.

Last financial year, SIMTARS progressed four major research projects funded by the National Energy Research Development and Demonstration Program (NERDDP) involving safety associated research and safety associated with underground coal mines. SIMTARS has made a further five NERDDP grant applications this financial year, thus considerably extending its safety research program.

This year the department was granted special funding to continue work on investigations into the Collingwood Park land slips and provide compensation to Collingwood Park residents. Last financial year the department, through its Chief Inspector of Coal Mines, conducted investigations into the subsidence that occurred in the Collingwood Park area. Two consulting firms were commissioned to undertake studies of subsidence mechanisms at Collingwood Park. The \$70,000 sought for this financial year will complete the technical investigations on these properties. The Government's compensation scheme for residents of Collingwood Park affected by the subsidence will also receive funds of \$1m to cover the purchase of a number of properties and repairs and maintenance to properties.

Special funds, totalling \$88,000 and in the form of a transfer from the Premier's Department to the Department of Mines, will be allocated to continue monitoring by SIMTARS of soil and air in the Kingston area associated with the hazardous waste disposal site.

\$30,000 in additional funds has been sought for the preparation of the final report into a site-ranking study for a large coal-fired power station in Egypt. Zafarana, east of the Suez Canal, has been selected as the preferred site, and its location is highly accessible to Queensland coal-exporters.

The Government will also support the international PACRIM 90 conference on the geology, structure, mineralisation, economics and feasibility of mining developments in the Pacific rim to be held at the Gold Coast next year. \$50,000 has already been given to the organisers of this conference and a further \$50,000 will now be provided to this conference, which will attract participants and papers from around the Pacific rim.

In concluding this section on the Department of Mines, it should be apparent that we have a Government instrumentality which has undergone a major organisational transformation during the past two years.

I believe that the department is fast on the way to becoming a model of accountability which other areas of Government will seek to emulate.

This State is indeed fortunate to have specialists of the calibre of those employed within the Department of Mines.

As a watcher from a distance, I say with all sincerity that I have been very pleased with the performance of the Mines Department. I think that most members of this Committee would agree with me when I say that the department has been well run, has caused very little trouble to the people of Queensland and has facilitated a great deal of development.

Mr Scott: What about electricity?

Mr KATTER: I turn now to the electricity industry.

Mr Scott: Transmission lines to?

Mr KATTER: The transmission line to Normanton is already being built.

Mr Scott interjected.

Mr KATTER: My information is that that line has been started. I can assure the honourable member that that line will be built. It is something that is near and dear to both our hearts. It will provide expansion.

Mr Scott: What about Weipa? You will have to consider a line to Weipa eventually.

Mr KATTER: I will give the honourable member an undertaking. I am pleased to see his commitment to the far north. I give the honourable member a commitment that I most certainly will be examining that proposal.

Honourable members interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Honourable members will have an opportunity to make a contribution to the debate at a later hour of the sitting.

Mr KATTER: The production and financial performance of the Queensland Electricity Commission have direct impacts on the residential and business sectors of the State's economy, including the export sector. The principal items in its Estimates which are before the Committee today are power generation and transmission, financing and debt-servicing, and corporate services.

An amount of \$570m will be required for the power-generation and transmission programs. These funds will be used to operate and maintain generating and power-transmission facilities and to provide new assets to meet the demand for electricity at lowest economic cost. A further \$749m has been provided to service and redeem the industry's loan debt. The commission, through the Queensland Treasury Corporation, manages the debt to minimise interest cost and to achieve continued reduction in its debt-to-equity ratio.

Expenditure during 1989-90 provides for some early repayment of indebtedness. There is no requirement for new loan raising this year and the commission is not intending to borrow any moneys. This year, all expansion will be financed out of the commission's profits.

Mr Simpson: Hear, hear!

Mr KATTER: I thank the honourable member for Cooroora. His sentiments are similar to mine.

A total of \$29.4m is required to fund the commission's corporate activities. This function is responsible for the regulation and co-ordination of the industry, the forward financial and engineering planning and the management of generation and the bulk electricity transmission grid. It is an opportune time to review the performance of our electricity supply industry as an entity and to foreshadow some of its future development. This is a landmark year for electricity-users in Queensland and for the industry.

What makes this so appropriate is that the price freeze effected by this Government, and the latest round of electricity price rises in other States, has now put Queensland into the lead in terms of having the lowest average price per unit of electricity sold in mainland Australia. This achievement is now widely acknowledged within the business community, and increasingly so by electricity-users.

A recent article in a national business magazine recognised that Queensland has the lead on price and that if the other States are to remain attractive to heavy industry, they have little choice but to follow our lead. In addition, the industry can foreshadow that, until 1994 at least, any subsequent price movements will be limited to no more than half the rate of increase in the consumer price index.

New initiatives in market research will allow the future strategic direction of the electricity supply industry to be determined so that resources can be used most effectively to meet our customers' needs for a safe, reliable and economic supply of electricity at the lowest possible price. The industry has always been a reliable supplier. I cannot help pausing for one moment to compare the performance of the socialist Government in Canberra with the performance of a Government that believes in private enterprise and the principles in which the National Party believes. The pilots strike is now in its seventh week. A strike that was held in the power industry in Queensland lasted for seven days. It is a case of seven days versus seven weeks. The commitment by the State Government to end the power industry dispute obviously cost the tax-payers of Queensland lost revenue, but it did not cost the tax-payers of Queensland anything in the form of taxation benefits handed out to anyone.

Mr Scott: Charles Blunt is backing the pilots.

Mr KATTER: The strike in Canberra has cost the tax-payers \$100m in hand-outs to Sir Peter Abeles and his company, Ansett.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The Minister's comments are irrelevant to the subject-matter under discussion.

Mr KATTER: Mr Chairman, I would think that the comments I am making are most relevant insofar as Queensland has been able to provide a continuous supply of electricity in this State. The Government overcame the previous problem and has rolled on. No-one else has been able to achieve that. That is reflected in the greatest number of megawatts of output per employee of any mainland State in Australia and the least amount of outage time on units, because they are being maintained. Those honourable members who, like myself, are familiar with power stations such as Collinsville will know that bans of various types have caused enormous problems in continuity of supply. Bans on various work practices were imposed by unions resulted in the Government's not being able to keep its systems running.

Since 1985, electricity price increases have been only 10.9 per cent, compared with a concurrent increase in the consumer price index of an estimated 40 per cent. In

addition, the industry can foreshadow that, until 1994 at least, any subsequent price movements will be limited to no more than half the rate of increase in the consumer price index.

Mr Smith: You read that before.

Mr KATTER: No, I did not.

New initiatives in market research will allow the future strategic direction of the electricity supply industry to be determined so that resources can be used most effectively to meet our customers' needs for a safe, reliable and economic supply of electricity at the lowest price.

The Queensland Government has not only provided continuity of supply in this State, but it has also been able to supply the cheapest electricity in Australia. That means that industry will gravitate towards this State and not to other States. The Queensland Government will be keeping the lights on and it will have the lowest electricity charges in Australia. More than anything else, that is what attracts industry. I pay a very high compliment to the people who have been managing the industry and providing the leadership. To a very large degree, of their own initiative they have made every effort that is humanly possible to cut down on the number of people employed in the electricity industry so that its efficiencies will attract industry to this State.

The industry must always be a reliable supplier. During the colder than average winter just passed, the electricity system responded to higher customer requirements than were forecast. Over the whole year, demand for energy increased by 7.3 per cent over the previous year. On the basis of peak demand, the increase was 9.5 per cent. At the end of June and July, new records were established and progressively broken until the peak demand of 4 003 megawatts was established on 18 July.

In discussing electricity finances, it is essential to look at the industry as a whole because of the close organisational and financial links between the electricity boards and the commission. In 1988-89, the industry earned almost \$1.59 billion in sales of electricity, with receipts from all sources amounting to \$1,700m. Operating expenditure for the year totalled \$1.66 billion, leaving a surplus of income over expenditure of approximately \$40m. The surplus on operations for any year is carried forward to the year immediately following and is applied to offset cost increases, make tariff adjustments or repay debts.

Debt-servicing costs remain the largest individual component of the industry's cost structure and represented 37 per cent of total costs. Generation costs took 24 per cent, transmission and distribution costs took 9 per cent and management took 10 per cent. The industry's contribution from revenue for capital works amounted to 20 per cent of the year's costs. Productivity improvements can be identified in all operating cost categories.

Power generation is now limited to four thermal power station sites at Callide, Tarong, Gladstone and Swanbank as well as the hydropower station sites at Wivenhoe, Barron Gorge and Kareeya. The reduction in the number of generators achieved by the installation of modern, large-capacity sets has been responsible for putting the industry's employee productivity at the leading edge of international performance comparisons. Productivity improvements have also been identified throughout the distribution, transmission and administrative functions.

Mr Scott: And lack of maintenance.

Mr KATTER: That is a valid comment.

All of those improvements have contributed to the industry's performance record. I know exactly what the honourable member said. It comes back to the situation that exists with union bans. Other States have bent the knee on union bans and have done what the unions have directed them to do.

Mr Scott interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The member for Cook!

Mr KATTER: The result has been that this State is able to keep its machinery running at levels that can only be dreamed of in the other States.

Mr Veivers: You should see a specialist about that chest cough you've got.

Mr KATTER: I thank the honourable member for his concern. As a fellow former footballer, I appreciate his solidarity with me.

The year just concluded also marks the completion of the first year of operation of the arrangement whereby the electricity industry assigned its debt-obligation commitments to the Queensland Treasury Corporation. That arrangement frees the QEC from raising loan capital and from maintaining inscribed stock registry facilities. It also ensures that it has a flexible debt-management arrangement.

Under that arrangement, the industry can make pre-payments of debt which can be utilised, if required in the future, to accommodate increased interest rates or to supplement regular instalments in times of financial stringency. That facility will help overcome the irregular pattern of the industry's capital expenditure requirements. Recently, as shortening construction lead-times lead to capital costs savings and fluctuations in cash-flow movements increase, that feature of the industry has intensified.

In terms of capital spending the industry program was limited to \$351m in 1988-89. Generation expenditure was relatively low as work on Callide B concluded with the commissioning of the station to its design capacity, with major costs for the Stanwell power station still to be felt.

Of the total spending, the electricity boards spent 72 per cent on subtransmission and distribution works and extending supply to new customers. A significant portion of electricity boards' capital programs is customer financed either by non-repayable contributions or initially by refundable deposits. Operating efficiency and productivity gains have also been realised with capital spending.

Despite the ongoing need to spend larger amounts of capital to ensure that the industry retains the reliability of supply that it offers, indicated improvements in internal cash flows will fund all foreseen capital needs and will contribute to continual long-term reductions in the ratio of debt to equity.

Until recently a feature of the industry in Queensland was that many potential electricity-users were isolated either from the main interconnected system or the independent undertakings that are operated by the electricity boards. The Government's rural electricity subsidy scheme has been an effective policy initiative that has been responsible for extending electricity supply where it is needed and for catching up with its commitment to the rural community. At the end of the 1988-89 financial year the value of the industry's assets stood at \$7.26 billion.

Before I leave the subject of remote-area supply, I point out that I will be looking very closely at that issue and will ensure that some form of solar energy or other similar provision will be made for those people who realistically are just too far from the grid system to be connected to it. That will save the enormous upkeep costs on those lines that are now borne by other tax-payers or electricity-consumers in the State of Queensland.

Mr Simpson: It is getting more cost effective.

Mr KATTER: I am sure that this Government can come up with a system that is very cost effective. The \$40,000 to \$60,000 price range should be sufficient to provide an electricity supply that is similar to that enjoyed by people here in Brisbane.

As I was saying, at the end of the 1988-89 financial year the value of the industry's assets stood at \$7.26 billion. Because of the transfer of financial assets to the Queensland Treasury Corporation, that level was almost unchanged from that of the previous year. Concurrently, the industry's liability position dropped from \$4,065m to \$3,750m. That change in the relativity of loan debt and assets was effected by internal funds and funds

from new customers who provided all the required capital. There were no new borrowings to fund capital works. Part of the explanation for the industry's good performance is the continuing strong growth in the market for electricity.

This Government will be looking very closely at ways of using more electricity in this State and importing less oil from the Middle East and other areas. Substantially, the electrification of the rail system in Queensland meant that less money was going out of the country to foreign oil-producers and more money was going into the pockets of coal-miners and people who work in the coal-mining industry in the State of Queensland. Those are the areas that this Government will be considering closely and moving into very aggressively in the forthcoming year.

The coal-fired power station at Stanwell near Rockhampton is on schedule to achieve first commercial production by March 1993. That station will have four turbo generators that are similar to those at the plants at Tarong and the Callide B power station. Significant economic advantages flow from similar designs and operating parameters.

The next power station that is scheduled to be completed after Stanwell is the Tully/Millstream hydroelectric power station. I believe that this Government should consider seriously changing that to a pumped-storage scheme. I will be looking very closely at the comparison between its operating as a hydroelectric scheme or as a pumped-storage scheme.

By making those comments I do not wish to reflect in any way upon the operations of the electricity industry in Queensland, because that is an excellent project. Problems are created for regional development when water is taken from the dry inland areas of the State. Decisions should not be made on that in an isolated, blinkered and tunnelled way but should take into account a number of parameters. In no way would I advocate that that should be construed as a criticism of the industry, because from its narrow perspective it was an excellent decision.

Mr Vaughan: I don't think it is a pumped-storage station.

Mr KATTER: No, it is scheduled to be a hydroelectric station. Although it will be a hydroelectric facility, I would like to determine whether it could be used as a pumped-storage station rather than simply as a generating station. That is a matter to be considered. I am not prefacing any change in Government direction.

This will have a significant impact on overall reliability of supply and in containing electricity prices to all customers. I am happy to record the very significant contribution of the industry's staff to the financial stability of the electricity supply industry and Queensland generally.

I turn now to the appropriation for the Department of Northern Development, which this year will be \$901,000. The economy of north Queensland is a strong contributor to Queensland's gross State product and, more importantly, to Australia's export effort. North Queensland exports substantial amounts of minerals, refined metal, coal, meat, sugar and seafood. The north is also a strong earner of foreign income through tourism.

Major projects which received assistance through the Northern Development Office last year included: a space symposia at Cairns and Townsville, a north Queensland horticultural field day, mariculture developments, feedlot developments, extension of the port of Townsville, an alkali-treated bagasse research project, promotional assistance for the Mossman Gorge dreaming trail, *Trek North*—a tabloid publication—promotion of the south-east gulf country and liaison with Government bodies, local authorities, industry groups and developers. Very substantial water resource development work was carried out in the mid-west of north Queensland.

I must single out John Andersen and all of the staff at Townsville. During my term as Minister they did very excellent work. What could be achieved by half a dozen people who worked very hard and who were very capable was quite unbelievable.

Having made those remarks, I will conclude by giving a short overall perspective. Over recent years the great growth sector and the great locomotive of the Queensland

economy has been the mining sector. Under the directorship of this Government, that sector of the economy has continued to boom. It is a boom of which we can be very, very proud. When Neville Wran took office in New South Wales he said that the picnic that Queensland had in the coal-mining area was over. He said that New South Wales would compete, and compete hard. He tried, but that State is still floundering in the wake of this State.

I am very proud that, by opening up of half a dozen huge gold mines, my home city of Charters Towers has become one of the greatest contributors to the expansion in the mining industry in the State. The hard-working people in those mines risk their lives daily. By its very nature, mining is a very dangerous occupation. Those people should receive accolades from every Queenslanders for the enormous benefits they have created for the Queensland economy. If it were not for those people, Charters Towers would be bereft of the economic development that this country desperately needs at present. To think that the Federal Government is toying with the idea of introducing a gold tax and putting that development in jeopardy can only be regarded with shock and horror. Just last month, \$2.58 billion more went out of this country than came into it. The only sector of the Australian economy that has shown any significant growth has been the gold mining sector. Its earnings leapt from \$400m a year to almost \$3.5 billion. That occurred over a period of five years. No movement occurred in the gold mining industry while that tax was being discussed. All of that development took place in the four years after the gold tax was knocked on the head. But now the Federal Government is once again considering a gold tax. The enormous potential for the continuation of that growth will be stillborn.

In closing, I reiterate that the electricity industry of this State has provided a reliable and stable source of supply to consumers. That has not been the case in New South Wales where, on one occasion, the whole system collapsed because of lack of maintenance, which was caused mainly by work bans and because of strikes in the neighbouring State of Victoria. This State has been cured of both of those maladies. However, even a cursory glance at the handling of the airline pilots strike reveals what would happen to the electricity industry in this State if by a miracle there was a change of command in the board of directors of this State. It would suffer the hopelessness that has been experienced in New South Wales and Victoria

This State faces very exciting prospects in the fields of mines and energy. Queensland intends to be the world-leader in solar energy technology. The biggest scheme in the world is currently being developed in this State.

Mr Scott: That's a nonsense. What about Coconut Island? You have given it a Mickey Mouse electricity supply.

Mr Veivers: You're a knocker.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I warn the honourable member for Cook and the honourable member for Southport under Standing Order 123A.

Mr KATTER: For the information of the honourable member, I point out that the two biggest electricity utilities in the world—one in the State of California, the other being the Westinghouse company—have installed the pilot project on Coconut Island. They are determined to ensure that they secure the contract for the supply of electricity to all of the Torres Strait islands. They hope that that will provide the springboard for them to achieve the electrification of the Indonesian islands and the South Pacific islands.

At a recent seminar in Queensland, the head of Westinghouse said that if a project the size of the Torres Strait project is installed in Indonesia every year for the next 100 years, all of Indonesia would still not be electrified. That demonstrates the size of the market that exists for this type of utility. As a result of the work being undertaken in Torres Strait, Queensland will most certainly be the world-leader.

Very soon I hope to make a statement about ethanol. I have very great hopes that that industry will bring half a thousand million dollars a year into the Queensland economy and provide this State, directly and indirectly, with 4 000 or 5 000 jobs.

Mr Smith: Has Alan Metcalfe backed down?

Mr KATTER: No. The department will not be working with that person.

This State will discover some very exciting events taking place in the field of silica-mining. I take on board the comments made by the honourable member for Cook. I am sure that he will strongly support the Government in its attempts to develop that industry. I am quite confident that the Government will be successful.

The development of water resources projects in north Queensland is a subject that is very near and dear to my heart. The projects have the capacity to earn \$1.1 billion in export earnings. Major developments in the production of phosphate at Duchess and developments associated with methane and the natural gas pipelines in this State will provide it not only with confidence in the future but also export earnings over and above the income that is being derived presently. The present level is approximately \$3.2 billion per year.

I have outlined the exciting projects on the horizon that this State has to offer to the people of Queensland.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I wish to inform honourable members that, on the Vote proposed, I will allow a full discussion on all the Minister's departmental Estimates (Consolidated Revenue, Trust and Special Funds). For the information of honourable members, I point out that the administrative acts of the department are open to debate but that the necessity for legislation and matters involving legislation cannot be discussed in Committee of Supply.

Mr VAUGHAN (Nudgee) (11.55 a.m.): As the Opposition's spokesman on Mines and Energy, I would dearly love to have sufficient time to respond to some of the comments made by the new Minister for Mines and Energy. However, as I am permitted to speak during this debate for 20 minutes only, I will stick to the research that I have undertaken during the preparation of my speech.

According to the Budget papers, this financial year a total of \$408.8m will be spent on new capital works for electricity purposes by the Queensland Electricity Commission and electricity boards. \$83.5m will be spent on the construction of the Stanwell power station, the first unit of which is scheduled to come on line on 1 March 1993, and \$10.2m will be spent on preliminary work associated with the Tully/Millstream hydro-electric scheme. In addition, to improve the security of power supply to the aluminium smelter near Gladstone, a 275 kV power supply is to be built to Boyne Island. \$287.5m is to be spent on a power distribution program to cater for a growth in demand for electricity, which will include extending and reinforcing supply to an estimated 40 000 new consumers across the State.

On page 370 of the *State Budget for 1989-90 in Program Format* it is stated that it is planned that the Queensland Electricity Commission's four major coal-fired power stations—that is, Gladstone, Tarong, Callide B and Swanbank—the two hydro-electric stations at Barron Gorge and Kareeya and the Wivenhoe pumped-storage station will generate 6.2 per cent more power than last year. It is further stated that the Queensland Electricity Commission will continue to benefit from the high availability for use of the lower operating cost generating plant at Tarong, Callide B, and Gladstone Power Stations. In this regard, I emphasise the need to continue the benefit of that use and the lower operating costs, particularly in regard to the Gladstone Power Station.

Unfortunately, not many people will have the opportunity or take the trouble to read these statements because they are buried in the pages of the numerous Budget papers. However, in view of recent reports about the likely sale of the Gladstone Power Station to Comalco for \$500m, they are significant and are worthy of additional comment.

As I indicated publicly at the time, I am opposed to the sale of the Gladstone Power Station to private enterprise.

I certainly consider the Gladstone Power Station, which is the largest power station in the State with a generating capacity of 1 650 mW, is worth much more than \$500m, particularly since \$42m is currently being spent refurbishing the station.

On 14 September the former Premier, Mr Ahern, announced that the Government was to sell the Gladstone Power Station to Comalco who wanted to buy the station as part of a proposed \$700m expansion of its Boyne Island smelter. He reportedly said the expansion of the smelter could not go ahead without the sale of the power station to Comalco. According to the former Premier, the arrangement would be that after Comalco took the power it wanted from the station, the Queensland Electricity Commission would purchase the balance but on the understanding that the price would not contain any subsidy to Comalco. I am opposed to the sale of the Gladstone Power Station to Comalco or to any other company because, as is indicated in the Budget papers, the Queensland Electricity Commission benefits from its high availability and its low operating cost.

Gladstone Power Station, which commenced operating in 1976, has at least a further 15 years of working life. Most of the coal it uses is relatively cheap and it is the largest power station in the State. In 1987-88 it generated 40 per cent of the State's power, whereas the smelter consumed 16.7 per cent. The figures for 1988-89 are not yet available.

At the present time, under normal circumstances the State has sufficient generating capacity to meet demand, even though maximum demand on 13 July last rose to 4 011 mW, which would have tested the State's power system. However, as I stated earlier, the Queensland Electricity Commission expects an increase in demand this year of approximately 6 per cent. If that increase is maintained over the next few years and if Comalco goes ahead with the planned expansion of its smelter, by 1993 the State's power-generating system will not be able to meet demand, even though the first unit of the Stanwell power station is scheduled to come on line in March 1993.

The reason Comalco wants to buy Gladstone Power Station is to endeavour to ensure a secure supply of power to the smelter which will require, when additional smelting capacity is installed, almost half the capacity of the station. The former Premier indicated that the Queensland Electricity Commission will purchase the remainder of the power generated by the Gladstone Power Station. However, if demand exceeds supply in 1993, supply to the smelter will, of course, take priority. Any shortfall of supply from the State grid will have to be borne by the rest of the State's consumers.

To try to overcome that situation the Government can advance the construction of the Stanwell power station, as was done with the Tarong Power Station, or bring the 700 megawatts of generating capacity that has been moth-balled in the last two years back into operation. This will cost money, but it is cheaper than building new generating capacity. What I am saying is that if the Government sells the Gladstone Power Station, it is relinquishing part of the Queensland Electricity Commission's ability to regulate the State's power system and, contrary to claims by the former Premier, the sale will cost electricity-consumers millions of dollars.

One question that is being asked is: if Comalco wants to own its own power supply, why does it not build its own power station? The answer of course is that a power supply for the smelter must have a capacity almost double the smelter's demand and, since it costs about \$1.25m per megawatt to build a power station today, such a power supply would cost over \$1,700m. So, if the Government is silly enough to spend \$42m refurbishing the Gladstone Power Station and then sell it for \$500m, it can be readily seen why Comalco would be interested in buying it.

Mr De Lacy: I would buy it myself.

Mr VAUGHAN: I can assure the honourable member that, on current indications, it will be not called to tender. Another point which has to be taken into consideration is that the first Gladstone unit came on line in 1976 and the last in 1982 and, as a

power station has a life of 25 to 30 years, Gladstone has many years of operating life left. It therefore does not seem logical to sell off a power station for \$500m and a few years later have to outlay over \$2 billion to replace it. Although Comalco has not yet confirmed that it is definitely going ahead with the expansion of the smelter—it was reported last April that feasibility studies would be completed in October—as I indicated at the start of my speech, the Budget provides for funds to build another 275 kilovolt transmission line to Boyne Island to improve security of supply to the smelter, and to provide a basis for any future expansion.

In 1981 the Bjelke-Petersen Government floated the idea of allowing private enterprise to build and operate power stations. The then State Electricity Commission sent out more than 200 copies of a tender registration document to companies around the world. Twenty-five Australian and international companies responded, and it was reported that it was expected a private power station would be supplying power into the State grid by 1990. In 1981 it was reported that Comalco had submitted a proposal to the Government to build a power station at Bowen in conjunction with an alumina refinery. My final comment on this matter is that, if the Gladstone Power Station is sold to Comalco, the price of power to the smelter would not be less than it is now—it could not be—but it would certainly be less than the price that the Queensland Electricity Commission would pay for any power it purchased from Comalco.

As I also indicated at the start of my speech, \$287.5m is to be spent on a power-distribution program which will include extending and reinforcing supply to an estimated 40 000 new consumers across the State. In relation to the extension of power to consumers, I want to raise the question of the supply of power to rural subdivisions. In the past, developers were allowed to cut large areas of rural land up into small acreage lots which are attractive to people who want to get away from the confinement of a small city or town house block. Unfortunately, the developers were not required to provide the normal services, such as electricity, and, as a result, people who bought those properties now find that if they want electricity connected to them they face an outlay of up to several thousand dollars, or even more. I understand that action has been taken requiring future developments of that nature to have electricity connected at the time the land is subdivided.

However, I am aware of a number of such developments where property-owners want electricity connected but are being asked by electricity boards to make capital contributions which appear to be rather substantial, and which many of the owners cannot afford. In addition, in some cases those property-owners who want electricity connected are being asked to clear the power line route. In many cases, particularly where only a small percentage of the property-owners initially want electricity connected, that is impractical.

While it is argued that the owners of those properties would have had to pay a higher price for them if electricity had been connected at the time of purchase, and therefore should now contribute towards the connection of electricity, unfortunately, unless all property-owners agree to have electricity connected at the same time, some owners end up paying more than others. In this day and age I cannot see why electricity cannot be connected to those developments with each property-owner contributing to the cost.

It is time that the requirement for electricity-consumers to pay a security deposit to have electricity connected was reviewed. In July of this year the electricity regulations were amended, increasing the maximum amount an electricity board can charge a domestic-consumer as a security deposit from \$300 to \$400. However, as at 4 April this year the seven electricity boards held a total of \$62m of electricity-consumers' money in security deposits, and the amount held is increasing at the rate of at least \$6m a year.

As an example of the way in which the amount is increasing—in 1980-81, it was \$18.3m. It is currently \$62m. The money is, to course, invested at high interest rates.

While consumers will from now on be paid between 4 per cent and 10 per cent interest—previously it was 3.75 per cent—the investment returns at least \$7m a year to the boards.

As the requirement to pay a security deposit is an imposition on many consumers, particularly those on low and/or fixed incomes renting premises, the interest that the boards receive from security deposits held should be set aside in a special fund as a hedge against bad debts. When the fund reaches the required level, security deposits currently held could be refunded to consumers.

If the interest that the boards have made on consumers' security deposits since the reorganisation of the industry in 1977 had been set aside in that way, there would be more than enough money to enable security deposits to be refunded now. The amount that the boards lose each year in bad debts is not great and is more than offset by the interest earned on security deposits.

It is also time that people living in caravan parks and mobile villages paid the same for their electricity as other domestic consumers do. In most modern caravan parks and mobile villages, electricity is distributed to residents through meters supplied by the proprietor.

Under the provisions of the Electricity Act, the price the proprietor can charge an occupant for electricity used is the price per kilowatt hour that the proprietor pays the electricity board or the domestic tariff. However, it appears from complaints I have received that some proprietors are charging a higher price than is prescribed by the Electricity Act and no action is being taken to stop such a practice.

I would therefore suggest that a special rate be prescribed for occupants of caravan parks and mobile villages based on the average price per kilowatt hour that such places pay for electricity which, according to my calculations, would be less than the domestic tariff and certainly less than is being charged at present.

I want to take this opportunity to refer to comments by the new South East Queensland Electricity Board General Manager, Mr Keith Hoffman, reported in the press on Thursday, 29 June last. Mr Hoffman was quoted as saying it was time the South East Queensland Electricity Board and the Electrical Trades Union sheathed the knives of distrust which had been out since the 1985 industrial dispute.

I totally agree with Mr Hoffman's sentiments and sincerely trust that he is able to re-establish the relationships that existed prior to 1985. It is certainly not in the best interests of the South East Queensland Electricity Board, its employees or the Electrical Trades Union for animosity and distrust to continue. I am aware that the union shares Mr Hoffman's views and will co-operate with him to bury the hatchet.

Mr Hoffman, of course, is an electrical tradesman who has come up through the ranks and thus has an understanding of the electricity industry and an appreciation of the need for industrial harmony, something which his predecessor lacked.

In the time I have left of my 20 minutes I want to refer to the funding for the Mines Department. According to the Budget papers, an amount of \$29.2m out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund has been allocated for Mines Department expenditure by comparison with \$27.4m last financial year. This is an increase of only 6.3 per cent, which is a decrease in funding in real terms. Although there is a need for a real increase in funding—I emphasise the words "a real increase in funding", particularly having regard to what the Minister outlined in his speech—to improve services to the industry at least the level of funding should be maintained, not decreased.

An amount of \$1.2m has been allocated for the establishment of district offices in Cairns, Mareeba, Charters Towers and Georgetown, and that is provided for in the Mineral Resources Bill, which has yet to be dealt with.

In that regard I note that, in the *Queensland Government Gazette* dated Saturday, 9 September 1989, applications were called for 10 mining registrar positions, 5 district tenure officers and 9 field officers. In addition to Cairns, Mareeba, Charters Towers and

Georgetown, positions were called for at Mount Isa, Winton, Rockhampton, Emerald, Brisbane and Quilpie. The closing date for receipt of applications is 2 October.

The establishment of those district offices must certainly improve the administration and regulation of exploration and mining tenures, and there is room for improvement in the present system. The Minister, in his comments, acknowledged that there was room for improvement. There is certainly a need to improve the policing of the provisions of the Mining Act, particularly the conditions under which authorities to prospect and mining leases are granted.

That is a significant part of the Queensland Labor Party's policy. The Minister also indicated, in his speech, the need for some action in that regard and he referred to the changes contained in the Mineral Resources Bill.

There are over 1 000 authorities to prospect and nearly 4 000 mining leases held throughout the State that should be subject to closer attention.

In the area of mining safety and technology, I note that the amount allocated for salaries, wages and related payments has decreased from \$4.6m to \$4.2m, a drop of over 8 per cent, yet we are told that this area of Mines Department operations which is aimed at the improvement of safety and health in mines and hazardous industries is to be involved in a program of increased inspections of quarries and of machinery at mine sites following the transfer of this responsibility from the Department of Industrial Affairs. In his speech, the Minister also referred to that area.

We are also told that greater emphasis is to be placed on environmental monitoring, particularly in regard to water quality management and erosion control at coal mine sites. The Minister mentioned that ecologists had been engaged at Cairns and Rockhampton. There certainly is a need for something to be done in that regard. In that case, why has there been a reduction in funding?

I now want to make a quick reference to the comments that the Minister made about the Mineral Resources Bill, which is currently before Parliament and which he has indicated will be debated next week.

As the Opposition spokesman on Mines and Energy, I have been inundated with complaints from all sections of the industries that are covered by the Bill. I ask the Minister to give serious consideration to allowing the Bill to lie on the table for a much longer period. Many people are not happy with its provisions. A Green Paper was issued in 1987 and there has been debate since then. Draft legislation was drawn up and it was discussed by selected groups in the community. The Bill was introduced into Parliament on 7 September. I am expected to be able to study it and all of the submissions, and to make a contribution in the debate. That is grossly unfair.

Mr BEARD (Mount Isa—Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party) (12.15 p.m.): Next week, I hope that we will discuss the Mineral Resources Bill, which is a major piece of mining legislation. I intend to canvass many matters about mining in the 30 minutes that I will have available in that debate, rather than in the 20 minutes that I have available in this Estimates debate. Unlike the previous speaker, Mr Vaughan, I hope that the legislation is not left to lie on the table for some months, to be discussed again. For two or three years there has been consultation, Green Papers and input from all sectors of the community likely to be involved in the mining legislation. It seems to be a complete piece of legislation. I will be seeking further clarification on some aspects of the legislation. Some members of the community have contacted me—no doubt they have contacted Mr Vaughan and some National Party members—about possible amendments. It is a radical shake-up of the whole mining legislation of the State. It has been around for two-and-a-half to three years and I do not think we can afford to wait any longer to have it introduced.

Because the Mineral Resources Bill will be debated next week—I hope—I will spend a few minutes talking about the other part of the Minister's portfolio, Northern and Regional Development, because it is not often discussed in this Chamber. It needs more

discussion than it receives. In fact, the portfolio needs more resources, and more attention needs to be paid to ensuring that projects are actually carried out.

I am pleased that the portfolio now includes regional development as well as northern development. That is a step in the right direction. The northern and the regional parts of this great decentralised State have incredible resources, most of which will be developed by private individuals and organisations—entrepreneurs—if the State provides the infrastructure, which is the State's job.

In this debate we have heard the Minister refer to the ethanol industry. I hope that shortly the company involved will receive support so that it can get that industry under way. We have a Cape York space base. We have a supply of energy on Coconut Island. We have the Bowen methane basin and Duchess phosphate. Several gold mines are in the early stages of development.

In my home town of Mount Isa, two new mines are in an advanced stage of development. The deep 3 000-3 500 copper-ore bodies will take Mount Isa well into the twenty-first century and the Hilton lead/zinc/silver mine 20 kilometres north of Mount Isa already has engaged 500 employees and will grow in the next few years. Often those initiatives get lost in the big conglomeration of industry in Mount Isa, at least in the perspective of the people from the south of the State.

In the far-flung areas of the State, great advances are also taking place in tourism. I am proud to have been asked to join the Tree of Knowledge Development Committee at Barcaldine, which has a project underway to celebrate in 1991 the centenary of the ALP. It is not strange at all that I should be on that committee. I am pleased to say that a couple of other people from the conservative side of politics have accepted positions on that committee as well. Regardless of a person's politics, this is not a one-party State. We acknowledge and honour an Opposition. We acknowledge and honour all points of view in politics. The foundation of the ALP in 1891 was a significant event in Australian history. Its centenary should be honoured.

The project which is being developed at Barcaldine to honour that centenary with a huge new tent theatre, quite apart from the honour that it pays to our pioneers, will become a major tourist attraction in the west of the State. It will link up very nicely 100 kilometres away with the already-established and very popular Australian Stockman's Hall of Fame and Outback Heritage Centre at Longreach, further along to John Flynn Place at Cloncurry, on to Mount Isa and up to the great gulf country. A week or two ago, I was delighted to see the Matilda Highway linking Charleville in the west with Cloncurry and then with Normanton and Karumba on the gulf came into being, with maps being issued to encourage people to come and explore those parts of the State.

Tourism has magnificent prospects in western Queensland. However, the point I make is that those initiatives cannot be introduced by opening an office in Townsville, staffing it with a couple of public relations officers, making grand statements and even passing legislation about enterprise zones in north Queensland. That tends to be very much words, image and gloss. The companies in the more remote areas of the State need the Government to provide the infrastructure so that they can develop the industries themselves. I will give one simple example.

In the late 1960s through to 1971, the company by which I was previously employed, MIM Holdings Ltd, took the plans for the construction of a zinc refinery in Townsville to an advanced stage. The company was ready to start refining zinc in Townsville alongside its existing copper refinery. However, at the time it did not receive from the State Government a guarantee of a cheaper rate for power. Because it could not get the rate that it asked for, or even a sensible compromise, it abandoned plans to construct the zinc refinery in Townsville. Shortly afterwards, there was a slump in mining, anyway, and the plans were put into moth-balls. However, towards the end of the 1970s MIM, still wanting to seek downstream processing of its zinc products, bought into a couple of German zinc refineries and is now heavily engaged with Metallgesellschaft in the further processing of zinc.

If the State Government had come to the party at that time and looked sensibly at a proposal for cheaper power, a zinc refinery would have been built in Townsville. A zinc refinery, alongside the copper refinery, would probably have employed 300 or 400 people. When one considers their families and the multiplier effect of that industry, it would have been a magnificent addition to Townsville's industry.

Mr Katter: Are you certain that that is correct, that they were genuine?

Mr BEARD: Yes. The company would have gone ahead with the project at the time. Of course, shortly afterwards a slump occurred. The timing was critical.

Of course, the project will not go ahead now because at present an excess zinc-refining capacity exists on world markets. The Government must seize the day and go ahead with those projects when they are put forward.

Other infrastructure which comes under other Ministers' portfolios is needed in the north west of the State. I refer to things such as roads, communications, airports, the staffing of schools, hospitals and police stations, and people such as speech therapists. I will stand corrected, but it is an interesting statistic that in Queensland there are only three surgeons west of the Great Divide. Occasionally, a flying surgeon visits that region. But one does not just go out and saw off a leg and say, "You'll be right, mate. Here's a bottle of Bundy rum. I'll be back in a month to see you again." Support services such as those provided by anaesthetists, post-surgery care and properly staffed hospitals are required.

I know that I am talking budgets and economics. All Governments will say that they are doing whatever they can as fast as they can. However, not enough is being done to attract to those towns professional staff such as doctors, teachers, police, health-care professionals, occupational therapists, speech therapists and physiotherapists.

I was pleased to see in the recent Budget incentives for teachers, but there was not much for anyone else. No Government can run away from those services. If the infrastructure is put in place, industry and development will follow.

I even extend my request for services to the arts. This morning, I had breakfast with a lady who is on the Arts Council of Australia and with a well-known artist in Queensland. We discussed some of the problems in that sphere. I was glad that I received a hearing about initiatives that should be introduced in the more remote parts of the State.

Some of my fellow north Queenslanders in this Chamber will be very well aware of the fine full-time dance company based in Townsville called Dance North, which is struggling under fairly adverse financial conditions to establish a school of dance and a professional touring company in that part of the State. That dance company does remarkably well. It has travelled overseas in the last year or two. This year, for example, it had to toss up whether to take its productions to Cairns or Mount Isa. Unfortunately, Cairns won. Perhaps Mount Isa will win next year. That company could not afford to put on productions in both centres.

Dance North is presently occupying fairly old premises in Townsville on an acorn-a-year rental. Townsville is a major provincial centre. It has a population of more than 100 000. It would be—and I say this in the knowledge that Mr De Lacy is listening—the administrative centre for a large area of northern Australia. Why could the Government not consider helping the various arts bodies in the north by establishing a facility for them that they could all use? They could pay rental for the usage of such a facility. A facility should be provided for those arts bodies, from which they could operate. That would help them to be able to take their talents to far-flung towns and cities such as Mount Isa.

The Flying Art School, which over the years has done wonderful work in Queensland, is short of funds. It has done so well, in fact, that many of the people who live in the remote parts of the State whom it has trained in art over the last few years have gone past the stage at which they just need to be told about perspective and a few other

simple, basic truths. They need to attend advanced courses conducted by experienced artists. Visiting producers and directors for plays, and musicians in residence are needed.

All of these things may sound trivial, but they are not. They are the very fibre of life. If people have to live and work in the more remote parts of this State, they are fully entitled to share—

Mr Prest: They could take the National Party Cabinet up there; it is a circus.

Mr BEARD: That would provide entertainment now and again.

The infrastructure is needed so that people can develop their talents fully. It would make living in these far-flung areas far more attractive.

I will canvass a few other matters that I have mentioned on other occasions. The private rental market—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I remind the honourable member for Mount Isa that his comments are a bit irrelevant to the portfolio that is under discussion. Arts is not part of the Minister's portfolio.

Mr BEARD: I accept your ruling, Mr Chairman. I did think that I was speaking about regional development and setting up the relevant infrastructure. I am sorry if I was not sticking to the subject-matter under debate.

Infrastructure includes the provision of housing. For example, in Mount Isa there are 325 Aboriginal families on the waiting-list for housing. Fifty of those people are living full-time along the Leichhardt River. There is no private rental market in a town such as Mount Isa.

If one dials the 000 emergency number in Mount Isa, one finds that the call is answered in Townsville. The woman who answers the phone asks, "Where are you calling from?" When one says, "25 Darling Crescent.", she says, "No, no. What town are you calling from?" A woman might have a baby beside her who is having convulsions. She says, "What do you mean 'What town?' My baby is having convulsions." But the switchboard-operator, who is doing her job properly, asks, "What town are you calling from?" The lady says, "I am calling from Mount Isa." The switchboard-operator asks, "What is the trouble?" The lady says, "My baby is having convulsions." The switchboard-operator says, "Right. I will contact the ambulance or the doctor."

That has happened on many occasions. A recent case involved a man who died. His wife was left at the end of a telephone for six minutes while the switchboard-operator in far-away Townsville—960 kilometres away—tried to contact the Mount Isa ambulance, police or whichever service was required.

Telecom has been contacted about this matter. It is understood that Telecom has to rationalise its services. However, it has to do better than that. It is no good talking about northern development or regional development if people have to put up with those sorts of things.

The Federal Government must review the zone allowance for tax-payers who live in remote areas. That also has to be on the agenda. It has to be encouraged.

This morning honourable members heard something about drought relief. Although I was delighted to see the Public Accounts Committee bring down a report and to lay the blame where it should be laid, that is against the people who rort the system, sight must never be lost of the fact that 95 per cent of the primary producers out there are honest, hard-working people who do not rort the system. Let us not flush them down the tube with some of the fellows who have been caught rorting the system. From what I have heard, the rorters tend to be some of the richer producers and even bigger companies, rather than individuals, who can afford lawyers and accountants who know how to rort the system.

Let us not flush down the tube with the perpetrators of those rorts the honest, hard-working people. Let the Government provide the necessary infrastructure in the north and the west of this State. The industries will then be developed by the sorts of people

who developed them in the nineteenth century and earlier in the twentieth century. Those people will get out and do it.

In the short time remaining to me I want to talk about the other part of the Minister's portfolio, which is Mines and Energy. Bearing in mind that next week I will speak again on a major mining Bill, I want to outline for the consideration of the Committee some of the problems and the concerns facing the mining industry, the Minister, the Mines Department and those who get out and do the mining in this country in 1989.

I will quote some facts contained in a publication produced by the Australian Mining Industry Council. Those facts cannot be disputed. That publication states—

“Mining disturbs less than 0.02 per cent of Australia's land area and plants over two million trees every year to help rehabilitate that land.”

In other words, there is less land under mining than there is under bitumen roads. It goes on—

“Since 1967, the mining industry has built 25 new towns, 12 new ports, 20 airfields and almost 2000km of rail line.

The asset value of infrastructure (such as railways, ports, roads, schools, hospitals etc.) built by mining companies in Australia exceeds \$3 billion (as at 1987).

The minimum value of minerals that cannot be mined because they lie beneath small areas of land included in declared national parks exceeds Australia's foreign debt (as at 1989) by at least \$50 billion.”

Our total foreign debt plus \$50 billion is the value of minerals locked up under lands that cannot be mined.

We heard on radio and television and read in the newspapers that Senator Richardson and others like him in Canberra were talking about locking up Coronation Hill in the Kakadu national park—a conservation zone which was declared for five years to be open for full mineral exploration. There is an estimated \$7 billion worth of gold, platinum and palladium under that ground. It was a declared conservation zone, open for exploration for five years. Twelve months after it was declared, Senator Richardson is trying to lock it up. Honourable members should ask his colleagues John Kerin and Senator Peter Cook what they think about Graham Richardson. They are two members of the Labor Cabinet in Canberra who know what developing the outback is about.

Mr Simpson: But they don't get a say.

Mr BEARD: They do not get a say because Richardson is the numbers man and he has the Prime Minister's ear.

That publication continues—

“The value of mining exports (not oil and gas) is \$16 billion a year . . . more than 41 per cent of Australia's total merchandise exports.”

An article in the *Sunday Mail* of 26 March this year commented on reports by an historian from the James Cook University in Townsville, Dr Kett Kennedy, who said that mining is still the whipping-boy. He said—

“The mining industry, for all its front and hitting power and with a heritage steeped in the best traditions of the Australian frontier, remains an industrial underdog, a whipping post for all and sundry who attack it not for what it is but for what they perceive it to be.

After 200 years of settlement, the mining industry, no matter where it is located—from Ravenswood to Robe River—is still having to justify its existence every inch of the way.

It is surprising that, with all its might and muscle it is still the skinny guy on the beach getting sand kicked in its face by the social conscience brigade who view it as the maverick tiger operating outside the laws of the development jungle.

With exports in 1987-88 valued at \$16,000 million, mining is doing more than any other industry to rein in the country's runaway balance of payments figures.

The combined rural export industries including beef and wool, although nipping away at the heels of mining, stopped \$1,000 million short in 1987-88 with total exports of \$15,000 million.

Dr Kennedy believes that the new leaders in the mining industry are bending over backwards in their sense of community responsibility.

And, he said, they are getting no credit for it.

The mining industry, he hints, is so aware of its responsibilities as to be somewhat self-conscious, perhaps a little too defensive and not aggressive enough when justifying its right to exist as a corporate citizen.

Queensland's Minister for Northern Development and Mines and Energy, Martin Tenni"—

as he was then—

“an aggressive defender of the mining industry, said that the days of miners ravaging the countryside and walking away are gone.

“These days we are dealing with long-life companies, big operations which have a heightened awareness of rehabilitation and of their role in the day-to-day drama of business and community life,” Mr Tenni said.”

I wanted to read that article into *Hansard* because it comes from a university academic whose political affiliations I know nothing about. That is the truth—the people who are trying to get over the financial position in which this country finds itself are battling the social conscience brigade who have never been past the tram terminus, who probably have never had dirty hands in their life, who go and sit up in trees and get in the road of honest workers trying to get to work to do what they are paid to do in approved logging areas, who sit around mining sites at Radium Hill in South Australia trying to stop their development, and who then move on to the next trendy issue place without ever doing a day's work in their lives. They are trying to stop the development of this country by sensible, responsible people with a 24-carat concern about the environment of this country and the future that our children are going to inherit. I am sick and tired of seeing those dead-beats doing nothing but bludge on the country and stopping people who are trying to do a day's work.

Mr Simpson: They still drive around in motor cars and switch on their television sets.

Mr BEARD: My word they do. They take all the benefits of mining. They live in timber houses and eat off timber tables.

The immediate past president of the Queensland Chamber of Mines, Mr Bob Bryan, in his *President's Report to Members 1988*, was on the same track when he said—

“It is frustrating and depressing to see the mining industry continually having to fight issues in order simply to stay in business. It is disturbing to see the inroads being made, particularly by the Federal Government, into the areas of State responsibility which impact on our operations.

We must surely hope that soon Australia will learn from the disasters of recent years. The message for those in power must be that it is all too easy to stop an industry, project by project”—

for example, Coronation Hill—

“and without clear and practical guidelines together with strong leadership in Government, it will be impossible to create a business climate in which major industries such as ours can flourish.”

I will not read the rest of his report because I think that by reading the last couple of quotations I have made the point that it is all too easy to take up a trendy issue, to stop development and to take our country further down the tube.

Nowadays, the mining industry knows all about the environment. I was born and bred in Mount Isa and I have lived there most of my life. A lead smelter and a copper smelter are located in the middle of the town. I live less than half a kilometre from a lead smelter. However, my family and I live comfortably, happily and healthily because the mining company continually monitors the environment and spends hundreds of millions of dollars on protecting it. However, mining companies are attacked all the time by people who do not know what mining is all about and have no idea how a dollar is made.

Those are the problems faced by the mining industry, by the new Minister for Mines and Energy, by his Mines Department and by all those who are intent on seeing this country rise from the ashes, into which it is slipping at an accelerating rate, and get on with the business of taking our rightful place in the world.

Mr MENZEL (Mulgrave) (12.35 p.m.): I congratulate the Honourable Bob Katter on his promotion back to Cabinet as Minister for Mines and Energy and Minister for Northern and Regional Development. There is no doubt that, when the history books are written, Bob Katter, Jnr, will go down in history as one of the great north Queenslanders and as the person who really got northern development off the ground for the State Government. I do not want to be disrespectful to other Ministers or to former Ministers, but I must point out that undoubtedly Bob Katter has put his whole life and career into the promotion of northern development. He did an excellent job in the Community Services portfolio. Following his promotion, he lost that portfolio. I am sure that the Mines and Energy portfolio will keep him busy and that he probably will not have time for the other things that he may have had time for in the past.

There is no doubt that north Queensland can go ahead with a Minister such as Bob Katter at the helm. I do not want to mention anything about Mines and Energy except to say that I am pleased to support the Tully/Millstream project, which, of course, was getting off the ground before Bob Katter became Minister for Mines and Energy. I believe that that project will be of tremendous benefit not only to north Queensland but also to Queensland as a whole. The Government's promotion of hydropower is a step in the right direction. It is important that there be a blend between the different types of power stations.

The Federal Government stopped the construction of a dam on the Franklin River. A system of hydropower was proposed for Tasmania. The Federal Government insisted that the Tasmanian Government use coal-burning power stations. In fact, the Federal Government is adding to the ozone problem in the atmosphere. It has been very irresponsible because the use of hydropower does not damage the ozone layer.

Mr De Lacy interjected.

Mr MENZEL: I am sure that the honourable member for Cairns will agree with me—

Mr De Lacy: I agree.

Mr MENZEL: I thank the honourable member. That is one of the problems that obviously the Federal Government overlooked.

I am sure that the new Minister will continue to develop the Tully/Millstream project, which is well along the track. I commend him for what has been done about northern development. While the Honourable Bob Katter was Minister for Northern Development, Offices of Northern Development were established in Cairns, Townsville and, of course, Mackay. I attended the opening of the office in Mackay. That those offices have been opened in the north of the State demonstrates how seriously this Government and Mr Katter view northern development, which I am sure will go from strength to strength.

In the past in this House when Estimates have been debated, members have referred to northern development as a paper tiger and have claimed that there is nothing in it.

The Office of Northern Development has a role to play. In many respects it acts as a liaison between local authorities and individuals, especially those who reside in Labor electorates and who might not receive proper or direct representation from the Government.

Mr De Lacy interjected.

Mr MENZEL: I am not here to comment on political matters.

I am sure that many honourable members would agree that development should not occur simply for development's sake. I refer particularly to the proposed Trinity Point development at Cairns. Many people who do not understand that proposal say that development is needed in Cairns and in other areas of north Queensland. However, the environment, the Esplanade and the foreshores of Cairns must be considered. To allow that development to occur would be a backward step.

I call upon the Government to examine the development proposal. I am not sure when a decision will be made on that project, but I urge the Government to reject it because it has gone completely overboard. If by some chance that development is approved, there is no guarantee that the Japanese will not buy it out at a great profit. Whether or not the Japanese would buy it, that project should be knocked on the head as soon as possible.

The disastrous economic policies of the Federal Government are deterring northern development. High interest rates are deterring development and investment not only in Queensland but also throughout Australia. The previous speaker, Mr Beard, mentioned the taxation system. There is no doubt that the Federal Government should consider more taxation concessions for people who are disadvantaged by living in remote areas away from Australia's capital cities. The provision of taxation incentives would go a long way towards the further development of north Queensland.

The pilots dispute has done tremendous harm, especially to the Cairns region. The Prime Minister jumped in with jackboots and a sledge-hammer and tried to bash the pilots into submission, but he was not very successful. It is about time that the pilots, the airlines and the Federal Government got together.

Mr De Lacy: Why don't you put pressure on the pilots? The Federal Government and the airlines are prepared to go before the Industrial Relations Commission. It is only the pilots who are refusing to go.

Mr MENZEL: The pilots were deregistered and thrown out. The Prime Minister said continually that he would not discuss anything with them.

Mr De Lacy: They are prepared to now. They are accepting your call.

Mr MENZEL: I am pleased that I had some influence on the Federal Government and that, at long last, it took notice. Perhaps the Federal member for Leichhardt, John Gayler, took a bit of notice. He probably faxed my speech to Mr Hawke.

Mr De Lacy: He always listens to you.

Mr MENZEL: I am sure that he does, and I listen to him, too.

Recently at a meeting in Cairns, which the member for Cairns and I attended, Mr Gayler was quite constructive. He did his best to inform the meeting of what was going on in the Federal sphere. However, I feel that the Federal Government has been quite negative about the dispute, which for years to come will have a disastrous effect on north Queensland. The sooner that the dispute is resolved, the better.

When Mr Katter visits Cairns next I would like him to inspect the leasehold land at Queerah. With my support a proposal has been put forward by a group of people to purchase a cane farm that was the subject of an application to the Mulgrave Shire Council for rezoning to industrial land. In the future that land could become part of an urban ribbon development or city development. If that land is allowed to be sold for residential purposes, factories or light industry, it will be lost for ever to the people of

Queensland, who are entitled to have one large, unpolluted area of land made available to them for recreational, sporting or other purposes so that they can maintain a decent life-style.

Mr McElligott: Who is the buyer?

Mr MENZEL: I believe the State Government should buy it.

Mr McElligott: Where is the money going to be found?

Mr MENZEL: The Government would not have to buy all of it. Some of it involves leases that are about to be renewed. I have written to the former Premier and the Minister for Lands asking that those leases not be renewed. The Mulgrave Shire Council, which has also supported my stand on the matter, sent me a copy of the letter that it wrote to the Lands Minister opposing the renewal of those leases. The bulk of the land is really State Government land.

Mr McElligott: What sort of money are we talking about?

Mr MENZEL: All of the land is not suitable. Some of it abuts the Trinity Inlet. I want that to remain unspoiled.

I understand that KEL, which has purchased some leases and some freehold land, has applied to freehold the land in question. I have nothing against KEL. However, the Government should not proceed on any application to freehold that land. The bulk of the land is Government land. I do not want it handed over or sold to private enterprise. That would be wrong. Once again, I appeal to the Government not to allow that to occur.

The proposed Cape York spaceport will be of great benefit to the development of north Queensland. I know that some people may have concerns about it. However, it will provide a tremendous boost to employment and development opportunities for north Queensland generally. I know that Bob Katter and other Ministers have been right behind that development and have done a lot of groundwork. I fully support their stand. I am sure that in the near future that spaceport will eventuate.

I commend the Minister for the tremendous work that he has done over the years. He has sacrificed a lot of his private life by travelling throughout north Queensland day and night, seven days a week. He ought to be commended for the tremendous job that he has done.

Mr De LACY (Cairns) (12.48 p.m.): In discussing the Estimates of the Mines and Energy and Northern and Regional Development portfolio, I will firstly comment briefly on the pilots dispute. As many other speakers have said, it is having a dreadful impact on the Queensland economy, particularly the economy of far-north Queensland and the economy of Cairns, which I represent.

During the week many Government members spoke about the dispute and endeavoured to score political points against the Federal Government. I thought some of the points of view expressed by them passing strange. Many of them, including the Premier, Mr Cooper, called on the Federal Government to enter into negotiations. They said that the dispute can be resolved only by negotiation, conciliation or arbitration. It is strange indeed to hear that proposition coming from the National Party, because negotiation has never been one of that party's strong points.

The Federal Government and the airlines are prepared to negotiate. The Industrial Relations Commission has called all parties to the dispute to appear before it and to make submissions. That has been rejected by the Australian Federation of Air Pilots. Today, I call on the Premier and the Government of Queensland to put pressure on the pilots to appear before the Industrial Relations Commission. If this dispute is to be resolved—and resolved in a reasonable way rather than by attrition—that is the only place in which it will happen.

If we can stop playing politics with this dispute and stop using it as a medium simply to bash the Federal Government, and if the State Government is sincere in its desire to resolve the dispute, then I call on it to apply pressure to the Australian Federation of Air Pilots to go before the Industrial Relations Commission.

Mr Katter: Why did we succeed against the power workers and your Federal Government failed so miserably in the airlines strike?

Mr De LACY: That is quite a silly question. This dispute is not yet resolved. As I said, it is passing strange, or peculiar, for National Party members to say, "Get out there and negotiate." The Government is really asking the Federal Government to give in to the pilots and to create circumstances in which the dispute is not resolved for all time. Surely that does not fit in with the kinds of principles that the National Party has been espousing over the years. The tourist industry has told me very loudly and clearly that it is probably prepared to hang on a while longer, provided the circumstances of the resolution of this dispute are such that it cannot recur. If the Minister does not agree with that, he can say so later.

The Estimates to which I want to refer are those relating to the Northern and Regional Development part of the portfolio. We are really discussing the continuing farce of the Department of Northern Development. I say "continuing farce", because that is all it has ever been. No better example need be given than that the department has been under the control of four different Ministers this calendar year.

As I mentioned in the recent Budget debate, page 423 of the *State Budget for 1989-90 in Program Format* contains the budget for the Department of Northern Development. If the last page was omitted from the document, there would not be any budget for the department at all. That would only be a return to the circumstances that existed last year when, in the real sense of the word, there was no Department of Northern Development, no budget and no programs.

Mr Katter: Let's not worry about that.

Mr De LACY: Last year's Budget papers contained no budget for that department. Instead, the department was funded by a Department of Community Services slush fund. The Minister knows that last year the department had no budget of its own.

Mr Katter: That's correct.

Mr De LACY: Exactly.

At least this year the Budget papers contain a budget for the department of sorts. I guess that is because of the program format. An amount of \$901,000 has been appropriated. The question is whether it is, or is not, enough. It is certainly too much for what it is being used for.

I will put my argument into context. Last year a cigarette tax was imposed on tobacco products in Queensland. The impact of that decision was felt by tobacco-farmers, all of whom live in far-north Queensland. Over a period of 12 months, that tax is expected to generate \$112m in revenue. The Government takes that amount away from tobacco-farmers each year but has returned only \$900,000 in the Budget through the Department of Northern Development.

As I and many other Opposition spokesmen have said, the Department of Northern Development has been no better than a propaganda unit for the National Party and the Minister of the day. The lousy Budget allocation of \$900,000 attests to that fact. That amount really cannot do much more than pay the salaries of a couple of press secretaries who turn out press releases on behalf of the National Party and the Minister and carry out electoral research, or do whatever else is seen to be in the best interests of the National Party. In my opinion that is a disgraceful misuse of tax-payers' funds.

The funds have been misused in a variety of ways but not to any great extent for the benefit of the ordinary citizen in north Queensland. Apart from being a propaganda

unit, it has also been a department that has provided employment opportunities for failed National Party hacks. It has developed into a sheltered workshop for National Party hacks and hopefuls. The most obvious example is Kevin Byrne who has been receiving a salary in excess of \$40,000 to campaign full-time for the Federal seat of Leichhardt. This so-called State Government department is providing the wherewithal for a National Party candidate to campaign full-time for a Federal seat. As far as I am concerned, that is absolutely disgraceful.

Mr Katter: What about the lady who is running against Martin Tenni? She is an employee of the State Government as well. She spends a fair bit of her time campaigning.

Mr De LACY: At any time, State Government employees are at liberty to stand for election to State Parliament, but they should not be using their time as a State Government employee to campaign.

Mr Katter: What is the difference?

Mr De LACY: The difference is that there is no Labor Party person doing that. The difference between that situation and Kevin Byrne is that he campaigns full-time. He uses the Department of Northern Development as his campaign office. He travels around Queensland campaigning full-time.

Mr Stephan: That is a lot of rot. You know that that is not right.

Mr De LACY: I know that before Mr Gilmore became a Minister, he received a fax from Kevin Byrne from the Office of Northern Development with a transcript of comments made on ABC radio in Cairns by the Opposition spokesman for Primary Industry, Mr Casey. Mr Byrne used the resources of that office to take down what Mr Casey said. He did not send the transcript to the Premier or to the relevant Minister. He sent it directly to Mr Gilmore so that Mr Gilmore could attempt to make political capital out of the comments that were made. Is the Minister really suggesting that that is a proper use of Government resources?

Mr Stephan: Are you trying to say that Mr Gilmore should not have known what was going on?

Mr De LACY: I was saying that State Government facilities should not be used in a partisan or party-political way. That is exactly what was being done.

Mr Stephan: Are you saying that he should not have known about it?

Mr De LACY: That is exactly what I am saying. A State Government employee has no right to use the resources of his department to advise a National Party back-bench member. That is exactly what I am saying. If the honourable member does not believe me and thinks that that is right and proper, his set of values is different from mine.

Mr Menzel: What office did he send it to?

Mr De LACY: He sent it to Mr Gilmore at Parliament House. Mr Gilmore was passing it around and Mr Casey got a copy of it. On the top of the transcript were the words, "From the Office of Northern Development, Cairns".

Mr Byrne has been doing other things. Apart from what I have described as the disgraceful misuse of his position as a State Government employee, I believe that he is also using Government funds for both private and political-party purposes. As the National Party's candidate for Leichhardt and head of the Office of Northern Development in Cairns, Mr Byrne uses State Government funds to buy stamps for use on National Party correspondence. In addition, National Party letters are typed in the Office of Northern Development in Cairns. When I say "National Party letters", that is what I mean. The letters are being sent out on National Party letterhead. They are being typed in that office.

Mr Katter: These are pretty serious allegations that you are making.

Mr De LACY: They are serious allegations. I am calling on the Minister to investigate them. I believe that the Fraud Squad ought to investigate them.

Mr Byrne's actions represent a misappropriation of funds. The Fraud Squad ought to be called in to investigate. I also ask the Minister to check out whether or not Mr Byrne booked a room at the Sheraton Breakwater Casino-Hotel in Townsville during the State National Party conference and charged the cost to the Department of Northern Development. On the advice that was given to me, at that time he shared that room with his girlfriend. In other words, the tax-payers of this State were paying for a National Party candidate to attend a National Party conference. If that is true, then it is improper conduct. In fact, it is fraudulent conduct. I ask that his actions be investigated immediately. Furthermore, I call on the Minister to sack Mr Byrne if he is concerned about propriety and about the values espoused in the Fitzgerald report. It is not right or proper for Mr Byrne to be campaigning full-time at tax-payers' expense.

Sitting suspended from 1 to 2.30 p.m.

Mr De LACY: Prior to the luncheon recess I was pointing out the disgraceful use of the public service—the Department of Northern Development—as a means for mounting political-party campaigns for the seat of Leichhardt. That is indefensible in any shape or form at any time. If the Department of Northern Development was making worthwhile achievements, it would not have been so bad, though I do not believe it would be acceptable even on that basis. The Department of Northern Development has no worthwhile role to play and it never has. It has achieved nothing worth while for the north.

Mr Katter: Could I say that there's some validity in what you are saying in Cairns, but it's not valid in Townsville.

Mr De LACY: All right.

I wish to raise an issue that is fairly close to Townsville, that is, the announcement that the Sydney-based company Ankal has decided not to proceed with its proposal to develop a plant to manufacture paper from kenaf from the Burdekin. This week the announcement was made that Ankal will establish that plant in the Murrumbidgee area of New South Wales. This potential multimillion-dollar industry has been lost to north Queensland as a result of the dithering and incompetence of the National Party State Government and because of the lack of support from the Department of Northern Development. It is a disgrace that an industry of this size has gone to New South Wales simply because the Queensland Government could not get its act together. Honourable members can bet that, if it was a \$200m property with private beach and bitumen car park built by one of the National Party's developer mates, it would be up and running by now. Because it was a different kind of industry, the drive and will were not there. Mr Katter was very quick to claim credit for this project when it was mooted, but it has finished up as one of those famous phantom projects.

Mr Katter: No, I don't claim credit for that one. I knew nothing about that.

Mr De LACY: It is a phantom project, although it will be established in New South Wales.

This was a genuine attempt to diversify primary industry and broaden the manufacturing base of this State. It was also a good opportunity to utilise the huge water resources of the Burdekin Falls Dam, because, as everyone knows, even though the dam exists, there is very little that can be done with the water from it. A new agricultural industry of some magnitude has not been established, and, to a large extent, the Burdekin Falls Dam is a white elephant, like the Ord River dam in Western Australia.

Mr Katter: Give it a bit of time.

Mr De LACY: An industry needs to be established; the opportunity was there to establish a kenaf industry. However, neither the Minister's department nor the State Government grasped the opportunity.

The loss of the potential multimillion-dollar recurring income from the kenaf industry has also robbed Queensland of a better environmental alternative for paper manufacture. Kenaf is a renewable resource suitable for paper manufacture. The State Government could have diversified from sugar production and provided an alternative in the Burdekin area, but the opportunity has gone. If ever the people of north Queensland needed evidence about the lack of effectiveness of the Department of Northern Development, this is a good case study.

I draw honourable members' attention to another issue concerning the Department of Northern Development, that is, staffing. No doubt most people saw the headline in this week's *Sun*, "Lonesome Bob. Who'll work for Katter?" There is a bit of a crisis in the Department of Northern Development because no-one will work for Mr Katter. The article suggests that it appears to be something to do with his reputation and his erratic way of operation. It might also have something to do with the fact that there have been no real programs and there has been no continuity within the department. During this calendar year, a total of four Ministers have held this portfolio. Public servants do not feel secure under that type of arrangement. The big concern now is that "Lonesome Bob" is starting to get some staff, but who are they? It seems that he will recycle some of his old staff. I understand that Shane O'Connor and Vicki Kippin have been reappointed to his staff. They were jettisoned under Mr Tenni's regime. Not only are failed staff leaving and then coming back, but also the Department of Northern Development has been subjected to major restructuring. I direct the attention of honourable members to page 422 of the State Budget, which sets out the program goals, program description and major events and issues. It states—

"The Northern Development Office will be re-orienting its focus, mode of operation and activities. The main initiative driving this re-orientation is a Regional Development Study (assisted by Coopers and Lybrand Consultants) . . ."

I understand that whole restructuring and the employment of consultants has cost literally hundreds of thousands of dollars. If one compares that figure with the total budget for the department of \$900,000, one will realise how important it is. As a result of that restructuring, a number of staff who were not performing were jettisoned, not least of whom were the ones I have just mentioned. I was told that it provided a wonderful opportunity to delouse the department.

Mr Katter: Which staff are you referring to?

Mr De LACY: I am referring to failed National Party candidate, Vicki Kippin.

Mr Katter: She was responsible for the sea hatcheries, one of the biggest mariculture projects in Australia and one of the two feedlots in north Queensland.

Mr De LACY: I accept the Minister's defence and, if the Minister is reappointing her, I hope that she has some credentials. The fact is that the Minister's predecessor went to great lengths and spent a lot of tax-payer's money in doing away with her job.

The Department of Northern Development is not performing satisfactorily and it seems a pity that the Ministers keep changing. The whole of the staff keeps changing, as do the Ministers. There is no continuity and people are not working towards the achievement of the goals that look good on page 422 of the Budget papers. Because of changes in staff, Ministry and direction, these goals are not being achieved.

It is high time that the Premier realised just what is going on. I suggest that the best thing to do would be to abolish the Department of Northern Development, have a look at the Labor Party proposal for a department of regional development and develop some strategies for development in all of the regions of Queensland instead of this party-political stunt which is the Department of Northern Development.

Time expired.

Mr HINTON (Broadsound) (2.38 p.m.): I am very pleased to enter this debate. I would like to make a few remarks on two particular matters, one concerning the upgrading of the Mines Department, particularly with computerisation, and the other, the increasing efficiency of the electricity-supply system and the tremendous advantage it is to Queensland.

Mr Davis interjected.

Mr HINTON: I am glad that the honourable member for Brisbane Central has noticed my presence. I thank him very much. I hate to be ignored.

I should like to say something about computerisation and the major way in which the Department of Mines operates in the regional areas of Queensland. The personnel of the Department of Mines will be supported by computer-linked offices in district centres in a move starting in north Queensland and expected to be Statewide by the end of 1990. Under the scheme the district offices will be linked with Brisbane using the latest computer technology to deal with exploration and mining tenures and other related administrative services and information. The computerised district offices will bring about a significant reduction in the duplicated filing of information and are designed to cut dramatically the time taken in obtaining mining-lease and land-use information.

To date, \$1.8m has been allocated towards the computerisation of the mining tenure database. Of this, \$630,000 has been allocated for the purchase of a Prime computer based in the Department of Mines Brisbane headquarters and ten \$60,000 Prime computers to provide the local computer capacity in each of the district offices. The personnel of the Department of Mines are presently involved in developing the graphical and non-graphical systems and capturing data on the main computer, which was officially turned on in September last year.

Mr Vaughan: How do you know all of this?

Mr HINTON: Because I am very well informed.

The Department of Mines tenure database is a result of the strong growth in exploration and mining throughout Queensland in the past few years. This has resulted in a substantial increase in the demand for the rapid processing and granting of exploration and mining tenures as well as the delivery of other related services and information.

Mr Davis: I did not think you accepted Ministers' briefs.

Mr HINTON: I accept all the information I can get. That is one of the differences between us and members of the Labor Party. We deal in information, whereas they deal in misinformation. There is quite a substantial difference.

Mr Davis: I would not be a lackey for a Minister, that's for sure.

Mr HINTON: The honourable member would never be a Minister in any Government. I can assure him of that.

The computers will be processing applications, identifying land parcels over which title is available or held and updating maps on screens. This capacity will all but do away with some of the most frustrating delays in mining titles work. For example, in the past, tremendous problems have been caused as would-be miners using hand-held compasses and tape-measures used the postal service to describe their target to the Department of Mines cartographic and tenure sections.

It is difficult enough with a rectangular block, but when the calculations involve a winding section, such as following a creek bed or hillsides, the problems are immense and have led to delays of up to two years in issuing mining leases. Under the new system, the would-be miner will go personally to one of the district offices and the application will be processed on the spot. The computer system has a background map

relating to creeks and roads and, if the supplied co-ordinates fail to match up, the problem will be identified and possible solutions suggested.

The system is designed primarily to provide information on all mining titles and tenures in relation to land availability subject to confirmation by survey; processing of applications and all variations, transactions and dealings; and general inquiries. The system will incorporate a central registry of graphical and attribute information for all mining titles and tenures; mechanisms to aid the processing of applications; on-line distribution of data to and from district offices, with input and output capabilities at all offices, including graphic presentation; search functions for both graphical and non-graphical data; management control with relevant reporting and statistical analysis; an administrative policy reference subsystem in relation to mining titles and tenures; and financial control and reporting for rents, royalties, security deposits and other fees. The Mines Department has a great deal of which it can be proud in this regard by using the latest technology to provide an improved service to both the mining industry and the general public. I congratulate the new Minister, the former Minister and their staff in this regard.

I should like also to say a few words about the Government's role in reducing the cost of electricity to Queensland consumers. It is a record of which the Government can be particularly proud. No other State Government in Australia can come within a bull's roar, if I may use that expression, of what Queensland has achieved, particularly since the electricity strikes and the restructuring of the industry that took place at that particular time.

Mr Campbell: You had to be shamed into giving pensioner rebates.

Mr HINTON: The honourable member can use whatever words he likes, but I can tell him that this Government has increased the pensioner rebate by a very substantial amount. In this Budget the rebate has been increased from \$6 to \$8. On a \$60 account, it has been increased from 10 per cent to 14 per cent. For pensioners who use less than that—and many pensioners do when living on their own—up to 25 per cent of the account is now rebatable. That is a very substantial contribution to pensioners.

Mr Campbell: You have got the narrowest concessions for pensioners.

Mr HINTON: Rubbish! There are 1 400 people receiving full pensions in Yeppoon and an enormous number of people receiving part pensions in my area. I attend pensioner meetings in my electorate very regularly and I know, and I can assure the Committee, that the rebates that the Government has provided have been very well received and appreciated. The honourable member should not talk about the pensioners; we are looking after them very well indeed.

Mr Davis: Our candidate up there tells us differently.

Mr HINTON: The Labor Party candidate has yet to go to Yeppoon. I am still looking for him. I hope he will turn up some time. Nobody in the district has ever met him. The people in the district are not even sure of his name. Recently, contestants in the Pineapple Queen festival were asked the names of the local member and the candidates for the forthcoming election. Not one girl out of 12 candidates knew the name of the ALP candidate. That demonstrates how effective he has been. I am delighted that the ALP selected the candidate that it did.

Mr Davis: Half of them were your relatives.

Mr HINTON: I will tell the honourable member why that candidate was selected. Three ALP candidates stood for pre-selection for the seat of Broadsound. With a 1.8 per cent majority, that seat is the second most marginal seat in Queensland.

I have just been handed a note from Mr Ardill. I thank him for it. He is quite correct. I want to talk to him about it.

However, three ALP candidates stood for pre-selection for the seat of Broadsound and the ALP picked a Left Wing miner from Dysart. It did not take much to work out why the ALP picked easily the worst of the three candidates. When I heard whom it picked, I laughed all the way home. He was picked because he was the only candidate whom the Combined Mining Unions would fund. Although the Combined Mining Unions are disaffiliated from the ALP, he was backed by Keith Wright. It was the only way that Keith Wright could obtain any election funds. Keith Wright backed that candidate not to help the State ALP but to help himself to election funds. Opposition members ought to appreciate that point. Because the ALP has appointed the weakest candidate in the State in my electorate, I am the beneficiary.

Mrs Harvey: Mrs Wright is on the pay-roll, too.

Mr HINTON: I thank Mrs Harvey. A very interesting point is that Mr Wright's wife is a paid researcher. They travel around together and Mr Wright receives two salaries. What an incredible deal! Together they run an organisation in central Queensland called the Central Queensland Consumers Organisation. Recently, I discovered the total membership of that noisy organisation! Mr Wright is the president, Mrs Wright is the secretary and there are no other members. It is a really ripper organisation! That is the organisation that people are expected to complain to instead of complaining to the Consumer Affairs Bureau. I have warned my constituency against taking complaints to that fictitious organisation.

Mr Davis: Why are you so worried about him? You mention this candidate every day.

Mr HINTON: Mr Pearce? I just thought of his name. I should not mention his name because, if I do not mention it, the public will never know who he is, which is a great advantage to me.

Mr Davis: I never mention my opposing candidate's name.

Mr HINTON: That is because the honourable member is not standing at the next election.

I am not here today to talk about the deficiency of the ALP candidate, Mr Wright's money-grubbing with the Combined Mining Unions or his wife's fictitious job with the department which enables Mr Wright to collect two salaries; I am here to talk about the electricity tariffs and the great deal that Queensland is receiving.

Queensland has the lowest electricity tariffs in Australia, with a tariff of 7.93c compared to 8.03c in New South Wales and 8.04c in Victoria. Those low tariffs have been achieved through sheer dedication and sheer effectiveness in arranging the electricity supply. It has been achieved by keeping power stations up to date and taking out of commission power stations that have decreased in efficiency.

Queensland produces 2 045 megawatt hours per employee; New South Wales, 1 457; and Victoria, 1 361. Queensland is much more efficient in its operations both in reducing the cost of electricity and in increasing production of electricity per employee. It demonstrates how effective the Government was during the electricity strike in restructuring the industry to Queensland's benefit.

Queensland has also had a decrease in electricity-generation employee numbers. In 1984, QEC had 5 245 employees. Today, with a much larger consumption area, it has only 2 995 employees, a decrease of 43 per cent. In 1984, the electricity boards had 7 948 employees, and that has dropped in 1989 to 5 673, a decrease of 28 per cent. That demonstrates a massive increase in efficiency.

Because of those factors, the Government is in a position to freeze its electricity prices.

Mr Vaughan: The work is going out to contractors.

Mr HINTON: So be it.

Mr Vaughan: You are still paying for it. You are not saving anything.

Mr HINTON: We are. If the honourable member does not believe that the Government is cutting costs, he should consider the fact that it has pegged electricity prices this year.

Mr Vaughan interjected.

Mr HINTON: I do. If the honourable member listened, he might learn something.

Electricity costs have decreased by 8 per cent, which is the level of inflation. If the Government pegs the price at a certain level, obviously, with inflation, it is decreasing the price in real terms. This year, the price has decreased by 8 per cent. The Government has made a commitment to the people of Queensland that the price will remain pegged until February 1991. What an incredible record!

Mr Vaughan: And so they ought to, too. It should have been done years ago.

Mr HINTON: Even Mr Vaughan would have to accept that that is a top performance. When Queensland's performance is compared with that in other States, in which electricity rates are going through the roof, helping to bankrupt businesses and driving people into poverty, one realises that Queensland has done extremely well.

Mr Vaughan: You are quoting incorrect figures again.

Mr HINTON: I am not quoting incorrect figures. That price is frozen until February 1991.

The Opposition cannot do better than that. Based on the present inflation rate, freezing that price will bring a real decrease in electricity tariffs of up to 24 per cent. No other Government can match that. It is increasing efficiency at a remarkable rate and it is something that the Government is proud of. It makes Mr Vaughan, as a union official, squirm in his seat. I know that it is uncomfortable for him, but it is a fact of life. The Queensland Government is very proud of its efforts in that regard.

Mr Vaughan: How long have you been in this Chamber?

Mr HINTON: I did not hear that interjection.

Mr Vaughan: How long have you been a member of Parliament?

Mr HINTON: I have been a member of this Parliament for three years. Three years is long enough to learn how to handle members of the Opposition, and I have learned how to do that very effectively indeed. Even the member for Bowen now concedes that I cannot be defeated in the electorate of Broadsound. I have learned the tricks of this game very quickly, and I have certainly learned how to handle the likes of the member for Nudgee.

I only wanted to mention two matters in conclusion, that is, the remarkable efficiency of the Mines Department in keeping up with technology and the great benefits that the Queensland public has enjoyed as a result of low electricity charges. The Government can be very proud of its record. I am certain that all rational honourable members would agree with me.

Mr SMYTH (Bowen) (2.54 p.m.): I am always amazed when I hear the member for Broadsound speak in this Chamber. Today he mentioned the good Labor candidate in the seat of Broadsound, who will be the member for that electorate next year after Mr Hinton is deposed. Mr Hinton talked about the way in which Mr Pearce came to be nominated as the Labor Party candidate.

Yesterday and today Mr Hinton has said that over the last three years \$50m has been injected into his electorate. The way Mr Hinton got those funds was by backing the coup against Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen and supporting Mr Ahern. After he got the \$50m, he turned and backed Cooper for the position of Premier. After the next election, honourable members will not have to listen to Mr Hinton in this Chamber.

The mining industry in Queensland is a traditional foundation of the State's economy. It currently contributes \$4 billion, or 8.6 per cent, of Queensland's gross State product. The major products include black coal, base metals, gold, bauxite and mineral sands. The emphasis has been placed on the extraction and export of unprocessed minerals.

There has been no move by this National Party Government or past National Party and National/Liberal Governments to encourage companies to invest in the processing of our primary products. Even the simple process of blending black coal before it is shipped to overseas buyers is not undertaken. Queensland coal is blended in Japan for sale to consumers, which results in a loss to Queensland in terms of money and jobs.

National and National/Liberal Governments in Queensland have not taken advantage of the wealth that is being created by the mining industry in this State. In fact, the cost of production has increased, and the price that we are receiving for our product has declined in real terms. The National Party State Government has not contributed to a long-term plan that will benefit Queenslanders for years to come. The coal industry in this State has been left to develop on its own. This Government does not have a plan to expand the industry in a constructive manner.

During the 1970s the coal industry flourished. However, in 1982 the industry was hindered by an oversupply of coal on the world market, which led to a decrease in real profits, and new technology led to the loss of hundreds of jobs in this State. There were no safeguards against this inevitable event.

When one considers the development of northern Queensland under the National Party Government and the National/Liberal Party coalition, one realises that northern development cannot occur under them. Conservative Governments in Queensland have always supported the electorates of Government members. As honourable members have heard, in the last three years the electorate of Broadsound has received funds to the tune of \$50m.

Mr Hinton: That is good representation, and you know it.

Mr SMYTH: I have just explained to honourable members that Mr Hinton obtained that \$50m in funding by supporting the downfall of Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen and sponsoring the appointment of Mr Cooper to the position of Premier. Mr Hinton will not be able to be relied on for support after the next election, because he will not be a member in this place.

The electorate of Peak Downs, which is held by Mr Vince Lester, has been promised a high school, a meatworks, a TAFE college and a new coal mine—Wolfange Peak—because he is losing support in the town of Clermont. However, a high school has been needed in that town for many years. I can remember that when I was a member of the Belyando Shire Council I, along with other councillors, argued that Clermont should have a school for students up to Year 12. The National Party members of that council argued against that proposal. They claimed that such a school was not needed in Clermont because they were able to send their kids away to boarding-schools, at no cost, as a result of funding received from the Federal Government. In fact, one National Party member said to me, "You can actually make money on the deal." What a crook!

I mention also the Mourilyan TAFE College, which was erected at a cost of \$19m before Vicki Kippin lost her seat. I understand that the staff of that TAFE college were worried about what courses they were going to offer and how they were going to fill that college. The building of that TAFE college in that town was a purely political stunt.

The Burdekin irrigation system is much needed by the cane-growers of that region to enable development. However, there is no mention of a channel passing through the electorate of Bowen—my electorate, a Labor electorate—to support the growers of tomatoes and beans and other horticulturists. There is no mention of that at all.

Mr Hinton: Tell them about the new TAFE college that you're getting over there.

Mr SMYTH: I will talk about that in a moment. There was a reason for that.

The State Government is using tax-payers' money to build a dam on the Proserpine River, to be called the Peter Faust dam, to supply the towns of Proserpine, Whitsunday and Bowen. The water in the Burdekin Falls Dam will sit there for years without bringing any development because the State Government is hell-bent on providing services only to National Party electorates.

The Labor Party will win the seat of Whitsunday at the next election. The Labor Party candidate, Lorraine Bird, will greatly appreciate the opportunity to represent her constituents. Earlier, Mr Hinton said that the TAFE college for Bowen—

Mr Hinton: You have achieved nothing in your electorate over the last three years. Is that what you are saying?

Mr SMYTH: I will let you know about the TAFE college for Bowen.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr Booth): Order! The honourable member will address the Chair and there will be less cross-fire from the member for Broadsound.

Mr SMYTH: In the 1986 election campaign, the National Party candidate for Bowen and the Government promised a TAFE college for Bowen. After the 1986 election, the Government forgot about the TAFE college. At the Queen's Beach Hotel, Joh Bjelke-Petersen made the statement, "If you don't vote for the National Party, you will get nothing." I am pleased to say that in the electorate of Bowen in the 1986 election the Labor Party received 57.02 per cent of the vote.

Although it is never mentioned in this Chamber, I point out that it is the Federal Government that supplies funds for TAFE colleges. I pressured Mr Lester, by way of correspondence, through the media and through the Federal Government to state when construction of the TAFE college would commence in Bowen. He assured me that a TAFE college would be constructed. Again, I contacted the Federal Minister and asked him what correspondence had been entered into. I was informed that the State Minister had stipulated that the only TAFE needs for the Bowen township were in clothes design and business principles. If that had been accepted by the Federal Government, Bowen would have been given a 20 x 20 shed, which would have been quite inadequate. I have managed to make members of the community aware of that problem and told them that the Minister will not provide a TAFE college.

A TAFE council has now been established. The Minister visited Bowen last week to speak to members of that council. I am going to keep an eye on it, but I do not intend to interfere. The people who have been nominated to positions on the council are very worthy and very capable. I will be in contact with them to make sure that progress will take place. After about 2 December, Labor will be in Government. The people in Bowen and Collinsville can rest assured that after the election they will be serviced by a TAFE college.

We need to move away from the ridiculous system of feathering our own nests and start to think of north Queensland as one very important part of our State. After the next State election, a Goss Labor Government will implement a plan to expand industry and give assistance and incentives to new development in the north. A State Labor Government will support private-sector initiatives to construct, own and operate a gas pipeline from the Bowen Basin to Townsville and Thuringowa to service the fuel needs of industry and residents and to provide a raw material for chemicals manufacture.

Mr Hinton: Mr Goss doesn't want the gas pipeline from Wallumbilla to Rockhampton. He is against the gas pipeline. How come you are against his policy? He is opposed to the gas pipeline from Wallumbilla to Rockhampton. He said that in the House yesterday.

Mr SMYTH: The Labor Party will sell it to private enterprise. The Leader of the Opposition made that statement in this Chamber recently. Mr Hinton should have his ears tested.

Resource-processing activities, such as copper-refining, nickel treatment and lime-to-cement manufacture, are among the major industries already established in Townsville and Thuringowa. Potential new resource-processing manufacturing activities include—

- nitrogen fertiliser production;
- explosives and other chemicals manufacture;
- liquid petroleum gas manufacture;
- gold-refining; and
- zinc-refining.

Further expansion of the existing nickel-treatment activity is also possible using imported nickel ore. The key to most of these resource-processing opportunities is the availability of economical methane gas in Townsville. Methane gas is the raw material from which fertilisers, explosives and other chemicals are made. Sodium cyanide is among the other chemicals that can be produced from methane gas. It is used extensively as a leaching agent in gold-recovery operations.

The surge in gold-mining activity in Australia, Papua New Guinea and the south Pacific has led to a rapid increase in demand for sodium cyanide and additional gold-refining capacity. In addition to its need for methane gas, the manufacture of sodium cyanide also requires caustic soda, a commodity that could eventually be made available in the Townsville/Thuringowa area from a locally based chlor-alkali plant. Chlor-alkali plants are major consumers of energy, as also are copper refineries and nickel-treatment plants. The energy requirements of those activities could be met in the longer term from a methane-fired power station.

As well as being a chemical raw material, natural gas has great potential as a fuel. In this respect its major advantage is that it is very clean, with minimal environmental problems, particularly in comparison with coal. It is anticipated by the private company Curtain Bros that methane gas could be made available economically to Townsville and Thuringowa from the Bowen Basin coal-fields using a new technique of methane drainage from coal beds. This technique is now in use in the United States. Pilot wells are currently being drilled to confirm the viability of this source of methane gas and a proposed route for a gas pipeline from the Bowen Basin to Townsville has been established.

A State Labor Government will support the Curtain Bros proposal because it will be of immense value to the northern region and to Queensland as a whole. Once agreement governing sales of gas in Townsville and Thuringowa has been reached, a State Labor Government will—

- allow use of Government easements for laying pipelines;
- grant rights for the private sector ownership and operation of the pipeline;
- grant rights to sell methane to major users in Townsville and Thuringowa and, if necessary, to sell surplus power into the Queensland power grid; and
- give consideration to other incentives such as provision of a royalty-free holiday on methane sales.

Because Townsville/Thuringowa already has a substantial industrial base on which to build and because land is available at relatively cheap prices for industrial purposes, that area will be developed as an export and trade centre. It is strategically located to trade with Pacific and south-east Asian countries, being almost centrally located between those markets to the north and Australia's major cities to the south.

Townsville's port facilities and international airport give easy access to export markets. Local companies already engage in significant export and trade activity and have indicated their intention to develop that activity to its maximum potential out of Townsville/Thuringowa. For example, local companies have developed specialist shipping operations to Papua New Guinea to service its mining industry, made trade missions to Papua New Guinea and other parts of the south Pacific, prepared a locally financed Townsville export directly and prepared a proposal for a comprehensive north Queensland export study.

A State Labor Government will encourage greater local processing of primary products and new product and market developments. The value of primary production in the northern region could be increased by further local processing of its principal products, namely, sugar, beef, fish, fruit and vegetables and through the expansion of its horticultural industry. The northern region should be encouraged to implement those diverse and value-adding opportunities in agriculture.

The high-income export markets for horticultural products are not being targeted aggressively by this State. Despite having the third-largest horticultural industry in Australia, Queensland has the lowest volume of horticultural exports and the slowest growth rate of any State. Queensland has not responded sufficiently to changing world-market conditions by shifting emphasis from bulk foods to value-added products. The Federal Economic Planning Advisory Committee's recent report on raw material processing bears testimony to that. Of the 28 new processing projects that are currently being undertaken, awaiting construction or in the final stages of feasibility study in Australia, only six are located in Queensland. Only \$340m of the \$3.5 billion of processing activity—9.7 per cent—is being spent in Queensland.

Queensland is being left behind badly. The Queensland Government does not comprehend that growth in agriculture and other primary industries will come from further processing, new products and export market developments and not exclusively from increased production of bulk primary products. As a Government, the National Party has done nothing for the people on the land who support it. Information is being received continually from people such as grain-growers, beef cattle producers, tomato-growers and sugar cane growers that the National Party Government is on the way out, and rightly so. It has not done a thing.

Mr Newton: We aren't getting any help from the Federal Government.

Mr SMYTH: We are not going to ask any pineapple-growers such as Mr Newton.

Mr Newton: You haven't done anything. Look what they're doing with the imported pineapples.

Mr SMYTH: Mr Newton should go back to the drawing-board and have a look at the figures. Instead of being negative he should be more positive by saying what is good for this State, not feathering his own nest in his electorate, which is what Mr Hinton is doing.

Mr Hinton: The only thing you ever expanded was the number of strike days in the coal industry. You made those grow very well.

Mr SMYTH: It is the general thinking of the National Party and the general thinking of the Minister that only the workers are at fault. It takes two to tango.

Two of the towns in Mr Hinton's electorate are coal-mining towns. At the next election the Labor Party will poll 92 per cent from those two towns and Mr Hinton will be gone.

Mr Hinton: You are one of those people who organise the strikes and it has cost 90 per cent of the work hours of days lost in this State from 1 per cent of the work population. You are one of those people who have helped to organise this caper.

Mr SMYTH: That is rubbish. Every day in this House Mr Lester claims that Queensland has the fewest strikes in Australia.

Mr Davis: The only organisation that Mr Hinton belongs to is the master forgers' association.

Mr SMYTH: I will end on that note. The only organisation to which Mr Hinton belongs is the united forgers' association. In Yeppoon, Mr Hinton and his party were confronted by the local police because they were selling second-hand goods illegally.

Mrs McCAULEY (Callide) (3.13 p.m.): Firstly, I pay tribute to the former Minister for Mines and Energy, Mr Tenni. From when I became a member of this Assembly I was a member of the former Minister's committee; and I have always found him to be hard working. I will always think of him as a good friend. Not only will Mr Tenni be remembered for the dreadful jokes that he told in this Chamber but also as one of the most popular Mines Ministers. I wish him and his wife Dawn very well. It is appropriate also for me to mention Jim Hamilton, who retired recently from the QEC. He will be sadly missed. I hope that he enjoys his retirement at Maleny.

One of Australia's biggest construction projects, which crosses the Callide electorate from west to east, is taking place in Queensland.

Mr Smyth: Does your husband own half of Yarrabee mine?

Mrs McCAULEY: If the honourable member listens carefully he will find out.

From the moment that that project was announced it was attacked by the knockers from the Labor Party and the Liberal Party, who said that the Government had no right to be undertaking such a project. They said that it was doomed to failure, but I am not sure what they are saying at the moment. I remind those people that the project to which I refer, namely, the \$100m State gas pipeline from Wallumbilla to Gladstone is rapidly nearing completion and will be a great success.

Some time ago I travelled to the west and saw the beginning of that pipeline. A fortnight ago I went to Gladstone and saw where it will terminate.

The 530-kilometre pipeline will connect gas reserves in the Surat Basin south of Roma and in the Denison Trough in central Queensland to Gladstone. Private enterprise shares the Government's faith in this project. Within weeks of work commencing on the project earlier this year, ICI had signed a contract with the State Government for the transport of natural gas through the pipeline for its \$80m caustic soda, chlorine and sodium cyanide complex being built near Gladstone. A fortnight ago I visited that complex and found it to be of great interest. This complex will buy its natural gas for use in the manufacture of sodium cyanide from Bridge Oil Ltd and Petroz NL.

Just two months ago Queensland Alumina Limited signed a contract with AGL Petroleum and Oil Company of Australia NL to supply natural gas to its alumina refinery in Gladstone from the Denison Trough gas-fields. AGL and Boral subsidiary OCA have formed a joint-venture company, Central Queensland Natural Gas Pty Ltd, to operate and manage the development of the Denison Trough gas-fields. The gas will be used by Queensland Alumina to replace imported fuel oil in the world's largest alumina refinery.

There is every indication that the State's gas pipeline will herald another great expansion phase in Gladstone. The Government hopes to extend the pipeline to Rockhampton, where the benefits to industrial and domestic users will also act as a great boost to that city. It is also the Government's belief that the completion of the pipeline from Wallumbilla to Gladstone will constitute a major element in its strategy to ultimately have a Statewide infrastructure in place to pipe gas to markets.

Mr Davis: Do you know where Wallumbilla is?

Mrs McCAULEY: I will bet that the honourable member did not know this: this year marks the twentieth anniversary of the commissioning of the privately owned Roma to Brisbane gas pipeline. The 440-kilometre pipeline carries all the natural gas supplies for the south-east Queensland market, and work is now under way on duplicating this pipeline to meet the demand for gas in south-east Queensland, which is increasing by 4 per cent each year.

Mr Prest: This is the same one you read the other day.

Mrs McCAULEY: No, it is quite different. If the honourable member listens, he will hear that.

By the end of this year, an \$11m pipeline being built by Allgas Energy Limited will bring gas to the northern end of the Gold Coast. This pipeline will be extended to the Broadbeach area by September next year and to the New South Wales border by 1995-96.

Although the State gas pipeline from Wallumbilla to Gladstone is being built, and will be owned, by the State Government, the ownership of future trunk natural gas pipelines will be decided on a case-by-case basis. The largest reserves of natural gas are in the Cooper Basin in the far south-west corner of the State. A few years ago, as part of the Minister's committee, I was fortunate enough to visit that gas-field. It was very interesting. It is the Government's hope that, in the future, a network of pipelines will connect these reserves to Mount Isa, to the east coast pipeline network at Roma and to the interstate pipeline network at Moomba in South Australia.

In addition to the natural gas fields to which I have already referred, within the coal seams of the Bowen Basin are potentially enormous natural gas resources in the form of methane gas.

Mr Smyth: I just told you that.

Mrs McCAULEY: The honourable member did indeed. I will tell him again.

The viability of extracting this methane from coal seams is presently being investigated by North Queensland Energy Pty Ltd, which has begun pilot production at the Broadmeadow pilot test site for methane drainage from coal beds near Goonyella in central Queensland. Goonyella is also an area that I visited a few months ago with Mr Tenni and his parliamentary committee.

Mr Smyth: You didn't tell me you were going there. That's in my electorate.

Mrs McCAULEY: We did not call in to see the honourable member. What a shame.

The future for natural gas in Queensland is very bright indeed. The State Government is proud of the part it is playing in the development of this increasingly important energy resource.

Yesterday in the Budget debate I spoke about the Stanwell power station. I will refer to some statistics, but I particularly want to target two aspects of Stanwell that are not usually spoken about. The 1 400 megawatt Stanwell power station will be constructed 28 kilometres west of Rockhampton in the Callide electorate. It is on a construction schedule that will see the first commercial electricity produced in 1993. It is the State's largest industrial project and will play an important part in assisting in the continued expansion of Queensland's industry.

With the State's maximum demand for electricity doubling about every 12 years, Stanwell power station will play an important role in augmenting the interconnected power grid, which serves customers from the New South Wales border to north of Cairns. The construction work-force will peak in 1992, when about 1 200 workers will be employed. When fully operational, the station will have about 300 permanent employees.

I want to make particular mention of the Stanwell skills development program, which has been tipped to help soak up many hundreds of Rockhampton's unemployed and to provide a major economic boost for that city. It is hoped that this program will be a pilot for the rest of Australia. In fact, Stanwell power station site manager, Mr Dave Clark, says that the program is designed to provide training, reskilling and bridging courses for Rockhampton and area residents. This will allow many of the Stanwell construction work-force to be drawn from that local area. It will help reduce unemployment and increase the spending power of the work-force, all of which will be a boon to the Rockhampton area.

The program will also benefit local contractors, who may need new workers to replace those drawn to the Stanwell site. Mr Clark has said that a total of 8 000 jobs

will be available at Stanwell between now and 1996. There are 140 workers on the site now, and this number will grow to 420 by this time next year. Mr Clark has also said that some members of the construction work-force will eventually gain employment on the operating staff.

The Stanwell skills development program has had the support of onsite and local contractors, the Commonwealth Employment Service, the college of technical and further education, the QEC and the unions. It is an important innovation for Stanwell and for the construction industry as a whole.

The other point that I wish to highlight in talking about Stanwell is the QEC's awareness of the environment in the areas in which it builds its power stations. Stanwell power station is situated three kilometres south of the Stanwell township in the Fitzroy Shire on a 1475-hectare site. The land used for the station includes a buffer zone around the station works and other facilities to minimise the effect of the project on surrounding properties. At the beginning of this month, an open day was held, which I attended. I was very pleased to note the large number of trees that have been planted and the general concern for, and interest taken in, the environment by QEC. That was also a matter of interest to me when I visited Tarong Power Station. One only has to read the leaflets and brochures circulated by QEC to realise that it is an organisation that is very conscious of the environment.

QEC has always been committed to protecting the environment at all stages in the development of power station projects such as Stanwell. As part of this commitment, an extensive environmental impact report on matters such as air, water, vegetation and existing land use was released for public comment in 1985. The report examined the environmental impact associated with the project and found that, because the design of the station would incorporate the findings of the report, the operation of Stanwell would not cause any adverse environmental effects. Issues that had been raised by State Government advisory bodies and public-interest groups were addressed in the report.

Additional strategies are being developed to manage waste water and ash on the site to ensure that the surrounding environment is protected. For instance, the recycling of cooling water for other purposes on the site will reduce substantially the amount of water that is discharged into creeks. Chimney-stack emissions will meet the requirements of the Clean Air Act. Any water that is discharged into local streams will meet water-quality limits.

Waste products from the power station will be properly and responsibly treated, monitored and controlled to avoid any harmful effects on the environment. Before the site was developed, investigations established that there were no unique flora or fauna on the site; nor were there any remaining areas of historical or scientific interest. QEC is continuing to liaise closely with local communities. It will maintain a pro-active stance on any environmental concerns. The day I was at the site, I was very interested to speak to the man in charge of the environment in that area. I was also very pleased to be asked to hand over to the Stanwell Rural Fires Board the fire tender donated by QEC. QEC had repaired it and donated it to the board as an indication of its good corporate citizenship.

In conclusion, I mention the Mineral Resources Bill, which is a most welcome piece of legislation. Yesterday I was astounded to hear members of the Labor Party state that they were against the legislation. I welcome it. It will certainly be very helpful to many graziers in my electorate, who look forward to the changes that will be brought about by that legislation.

Mr SCOTT (Cook) (3.26 p.m): It gives me great pleasure to take part in this debate.

Mr Elliott: In your twilight hours.

Mr SCOTT: I will be a flame until the very end.

I listened closely to the speech made by the previous speaker. Although I have nothing personal against Mrs McCauley, who is a nice member, I do not believe she is

a very effective representative. I regret that she is leaving the Chamber, because I wanted to remind her about Councillor Greg Clair, who will take her place as the member for Callide. In spite of the fact that he has a fairly large percentage of National Party votes to overcome, I understand he is going like a train and that he will be the next member for Callide. I am very pleased to hear that.

During my speech I will refer to both mining and northern development. It is very interesting that those two areas of Government have been combined in one portfolio. I wish to acknowledge some of the public servants who are in the lobby because I am aware of the service that they have rendered to their departments and to the Government. I pay them great credit. I cannot see Mr Galwey, the Electricity Commissioner, but I am sure that he is not far away. I pay tribute also to my former workmate in the QEC, Keith Viertel.

Mr Hayward: That's given him the kiss of death.

Mr SCOTT: I do not think that he is a Labor Party supporter. Nevertheless, I must make a comment to redress that impression. In secret ballots, one never knows how people vote. I must say that it was very nice to be in Mr Viertel's company on Horn Island.

Mr Prest: If the job is there, that is where you go.

Mr SCOTT: That certainly applies to some people. I have no doubt about that.

I can also see Mr Wolff in the lobby. He is head of the Mines Department. I am looking as hard as I can into the lobby, but I am yet to find the new Director, Northern Development, who will be based in Townsville. There are some upwardly mobile people in the Department of Northern Development. Apart from being unsure of where the money will come from to pay that person's salary, I wonder who will be the new director? Will that person be based in Townsville? I notice that the Minister has a smile on his face, but his enigmatic smile is not telling me very much.

On a more serious note—the Labor Opposition is concerned about where the funds will come from to pay the salary. I simply hope that the Minister has not been able to take funds from the Department of Community Services to pay this high-flying salary. Throughout this Minister's administration of the Department of Community Services, there was never enough money to meet the needs of Aboriginal communities. The funds were always misdirected and misspent. They never wound up in the proper place. If the funds are being directed to the Department of Northern Development, that matter really should be looked into.

Mention has been made of the Mineral Resources Bill, which is very important to my electorate. This speech is not my swan-song; I will be taking part in the debate on that legislation if it is debated. It is well known around the traps that the legislation is likely to be withdrawn. Although I do not intend to discuss future legislation, I draw attention to the secretive way in which advice on that legislation was circulated. A very secretive list was drawn up and a very select number of people were in receipt of information—a White Paper, Green Paper or whatever it was—on that legislation. It was not possible for the ordinary citizens of Queensland to obtain information on that legislation, and the previous Minister's polite explanations of it were never circulated widely. The Minister should not look puzzled, because he knows as well as I that no ordinary citizen in his electorate could have obtained information, unless he was a member of the United Graziers Association or a similar high-flying organisation. People in the community have not been given an opportunity to look at that legislation. Why was it sent secretly to certain people? I know that Mr Katter is the new Minister, but he must be careful not to get a headache by shaking his head from side to side, because he knows nothing about his new department. As a responsible Cabinet member, the Minister has been involved in Community Services and Northern Development and he should have ensured that people received that sort of advice.

The new legislation will be important, because mining is important to the Cook electorate. The Comalco mining company, which is a good company, has been in Weipa in the Cook electorate longer than any other company. It has enlightened management and looks after its employees. There is a good relationship between the company and its employees. The employees' interests are well looked after by the site committee that has been active there for many years. This is a good, sensible approach. I am pleased that the senior members of the department are nodding their heads, because they know of that relationship. I am pleased that it is recognised. This Government's anti-union Ministers try to destroy the union movement whenever they can, and the Minister would certainly try to destroy the relationship that exists in Weipa.

I know Mr Katter's style; he is so anti-Labor that it is not funny. I have a copy of a pink how-to-vote card that the Minister handed out which states, "I will labour for you." The word "labour" appears in large letters. The Minister, who is a member of the National Party, handed out this deceitful card. I should have brought it with me and held it up in this Chamber. Does the Minister remember that card? Of course he does; he is squirming in his seat. He has never in his life laboured for anyone except Mr R. C. Katter, and he has not even been successful at that. John Gayler has asked me to ask the Minister about his law degree. Will he finish that degree when he is no longer a member of Parliament next year?

I am sure that you, Mr Temporary Chairman, would like me to return to debating the Estimates, and I will do so. Almost all of Queensland's gold-mining is carried out in the Cook electorate. Horn Island is not a major gold-producer, but some gold comes out of that rather mysterious hole in the ground that they call a gold mine on Horn Island. I worry a little about what is happening on that island, because of some of the people involved in that enterprise. Is the ex-secretary of the National Party involved in that project? Some fairly high-falutin person is involved in it. The Red Dome and Kidston mines in the Cook electorate are major producers. There is no need to gerrymander the Cook electorate to give me the Burke Shire, Mornington Island and Wujal Wujal, because there is no mining in Wujal Wujal at the moment. Do honourable members remember when the Government gerrymandered the Cook electorate because Mr Tenni did not want those Aboriginal voters and they were given to me? I know that the instructions came from the grassroots of the National Party to the people framing the electoral boundaries. They were told to take Wujal Wujal out of the electorate of Barron River to save Martin Tenni's skin.

I am proud of the fact that for a reasonable period the Federal Government did not impose a gold tax. Government members are great ones for telling this Chamber that they believe that the people in Canberra do not know what they are doing. They use stronger terms, but that is a euphemistic description of their statements. This taxation relief is something that the Federal Government has done that is extremely progressive and, when it cuts out next year—as it should—that will be another progressive move and will allow this nation to earn rightful income from the gold-miners.

I must mention Shelburne Bay. It troubles me that Mr Katter is trying to get his hooks into Shelburne Bay. He does not understand. That is obvious from the statement he made that Queensland needs silica-mining because of all the silicon chips that could be manufactured. I do not need to tell honourable members that a handful of silica sand would produce enough silicon chips to last Queenslanders a long, long time. He is talking about simply digging minerals up and shipping them out of the State, without undertaking any value-increased activity whatsoever. Mining is occurring north of Cooktown at Cape Flattery. There is enough silica sand leaving Queensland at the present time and for quite a long time to come. The operation at Cape Flattery is productive and employs several people.

Mr Katter: Unprocessed.

Mr SCOTT: Perhaps the Minister can tell me about the value-increased activity that he promotes. That is quite right; it is unprocessed. The Minister wants to do the

same at Shelburne Bay, which has values and attributes other than silica sand. The Minister can keep his hands off Shelburne Bay for a long time to come.

I turn now to electricity supply. The Minister thought that the transmission line to Normanton was under way, but, of course, it is still two and a-half years down the track. When the Minister stands up later this evening to sum up, Mr Galwey and some of the other public servants will have put the Minister right and told him that electricity supply is a long way away. This is important to the Cook electorate because Karumba residents do not receive a full electricity supply. The Minister should know that because he was the so-called Minister for Northern Development for so long. He did nothing about getting the residents of Karumba a proper electricity supply. The Minister is looking a little vacant. Someone involved in the fishing industry in Karumba cannot receive a public electricity supply. That was laid down by Order in Council. This deprives people who have every right to have a share of a public electricity supply for which they are prepared to pay. They are denied this supply by an Order in Council cooked up by the Queensland Government for shady reasons.

When I complain about it in writing, the Government tells me it will build a transmission line. It does not happen to mention that there is a three-year lead-in time for the particular Var-correcting item that is required for the line. The line will not be ready for a long time and the people of Karumba, and those who must rely on isolated generation, will be denied a proper electricity supply. When the Minister replies he will tell me about a Cairns-Weipa transmission line, which is not an outrageous suggestion at all. Certainly, if a smelter is to be established in that area, part of the consideration must be a transmission line to Weipa. Comalco has been busily looking for oil or coal to augment its means of generating power in that area. At the present time it operates on all oil-generated power. Comalco would like to find some oil or coal to use as fuel in its powerhouse. The alternative is to provide a transmission line to Weipa.

Like the honourable member for Nudgee, I am shocked at the thought of selling the Gladstone Power Station to the Gladstone branch of Comalco. Of course, I am supportive of the Weipa branch of Comalco. I know what will happen. There have already been sweetheart deals in regard to the cost of electricity supply at Gladstone and I agree totally with the honourable member for Nudgee about what would happen if that company were allowed to grab that powerhouse. The people of Queensland would suffer. Many parts of my electorate do not have electricity supply so the Government should not make it more difficult to provide electricity or to increase its cost.

What does the Government intend to do about the outer islands in the Torres Strait? I hope I am not told that the mates of the Government in Westinghouse will provide electricity there as the Minister mumbled in his speech this morning. Westinghouse was given the job at Coconut Island and that is enough. It is a totally unsatisfactory supply of electricity. The house-holders on that island can only use as much power as they can get out of one 10-amp outlet.

Mr Hynd: That's so they won't get electrocuted.

Mr SCOTT: I know that that was said in jest.

They deserve the same as the people in the rest of Queensland and they are not getting it. Government members know the way that the supply was provided. Westinghouse wanted to do some experimenting and it was given the opportunity to provide the supply on Coconut Island. Now the Government wants to offer that company the other 13 communities.

I have referred this action to the Public Works Committee and asked it to oversight the steps that will be taken. I have suggested the setting up of a committee comprising departmental people, FNQEB engineers and consultants to look into the cost benefits.

Mr Katter interjected.

Mr SCOTT: Who prepared it? One of the Minister's departmental officers, and I know who the person is.

Mr Katter: A \$60,000 report by the top engineers in Queensland recommended the proposal. I am sure that you know more than they do!

Mr SCOTT: The Minister should table that report. I know what the Minister is doing. He is trying to do a deal with his mates in Westinghouse and it is just not going to work. The previous Minister was a total and absolute loss in the job. All he could do was to sit in the nice leather ministerial seats and ride round in his LTD. He did not do a thing for mining, northern development or the electricity supply in my electorate. In spite of the fact that I have spoken in this Chamber on many occasions, written to Ministers and spoken outside until I am hoarse, we have had to wait. What has been the result? Not nearly enough, I am sad to say.

I now want to talk about some of the Aboriginal communities. They have been excluded from any aspect of northern development by a series of Ministers. They are now back with the present Minister and I shudder to think what will happen. In my notes I wrote, "Please keep Mr Katter in the Mines Department signing papers, drawing maps or making little sketches. Keep him out of northern development. Keep him out of the Aboriginal communities. Give him something to occupy him for the next eight or nine weeks until the election after which he will no longer be there to plague us."

At this juncture I must say that the Minister is a nice man. The problem is that he does not have any brains. It is not right that a person with no ability should be promoted. Where does he sit now? He is not in the second row of the Cabinet bench where he was three or four weeks ago. In the post-coup situation he now sits in a prominent place in the front row. At least he is a little closer to me so that I can interject and remind him of some of the facts of life. It is a shame, because he has been very destructive in Aboriginal affairs.

He was given a plan under which deeds of grant in trust were to be given to the Aboriginal communities. I was greatly surprised when this was announced by Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen in 1983. I was listening to the radio while I was campaigning and I could not believe my ears when I heard that deeds of grant in trust were to be issued.

The responsibility was given to the relevant Minister to use them as a base and then build for the Aboriginal communities and the Aboriginal people a whole environment that they could be proud of and that would improve the standard of their lives. He has done nothing like that at all. He has played politics with a National Party candidate whom he has dredged up. The people of Cook will just not wear it. The Minister now has the ability to fly round in the Government jet, and he will have the National Party candidate with him. I can tell him now that he is wasting his time. A man named Steve Bredhauer will be the next member for Cook and I am proud to say that because I know that the responsibilities of the electorate will be in good hands. The Minister can try all he likes by using Northern Development funds to fly around and promote the National Party candidate, but it will not get him anywhere.

The deed of grant in trust was to be the basis for the ownership of land on which things could be built to give Aborigines pride. They want a communal interest in the things they are interested in. But what did the Minister do? He put them into private ownership long before they wanted it. He picked his mark. He picked certain people on whom he could make an impression.

A lot of people in this State were shocked when they saw a television program that was shown throughout the State in which the Minister belittled Gordon Pablo, who is a good bloke who had the temerity to take a map up to the Minister to show him his traditional interest in land at Shelburne Bay. What did the Minister say? He said, "There's something called a facsimile machine, Gordon, and you can get a photo out of it and give it to me." I do not like putting this on the Minister, but he should try because, over the next few weeks, he will have some dealings with these people. He has

to take himself in hand and consider his actions in dealing with these people. I ask him not to put people like Gordon Pablo down.

I hope that the Minister will tell me whether the Department of Northern Development will be located in Townsville. I hope that the departmental people are able to keep the Minister out of the road. We certainly do not want him near the space base or around Lockhart River trying to promote that major tourist development on the land sold by a National Party mate for a large amount of money.

I take the opportunity during this debate to thank the public servants who, for 12 years, have been helpful to me. I have always liked dealing with them. I must say that I have appreciated dealing with the Ministers when I have had to do so. They might not have much ability but I know that, in their hearts, they are not bad people and they do try to help when matters are put to them. We really have to lay it on them.

I express appreciation to the staff members at Parliament House. It has been a great pleasure to work with them over 12 years. Honourable members tend to think of the 89 of us sitting in this Chamber as being the be-all and end-all of the whole parliamentary system. The Ministers do not even understand the doctrine of the separation of powers. I will not lecture the Chamber on that matter; I certainly understand it.

Mr Newton: Come off it.

Mr SCOTT: The Government does not know how to keep the bureaucracy or the judiciary out of politics. That is the doctrine of the separation of powers. The Government has gerrymandered the electorates to make its position secure. With the gerrymander, it believes that it has built a base that will keep it in power for ever. Therefore it is able to merge the powers of the judiciary and the powers of the bureaucracy; there is no separation in its mind. The honourable member thinks that when he is speaking to the police commissioner he is speaking to one of his clique; the same applies to a judge.

Time expired.

Mr ELLIOTT (Cunningham) (3.47 p.m.): It gives me great pleasure to support the Minister in the presentation of his Estimates. I am delighted to see the former Minister for Community Services and Northern Development back taking great interest in what is occurring in north Queensland. As a member of his committee when he first was given the Community Services portfolio, I took great interest in his activities. I congratulate him on his elevation once more to the Ministry. I am pleased to see him again looking after the interests of north Queensland. No-one could deny his tremendous enthusiasm and dedication to north Queensland.

The name Katter is synonymous with north Queensland, as it is with western Queensland. I congratulate him on that. It will be interesting to witness the development that he will generate in north Queensland.

Mr Scott: In 10 weeks.

Mr ELLIOTT: I am not talking about 10 weeks; I am talking about ongoing Government policy over a period and all the people who have been involved. The Government works as a team. The officers sitting in the lobby advising the Minister are part of the Government team that is doing its best for the State.

I am delighted to see the projects that have been initiated. When a former Premier suggested that a spaceport would be constructed at Cape York, Opposition members laughed loudly. They accused the former Premier of being away with the pixies.

Mr Scott: Is it there yet?

Mr ELLIOTT: It is a lot closer today.

Mr Scott: A lot of people are not holding their breath, I might say.

Mr ELLIOTT: I should not be offering wagers in this Chamber, but if the honourable member would like a wager with me of a non-monetary kind, I would be happy to take

him up on it. I believe that the spaceport definitely will go ahead and will have a tremendous impact on Queensland's economy.

Last century, the Jardine brothers drove stock through Cape York Peninsula in spite of warlike and savage Aborigines who resisted their presence. Because of the problems involved, I would not attempt the feat these days. The Jardine brothers laid the corner-stone for the development of Cape York. It has taken a long time to come to fruition.

In my three years as Minister for Tourism and National Parks, I spent some time in the north and I am aware of the problems that exist. It is regrettable that the member for Cook adopted a derogatory attitude to the development near Iron Range. That development has fantastic potential.

Mr Scott: For the Lockhart River people?

Mr ELLIOTT: It has potential for everyone. Obviously, it has potential for the Lockhart River people as well.

Mr Scott: You have no idea of what is involved. You don't know what you are talking about. You haven't been to Lockhart River to talk to the people about it.

Mr ELLIOTT: The honourable member is wrong. He pontificates in the Chamber and accuses other people of talking rubbish. He assumes that other members only sit in the Chamber or wander up and down Queen Street. I have walked, driven and flown about that area. I have even travelled by boat to that area.

Mr Scott: And you went to Lockhart River, did you?

Mr ELLIOTT: I have been to Lockhart River. I have been to the mission and spoken to the people.

Mr Scott: It is not a mission now; it is a community.

Mr ELLIOTT: I know. When I was there, it was a mission. I have been there and done those things and I know the area quite intimately. It has tremendous potential for development as a resort. Provided the pristine beauty of the area is retained, people will visit it to see the natural beauty—not to despoil it or to build ugly structures that are not in keeping with the environment. We should not develop technology and monuments to modern man; we should improve the aesthetics of the area. That is capable of being carried out. The Lockhart River community has beautiful national parks adjoining it. I was involved in the gazettal of those national parks and I know a lot about them.

I look forward to seeing the full potential of Cape York realised. However, I do not want to waste too much time on the one topic. There are other matters that I want to address. But honourable members can be assured that it does have tremendous potential. I would be disappointed if the Opposition spokesman was to denigrate that. If it is done properly, it does have the potential, both through national parks and tourism, to assist in the employment of some of the Aborigines who live in that area. The Government tried to implement a program of employing Aboriginal rangers in national parks. I believe that such a program has tremendous potential.

Now I want to touch on some other aspects. I was disappointed to hear the member for Cook suggest the imposition of a gold tax. If the Labor Government wants to kill the goose that laid the golden egg, it can go right ahead and institute a gold tax. A gold tax might be all right if it could be imposed only when the price of gold rose above a certain level.

Mr Scott: Why should gold be protected? You tell me.

Mr ELLIOTT: Because basically it is the one thing that is really enjoying a resurgence——

Mr Scott: Why not pick on coal-mining or tin-mining?

Mr ELLIOTT: The honourable member should listen. There is an old saying that he who keeps his mouth open does not have his ears open.

Mr Prest: I've never heard that.

Mr ELLIOTT: I made it up on the spot, actually.

Mr McElligott: An old Tony Elliott proverb.

Mr ELLIOTT: Something like that.

When these people started to talk about instituting a gold tax, gold was about \$420 or \$430 an ounce. It is now down to \$360-odd. I have lost track of the price in the last few days. However, it is way down on what it used to be. Quite frankly, the imposition of a gold tax would kill the gold industry. That industry brings revenue into this country. It is assisting to alleviate our balance of payments problem.

The honourable member's colleagues are hell-bent on wrecking the tourist industry. They do not seem to be able to do anything to get the tourist industry back on its feet. I cannot believe that the honourable member can be so unthinking and uncaring about the economy of this country as to suggest the imposition of a gold tax.

Mr Scott interjected.

Mr ELLIOTT: I do not know anyone involved in the grazing industry who would support a tax on gold at the moment. They understand the equation. They know what is involved. We are all going to have to foot the bill. If members of the Opposition want to go down the Argentine road, they should just keep up that sort of thinking, because that will be the end result.

Mr Scott: What about tin-mining?

Mr ELLIOTT: I would be the first to agree that incentives should be given to all of those operations that bring in export earnings. The Government should be bending over backwards to assist in the development of the Sarich engine. It should be bending over backwards to help Valpadana tractors——

Mr Scott interjected.

Mr ELLIOTT: The honourable member must be joking.

Components are being brought in for the Valpadana tractor, and those parts attract a lot of duty, which is making that operation unviable. The next thing will be that Valpadana tractors will be built in Canada.

Mr Simpson: They won't put a duty on bringing in pineapples, though.

Mr ELLIOTT: That is dead right. The member for Cooroora is spot on. The importation of pineapples into this country is wrecking the pineapple industry. What sort of stupidity is that?

Mr Scott interjected.

Mr ELLIOTT: The obvious thing to do is to put a higher tariff on the pineapple that is being imported.

I would not eat the pineapple that is coming into this country. I do not believe that the hygiene standards in some other countries are up to scratch. I get very upset if any member of my family buys imported pineapple. I stick to Golden Circle.

Mr Scott: You're a protectionist, are you?

Mr ELLIOTT: No, but there has to be a balance. I do not want to waste time debating that subject with the honourable member all day.

I believe that the Federal Government has to take stock of itself and seriously reconsider the imposition of a gold tax or any other tax. It is very important that people realise just what the end result of such a tax would be.

I turn to the suggested sale of the Gladstone Power Station. I place on record my support for the sale of that power station, provided that the price obtained for it is adequate.

Mr Vaughan: What price do you reckon?

Mr ELLIOTT: I must be honest and say that I would not have a clue what would be a fair price. I am talking about the principle of the thing. The honourable member may have some idea because he had some experience in the industry in years gone by. However, I do not go around valuing power stations. I wonder whether any other honourable member runs around every day valuing power stations. If the honourable member asked me what a grain farm was worth, I might be able to tell him. Power stations and farms are two different things.

The Gladstone Power Station is capable of achieving 84 per cent of capacity; Tarong is about 92 per cent; and Callide B, which is even more efficient, is about 98 per cent.

Mr Vaughan: When were they built?

Mr ELLIOTT: The honourable member is just reinforcing my argument that it is good business sense to sell off that power station if it will mean additional industry in Gladstone and the QEC is able to buy electricity at the same price as it is now paying.

Mr Vaughan interjected.

Mr ELLIOTT: I am not an expert in that field.

Mr Prest: Don't talk about it if you don't know.

Mr ELLIOTT: I am talking about the principle.

Members of Parliament talk about the principle of things. If honourable members have expertise in certain areas, then they can speak with authority. However, members of Parliament have as much right as anyone else—in fact they have a responsibility—to talk about the principle behind things. It is very important that we do so. The members of the public want to know where the Government stands. The newer power stations are more efficient than older stations. If a greater part of Queensland's electricity can be obtained through more modern and more efficient power stations, cheaper electricity will be provided to consumers. After all, is that not what we are all trying to achieve?

While I am referring to the cost of electricity, let me refer to what the mates of members opposite in the other States do. I will make some comparisons.

Mr Prest: Stick to Queensland.

Mr ELLIOTT: The honourable member does not like it.

Mr Simpson: They can't cop it.

Mr ELLIOTT: As the honourable member for Cooroora says, they cannot cop the fact that the cost of electricity in the other States is far higher than it is in Queensland.

The unions tried to turn out the lights in Queensland. If a Labor Government were elected in this State, it would turn out the lights. A Labor Government would repeal the essential services legislation. Queensland would go back to the bad old days, and we would end up like Victoria, where the trams do not run. We are not going to see the clock turned back.

Let me examine the electricity charges in other States. Honourable members would be aware that a tremendous enhancement in productivity has occurred in the electricity industry in Queensland. In 1984, the QEC had 5 245 employees, whereas it now has

2 995. The various electricity boards throughout the State had 7 948 employees, whereas they now have 5 673.

The average electricity price in Queensland is 7.93c per kilowatt hour; in New South Wales, 8.03c; and, in Victoria, 8.04c. Electricity charges in other States are continuing to increase. Electricity charges in Queensland are being held at the level that I indicated.

In Queensland, 2 045 megawatt hours of electricity are sold per employee; in New South Wales, 1 457; and, in Victoria—the famous Cain State—1 361. The plant availability in Queensland was 84 per cent; in New South Wales, 61 per cent; and, in Victoria, 61 per cent. The cost of generation in Queensland was 1.67c per kilowatt hour; in New South Wales, 2.09c; and in Victoria, 2.24c.

I ask honourable members: is it any wonder that people are voting with their feet and coming to this State every day of the week? They are leaving Cain's Victoria in droves because they are being absolutely alienated and taxed out of the system. I have great pleasure in supporting the Estimates. If people return to the days—

Mr Prest: We'll return; I don't know about you.

Mr ELLIOTT: The honourable member admits that he will overturn the essential services legislation, and that he will put Queensland back to a position in which strikes are held in the power industry. As I said, I have much pleasure in supporting the Minister's Estimates.

Mr SCHUNTNER (Mount Coot-tha) (4.04 p.m.): As I have only two points I wish to make in my contribution to this debate, I shall be speaking fairly briefly. The first matter to which I refer is the climate in which economic activity occurs within the State. I shall refer to a particular example raised with me by a constituent and outline the frustration experienced by that person regarding the development of natural gas resources. It centres on the planned development of the pipeline from Wallumbilla to Gladstone. This constituent, who had come from overseas, was for a long time encountering nothing but frustration in trying to develop a gas-field. One would think that a place such as Libya would be one where business is more difficult to carry on than it is in Queensland. The image that members in this Chamber would have about Libya is one of a socialistic regime—which it is—with the terrorism of a Gaddafi. Russian help to that nation would suggest its socialistic leanings. Yet this particular constituent was so frustrated by the economic climate and uncertainty he had to endure that he believed that he would be better off going back to Libya to work than to continue trying to do what he wanted to do in Queensland. The development of natural gas-fields is surely something that is very important to the economy of this State. I felt that it was important to raise this matter during this debate and express my concern about it.

The second point that I want to touch upon deals with northern development and the scheme that I used to call an incentive transfer scheme and which the Government has called the Remote Area Incentive Scheme for teachers in Queensland State schools. This will have a considerably beneficial effect on education in remote areas, not only in the north but also in the west. However, I think it is important to raise it in the context of a debate about northern development.

I take members back a little to indicate the long history of this matter before we saw it brought forward in the Budget this year. My recollection and involvement with this scheme goes back to about 1974 when Sir Alan Fletcher was the Minister for Education. He asked a group of Education Department and teachers union officials to think about ways and means in which education could be improved in really remote schools. As many honourable members in this Chamber will recall, it is a long time since Sir Alan Fletcher was Minister for Education. At that time I was Vice-president of the Queensland Teachers Union. I was involved in a group that did a lot of work in looking at the problem, identifying how it might be overcome and presenting a report subsequently to the Education Minister, who at that time was Mr Bird.

At that time, schools in the remote areas of the State were divided into 10 categories with about 30 schools in each category. Although some of those schools would not qualify as being remote, some of them such as Mornington Island, Kowanyama and Pormpuraaw certainly would be regarded as remote in anyone's language.

At the end of each year it is not uncommon for remote places to experience a 100 per cent turn-over of teaching staff. That is not necessarily because those teachers do not like those places. The fact is that, for economic reasons, many of them cannot afford to stay there. The cost of travelling to and from those places, the cost of food and other expenses are prohibitive. After one or two years' service in those remote places teachers find that they are at a considerable disadvantage compared with their colleagues who have been working in less remote places.

During the mid-seventies a report which favoured an incentive scheme was compiled by the Queensland Education Department and the Queensland Teachers Union and presented to Mr Bird, with high hopes that it would be implemented. Unfortunately, the Cabinet of the day did not proceed with it. During the late seventies a select committee of inquiry, which included both Mr Ahern and Mr Powell from the Government benches, was established.

Prior to the last election, and perhaps before that, incentive schemes have been Liberal Party policy. I am pleased to note that this Budget contains provision for such schemes. The current proposals are very similar to those that were contained in that report that was produced a decade ago.

As to teacher accommodation—its quality will be improved because air-conditioning is to be installed wherever appropriate and adequate security is to be provided. The rental that teachers pay for their accommodation will be nil or minimal.

The Budget contains a suggestion of the provision of four-wheel-drive Government vehicles that would be made available to teachers for private use. Better travel benefits will accrue and salary loadings will apply. A very important element is the provision of better professional development for teachers. The quality of education in remote centres suffers because inadequate professional development is provided for teachers, most of whom are very young and have had very limited experience. Because they teach in such remote areas, their capacity to mix with colleagues is very limited.

I am pleased that the Budget incentives will result in better education being provided in remote centres. Few people may realise that some of our far-northern schools are within sight of the New Guinea coast. Several years ago I visited some of the schools that are situated north of Thursday Island and saw at first hand their facilities and conditions.

Some people may have the mistaken belief that the incentive scheme will apply to dozens and dozens of schools. I stress that the concept of remoteness is quite relative. Although people in a centre such as Middlemount might think that they live in a remote area, if they were to visit places such as Doomadgee and Bedourie they would realise that Middlemount is not remote at all.

It remains to be seen how far the incentive scheme will be implemented. I urge the Government to proceed as far as possible with it. The problems of mobility of staff and the frequent turn-over of staff are felt not only in the very remote schools but also in those that are less remote.

Mr TENNI (Barron River) (4.14 p.m.): I am pleased to support the Estimates. Some of the comments that have been made during this debate have upset me, but they are best treated with the ignorance that they deserve, particularly the comments of the honourable member for Cook, who spoke about the ability of the electricity authority to service his part of this great State. Mr Scott must be running around in a daze without realising that a new power plant has been constructed on Horn Island and that another one is nearing completion on Thursday Island. Apparently the honourable member is unaware of the electricity industry's great support for the existing power plants on

missions in the gulf and on the islands. The honourable member is also unaware of the assistance that has been provided by the electricity industry in this State in the upgrading of the solar/diesel-powered systems that have been introduced, including one on Coconut Island, one that has been on trial near Longreach and another one east of Rockhampton.

It is hoped that all of these proposals will benefit the outlying areas such as the islands, the missions and other outback stations. It would be virtually financially impossible to take the grid system to those properties without charging the rest of the electricity-consumers in this State very high tariffs. As I said, I ignore the comments made by those who believe that the Mines Department has not done the right thing by this State.

For some 22 months I had the great honour and privilege of ministering that department. I say very clearly—and want it recorded in *Hansard*—that the mines and energy organisations of that department are the best two organisations that I have ever had anything to do with. I am very sorry to be leaving the Parliament, mainly because I am sorry to be leaving those two organisations and the calibre of the people who occupy positions within them—from the top to the bottom. I say that very, very genuinely.

The fact that this State's mining industry has expanded greatly is proof enough to its tax-payers that the entire Mines Department has done a wonderful job. The department has had its problems and its ups and downs. One of the big problems, which related to the coal industry, was the cost of coal rail freights.

Some years ago when the price of coal fell, those rail freights held the coal industry at its then level when in fact, with reduced coal freights, it should have been going ahead in leaps and bounds. I am very pleased that those reductions have now been granted to all new mines and to old mines that decide to expand. I really believe that the reduction should have gone a bit further to include existing mines so that the coal industry could have really gone ahead.

I recall that many years ago the Labor Party screamed its head off when the Government gave the coal mines rail freight concessions. The Labor Party said that it was wrong and that it should not have been done; that the Government was looking after the big fellows. Yet in the last few years, particularly in the last 12 months, the Labor Party has supported the proposal of reducing coal freight rates throughout Queensland. I suppose everyone is entitled to have a change of heart. I am glad that the Labor Party's change of heart was in the right direction.

The Director-General of Mines, Mr Kevin Wolff, and his entire staff need to be thanked for the work that they have done. I would like their names recorded in *Hansard* because I wish to express my personal thanks to them for their assistance during the 22 months that I was Minister for Mines and Energy. One could not find a person who has worked harder or for longer hours than Kevin Wolff has in the running of the department. Even though he was eligible for retirement some time ago, he has remained with the department. When he eventually does retire, it will be a great loss to the department. He is a great guy with great vision. He is a great adviser. If the present Minister, Mr Katter, takes notice of the advice given by Kevin Wolff, he will not take one step in the wrong direction. Kevin's advice to me during 22 months proved to be 100 per cent correct. Not only I but also the industry went in the right direction.

Mr Ken Gluch and Mr Bernard Cox, who were Mr Wolff's two main assistants, are tremendous men who will, of course, follow in Kevin's footsteps. I spent a lot of time with Bob Waldie. He is in charge of the gas pipelines. He is a very capable, steady and solid person, one who tried to help Kevin and myself draw up the contract with QAL for the construction of the pipeline from Wallumbilla to Gladstone. All of us know the benefit of that pipeline to Gladstone. I personally thank Bob for his assistance in that scheme.

I pay tribute also to Mr John Reinhold, Mr Garry Stubbs, in the PR section of the department, and Mr Michael Holliday, who prepares the mining journal. In the past 22

months that mining journal has improved from being not a bad sort of a journal to a first-class product. That has come about because of the work of Michael, Garry, Alan Murray and many others who have played a major role in its production. That journal is now in demand by many people throughout Australia and from overseas.

I also thank John Torlach, Viv Sandercock and Red O'Hara, who played a major role in checking the costings of rail freights on coal and many other matters that arose from time to time. They are certainly great guys.

I also thank Mick Minz, who is now retired from the department. During the last few weeks, he has been engaged on a contract basis to complete the new mining legislation. Mick Minz is a tower of strength, a man who has a lot of brains, a lot of foresight and a man who has really helped Kevin and myself with the new legislation and also with the general development of mining in Queensland.

I also thank Graham Hardie, Bob Sheridan and Bob McGaw. They are great fellows who look after the explosives section and the dangerous goods section. I also thank Bob Day, who works in the mapping section of the Mines Department. Unfortunately, the Budget did not provide everything that we wanted for the department. One cannot always get what one wants in the Budget. However, I ask the Minister to take particular notice of the mapping of minerals in this State. That is very, very important. A very large amount of money is needed to undertake that mapping—something to the tune of at least \$2m per year over the next four or five years at least—to upgrade the geological maps which in turn will create more mining in this State, as a result of which more jobs and more development will be created. That is what the State is all about. I ask the Minister, when he is framing next year's budget for the department, to play a major role and make sure that that part of the budget is catered for.

Malcolm Daly is another guy who has a great deal of ability. He is probably someone who will reach the top levels in his profession one day. He is a great performer and I thank him personally for his assistance. Merv Noume provided assistance in relation to the coal industry and Peter Dent contributed to the function of the safety laboratory. The people of Queensland are very fortunate to have those officers associated with the Mines Department in Queensland. I wish to assure those officers that any criticism of the Mines Department by members of this Assembly is totally wrong. It is a great department and it is doing a great job. It will continue throughout the years ahead to provide a top quality service at a very low cost to the tax-payers of this State. Last financial year the department was allocated \$24m but returned to Treasury revenue in excess of \$200m. No-one complained about that. If the Mines Department were a business, it would make a fortune and pay enormous taxes to Mr Keating. The staff of the Mines Department are a great bunch. I wish them well for the future.

Preparation of the Mineral Resources Bill has been completed over a period of two years. It involved the preparation of a Green Paper and a draft report. Heads of the Mines Department and representatives from the primary industries and mining sectors and I have contributed to its formulation. The group that will be the losers as a result of that legislation will be the miners. Those who stand to gain the most are the property-owners. There can be no ifs or buts about it. The Queensland Government has given a great deal and has taken away very little.

The Mineral Resources Bill will protect the environment. Ratbag miners who caused destruction in the past will not be allowed to continue. Both responsible miners and the landscape will be fully protected. However, I acknowledge that some land-owners need to be pulled into gear because some parts of the district have been allowed to be overrun by rubber vine and noogoora burr. Noxious weeds have not been kept under control. When the time for expiration of the leases approaches, the land-owners responsible for the neglect should be pulled into gear. The leases should be taken from them unless they are prepared to clean up the properties. The introduction of the new legislation will assist property-owners, but it is time that they helped themselves and looked after their properties. If they do not, the Government ought to seriously consider relieving them of the leases.

Mining organisations, graziers, wheat-growers and grain-growers should all work together in a satisfactory manner to return some benefit to the tax-payers of Queensland. That is a very important consideration. I plead with the Minister to ensure that the Bill is passed by this Parliament next week. This morning I understood members of the Labor Party to say that more time should be allowed for consideration of the Bill. However, I notice that the Liberal Party totally supports the legislation. I congratulate the members of the Liberal Party and thank them for their support. It is incredible that members of the Labor Party claim that they need more time when preparation of the Bill took two and a-half years.

Mr Vaughan: A lot of people in the community are most unhappy. After all, I have had the Bill only since 7 September whereas you guys have had the Bill since 1987. You didn't even send me a copy of the Green Paper. I never saw it and a lot of people never saw the draft legislation. It was selectively circulated. There are a lot of people who need a lot more time to have a look at it. It is a big Bill.

Mr TENNI: The draft legislation was not selectively circulated at all.

Mr Vaughan: That is what you say in the explanatory notes.

Mr TENNI: It was sent to the secretary of every organisation in the State of Queensland.

Mr Vaughan: That is what it says on the front of the document.

Mr TENNI: If the honourable member would kindly listen, he might understand. It might have been sent selectively, but it was sent selectively to the secretary of every organisation in this State. The honourable member is merely stating that certain organisations are not prepared to bring their members up to date with the latest legislation that may have some effect on their members. I do not believe that this Government or this Parliament should be responsible for the neglect of those particular organisations. They have had loads of time. The Bill has been discussed with representatives from every industry involved over the last 22 months since I was involved in its preparation. I would certainly not support any further extension of time.

If the honourable member did not receive a copy of the Green Paper, I apologise. I was not the responsible Minister when the Green Paper was circulated.

Mr Vaughan: I had to get one from the library. None was sent to me.

Mr TENNI: The honourable member would acknowledge that I have kept him up to date with information. I sent him a copy of the draft report as soon as it became available. That is the way I have operated.

I say to members of the Opposition that the Bill is a very good piece of legislation. If the Opposition knocks its provisions or tries to delay passage of the Bill, the people who will suffer most will be the graziers and wheat-growers who would otherwise stand to gain a great deal from the protection of their properties. It is very important that the Minister ensures that the Bill is passed by this Parliament before this session is concluded. The Mineral Resources Bill has my total support.

The electricity industry is fortunate to have some of the most capable people one could find working for it. A few of them retired recently, which is a loss to the industry, but people such as Mr Neil Galwey, the Electricity Commissioner, are very capable. Mr Keith Hilliss is the new deputy commissioner and is acting as commissioner at the moment. He is doing a splendid job. Mr Jim Hamilton retired a few weeks ago. He is a wonderful person. Over many, many years he did a great job for the industry. Mr Keith Viertel does not pull any punches—he is a bit like me. He puts the position right on the line, and he is the type of person I like. Keith has been a tower of strength to me.

David Price has worked in the public relations section and has also done a wonderful job. Stewie Lister has had the job of talking to union representatives when staff numbers

have had to be reduced and when plants have had to be closed down. He is a very capable person and he, too, has done a wonderful job. Terry Sherman and Cliff Farmer are both great people and have performed marvellously. The electricity industry in this State has probably been served by other capable people, but the stage has now been reached at which no staff increases will occur until February 1990. The QEC's accounting period runs from February to February and any additional increases after 1990 will not be made until February 1991.

In addition, the promise has been made that for another three years the increase in price will be no more than half the rate of the CPI increase. That promise has been made and honourable members can be assured that it will be kept. If things go well in the industry, it is possible that that increase in price will not be implemented. As I say, it depends on the industry and the state of the nation. Because of the capabilities of the people in the industry, that proposed increase in price may be scrubbed, or, at the very least, the proposed increase for the first or second year may be scrubbed. That is some way down the track, but it is assured. Government members get sick and tired of the Opposition saying, "They are not going to give you an increase this year, but they will double the increase next year." The Government has bugged that idea; the increase will not be doubled next year. At this stage of the game the electricity industry is in excellent hands.

If the Gladstone Power Station is eventually sold, honourable members can be assured that it will not be sold unless the price paid for the station is sufficient to permit the industry to invest the money and receive the necessary profit to cover the distribution of power; in other words, the construction of the power lines and the maintenance of the grid system. This Government will not sell that power station unless the system can be fully protected by the funds received from the sale. Common sense dictates that if the Government were to do otherwise, the cost of power to consumers would be increased. The Comalco company that is interested in buying the power station has made it very clear that it will not buy a power station if it results in an increase in the cost of electricity to the remainder of people of this State. If a deal is done, it will be one that will protect the interests of the power-users of this State who are virtually the share-holders of the Queensland power industry. The industry is controlled by the commissioner and deputy commissioner and is in good hands.

The Office of Northern Development has Shane O'Connor as its director in Brisbane, Mr Kevin Byrne as the director in Cairns and has new fellows in charge in Townsville and Mackay. All those gentlemen are doing an excellent job, and I become very annoyed when people accuse Kevin Byrne of spending his time campaigning. I understand that the Labor Party is worried about Kevin Byrne winning the seat of Leichhardt. He can retire tomorrow from the Office of Northern Development, because there is no doubt that he will become the next member for Leichhardt. The Labor member for the area has done a reasonable job in the past, but no-one has seen or heard of him in the last three years. He will lose his job whether he likes it or not. Kevin Byrne works more than eight hours a day, and sometimes 10 or 12 hours a day, or even longer, for the Office of Northern Development.

Time expired.

Mr PREST (Port Curtis) (4.34 p.m.): I have pleasure in speaking to these Estimates, because both mining and energy play a very important part in the progress and expansion of my electorate. At the present time, the main talking point in the electorate is the price of electricity after the sale of the Gladstone Power Station to Comalco.

A newspaper article dated 30 September 1988 stated—

"Extension to Boyne Smelters potlines depended on negotiations for favourable electricity prices from the Queensland Government.

Confirming that the addition of a third and possibly fourth potline was under the microscope, the chairman of Comalco Ltd, Mr John Ralph told the Securities Institute of Australia this week that electricity prices had to be favourable.

The smelter at Boyne Island is Queensland's largest single electricity user.

Mr Ralph said the introduction of a third potline would lift production at Boyne Island by 60 per cent by adding a further 150,000 tonnes to the present capacity of only 210,000 tonnes."

Another newspaper article dated 13 August 1988 stated—

"The Queensland Government and the Queensland Electricity Commission would like nothing better than for Boyne Smelters Limited to go ahead and build a third and fourth potline at its huge aluminium smelter."

That is the feeling of every person in my electorate. The article continues—

"The State's Mines and Energy Minister, Mr Martin Tenni, said the possibility of two extra potlines at Boyne Smelters was just another exciting chapter in Gladstone's industrial future.

He said if and when the expansion at the smelter happened, the State would have the electricity capabilities to more than handle any increase."

That is correct. At the present time there is a surplus at that power station between the peak period at night and the high peak period in the morning. That is the time when the power station cuts back its capacity from 280 megawatts to 80 megawatts.

On 14 September this year the Queensland Premier, Mike Ahern, made an announcement for political reasons, which was reported in the *Gladstone Observer* as follows—

"The Queensland Government has entered the final stage of lengthy negotiations with Comalco Ltd for the sale of the Gladstone Power Station.

Premier Mike Ahern yesterday presented a brave new vision of Gladstone as base for the free world's largest smelter with energy provided by a privately owned power plant.

. . .

Premier Mike Ahern made the surprise announcement in Gladstone following an inspection of Boyne Smelters which has been earmarked by major shareholder Comalco for a \$700 million expansion in the shape of a third potline.

Mr Ahern said sale of the Gladstone Power Station to Comalco was the key to the smelter expansion receiving the green light, with the State Government already supporting the move in principle.

A negotiation settlement is expected in the 'next couple of months' . . ."

Unfortunately, Mike Ahern is now sitting on the back bench. He tried to make political mileage out of this project, but it contributed to his downfall. The article continues—

"Mr Ahern said the sale of the power station would be in the best interests of Gladstone, Queensland and the nation but stressed people's rights would be fully protected.

'The rights and privileges of the existing employees will be fully protected and current operators of the facility will in no way be disadvantaged.'

. . .

Comalco, as part of the process, would upgrade the pollution mechanisms at the Gladstone Power Station."

That, in itself, would be a wonderful thing for Gladstone because, over the past 13 years since that station came on line, Ministers for Environment have been saying that there were no environmental problems and no pollution from that power station. Now Mike Ahern and Comalco are saying that, should the sale of the station go ahead, the first thing that Comalco would do would be upgrade the pollution mechanism. Every person in Gladstone and district who, for a long period, has suffered with respiratory problems because of the pollution and fall-out from that station would greet that announcement with cheers. I am quite certain that, for that reason alone, the majority of people would support the sale of the station to a very responsible company.

I support any measure that will boost industry and create jobs. I will not oppose or support the sale of this power station until more information is available on the return to the public and the purpose to which the money from the sale will be put. A few moments ago the honourable member for Barron River, the former Minister, repeatedly used the word "if" in regard to the sale of the power station, indicating that Mike Ahern's statement was somewhat premature.

I would want to be assured that the jobs of the electrical workers are secure. After all, the National Party Government, by its vicious actions against the power workers, has been hell-bent on wrecking their working conditions and destroying their families. I would not want to see those workers and their families hurt again as they were by the National Party during that year.

The editorial in the *Courier-Mail* of 14 September 1989 reads—

"According to Mr Ahern, no jobs will be lost in the deal and Queensland taxpayers will not have to subsidise cheap power to Comalco. Indeed, the Government will ask for a written guarantee on jobs. All very well, but once the power station is sold, all operating decisions including those of staff numbers, become a matter for Comalco. It is a brave politician who can predict that a privatised industry will have the same staff levels as an industry operated by a semi-government authority. For its part, Comalco is unlikely to spend \$500 million without being sure it will get a return on its investment. That return might be accompanied by increased efficiencies, which might also be another way of saying a smaller work force.

Mr Ahern's second point about tax-payers not providing subsidies to Comalco also bears some closer examination and qualification. Under existing pricing arrangements, electricity consumers are subsidising industrial users, simply because of the differential pricing policies applied to bulk consumers. The economic arguments about economies of scale seem not to work in favour of domestic consumers who, in the past, have not only subsidised industrial users but also have underwritten investment in so-far unused generating capacity. In fact, last year the Queensland Electricity Commission managed to service all its debt from revenue, a situation which had not applied earlier because of the enormous and, in some cases, not yet necessary, expansion of capacity.

Over the past three years, the real reduction in prices has been about 12 percent. While this might come as a surprise to domestic consumers, particularly in the south-east corner of the State, the real reduction applies after adjustment for inflation. But these figures are useful in illustrating how electricity generating authorities can argue a plausible case in public."

In my opinion, the reasons are the large number of sackings in the industry and the fact that, over the years, the Queensland Electricity Commission has ripped off the ordinary consumer because, over the past three years, there has been a reduction of 12 per cent after adjustment for inflation.

Another editorial reads—

"According to Comalco managing director of smelting, Karl Stewart, an agreement to purchase the power station could be signed within three months, signalling a go-ahead on the project to more than double the Boyne Smelter's capacity.

Mr Stewart also signalled a need for some haste to take advantage of the present opportunities for viable smelting expansion. '... if we don't make our expansion move soon, we'll have missed the boat,' he said."

On 21 September, a meeting to discuss the power station sale had been arranged. I understand that Mr Karl Stewart went to Gladstone to meet the power station workers, but he was told by the QEC that he was not to meet them and, after the mass meeting, he could speak only to delegates. It was reported that —

"QEC representatives tabled a briefing paper at the meeting outlining the negotiations between Comalco, the QEC and the State Government which admitted negotiations were at a preliminary stage."

That proves that Mike Ahern's announcement was very premature. Karl Stewart went to Gladstone to meet with the power station workers. However, he was requested to speak only to the delegates.

I have always found Comalco to be open in discussions with me. In the limited time that I had to speak with Mr Stewart, I could not form a conclusive opinion on the sale of the power station. I would need more facts about the matter. However, I support the creation of job opportunities in my electorate, provided it does not disadvantage other people.

When Mike Ahern announced the sale of the power station, I was just as surprised and shocked as the Comalco officials, the public of Queensland and the electrical power station workers. He embarrassed Comalco officials and took the partners in the Boyne smelter, who are mainly Japanese companies, by surprise. At that time, discussions between Comalco and the QEC had not reached a stage at which Comalco felt that it could inform its partners about the proposed purchase. No doubt, the phones at Comalco have not stopped ringing since Mike Ahern made that premature political announcement. To say that the announcement was premature and an embarrassment to Comalco would be the understatement of the year.

In the past, Comalco has not had problems with power supply. Power station workers assured Comalco that the power would never be cut off, even in times of industrial disputation. That assurance has always been honoured.

The Boyne smelter commenced operations some years ago. The negotiations to purchase the power station will lead to discussions with departments, unions and workers about the supply of coal, freight rates and the amount of surplus power generated.

I turn to the supply of coal. When I asked officials of Comalco whether they would honour the coal agreements that have already been negotiated, they said that they would. However, they said that when the contract finished they would obtain coal from mines in which Comalco had an interest. That will result in redundancy arrangements in coal mines presently supplying coal to the Gladstone Power Station. When workers in the coal mines face redundancy, industrial strife may be created not only by the miners at the particular mine but also by all miners in the coal-miners' union. Comalco accepted that a problem might exist and that it would have to enter into discussions in order to ensure continuity in the supply of coal to the power station.

I turn now to coal freight rates. At present, no discussions have taken place about freight rates. The mine-owners are saying that the cost to transport coal from the coal-fields to the port for export is excessive and is making the operation non-competitive. If the price paid by Comalco for the cartage of coal to its power station is excessive, it may increase the cost of the electricity that is generated from the power station. Therefore, Comalco must have discussions with the Government about coal freight rates. Because of the employment opportunities offered to Queenslanders and the opportunities offered to improve the economy by the export of aluminium, Comalco should be looking at a considerable cut in the coal freight rate from the coal mines to its station.

I turn now to the generation of surplus power. At present, the Gladstone Power Station can swing power into the grid at any time. In the off-peak period, it can cut back each unit from 280 megawatts to 80 megawatts. Comalco realises that power will not always be generated at full capacity of 1 680 megawatts; it could be producing 1 400 megawatts. Comalco's requirement will be approximately 800 megawatts a day, leaving a surplus of approximately 600 megawatts. If Comalco feeds its surplus into the grid in the off-peak period at night, it could mean that other stations such as Tarong and Callide B would have to shut down. Redundancies could occur at those stations.

The Government must take those matters into consideration and have discussions with the company about them. When the Labor Party is in Government, it will talk to Comalco about those problems.

Mr Gately: You don't know whether you are coming or going.

Mr PREST: When the honourable member was hunted out of New South Wales by the fuzz—when he was one of the corrupt cops in New South Wales and was hunted out—he did not know whether he was coming or going, either.

Mr GATELY: I rise to a point of order. I find the words that the honourable member has used most offensive, and I ask that they be withdrawn forthwith.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr Burreket): Order! The honourable member has been asked to withdraw those words.

Mr PREST: I will most certainly do so, because I would be ashamed of them, too.

I have outlined some of the problems that the Opposition foresees. The Opposition is not going to say that it is totally against or totally supportive of the sale of the Gladstone Power Station. Members of the Opposition believe that they must be taken into the confidence of the Government and supplied with all the information that would allow them to make a decision in the best interests not only of the workers in the area but also of the people of Queensland.

In the past I have spoken about the activities of the Capricornia Electricity Board—it has now changed its name—in the Capricornia region. That board is having to cut back its overheads by some 20 per cent. The first step that is being considered in order to do that is the sale of the CEB headquarters in Goondoon Street, Gladstone, at a price of \$250,000. That is a give-away, bargain-basement price. It can be seen that that property is very much undervalued. It is a prime piece of real estate.

Time expired.

Mr VEIVERS (Southport) (4.55 p.m.): It is with great pleasure that I join in this Estimates debate. This marvellous, new, silver-haired Minister—a young fellow who has definitely found the elixir of youth in the north—is a refreshing change after the member for Port Curtis, who seems to believe fiction.

A number of aspects of the taxation policies of the Federal Government—and I want to speak about mining taxes—are having a detrimental impact on the capacity of the Queensland mining industry to take full advantage of current exploration and development opportunities.

The Federal Government seems intent on introducing corporate taxation on gold-mining income from January 1991. It is fair to say that the gold industry is amongst the country's top export earners and has achieved dramatic growth in recent years.

Queensland is the largest gold-producing State in Australia, with gold bullion production having increased nearly sevenfold in the past five years to a preliminary figure of 45 000 kilograms in 1988-89, valued at some \$445m.

Mr Vaughan: Where do most of the profits from gold-mining in this State go?

Mr VEIVERS: Probably into consolidated revenue in Canberra.

This picture is somewhat distorted because the prospect of a gold tax is influencing production and investment decisions as some enterprises seek to accelerate production and high-grade operations in order to maximise returns in the pre-1991 period. There is no doubt that a gold tax will burden an industry that has already suffered from significant fluctuations in international gold prices over the past couple of years.

There is also concern within the oil industry that the application of capital gains tax provisions to farm-out arrangements and the current treatment of eligible expenditures as tax deductions will adversely affect exploration activity. I think all honourable members would acknowledge that activity is being adversely affected by high interest rates. This is at a time when Australia is faced with declining oil self-sufficiency and a number of oil companies are taking their business to competing overseas locations. Australia, and particularly Queensland, just cannot allow that to happen.

In the area of tax deductibility, a significant expansion in the level of exploration might be achieved by mobilising funds through simplifying the administration of drilling funds and/or amending the tax regime to allow petroleum explorers to pass eligible exploration deductions on to individual share-holders. I say that because as soon as members of the Government mention money and the word "profit"—the member for Nudgee was talking about it before—members of the Opposition go into a big tizz. I can tell members of the Opposition this: if private enterprise does not make a profit, it goes down the tube. I do not know what the Labor Party wants to do. It seems to want to bleed private enterprise until it cannot give any more. That is what these blokes will do when they get into Government.

Mr Newton: If they get in.

Mr VEIVERS: Yes, if they get in—and they will not. They would not know what private enterprise was about.

Recently the Queensland Government made a submission to the Federal Government body that is conducting a review into certain aspects of petroleum excise and royalty arrangements. My Government is particularly concerned about on-shore excise policies and is also concerned that the Federal Government may use the review as a means of intruding into State royalty arrangements. That would be the last knock and would sound the death-knell for this industry.

The Department of Mines will be monitoring the Federal Government's taxation policies closely. I know that the new Minister, Mr Katter, will be watching the Federal Government like a hawk. His department will be making the necessary representations to Federal authorities, including the Australian Minerals and Energy Council, in relation to Queensland's concerns.

I intend to make only a short speech. However, I must point out that, apart from tourism, the mining industry is probably the most valuable industry to this State. At present, the tourist industry is really in the doldrums, basically because of the air pilots dispute. We do not want the mining industry to sink down to that level. Thanks to Keating and Hawke, Australia is becoming a banana republic. If we allow the Federal Government to get its fingers into the mining industry, as it has in the air pilots dispute, we will have the same sorts of problems.

I am happy to inform the Committee that Mineral Deposits on the Gold Coast—one of the old companies—is doing quite well despite the Federal Government's slashing at it with high taxes. I am also happy to state that SEQEB's position on the Gold Coast is quite good. My electorate is expanding quickly and it is doing very well. Sales must continue to Japan and other countries. The member for Port Curtis said something about the former Premier, Mike Ahern, surprising the Japanese when he told them about the sale of the power station. The last time that we surprised the Japanese was at Nagasaki and Hiroshima. The honourable member should not delude himself. Fair dinkum!

Mr Prest: You weren't there.

Mr VEIVERS: I wish the honourable member had been there. We could have got rid of him there, too. I am not knocking the Japanese; I am stating the facts of life. If Queensland loses sales to the Japanese, it will really be up the spout.

The Federal Government in Canberra interferes and tries to get its fingers into everything. Queensland is the most profitable State in Australia. However, if Opposition members were to occupy the Government benches, Queensland would go backwards. If they think they are going to occupy the Government benches, they have another think coming. The people of Queensland would be awake to them because they would be trying to rip them off, as the Governments in Victoria and Western Australia are doing to the people in those States.

Mr Yewdale: A oncer.

Mr VEIVERS: I do not mind the honourable member saying that I am a oncer. I point out to him that I was not a one-test wonder. After the next election, I will be back here to give the honourable member curry, and I will have pleasure in doing that.

Mr EATON (Mourilyan) (5.03 p.m.): Although I will compliment the Government at the beginning, I will be giving it a belt along the way. The Government has taken a long time to provide facilities for the people of north Queensland. I will outline some of the benefits that have been achieved and how long it took the Government to provide them.

At the local high school in Innisfail, young people are being educated to take a role in the development of north Queensland. When I became the member for Mourilyan at the end of 1980, the Innisfail State High School did not have a free-standing library, nor did it have a decent manual arts block or an administration building. In fact, the school library was located in about three old, disused class rooms. Only 25 children could fit into one section of it at a time. As honourable members know, Innisfail is situated in a wet area. Although the children could have been increasing their knowledge by attending at that library, only 25 children could be accommodated in it at one time.

The Government has failed to cater for the needs of the people of north Queensland. As the Minister is a north Queenslander himself, he is aware that north Queensland has diverse climatic conditions. In one part of the north people are screaming out for air-conditioning; others are trying to build shelters and play sheds so that children in large schools can leave their class rooms at lunch-time, eat their lunch and participate in other activities that are beneficial in the learning process.

As the Innisfail State High School did not have the necessary buildings, I asked the Minister to take action. He said that he would look into the problem. However, for a long time nothing happened at that school. Members of the parents and citizens association came to me. I asked them to show me the correspondence so that I could bring myself up to date with what the association had applied for and what had happened over the years. In the late 1960s, when Peter Byrne was the member for Mourilyan—

Mr Davis: A good bloke, too.

Mr EATON: Peter Byrne was a very popular man. He had taken up the case on behalf of the parents and citizens association to try to obtain some benefits for the school. I was given copies of letters written by Mr Peter Moore. Mrs Vicki Kippin also made approaches to the Government. The Innisfail State High School is now probably one of the best high schools in north Queensland. It has not only many facilities but also the land that it requires. If the Minister has not already been approached about the siting of the Herberton State High School, he will be approached about it in the future. Something will have to happen there between the Education Department, the Works Department, the Lands Department and the local authority. It is a complex issue. The matter requires very urgent consideration.

Later I will be providing the Minister for Northern Development with facts and figures to try to alleviate a problem in Herberton. The local authority has received letters from people who reside along the coast and who wish to retire to the Herberton area. They have asked the council whether they could buy or obtain a residential block so that on their retirement they could move into Herberton.

To upgrade the playground at the Herberton State High School, it is proposed to resume four residences and a Government residential block. Where will the owners of those properties go once their properties are resumed? Reserve 28 is located opposite the school. Through the Lands Department, there is a great opportunity for the Government to have a mining company release an area from its lease so that it can be used for developmental purposes. A new high school and new residences could be built there. However, the infrastructure that is needed, such as roads and access, would cost about \$300,000. There is a great opportunity for the Government to play a role in making money available to the local authority so that it can develop the land, thereby bringing long-term benefits to the township of Herberton as well as increasing the number of

children enrolled at the school. If the population of an area can be increased, the additional families moving into the area will increase the enrolment at the school.

Mr Newton: I know all about that. I got 7 200 new voters.

Mr EATON: The honourable member is right.

The north must be developed. I know that the Minister is very well aware of that. The Government has fallen down in helping industries that can bring long-term benefits to north Queensland. In recent years, the tin-mining industry has suffered hard times. Although some people have been able to branch out and find a bit of gold, they are treading water. The number of miners who have branched out and found a bit of gold is surprising. Because of the high price of gold at the moment, they are able to tread water and keep themselves in employment. The two issues that should be uppermost in the Government's mind are incentive and opportunity because, if they exist, people and development will be attracted to Queensland.

After the mining industry went bad, many people found that slate and sandstone could be used for tiling and carving. However, a great deal of money is needed to establish those industries, and the Government could play a very important role in assisting them. Those people have a product and orders for it all around the world, but because they lack the collateral, the banks will not lend them the necessary funds. Through the Department of Northern Development and the Cape York/North Queensland Enterprise Zone the Government has a great opportunity to assist those projects, but it takes too long to make decisions on them.

Schemes and business enterprises in the north should be operated by northerners. However, because they are unable to obtain sufficient finance they get into difficulties and are taken over by finance companies and then sold off to bigger companies. Unfortunately, the income from those businesses then goes to southern-based companies or overseas companies.

At present north Queensland is being rediscovered by overseas entrepreneurs and quite a few enterprising businessmen are looking to set up business there. Not only must we keep an eye on overseas companies but we must also watch the fast-buck merchants who are far worse than the overseas companies that are trying to rip off the north.

The biggest problem that is encountered is that, because the north has so much to offer, people find it difficult to believe that it has so many attractions and attributes. Because of its agricultural and dairy products and grain, north Queensland has probably the richest food-bowl in the world. The coast has riches from the sea—seafood products. North Queensland is probably too self-sufficient and much of its product has to be exported. The area is affected by the tyranny of distance and the cost of transport.

Although the Main Roads Department tries to maintain the roads in north Queensland, its job is made difficult because of the wet season. Because of the bad roads, many truckloads of produce are lost. Because many of the people in the north are battlers, they cannot afford to insure their produce. Recently a seafood-processor went bust because his semitrailer was involved in an accident and he lost a 40-tonne load. Honourable members would realise the worth of that produce. Because of the amount of money that that man had borrowed to expand his business and because that load was uninsured, he went broke.

Mr Muntz: On the Bruce Highway, was it?

Mr EATON: No, it was not on the Bruce Highway, it was on the Kennedy Highway.

Mr Muntz: Federal funding is required.

Mr EATON: I realise that the Federal Government has a long way to go in that respect.

Mr Muntz: You should have written to Mr Hawke.

Mr EATON: When the State and Federal Governments announce that \$8m or \$10m will be provided for road-funding, many people rub their hands with glee and say that that is great. However, the cost of forming a road is \$1m a mile. Although \$300m for road-funding might seem like a lot of money, it provides only 300 miles of new road, which is not very much at all.

Mr Simpson: Did you know that what Keating is taking is a whole lot more than that? It is \$7,000m.

Mr EATON: I realise that Queensland is not the only State in Australia that needs more funding for roads. However, a large proportion of its road-funding goes towards the maintenance of existing roads. Every year, because of the wet season, roads and culverts in flat, swampy areas are washed away. The Main Roads Department says, "We cannot build a new road there. We patched that road last year and spent hundreds of thousands of dollars on it." Because insufficient funds are available for building new roads, that money is spent on maintenance.

I turn now to the opening of the Mourilyan harbour, which is probably the best natural harbour in Australia. I realise that that is a wide statement, but a great opportunity exists for that harbour to be used for exports.

Mr Katter: It only takes small boats, doesn't it? I am for you; but it is just a bit of a worry.

Mr EATON: I realise that bigger and heavier boats are being built, but the widening of the harbour is being considered.

Large cargo boats are not necessary to take some of our produce such as seafood and grain to Asia. At present grain from the Atherton Tableland is taken to Mackay because it has the only grain-loading facilities in north Queensland.

If a grain-loading facility was established in the north, it would be possible to increase grain production on the tableland. Many graziers outside Ravenshoe have cleared a thousand acres on which they want to grow sorghum. Some of them have grown trial crops of wheat. The growers would like to be able to export more of their grain crops. Approximately 80 000 to 100 000 tonnes is grown at present, but the Department of Harbours and Marine requires a throughput of 200 000 tonnes before it will install a grain-loading facility. The Government should plan for the future. If the facilities are established, with the opportunity of Australia's markets being expanded in Asia, Mourilyan harbour could be developed for export use.

I approached the Department of Harbours and Marine to acquire land on behalf of a person who wanted to process and export seafood. The northern part of the State grows fruit and vegetables and exotic fruit. They could be better marketed, but the area lacks the necessary processing facilities to handle them when they are in season. I hope that the Government will consider that in the future. Private enterprise is also involved in the development of aquaculture projects. In the future, that will become a major industry in north Queensland.

To keep people in north Queensland, the Government should also provide more health services such as the appointment of hospital dentists and optometrists. At present, Innisfail does not have a hospital dentist or optometrist. In some areas, if the optometrist is not available the patient is referred to a private optometrist and the Government picks up the tab. That should also be the case with dentists. Many people do not go to the dentist until they really have to. If no hospital dentist is available, the patient has to pay a fee. Many people are not members of medical benefits funds, so they do not receive a refund. The worst affected are the families, particularly those faced with the costs of high interest rates and those rearing a family. Many people are dependent upon the hospital dentist. I hope that, in the future, the Government will consider improving that.

Much of the development in north Queensland has been undertaken by private enterprise. Controlled and balanced development is required otherwise disastrous results

can follow. In my electorate, development is occurring from Ravenshoe to the Wild River, a distance of some 20 miles. When that development is completed, about 3 400 blocks will be available. Some of the blocks are along the Wild River and some are along Vine Creek and have good access to water. But what will happen to the people who move out there onto those blocks? There is no employment in the area.

That is why I am pleased that the Tully/Millstream hydroelectric scheme will go ahead. I know that the Minister is in favour of that scheme. He can certainly count on my help in promoting it. It will bring many benefits to north Queensland. That scheme will generate the power necessary for north Queensland. If something should happen to the two tielines in the grid system, north Queensland could be without power. The Tully hydroscheme will provide enough power for that area. It is as big as the hydroscheme at Wivenhoe. A few years ago surplus power from the Barron Falls and the Tully Falls hydroschemes was sold to Townsville when that city needed it. Now all electricity in Queensland is on the grid system, but something could go wrong with the towers.

When cyclone Winifred hit north Queensland, the electricity supply to about 3 000 people and some businesses was disrupted. Two electricity towers were blown over. The engineering specialists said that those towers would withstand all sorts of cyclones; but cyclone Winifred blew two towers over, one between Innisfail and Cairns and the other between Cardwell and Innisfail, and power supply was disrupted. Although electricity did not have to be rationed, the stage was reached at which load-shedding was introduced. As honourable members would be aware, because of the heat in the north, refrigeration problems were caused.

At one stage, about 2 800 people were without power when the needle on the power station's warning meter reached the point at which load-shedding should begin. Both the Barron Falls and the Tully Falls hydroschemes were generating maximum power. However, it is not possible to generate maximum power continually. It is like a motor car engine. If a car's engine will do 5 000 revs and a driver decides to run it at 5 000 revs every minute that he drives it, the engine will not last very long.

I am pleased that development is coming into north Queensland with the Tully hydroscheme. I invite the member for Southport to have a look at that scheme. He will be made welcome. I know that he lives in the elite area of the State, the south-east corner, where there is everything. It has freeways and highways.

The Government has not learned its lesson from pulling up the Gold Coast railway line. In north Queensland the same thing is being done. The Government has closed the railway line from Ravenshoe to Atherton. I am sure that it is looking forward to the day when it can close more railway lines. Railway stations have been downgraded. The stations at Boogan and Silkwood have been closed. It is fortunate that they are on the main Sunlander/Queenslander route.

The Opposition hopes that the day will come when it wins Government and brings progress to north Queensland by reopening those lines. The produce is there. It needs to be channelled into the railways. The Government is giving more help to the railway's opposition such as the road transport companies than it is giving to its own railway system. This State was developed by the railway system. People could go out west or up north. Many people had to endure hardships to bring those rail services not only to north Queensland but also to other places in this State. The best and safest thing the Government can do is take the big, dangerous trucks and buses off the road and enable goods and people to travel by rail.

Time expired.

Mr NEWTON (Glass House) (5.23 p.m.): The electricity industry in Queensland provides the lowest-priced electricity of any mainland State in Australia. The National Party Government can justifiably be proud of that achievement. Credit for the low cost of electricity must be given both to the National Party and to National Party Ministers who have held the Energy portfolio in the past.

I pay tribute to the heads of department and staff of the QEC. As Mr Tenni said earlier, the incredible achievements of the Government in the generation and supply of electricity have been made possible by a succession of competent Ministers.

Mr Vaughan: Is that the overall price or the price to the consumers?

Mr NEWTON: I will come to that later in my speech.

During this debate, members of the Opposition have made negative statements. The criticism of the electricity-supply industry was put right by Mr Tenni, who also mentioned the achievements of this Government in northern development. Members of the Opposition should read the report published by the Queensland Electricity Commission and become aware of the way in which efficiency has been integrated into the generation of electricity. The Government should also be credited with being able to maintain a constant supply of power in this State and keeping the lights on. The people of Queensland appreciate the reliability of the electricity-supply industry which is due largely to the good management of this Government. The people in my electorate remember problems that were caused by the electricity strike in recent years.

The Queensland Electricity Commission recorded a staff level in 1984 of 5 245. In 1989, the figure is 2 995, which represents a 43 per cent reduction. The commission has applied principles of efficiency to the overall benefit of the tax-payers in this State.

For the benefit of honourable members, I will mention the price paid per kilowatt hour by consumers throughout Australia. In Queensland it is 7.9c; in New South Wales it is 8.03c; and in Victoria it is 8.04c. The low cost of electricity is one of the reasons that people leave the southern States and choose to live in Queensland. Many people ask why businesses transfer their operations to Queensland. Part of the explanation must be the constancy of the electricity supply and the reasonable cost to the consumer. Those two factors must surely support the establishment of new industries and enable them to go ahead.

There are costs associated with the generation and supply of electricity. It may be useful for me to outline a comparison between Queensland and the other States to show the level of efficiency of Queensland's electricity industry. The cost in Queensland amounts to 1.67c per kilowatt hour. In New South Wales, the cost is 2.09c per kilowatt hour, and in Victoria it is 2.24c per kilowatt hour. Queensland leads Australia in keeping costs down. In spite of an inflation rate of 7.2 per cent per annum, electricity charges have remained at the same level as they were in February 1988. As Mr Tenni said earlier, that is a remarkable achievement. The period of reduced charges followed a three-year period when electricity charges increased by less than half the rate of inflation.

The Government is committed to tariff strategies that will result in no increases amounting to greater than half the CPI up till 1994. As Mr Tenni said earlier, the increases may not even be as great as that.

Mr Vaughan interjected.

Mr Stephan: He is jealous.

Mr NEWTON: Of course he is jealous. I can see costs doubling if—and I emphasise the word “if”—the ALP wins Government in this State. People are very wary about ALP policies.

Mr McElligott: You're gone.

Mr NEWTON: The honourable member is gone. He should keep up his swan-song.

For the first time, the electricity-supply industry has not needed to raise borrowed capital. That point was made earlier by Mr Tenni. In 1988-89, the industry financed its capital requirements of \$350m from funds generated from the sale of electricity, and capital contributions from new customers for supply extensions. The increase in the number of new customers indicates that people are indeed moving to Queensland. In

my electorate, an additional 7 000 new consumers have lodged applications. I have also noticed that new connection work has been undertaken in my electorate.

Mr Davis: At Maleny, in the Conondales.

Mr NEWTON: That area is getting a supply of electricity. All of the new expansion areas are having electricity connected and the people love it. They know that they have an effective parliamentary representative looking after them. That is why people are coming to settle at Maleny. The ALP has no chance of being successful in my electorate at the next election, because I look after my constituents very well.

The electricity-supply industry's self-funding arrangements are in line with its objective of reducing its debt-to-equity ratio. In the face of an ongoing need to spend larger amounts of capital on new plant to meet customers' needs for electricity, the industry is planning to improve internal cash flows to fund capital needs from current revenue.

Mr Stephan: You need the right ratio.

Mr NEWTON: That is right; we must have the right ratio. I look after my constituents. And I like to have the right ratio, too.

The industry will also attempt to reduce the debt-to-equity ratio continually over the period till the year 2000. That is another great achievement. As I said earlier, the Opposition has no hope of being successful in Government. The debt-to-equity ratio will blow out if the ALP ever wins Government in this State.

The efficiency measures I have outlined show the commitment of the industry to continual improvement in performance, continual reduction in costs and continual improvement in the utilisation of its assets. The industry has not shown any inclination to rest on its laurels. A marketing strategy is being developed to better define and guide its efforts to meet the needs of customers. Surveys and studies are presently under way to bring about a better understanding of customers' needs and identify opportunities to improve the use of industry resources and bottom-line results.

Recently I declared open some housing projects in my electorate. I saw with my own eyes that the incorporation of efficiency measures in the design of houses can result in a saving in energy costs. The same principles of efficiency as apply in the reduction of household costs apply to the generation and supply of electricity. The Government and the electricity industry are constantly striving to meet the needs of electricity-consumers in Queensland.

Queensland's farming community suffers long periods of dry-weather conditions. Irrigation is the only answer if enterprises are to survive. I emphasise this point for the benefit of members of the Opposition who tend to forget that farmers put a lot of work into producing crops. If electricity tariffs can be reduced to assist primary industry, that will ultimately make Queensland a better State.

In response to concerns raised by irrigators, the electricity-supply industry has worked closely with the farming community to review irrigation tariffs and supply farmers with electricity at competitive prices while ensuring that electricity-supply industry assets are used efficiently. Earlier in the debate the member for Port Curtis mentioned that the industry generates an oversupply. I point out that farmers use electricity during off-peak periods for irrigation, which not only reduces the costs of production for the farmer but also utilises a source of energy that is readily available.

Last year saw the introduction of a new tariff, tariff 64, which has been welcomed, particularly by the small day-time irrigators, who recognise that this tariff is the cheapest for their conditions. The new tariff reflects farmers' desires to have a simple pricing structure, that is, a single day rate and a single night rate. That helps in areas where farm-workers must be efficient.

Mr Veivers: Do you use a lot of power for irrigating your papaws?

Mr NEWTON: I am one of the consumers. Before I entered Parliament I worked on the land and one of the engines I used for drip irrigation did not stop running for six weeks.

Mr Davis: Do you have what they call drip irrigation?

Mr NEWTON: Yes, drip irrigation. It saves a lot of water and is very efficient.

Larger irrigators, who are particularly concerned with coping with long, dry spells, have been assisting the industry to reflect their needs in tariff conditions, and initiatives will be announced in the future by the good men in the department.

In bringing down the State Budget, the Government was delighted to increase the electricity pensioner rebate from \$6 to \$8 a month for all eligible Queensland pensioners. My electorate contains a large number of pensioners, although I do not believe that Mr Davis would qualify for this pensioner rebate. That improvement continues the Government's ongoing commitment to its elder citizens that began in 1987.

Mr Vaughan: You had to be forced to introduce it, though.

Mr NEWTON: This Government will always have an ongoing commitment to its elderly citizens.

Of critical importance to the achievement of the outlined cost-savings has been the excellent performance of Queensland's modern power station plant. Two months ago I visited the Tarong Power Station.

Mr Perrett interjected.

Mr NEWTON: As the honourable member for Barambah said, it is a great power station. It is clean and well equipped.

The new stations at Tarong and Callide have consistently achieved greater than 90 per cent availability since coming on line, equalling or bettering performances all around the world. Similarly, moves have been made to improve the availability of Gladstone Power Station. It should be noted that Gladstone Power Station's availability improved by more than 8 per cent on the previous year and is up to 88 per cent. That proves what can be done with new technology and machines. A refurbishment program presently under way on Gladstone Power Station will assist in continuing this excellent performance.

To ensure that future demand for electricity is met, the Government is continuing further major power station developments at Stanwell and Tully/Millstream. Design work for the 1 400-megawatt Stanwell power station reached a peak in 1988-89. Construction activities on and off site are gathering momentum to meet a commercial load date for the first unit of 1 March 1993. This power station will cater for the increasingly large number of industries that are moving to Queensland. Queensland will establish secondary industries long before the other States, because the power needs of those industries will be met. Being established in my electorate are industries that will use large amounts of electricity. Contracts awarded for the Stanwell power station have generally exhibited lower prices than those experienced in previous years. Significant savings have resulted from factors such as optimisation of designs through value engineering studies, use of the latest Australian and overseas design and construction techniques, adoption of improved competitive procurement practices and generally a more competitive contracting environment.

The 600-megawatt Tully/Millstream hydroelectric scheme was recently approved by the Government. The scheme is a major expansion of the existing Tully Falls hydroelectric project, which has been in operation for more than 30 years, and will utilise much of the established infrastructure, including the major water storage of the Koombooloomba Dam. The scheme involves the construction of a 600-megawatt power station, two large dams and several smaller dams and weirs, as well as more than 20 kilometres of tunnels.

Recently the Minister and I visited the Wivenhoe Dam and the Tarong Power Station. In today's environment, the use of water to generate power is a great initiative.

It is a clean way of generating power and should have been used in years gone by. These schemes meet the environmental needs of today's society.

The new Tully power station, with three 200-megawatt generating units, will be located deep underground and discharge its water into the Tully River about 19 kilometres downstream of the existing Kareeya Power Station. Compared with coal-fired power stations, this scheme offers the benefits of lower capital expenditure and very low operating costs and is more favourable environmentally. Those areas are blessed with more rain than areas in the south of the State, and are ideal for the development of hydroelectric schemes. A coal-fired alternative to the Tully/Millstream scheme would have cost an additional \$500m, which could have been recouped only through higher tariffs in the future.

It is great that the industry has people who are wholly and solely concerned with the cost of producing electricity. In addition, there are those who bring the stations into being. I must spend a little time on the trip we undertook to see these power stations.

Mr Yewdale: You won't be going round on election day; you'll be going down.

Mr NEWTON: I will be going up on election day. I am glad to hear that comment from the honourable member. My constituents have great respect for me and for what I have achieved for them. I hope that the Labor Party can produce a candidate to stand against me because I have served my electorate well, and that will show up on election day. In addition, the Government has put a good deal into my electorate. Many people are coming into my electorate and, because of this Government's initiatives, are using the electricity being produced. More will be done in my electorate because I will still be representing it after the next election.

I now want to deal with the rehabilitation of the areas from which the coal was taken to supply these power stations. Despite the protests of the environmental people, those involved deserve to be congratulated on what has been achieved. The mine-owners are putting the soil back and planting trees and grass. This will be of benefit to the country.

I give top marks to everybody involved in this industry. The Ministers have done everything possible to ensure, until 1994, a supply of electricity at the cheapest rate in Australia. This continued supply of electricity will cost less than in the other States. This results from what has been done by this great Government and everybody in the industry, from the worker to those providing the new machinery, which is more cost efficient. We saw that sort of machinery at Tarong. There is no doubt that what the Government has done will attract large numbers of people from the other States.

I had a chat with a person who came from Victoria. I said, "Why did you come to Queensland?" She said, "There are greater opportunities in Queensland because of the industry development here and the openness of the economy." Many people come to Queensland because of the great work that is being done by this Government. More and more people will come to Queensland. Our population is increasing, whereas there is negative growth in many of the other States.

Mr SHERLOCK (Ashgrove) (5.40 p.m.): May I begin by thanking the Labor Party Whip, the Government Deputy Whip and the honourable member for Thuringowa for allowing me to enter the debate at this stage so that later I may attend to some business in my electorate.

The basis of northern development and regional development in a vast and diverse State such as Queensland depends upon the infrastructure of buildings, roads, schools, hospitals, care for the aged, and all the other things that take place in the community. I should like to spend a few minutes on community health.

A recent decision taken by the State Government increased by \$20 a day the charges in public hospitals. That will have a big impact on north Queensland families and the families in all parts of rural Queensland. That is a 13 per cent rise, which is a good deal more than the inflation rate. The Commonwealth recommended a \$10-a-day increase

and I understand that all hospitals throughout New South Wales will work on that amount. Consequently, northern regional families in Queensland will be asked to pay a \$10-a-day bed tax, which will have a severe impact.

Patients will have to pay this increase out of their own pockets. The people in Queensland who have health insurance pay various State taxes, their Federal tax and their Medicare levy. They pay the general tax that supplements the health costs that the Labor Party in this nation imposes. It is private patients in particular who will be discriminated against because an increase in health fund charges is sure to follow. This is totally inconsistent with the principles of a party such as the National Party, which supports those who look after themselves. I consider that it is a bad decision because it is in excess of the inflation rate and it discriminates against the one-third of Queensland families right throughout the State who insure themselves. It is difficult to understand such a decision coming from a Government that encourages people to look after themselves. The bottom line will be an increase in the cost of private health insurance, which will impact not only on the public sector but also on the private sector.

I draw the Committee's attention to the windfall of \$450m above budgeted receipts in the last financial year that resulted from the collection of extra stamp duties. Because Queensland is so great in its progress, it collects additional stamp duties and land tax. Last year, the windfall was \$450m above budget. I understand that it is running at the same rate in the current year. With a quarter of the year gone, we can expect that in excess of \$100m above budget has been collected.

A Cabinet Budget Committee decided to increase by \$20 a day the public hospital charge throughout the State.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I find it a little difficult to see the relevance of the honourable member's remarks to the portfolio of Mines and Energy and Northern and Regional Development. He seems to be debating health legislation. I draw his attention to that.

Mr SHERLOCK: I take your point, Mr Chairman. However, I make the point that the increase of that fee by \$20 a day will have an impact on the infrastructure in the State and on the cost of health to families in every part of the State.

The Government is attempting to develop a space station at Cape York. In places such as Mount Isa, Townsville, Cairns and every other regional centre in the State which has a large hospital, the public hospital charge will increase by \$20 per day. I call on the Health Minister and the Premier to review that matter.

I thank you for your ruling, Mr Chairman. I will now talk about Aboriginal health and the Aboriginal population who occupy a large part of north Queensland and who are heavily involved in northern development. Mr Katter is in the Chamber. I acknowledge the contribution that he has made, particularly to the development and welfare of Aboriginal communities.

The traditional Aboriginal family group has a positive role to play in the future development of Queensland. Queensland Government health initiatives will enhance their traditional life-style and address inadequacies such as the lack of adequate education, the low self-esteem, the high rates of preventable diseases and the neglect of certain treatable conditions. Aboriginal health is best understood against a background of a range of environmental and social problems, including the relative urban and rural deprivation, the loss of traditional way of life, the family separation and poverty, the inadequate sanitation and water supplies and access to medical treatment and housing. Aboriginal health-providers must work with their own people to support traditional community life.

In Government, the Liberal Party will continue to recognise the special problems of Aboriginal communities and the way those problems impact on the Queensland health system. We will acknowledge the special health program that exists for Aboriginal health communities. That program focuses on prevention of maternal and neo-natal mortality,

malnutrition and early diagnosis and treatment of adult and childhood diseases and infections.

We will directly consult with Aboriginal communities to ensure the provision of adequate housing, clean water, sanitation and sewage disposal. We will emphasise health education, especially hygiene, nutrition and diet to both children and adults. We will provide training programs for Aboriginal people as fieldworkers. We will encourage the training and appointment of Aboriginal administrators in relevant health programs. We will support Aboriginal communities to be self-sufficient through health centres and simple training programs through community councils. We will develop highly mobile teams to be used for basic health care education. We will develop community antenatal programs, adequate birthing centres and close post-natal follow-up for mother and child. We will provide co-ordinated medical services between mobile clinics and existing medical structures in the management of diabetes, cardiovascular disorders, alcoholism, eye diseases and ear, nose and throat disorders. We will foster policies which recognise the special status and role in the community of the elderly, who are the repository of Aboriginal language and culture. We will develop educational preventive programs relating to the effects of life-style and diet in order to improve the quality of life and life expectancy.

Mr KATTER: I rise to a point of order. The honourable member is making a very good speech and the matters to which he is referring are very important. However, I do not believe that they are relevant to Mines and Energy. This is to be a long debate. I am sorry to be rude, but I believe that the honourable member should return to the matter being debated.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I must uphold this point of order. I have remonstrated with members in the past for being irrelevant. In fact, I have asked some members to conclude their speeches. The Chair cannot allow inconsistency. It is embarrassing for me to have to listen to a speech that has no relevance whatever to the subject-matter under debate. I ask the member to consider his position and respect the position of the Chair.

Mr SHERLOCK: I do not mean any disrespect to the Chair, Mr Chairman. I accept your decision. However, let me say that the Aboriginal community is very important in the northern development of the State. I understood that we were debating Northern Development Estimates.

I turn now to the Cape York space station, which has been mentioned already in the debate, and to the tremendous window of opportunity that we have in Queensland to provide that facility. The economic impact of the Cape York space station in the first five years has a capacity to be \$1.5 billion in the construction stage alone. We could have space launches on that site within three years. The project will create 550 jobs and generate \$20m in wages a year.

It is two years since former Premier Petersen announced the program for the Cape York space station. We all know the great opportunity that Queensland has with a site that is one of the best in the world; a stable environment, the best geographical site for west-east launches and a great site for north-south launches. Australia has a good record in terms of space launches. Back in the 1950s and the 1960s, launches from Woomera established Australia's reputation. However, because we launched to the east and because the French pulled out of the project, we had to pull out of it.

The project at Cape York is so good. Because it is close to the equator, a rocket is able to put bigger payloads into space.

Of course, the space project is a trucking operation; it is a transport operation. Water, fuel and materials that are to be used in manufacturing in space—highly technical material, pharmacological material and so on—will have to be transported up to the space station, hopefully from a site at Temple Bay. The major transport firms in this nation are getting behind that project.

The scram jet engine is being developed in Queensland. That in itself has tremendous future potential in the aircraft industry throughout this nation and the world. Cape York could become a regional base so that people could fly from Tokyo, New Zealand, the United States, Asia and other parts of Australia to Europe or North America in less than an hour using suborbital flight.

The scram jet engine is being tested in a wind tunnel at Queensland University. That project is being overseen by Professor John Simmons. It has the potential of taking over as the second stage of the rockets of the future. That will enable Queensland, which is the leader of the space industry in Australia, to put bigger payloads into space, because a scram jet uses no fuel at all. Therefore, a heavy fuel load is not necessary. The scram jet could blast off from Temple Bay at Cape York on a normal rocket. Before that rocket goes into orbit, there would be a second stage powered by a scram jet engine, with air forced in the front and forced out the rear under enormous pressure. The vehicle is launched into space with an infinitesimal amount of fuel compared with that which is presently used. That increases the payload enormously. It provides Queensland with a great opportunity for the future.

It is estimated that between 1989 and 2001 there is the facility for some 19 to 32 commercial launches per year, and 25 per cent of these could come to a Queensland-based spaceport. This provides the opportunity for generating wealth for Queensland, and north Queensland in particular, to the tune of some \$50 billion. But, of course, it is a race, because other countries would like to beat Queensland. Hawaii, Brazil, Indonesia and Kiribati come to mind. We have an opportunity now; we have a window. It is there for the taking. I draw the attention of the Committee to the Kennedy vision of the 1960s, which put an American onto the moon. I call for that sort of vision in terms of ensuring that Queensland is first in the race to create the first commercial spaceport.

While I am on the subject of northern development, I want to talk about something that affects my family and is dear to my heart. I refer to my own son, Stuart, who is a Bachelor of Science from Queensland University and also a Bachelor of Pharmacy. Just under a year ago Stuart set up his own pharmacy at the Marina Mirage resort at Port Douglas, and he is doing very well. He is 26 years old, and he has a lot of spunk and determination. He also has a large mortgage, and the interest rates are impacting on him, as they are on others who own small businesses.

Businesses at the Marina Mirage resort are closing down because they are running out of capital. Costs are impacting upon them. The Labor-imposed interest rates are really holding back small-business development in north Queensland, particularly in Port Douglas and other tourist resorts. Of course, the situation brought about by the Federal Labor Government does not help a young pharmacist who is trying to make his way and who is hanging out his shingle for the very first time in a new development.

The pilots dispute has finally devastated many of the tourist facilities in the north. It has certainly devastated new businesses. My son is battling all of these adverse conditions. I might say that I am proud of my son. I am proud of what he has achieved in the past, and I am sure that he will go on to be successful in the future, because he has got the guts and the determination that have made this country great. He has the enterprise to go out and build something and to create some of the wealth of this nation.

I conclude by saying something about the development of the north of Australia and, in particular, the north of Queensland. Recently I had the privilege of being in the northern part of Western Australia and the Northern Territory during the Kangaroo '89 exercise. I went up there for four days. I also went down to Kununurra and I saw the 8/9th battalion, which were deployed there, and the 2/14 Lighthorse, which happens to be based in my electorate, in action in that exercise in Western Australia. I then had the opportunity of going down to Katherine to see the headquarters of the 1st Division and down to Roper's Bar, where I, together with members of the local community, inspected the artillery, the cavalry regiments out in the field, the communications and the close working together of the defence forces and local communities.

Of course, one of the great military threats to this nation is some sort of incursion from the north. Our military intelligence reveals that there is very little likelihood that there will be a mass landing in northern Australia. Thousands of miles of ocean would have to be crossed to achieve that and, logistically, support would be needed. However, Australia is very vulnerable indeed to incursions by an enemy who could come in and perhaps seize some vital assets in northern Australia. I cite the example of a Cape York spaceport at Temple Bay. The enemy might seize some of those large facilities, take some hostages and perhaps threaten to cut some throats. If that occurred, this country would have a real problem on its hands. If it happened before the major wet, Australia would face extreme difficulty indeed in defending itself.

It is vital to put in place that infrastructure that I spoke about earlier, that we build the roads, that we have clear communication, deep-water ports, airports, schools, hospitals and community health centres in place to enable it to happen.

Sitting suspended from 6 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr PERRETT (Barambah) (7.30 p.m.): It gives me much pleasure to have the opportunity to speak in this debate. Mining is one of Queensland's major primary industries. It has played a tremendous role in the development of this State. Queensland is fortunate to have such rich mineral resources contained in almost every part. A wide range of minerals is mined in this State and a number of oil wells produce commercial quantities of oil.

Tonight I want to use the time available to me to focus on two specific areas. Firstly, I shall refer to some issues in my electorate. Later, I shall concentrate my remarks on some of the environmental issues that arise from time to time and connect them with the mining industry.

I congratulate the Minister on his elevation to this more senior portfolio. I had a lot to do with him when he was Minister for Community Services. An Aboriginal settlement is located within my electorate. The Minister paid several visits to that community and I always found him very helpful to deal with. I am sure that he will do a good job in his new portfolio. The Minister has first-hand knowledge of the extensive mining industry in his electorate.

Before dealing with the mining industry, I point out that the construction of the Tarong Power Station in the South Burnett area has not only been a tremendous boon to Queensland but also has been a tremendous boon to the South Burnett area. Although Tarong is not in my electorate, my constituents benefit from some of the spin-offs from it. I would hasten to say that during this time, when the rural industry has been deflated by a continuance of—

Mr Vaughan: It only cost \$259m to do it.

Mr PERRETT: It was money well spent. Queensland now has the cheapest electricity in Australia. I do not think that anybody could argue about the benefits gained from the building of the Tarong Power Station.

A lot of money is injected not only into Kingaroy but also into other towns in the South Burnett area. In the last couple of years, when there has not been very much money coming out of rural industry in that area, it has kept the town going. Be that as it may, QEC has been an excellent tenant, as has Pacific Coal, which operates the coal mine. They are wonderful supporters of community services in the area. The provision by them of sporting amenities and other facilities has been very much appreciated by the residents.

While I am dealing with Tarong—I hear some noises coming from the opposite side of the Chamber about Sir Joh's influence in the construction of the Tarong Power Station. I believe that it was a value decision. I would like to heap praise on Sir Joh for having the foresight to build the power station at Tarong. Sir Joh has not stopped there. He has leases on vast kaolin deposits in the Kingaroy area. At present, I believe that he is looking closely at setting up a \$300m processing plant in the Kingaroy area.

Knowing Joh's determination to make things succeed, I believe that it will succeed. That project will be a tremendous boost for industry away from the coastal belt in this State. Industry is certainly needed inland; too much of it has been heaped upon the coastal belt. Mr Prest would be well aware of the benefit of industry to his electorate.

Mr Prest: We are talking about industry next Wednesday night.

Mr PERRETT: I am talking about mining. Before a ceramics plant can be established, it is first necessary to mine the kaolin.

Mr Gately: But you wouldn't expect him to know that, would you?

Mr PERRETT: It amazes me sometimes.

I have every faith that this venture will succeed and that it will be a tremendous boon to Queensland. The population of the town of Kingaroy could double in the next five or six years.

Some gold deposits are located in my electorate around Kilkivan, which is not very far from Gympie, the site of some of the first gold mines in this State. Alluvial gold-mining is being carried out by a company called Beaumark. One of the problems that was brought to my notice recently related to the rehabilitation of land. Beaumark has generally tried to do a good job. A great deal of money has been spent by that company on rehabilitation. Unfortunately, owing to adverse seasonal conditions, sometimes when land is reseeded a very good strike of grass does not occur. During the last six or eight months the area has received a high rainfall. A great deal of erosion has occurred. The holdings in the area are small in comparison with those in central and northern Queensland. However, the soil is more fertile. When a significant percentage of a person's property is mined and the rehabilitation is perhaps not spot on, the livelihood of the property-owner is affected seriously. I have brought that matter to the attention of the Minister and he has given me an assurance that he will examine it.

Recently, in the Black Snake area, which is also near Kilkivan, a firm called United Reefs indicated its intention to reopen some old gold mines. Hard-rock mining is the method used to extract the ore. The proposal has created concern because the company intends to use the cyanide method of extraction of gold from the ore.

People have approached me because they are concerned about environmental issues such as road damage. The site of those old mines is about 25 miles from Kilkivan township on a very narrow, winding road that is wide enough for only one vehicle. Because accidents might occur on that road and lives might be lost, people are concerned about the number of trucks that will use it. Twice a day a school bus travels along that route.

During my stint as chairman of the lands committee of the Cattlemen's Union I saw many problems created by mining in some of the cattle areas of central and northern Queensland. I am pleased that the department has considered seriously ways and means of alleviating some of those problems. I am sure that people such as Kevin Wolff, Ken Gluch and Mick Minz from the Mines Department got sick of people such as me knocking on their doors with complaints, but they were always friendly; they gave me a hearing and considered my concerns.

During my tours of the State, some of the worst devastation that I saw was in north Queensland, particularly around Georgetown and Forsayth, where tin-mining had taken place. When the bottom fell out of tin-mining, miners turned to gold-mining. The department has probably learnt from its past mistakes. In the past a lot of degradation occurred, particularly erosion that was caused by small operators who went broke, walked out and left a lot of rubbish strewn around properties because they did not have the funds necessary to undertake rehabilitation. Many of them leased their plant and, when they did not strike it rich, they just walked away. Their plant was repossessed and there was virtually no skin off their noses. Unfortunately, the land-holders lost out.

At that time there were not many field officers within the department, but Gary Smith from Emerald—a very helpful and likeable gentleman—inspected the land, spoke to the land-holders and immediately an improvement was made in the rehabilitation of that land.

Mr Prest: They ought to rehabilitate some of the land around Anakie.

Mr PERRETT: That was another area that I inspected. Those gem-fields are well known because real anarchy occurred there. Small operators created that havoc.

Mr Prest: You wouldn't think the big fellows would do that now.

Mr PERRETT: The big mining companies usually do the right thing. Because the smaller blokes create all sorts of problems, land-holders are usually happier to have big mining companies on their properties.

When attempts were made to rehabilitate land in central Queensland, parthenium weed was cultivated. The Leader of the House, who is the Minister for Land Management, would not be too happy about that; neither were the land-holders.

The department has taken a very serious look at the environment. Despite some of the bleatings that honourable members hear from time to time, the Government is interested in preserving the environment. As an example, any honourable member who has been to Fraser Island would realise that the area that was sand-mined has been properly rehabilitated. It is probably the best-preserved area on the island. The trees have grown, the grass has taken quite a foothold and there is definitely less damage from wind erosion in that area.

As to environmental management—the Mines Department continues to demonstrate its commitment to improving the environmental performance of the mining industry. Firstly, it has significantly streamlined the procedures for assessing environmental matters that are associated with the granting of mining titles, which is a great step forward. During the past 18 months three new staff positions have been created within the environmental management unit. The end result has been quicker and more efficient processing of title applications and a greater thrust of efforts in the field. In the past the department had insufficient numbers of people in the field. There are so many Ned Kellys in the industry—particularly small operators—that if they were not being watched they could get away with virtually anything. It is pleasing that ecologists have been deployed in Rockhampton and Cairns.

Secondly, appropriate environmental codes of practice have been developed by the department, in consultation with industry and other relevant authorities. As a consequence, a code of practice in the safe use of cyanide has been developed, which I know will make the people who live around the Black Snake area of Kilkivan a little more contented.

Work has also commenced on codes of practice for the rehabilitation of coal mines, and work will soon commence on codes of practice for waste disposal, tailings dam management and decommissioning of mines. It is hoped that all of these codes of practice, as well as additional helpful guide-lines, will be completed within 12 months. It certainly will be welcomed by all environmentalists around the country.

Thirdly, there is a thrust to ensure that environmental management, rehabilitation and decommissioning are integrated with mine-planning. That is a must. Before the land is actually mined, all the planning must be laid down. The department is committed to ensuring effective and timely rehabilitation at mining operations. For example, coal-mining operations in the Bowen Basin are being requested to develop sound rehabilitation planning and erosion control trials. As I mentioned before, erosion is certainly a major problem. These should be completed and approved by about the middle of next year, with the view to immediate implementation of improved rehabilitation.

As a reflection of its contribution to the Government's land-care strategy for the State, the department strongly believes that mining must be more demonstrably a

compatible land resource user in conjunction with other users of our land. It believes that the most effective way of achieving compliance with acceptable environmental standards is to make industry more sensitive and aware and to make it understand the consequences of not maintaining these standards.

Administrative effort therefore is being focused on ensuring that miners take increased responsibility for impact assessment by adequate planning to address likely environmental hazards before proceeding with their projects, and by the monitoring of environmental performance during mining. The aim is to have the miners do it correctly, right from the beginning. The beginning is at the planning stage. The environmental dimension not only needs to be properly organised but also must receive appropriate funding throughout the entire life of the mine. That is the industry's responsibility. I think that has been exemplified by some of the small miners who went into an operation without sufficient funds behind them.

The department's role is to exercise its authority through the review process at the granting-of-leases stage and by deploying resources in the field to advise and educate and to monitor the performance of the actual mining operations themselves. The recent deployment of staff to Cairns and Rockhampton is intended to promulgate enhanced standards for environmental performance and to better monitor industry performances.

There can be no question that the mining industry makes an invaluable contribution to the economic well-being of all Queenslanders. The department, in ensuring that the State's mineral and energy resources are assessed, developed and utilised, places a high priority on also ensuring that this is achieved with sound environmental management.

The department must be congratulated on the decisions that it has taken. It has listened to people who know what they are talking about—people who have been affected. I guess that all of us will benefit from the strategy which it now has planned.

Mr McELLIGOTT (Thuringowa) (7.50 p.m.): In my contribution to this Estimates debate I do not want to say too much about the mining industry. I must admit that I do not know a tremendous amount about it. However, I will concentrate my remarks on Regional Development, particularly as it relates to the area of the State that I represent, the Townsville/Thuringowa area. Before I do so, I want to make a few comments about mining, based mainly on what previous speakers have said.

The member who has just resumed his seat referred to the environmental aspects of the mining industry. I was a little surprised to hear some of the comments made by the member for Mount Isa about the conflict, as I understood it, between conservationists, environmentalists or greenies—call them what you like—and the mining industry. I wondered whether perhaps he was aiming his remarks at some sort of community concern that is currently being expressed in Mount Isa.

Be that as it may, I think it is incumbent on all of us to recognise that, despite the problems that environmentalists may have caused the industry at different times over the years, they have nevertheless performed a real service to our community. Not only in the mining industry but also in industry and development generally, the stage had been reached at which leaving this earth for future generations was the last thing on people's minds. Fortunately, a dedicated group of people have revised our thinking on that. Although in some instances it can be argued that environmentalists have perhaps become too concerned or too reactive, in most cases a balance has been achieved. In mining and development, a balance has been reached so that development and mining can proceed, with the mined and developed areas of the State being left in a reasonable condition for future generations. I was surprised at Mr Beard's comments along those lines.

The other comment that I want to make about mining generally is that I cannot help thinking about the progress and the enormous changes that have occurred in the industry over the past 40-odd years. I can recall as a young fellow going underground in a private coal mine in the Burrum coal-field near Howard and Torbanlea. As I said, it was some 40 years ago and, as I recall it, it was a very basic mining operation.

Mr Prest: You would have been very young then.

Mr McELLIGOTT: I was very young in those days.

It was a very basic mining operation with pit ponies, picks and shovels and those sorts of things. I think that the mine concerned was owned by the Stafford family. At that time there was some coal-mining activity in the Ipswich region, but certainly not the massive coal developments that exist now in the Bowen Basin and other areas in central Queensland.

Similarly, I doubt very much whether any gold-mining was occurring in Queensland at that time. It would have been before that time that the fields at Gympie and other places were operating. Yet today some quite extraordinary gold-mining operations are taking place at Kidston and elsewhere. During the past 40 years, the changes that have occurred in the mining industry have been quite remarkable. The mining industry has brought wealth to this State and to this nation and has provided job opportunities for many people.

I notice that the Minister has returned to the Chamber. Earlier he referred to historic aspects of the industry, which is a topic I wish to address. Last Saturday I visited Charters Towers, which is situated in his electorate, as a tourist. I have been there many times before but on this occasion I was part of a bus-load of tourists. I inform the Assembly that I had a very interesting day. Charters Towers has a great deal to offer people who are interested in history, particularly the history of the mining industry. However, everyone on the tour was disappointed to find that a number of the agencies for the National Trust and other advisory bodies were closed. Many of the people who were on the tour with me would have liked to obtain information on heritage matters but were unable to do so because those who usually provide that type of information simply were not there.

The Northern and Regional Development section of the Minister's portfolio is very important. Clearly, if the Government is genuine about developing industry in north Queensland, it should put in place a proper strategy to ensure that not only is new industry created but also that more people are attracted to the area. It is a sad fact of life that, unless reasonably large population centres can be established, projects tend to slow down. I am concerned about the lack of development in towns such as Ingham, which is a single-industry town. From my observations, entire families are leaving Ingham to move elsewhere, presumably to the south-east corner of the State. Places such as Cardwell that have depended almost entirely on tourism are experiencing a decrease in population. Unless the Government can create new industries in that area, further examples of decreases in population will emerge.

I am pleased to be able to advise members that Wayne Goss recently launched a strategy to establish Townsville as the export capital of north Queensland. The strategy contains some important elements. As a member of an incoming Labor Government, I believe it is a strategy that is needed in Queensland. I would be very proud to be part of its implementation in the region that I represent.

Under a Goss Government, Townsville will be a critical element in the implementation of Labor's export development strategy for Queensland. That assertion is based not on sentiment, but on hard economic facts that underline Townsville's status as the economic and export fulcrum of north Queensland. There are some basic facts about Townsville that cannot be debated. For example, Townsville is a major industrial centre in its own right. It is also the principal port outlet for a range of primary and resource industries located in the broader north Queensland region. It is also a major tourist destination in its own right and provides an access point to various adjacent island resorts. It is a major communications centre and covers all modes of transport. It has an international airport, major port facilities and a major rail and road transport junction linking adjacent regions to the north, west and south. It enjoys almost unparalleled proximity to the major emerging export markets of Melanesia, south-east Asia and the remaining dynamic economic areas of the Pacific rim.

Townsville's undisputed economic significance in the north is reflected in its increasingly important status as an export centre. The most dramatic increase in export tonnages has been in general cargo shipments—some 650 per cent over three years. This has been almost exclusively due to the rapid development by Curtain Bros Shipping Services, which is supplying the major mining developments at Ok Tedi and Misima Island in Papua New Guinea. Papua New Guinea has been traditionally serviced out of Australia's southern capitals but Townsville, through the entrepreneurial success of Curtain Bros, is now becoming a major player. Papua New Guinea's total imports from Australia amount to some \$700m, of which Townsville's share is now on a steady increase. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, exports through the port of Townsville to Papua New Guinea for the year ending March 1989 stood at \$94m. The *Australian Financial Review* predicts that this figure will rise above \$100m by 1991.

Statistics demonstrate that Townsville has developed a sound export base. What is needed, however, is a comprehensive strategy with the active participation and support of the State Government which would further develop and diversify Townsville's export capacity. The challenge for all of us is to turn Townsville into Queensland's and Australia's springboard into the Asian market. This will not be a straightforward task, as Townsville faces potentially stiff competition from Darwin. Nonetheless, with a positive, coherent and forward-looking strategy, it is achievable.

The National Party Government has pursued what is in substance a policy of economic neglect in relation to north Queensland. The National Party has maintained the rhetoric of concern for the north while not delivering on the reality. This is nowhere better illustrated than in the National Party's Office of Northern Development, which has no policy function other than acting as a public relations unit for the party in the north.

There has been no National Party response to Labor's regional economic development policy for the north, which was released in Townsville in March 1989. The Nationals have yet to articulate a comprehensive policy for the region. The only program to be advanced by the present Government for the north is the northern enterprise zone. The principal problem with this proposal is that it is discriminatory in relation to new industries and those technically lying outside the narrow geographical definition of the zone. Labor sees the zone as, at best, an initial step in the direction of a properly structured regional approach to an economic and export development strategy for north Queensland. Labor's strategy, moreover, will apply to the entire north as opposed to a narrow part of it.

The Liberal Party has not released any comprehensive policies for north Queensland—economic or otherwise. There has been no substantive response to Labor's detailed regional economic development strategy for north Queensland. There has certainly been nothing from the Liberals on export policy. There is in fact a total policy vacuum as far as the Liberal Party is concerned, presumably in the belief that substantive policies are not relevant to its aspirations for political office.

Labor's strategy to make Townsville the export capital of the north forms an integral part of Labor's regional economic development strategy. Since January 1989 detailed development strategies have been released for ten of Queensland's 13 economic regions. Labor's economic strategy for the northern region, centred on Townsville, was released in March 1989, as I said earlier, and has been the subject of detailed input since then from representatives from a broad cross-section of the north Queensland business community.

As part of Labor's regional economic development strategy, a Goss Government will establish a department of regional development, with offices in each of Queensland's economic regions. For the northern region the DRD central office will be located in Townsville. Both the department and its regional offices will be closely linked to the newly established department of Premier, economic and trade development in Brisbane. The department of Premier, economic and trade development will contain within it the

entire range of the State Government's export-related expertise. The department of regional development, through its representative office in Townsville, will access the range of export-related programs which the department of Premier, economic and trade development will offer.

A principal function of the DRD north Queensland office will be to ensure that north Queensland industries make maximum use of the export-related programs offered through the department of Premier, economic and trade development in Brisbane. These programs should not be the preserve of industries located in south-east Queensland. Their objective is to expand Queensland's export capacity on a Statewide basis with a particular emphasis on the economic development of the north.

Labor's export development strategy for Queensland foreshadows the establishment of a Queensland export service. This will replace the State Government's existing and grossly inefficient operations abroad. It is planned that through the expenditure of the same amount of funds, some 20 to 25 export professionals will be employed by the Queensland Government with the explicit purpose of vigorously marketing Queensland products abroad. Given the particular economic significance of north Queensland, it is envisaged that at least one third of these export officers will have particular expertise in north Queensland industries. Their expertise will cover areas such as horticulture, aquaculture, mariculture and the beef industry.

A Goss Labor Government will initially offer a range of three export-related programs—

- (1) a horticulture export promotion program;
- (2) a beef industry export development program; and
- (3) an east Asian market penetration program.

All three programs are directly relevant to the industry profile and export potential of north Queensland. North Queensland industries will therefore be in an excellent position to make maximum use of these programs.

The key to the expansion of exports of exotic fruits, vegetables and flowers cultivated in north Queensland lies in the region's capacity to rapidly and regularly air freight these products to the principal markets of south-east Asia, north Asia, North America and the European Community. The major structural deficiency existing in this respect is the inadequacy of regular international air services from Townsville. At present, there are only two international air services operating from Townsville each week. Enormous export opportunities are therefore being lost. A Goss Government will initiate direct action with both the Federal civil aviation authorities and the international airline companies to ensure that either the frequency of international air services from Townsville is increased; or that the domestic airline industry be rationalised in such a manner as to make Townsville readily accessible to a proximate international airport to enable the rapid transshipment of air-freighted products.

The number of airline services into Townsville also needs to be increased in order to maximise the city's tourist potential. In this respect Labor does not believe that the Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation has performed its functions properly in the effective promotion of Townsville as a major international destination. A Goss Labor Government will restructure the Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation and redirect its resources in such a manner that international tourist promotion becomes the QTTC's first and foremost objective. The QTTC will be directed to promote specifically north Queensland tourist packages both internationally and interstate. These north Queensland holiday packages should contain a diversity of holiday destinations, including periods on outback stations, periods in Townsville and/or Magnetic Island, followed by a period on a reef island. Labor believes that the key to Townsville's international tourist future lies in the effective promotion of itself as part of a varied holiday package for international tourists accustomed to a diverse range of experiences within a single pre-arranged holiday package.

The port of Townsville is crucial to the city's economic and export future. In relation to the importation of nickel ore, Labor's position is that it must await the report of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority on the environmental impact of Halifax Bay as an appropriate port. Should the authority determine that the port of Halifax Bay can proceed without significant adverse environmental impact, then Labor will support this finding. Should the authority find to the contrary, then Labor will support the appropriate redevelopment of the port of Townsville to accommodate the requirements of larger vessels offloading nickel ore. Labor nonetheless maintains that, under this contingency, appropriate alternative arrangements will need to be made to minimise the dislocation of vehicular traffic, including the construction of necessary rail overpasses.

Labor believes the existing railway goods yards are not adequate for Townsville's general industrial or export purposes. There is insufficient room for expansion. A Goss Government will give a high priority to the relocation of these yards to Stuart where a more efficient complex could be constructed.

James Cook University has developed a strong regional identity. Over the years the university has succeeded in developing strong links with the Townsville and north Queensland business communities. A Goss Labor Government proposes to further develop these links by initiating discussions with the university authorities with a view to establishing a two-year masters program in international business.

I will not read the policy document word for word, but the extracts that I have cited indicate that only the Labor Party has been able to bring forward a comprehensive policy for regional development; the sort of policy that will develop the kinds of new industries I have referred to and will rescue places such as Ingham, Cardwell and other smaller towns around the region that thus far have been dependent upon a single industry. The pilots strike has demonstrated to everyone the folly of depending on a single industry.

Tourism in north Queensland has been hit very badly by the effects of this strike, but nonetheless it indicates the danger of depending upon a single industry. Whether the tourist industry in north Queensland will finally recover from this belting remains to be seen, but clearly, if the State Government is to play its role in regional development, it needs to do much more than simply establish a department that is used mainly for public relations purposes; it needs to come up with real strategies.

The kinds of strategies that should be considered are export-orientated. Townsville, and north Queensland generally, is ideally placed to take advantage of the market opportunities in the Pacific rim countries. Curtain Bros have clearly established that it can be done. The potential for the export of horticultural and aquaculture products and other products is quite considerable. The Minister has talked about it and he has played around the edges but there is no strategy in place. If it were not for the energy and enthusiasm of people like Mick Curtain, nothing would have occurred.

Government members interjected.

Mr McELLIGOTT: I have certainly got them off their backsides, Mr Temporary Chairman. They are now starting to think about the needs I am talking about, such as a real export strategy to promote north Queensland and to provide job opportunities in north Queensland. What I have indicated shows that the incoming Labor Government will introduce a real change for north Queensland. I am a north Queenslander and I understand the problems which are becoming more serious in the tourism towns, the sugar towns and the single industry towns.

Mr STEPHAN (Gympie) (8.08 p.m.): It gives me a good deal of pleasure to join in the debate and to wish the new Minister well in his portfolio. He will find this environment to be quite different from the previous one. I also take the opportunity to congratulate the previous Minister, Mr Martin Tenni, on his approach and the good work that he did during the past couple of years.

I also express my thanks to Mr Kevin Wolff and Ken Gluch, who are advising the Minister tonight. They have given me a good deal of assistance over a long period. Also

they visited my electorate recently and looked at some of the mine shaft collapses that have occurred from time to time and created quite a problem for the local residents. Some of these shafts are beneath dwellings and one can imagine the frustration of waking up in the morning and finding an enormous hole under one part of the house.

Mr De Lacy interjected.

Mr STEPHAN: I do not think that the honourable member would like it, either, but it is a continuing problem, particularly in wet conditions.

Mr De Lacy: Has the Liberal Party got your seat as a possible gain?

Mr STEPHAN: No.

The problem arises because the shafts were put down a long time ago and, although the timber in most instances is in very good condition, some of it collapses and it seems that this is the major problem. It is certainly being investigated and the Gympie City Council is being given encouragement to fill the shafts in. However, that does not completely overcome the problem and collapses do occur.

I took note of what has been said in the speeches by Opposition members. The honourable member for Cairns is in the Chamber. I noted his ability to ridicule people in his area when they are in fact doing their work but are getting under his skin because they are getting on top of the Labor Party. He is doing this to Mr Kevin Byrne for no reason but to try to undermine him and get him out of the way. Mr Byrne spends a great deal of time travelling round for the department and the State Government, and that is never mentioned. It is all very well to try to undermine, to ridicule and to be difficult and nasty, but, on the other hand, a good deal of assistance and co-operation has been given by the department in the development of north Queensland.

I would have thought that one of the prime objectives of even members of the Opposition would be to help to develop industries in the north. There is certainly great potential in the north and a good deal of work has to be done and a good deal of encouragement and co-operation given if the potential is to be realised.

I took note of the comments of the honourable member for Thuringowa about the changes in the mining industry, including those that took place when he was involved in this industry in his younger days.

In the Gympie area, investigations are being carried out into the possibility of opening up the underground mine. I cannot help but recognise and admire what was done by the old miners 50 and 100 years ago. They worked at deep levels in oppressive heat and stifling conditions. A person has to spend only a few hours down a mine to realise the problems associated with working in humid conditions and lack of ventilation. The conditions would have been hard and tough and the miners would have lost a lot of sweat and tears in winning the gold.

Many of the mining companies are ridiculed about their rehabilitation projects. Those who complain rarely return to a mine area 12 months after the actual mining has ceased and the rehabilitation is in place. If they did, they would find far more vigorous growth than was there originally. People complain that the land is not left in its natural state. However, after the trees are planted, they are cared for and the area is rehabilitated very well. I have noted instances of people who have ridiculed mining companies and complained of the degradation that they have caused. Whilst making those complaints, the people made complimentary remarks about the natural environment in which they were standing, yet that area had been mined previously. Some people get carried away and launch unfair criticism at mining companies.

The Minister has informed the Committee of the value of Queensland's mineral wealth. The high standard of living that we enjoy in Queensland is a result of the mining industry. However, minerals are not a renewable resource. A problem with mining generally is that it is not a renewable resource such as the timber industry. Mining in a particular area cannot continue for ever. We must ask ourselves whether the living

standards that we enjoy today can be guaranteed tomorrow. Will the current stability of the economy carry on into the future? Queensland enjoys financial stability whilst many other States and other countries are having problems. People are coming to Queensland because of its financial stability.

The more readily identified mineral deposits near the surface have been found already. To break new ground, today's prospectors are having to rely more and more on sophisticated techniques and a more detailed understanding of the geological factors that control mineralisation.

At Gympie, gold-mining is not taking place near the surface. Tests are carried out to determine not whether gold is underground but to determine the cost of extracting it. At present, deposits are being mined 900 metres underground. From that point, drilling operations are extending a further 900 metres. Mining companies have the potential to mine another 500 or 600 metres deeper than they are at present, which is approximately one and a half kilometres underground. Mining at that depth requires more accurate programming than was required in the past.

I compliment the BHP-Eldorado organisation on the work that it is carrying out and the contribution that it is making to the financial success of the area within which it is operating. I do not say that that is the only organisation operating in the Gympie area. However, it is mining underground at a greater depth than has been reached previously and problems with water are being encountered.

The corner-stone of future development and growth of the mining sector is the maintenance of up-to-date geological maps, because they present the information that provides the clues and signposts to the discovery of new mineral deposits. Geological maps have contributed to the State's mineral development in the same way as the early explorers opened up the State for pastoral development. Knowledge of geological materials and processes is also of value in land use planning, conservation and rational natural resource management. The prime source of geological information in Queensland is the Statewide coverage of geological maps, which resulted from 35 years of systematic geological mapping jointly undertaken by the Department of Mines, through the geological survey, and the Bureau of Mineral Resources.

Since 1984, the Government has funded the Regional Geological Mapping Program, following the withdrawal of Commonwealth Government support for that important activity. Since its inception, that program has targeted geologically complex areas of north Queensland which have high potential for mineral discoveries. Resources have not been available to undertake major mapping investigations elsewhere in the State.

Since 1984, six sheets covering Atherton, Clarke River, Einasleigh, Mossman, Mount Coolon and Maryborough have been remapped, and work is in progress on four others covering Bowen, Cooktown, Charters Towers and Townsville. Despite those achievements, over 100 of the State's 119 maps at 1:250 000 scale are based on data collected more than 20 years ago.

Geological mapping entails an extensive program of gathering geological and geophysical information from company exploration, academic research and field observations by geologists of the Department of Mines during a four-month field session.

A computer-based Regional Mapping Field Data Management System has been developed to improve the recording of field data and to facilitate access to and analysis of the data.

Another significant achievement is the development of a computerised mineral occurrence database, which greatly improves access to data on the State's mineral resources.

A wealth of data on the State's petroleum and ground-water resources is also available in two large computerised databases: Queensland Energy Resources Database and the Groundwater Database.

We tend to almost ignore the fact that the underground water system has the potential to assist enormously in various areas of the State. In fact, it is the life-blood of many of the areas away from the coast and even areas near to the coast. If this can be utilised and developed a bit more than it is at present, it will certainly help to encourage the development of our land with different types of industries. That is very important.

When one goes back in history just a little, one realises how important is the development of underground water systems. I know that arguments on that subject are taking place at the moment. One only has to consider the example of Wolffdene to realise the problems associated with surface water conservation. To ensure a sufficient water supply for the future, some of our valley areas, which are very fertile and which we can ill afford to lose, have to be covered. However, it is an either/or situation; we either have the development or we have the water.

The development of underground systems is one way of utilising the water that is underground without losing land to dams. I again compliment the department for the work that it has done in this field. Of course, it must be realised that this is only the beginning. There is a long way to go in the development of this particular resource.

In response to the rapid decline of reserves in the State's principal oil-producing region, that is the Cooper Basin in south-west Queensland, the Department of Mines undertook a three-year study to identify the geological controls on petroleum generation and accumulation in these basins. The results of that study, which was completed this year, will guide future exploration in this region.

At present we do not hear much about petroleum exploration and development. It has died off to a very large extent. That is a problem that we can ill-afford to ignore. We can ill-afford to say, "We will leave that for future generations to worry about." Exploration—particularly oil exploration—is expensive for the companies involved. However, if we want to maintain our present living standards or develop alternative fuels, encouragement needs to be given to these companies. I believe that we are falling down in that regard. In the past, people were prepared to put their money into oil exploration and development.

The model developed during the Cooper Basin study is being applied to the northern Eromanga Basin, where so far exploration has failed to discover significant petroleum resources, although encouraging indications are present.

The importance of geoscience mapping to Australia's economic and environmental well-being has been reaffirmed in a recent review conducted by the Bureau of Mineral Resources, which will lead to the development of a national geoscience mapping accord in consultation with industry and the academic community. The Geological Society of Queensland has played a major role in identifying priority areas for attention.

The Department of Mines also plans to extend the audit of the State's physical natural resources into central Queensland through mapping investigations in the Charters Towers to Emerald region. These measures and others towards mapping the State, in a geological sense, underline the necessary role played by the Department of Mines in the exploration and development of Queensland's mineral and energy resources. We cannot afford to ignore or belittle that role. Rather, we must lend our support to those efforts and, in so doing, ensure the continued health of this State's principal driving sector. Again I emphasise that that principal driving sector has helped to ensure that our living standard remains at its present level.

Mr Davis: You think the Cooper Basin is the place where the Premier washes his face.

Mr STEPHAN: It is obvious that the honourable member has just entered the Chamber. If he had been listening, he would know that I have also talked about some of the gold-mining fields.

The Government has placed great confidence in the mining industry. Like primary industry, the mining industry has certainly played its part in Queensland's development.

I compliment the mining industry for the work that it has done. I wish that industry all the very best for the future.

Ms WARNER (South Brisbane) (8.28 p.m.): I wish to speak about the prospects of northern development, with specific reference to the Aboriginal people who live in that region. Of course, the Cape York Peninsula is one of the few areas in Queensland in which the Aboriginal population actually outnumbers the non-Aboriginal population, and by a considerable number.

I understand that 58 per cent of the population of Cape York, which is 8 788 individuals, is Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, while the total population is 13 194. It is interesting that the Aboriginal population in that area is actually growing at a rate of 3.4 per cent and will continue to grow faster than the non-Aboriginal population, so much so that by the year 2015 it will double in size.

Another aspect of the demographics of Cape York is that the European population is confined to one or two centres, that is, on the periphery of the peninsula rather than throughout the peninsula. The vast majority of the European population is confined to Weipa and Cooktown. That gives us some idea of the complexion of the population on the peninsula. That makes a difference in terms of the future use to which the land on Cape York will be put. In talking about spaceports, tourist developments, improved pasture or simple grazing, which has been the traditional use of land in that area, the needs, desires and aspirations of Aboriginal people need to be taken into account. After all, in that area they comprise the majority of the population.

In the past, some fairly despicable crimes have been perpetrated against Aboriginal people in the name of the so-called economic development of the white population. Of course, in the very early days the Aboriginal people were treated virtually as though they were animals that could be removed from that land at the whim or at the will of the white settlers. At that time, the Aboriginal people resisted the enforced occupation and reacted with a degree of violence.

Mr Lee: Is that because of Mr Scott's representation or not?

Ms WARNER: I am talking about the late nineteenth century or the mid-nineteenth century. Even though Mr Scott is of some age, he is not that old.

Relationships between the European settlers and the Aboriginal people historically have not been good. There has been what I suppose one could describe as a history of mistrust, of antipathy and difficulty between the two societies when they came up against each other. There was what could be called a wall. In 1897 legislation was introduced by the Government that was described as the Protection of Aborigines Act. It was aimed basically at protecting Aborigines from white settlers who were violent towards them. Missions were also set up at that stage as a means of implementing the policies of that legislation to care and protect the Aboriginal population. Religious organisations operated those missions. It was also the view that the survivors of the wars that had taken place should be protected from further direct violation. At the time, the idea was that the race would simply die out in peace. Aborigines were gathered together in communities or missions away from the influence of opium and alcohol on land unwanted by pastoralists where their needs could be seen to until their ultimate demise. This policy of segregation also served to placate the fears of many people about the rapid increase in half-castes and the perceived threat to the White Australia Policy. Segregation was also aimed at reducing the rapid growth of the mixed-blood population.

The reserves that were established also became a convenient source of cheap labour. There are examples of some good relations between white settlers and Aborigines. In some cases there were quite beneficial relationships and a high degree of trust between the tin-miners in the Annan River area and the local Aboriginal people. There was also a number of pastoralists who had positive attitudes towards Aboriginal people. The 1897

legislation allowed the Government to force Aborigines onto reserves and to provide complete control and protection. The loss of land, together with the forced mix of different tribal groups, dealt a blow to Aboriginal society, the extent of which is only now being understood. Understanding the effects of these changes can assist in the appreciation of present-day Aboriginal attitudes.

By 1939 it was realised that Aborigines were not dying out and the attitude shifted to paternalism, where the institutions of missions and reserves were to be made successful in economic terms. Segregation was more rigidly enforced, and under a new Act it was intended that Aborigines be encouraged in various enterprises that would allow them to learn and accept white values and life-styles. The emphasis was on agricultural production. This posed real difficulties in areas such as the peninsula, where the Aboriginal communities were confined to the poorest land—in the area extremely low in agricultural potential. There was no suggestion at that time that Aboriginal people should be allowed to own land.

In 1957 the Queensland Government adopted an official policy of assimilation, and in 1965 the Department of Aboriginal and Island Affairs was set up to implement the notorious 1965 Act which combined the principle of assimilation into the existing Act. During this period there were removals and forced migrations. People were moved around and about on the peninsula. Many people now remember the conditions. They often talk about the iniquities encountered under the Act. Even today, some Aboriginal people still feel as though they are operating under the Act.

A lot of people were forcibly moved to Palm Island, some to Mapoon and some to Hope Vale. Settlements were also established on the north of the peninsula at Umagico, Bamaga and New Mapoon during the 1960s. There was a lot of enforced movement under the idea of assimilation. It was not until the 1980s that there had been any kind of recognition of Aboriginal people's traditional ties with the land and the need for there to be some form of land rights. The deed of grant in trust recognises that land is important to Aboriginal people and that policy has now changed to allow for a separate cultural development as the preferred future for Aboriginal people. The deeds of grant in trust, about which I have had a lot to say in this Chamber because there are major problems with them, have now been granted to most of the larger Aboriginal communities. The opportunities created under the deeds are producing a degree of optimism amongst Aboriginal people in that they may be able to re-establish some of their pride and traditional culture. They are also opening up opportunities for commercial and social development within the communities, but the deeds, as I said, are not without their problems. However, they represent an enormous improvement in the pre-1980 situation, and most Aboriginal communities have a positive view towards them and have quite high expectations of what may be achieved.

A number of communities have certain reservations about the deeds of grant in trust, particularly in respect of their rights over resources and their ability to control the use and development of land in surrounding areas. The other major problem is that the deeds are based on a European concept of land tenure, which is alien to the Aboriginal people. Many communities have difficulty in understanding the basis of their operation and the notions of rights and responsibilities under the deeds of grant in trust.

The other less obvious change is the increased independence that is available to Aboriginal communities to manage their own affairs. The Community Services (Aborigines) Act and its amendments have allowed an increasing hand-over of responsibilities to Aboriginal communities, although not without some difficulties and strains.

All of the communities on the peninsula continue to experience difficulties of significant proportions, such as serious social, medical and economic problems. For those communities to become economically self-sufficient in whatever manner they choose rather than one that is pressed upon them, specific attention must be paid to the education of those communities, the poor infrastructure and housing, alcohol abuse, diet, the low level of community resources and the legal problems that beset those communities and with which the Minister would be very familiar.

The present deed of grant in trust is riddled with so many difficulties that, after some years of experimentation, it requires considerable overhauling. I understand that the former Minister for Community Services has been going around to a number of Aboriginal communities saying that when he got back to Brisbane he would introduce all sorts of new and wonderful legislation that would make changes to the deed of grant in trust and bring benefits to the community. The Minister has done no such thing and has been just limping along, trying to implement the existing legislation, which has been inadequate.

Mr Katter: What are the specific inadequacies?

Ms WARNER: I will point out specifically the inadequacies of the leasing requirements under the deed of grant in trust.

In Hope Vale I understand that an opinion has been received from a barrister who suggests that the leasing arrangements under the deed of grant in trust and the land-holdings Act may very well provide for the alienation of land after it has been leased. The council has responded to that fear by refusing to grant any leases in the short term.

I understand that the Minister took it upon himself to become exceedingly angry at that suggestion and said that he was going to send in an executive officer to force the council to grant leases. However, the Minister found that, under the legislation, that would have been illegal. The Minister tended to go off his head very quickly. He acted in a very hot-headed manner. Fortunately some form of sanity prevailed and he did not break his own laws.

That is one of the aspects in which the deed of grant in trust is inadequate in terms of its leasing provisions. Of course, there are acceptable ways of filling the gap to which the Minister referred and less acceptable ways of filling it. I ask the former Minister to offer advice on that aspect to the new Minister, Mr FitzGerald. It is difficult to keep up with the revolving-door mentality that seems to have afflicted Government members.

Problems exist in the title and in the deed of grant in trust. Initially members of the Opposition were very well aware that the Government might encounter difficulties. One of the differences in the attitudes of the National Party and the Labor Party to the development of the Cape York Peninsula is that, for some time, the National Party Government has adopted a laissez-faire policy that is based on no social planning, no environmental impact studies and no understanding of the social structure of the populations with which it is dealing. The Government's basic ideological position is to develop at breakneck speed regardless of the human consequences of its desires.

On the other hand, a Labor Government in Queensland will not be so stupid. Environmental impact studies will be undertaken. A Labor Government will be sensitive to the needs of existing communities and will offer some very constructive suggestions about the levels of development that are not only possible but also desirable. There are all sorts of things that can be done to possibly develop, but whether or not that development is socially desirable is another matter. Perhaps more damage is caused by the breakneck speed development with which the National Party has been involved for a long time. It has developed and then worried about the consequences of that development.

Mr Katter: But there is 70 per cent unemployment.

Ms WARNER: It is not just a question of employment. In many cases the National Party has presided over a development in Queensland that has necessarily meant a reduction in jobs.

Because mining is the major primary industry in this State, Queensland has moved from industries that are quite labour intensive to ones that are non-labour intensive. One of the features of the mining-led recovery of the seventies was increased unemployment. Although the industry offered high wages, not many jobs existed.

Other industries such as tourism offer poor wages but are relatively labour intensive. Some sort of judgment and balance must be maintained with those sorts of developments

as to what is socially acceptable and desirable. At all times the Government must realise that it is dealing with the real needs of the people, not some abstract notion of the fast buck or the dollar; that as long as one makes a profit everything is fine. That is simply not the case.

If Governments are to survive they have to be able to make those very fine-line judgments about the balance between the almighty dollar and socially acceptable ways of living because, if they do not, they will be voted out of office. That applies to the Labor Party as much as it does to any other political party in this State. Unless the needs of the people and the environment that is necessary to sustain our way of life are taken into consideration, political parties will be cutting their own throats on a purely interim, pragmatic level. Of course, there are many more things at stake. I appeal to the Government, on the basis of political pragmatism, to show some sensitivity. But may I also appeal to it, in terms of the future of this planet and the survival of us all, to show a little bit more sensitivity on those issues?

I will speak briefly about the myriad problems that exist in the deed of grant in trust as a form of title. The whole of the Cape York Peninsula is affected by land development and the sorts of tenures that can be granted. Those tenures are really important. Aboriginal people have a specific relationship with the land in that they deal with it in a particular way; they do not see it as something that can be exploited and from which they can move and which is bought and sold. I think that they find that quite a despicable notion that white people have.

One of the other areas of deficiency in terms of the deed of grant in trust is that the Government gives Aboriginal communities very little control over the economic development of their own land. They do not have forestry rights, quarrying rights or mining rights. The Aboriginals should be making many of the decisions. Another thing that is occurring in those communities is that because of the low level of education and facilities for debate and understanding of their own position—because they have been moved around in such an arbitrary and cruel manner over such a long period—in many cases those people are demoralised—totally demoralised. A caring infrastructure needs to be set up which allows those communities to communicate with one another.

Mr Katter: You just set up an economy.

Ms WARNER: I am sorry, I will not take the Minister's interjection.

Mr Katter: You need to give them pride in their jobs.

Ms WARNER: No, they should not be treated like white fellows. If they are, their Aboriginal status is undermined and they would reject it, and rightly so, because it is alien to them. What is the Minister involved in? Some sort of genocide? Just wipe out their culture? That is what the Minister wants to do. He only talks to the people whom he has been trying to bribe for many years with massive levels of corruption up there in the peninsula.

The Minister may laugh to cover his embarrassment. However, they are the facts of life. The Minister has caused more damage in those communities to the internal relationships between people than he is worth. As a result of the social dislocation that he has personally caused, he should hang his head in shame.

Mr Katter: Have you been up there?

Ms WARNER: Yes, I have, and I have heard about the social dislocation problems, division and conflict that the Minister has personally introduced into those communities. It is a disgrace. It is totally and utterly irresponsible and uncaring. But then, what is one to expect from a National Party Minister?

Time expired.

Mr D'ARCY (Woodridge) (8.48 p.m.): Last night in the Budget debate I outlined how this National Party Government had misused money and created a massive debt

in Queensland that was contributing to Australia's overall debt woes. In doing so, I indicated that much of that debt had been caused by the power-generating authority in Queensland. I also outlined last night the basis of the misuse of this State's minerals. Our State economy still very much maintains its viability through the mining industry and other primary industries.

One of the great failures of the National Party in Government over the last few decades has been to properly organise the mining industry. It is a fact of life that in the last few decades, when the world has needed the primary mining products that have come from Queensland, those products have been shipped out with gay abandon. Coal, oil, silica, silver, lead, zinc and alumina have gone out of this State with very little secondary treatment. Many things have contributed to the Government's inability to put together a grand plan for the treatment of minerals in this State so that it would have a proper industrial and manufacturing base.

On a per capita basis, Queensland's manufacturing is well below the national average. Queensland has something like 16 per cent of the national population but only 11 per cent of the manufacturing industries. That has occurred as a result of a tactic of the National Party in Government. It has not wanted manufacturing in this State; it has driven it away.

The National Party should have been able to put together a manufacturing base for the treatment of minerals. This State should have facilities for the long-term secondary treatment of various minerals. Instead, the minerals are shipped overseas and they are returned to this country in manufactured forms. Many of our minerals have gone to Japan, Taiwan or Korea.

I believe that the National Party has planned it that way. The mining industry in Queensland has been dealt a savage blow by the National Party. Over a long period the National Party has destroyed confidence in that industry. I heard the former Minister for Mines and Energy, Mr Tenni, say today that the Mines Department has a proud record. I would go along with that. The Mines Department in Queensland does have a proud record that goes back almost a century. The Mines Department itself well and truly knew of the viability of what was available in Queensland long before many of the new companies that are currently mining coal, gold, or whatever, came to this State. The Mines Department had reports of available deposits of minerals, but it allowed mining companies to take out leases.

All of us remember when, just to get a sale off the ground, Gordon Chalk introduced the 5c a tonne royalty. Although the Liberals say that they had nothing to do with that, they were responsible for some of the things that happened in previous years' Budgets. At that time the Government could have extracted from the sales of those minerals a price that would have allowed, over three or four decades, the development of decent secondary and tertiary treatment of those minerals.

Probably the greatest disaster for the mining industry was caused by the Mines Department, and it featured fairly well in the Fitzgerald inquiry. It is a subject that I knew very well at the time. I refer to the disaster and the distrust that was caused by the granting of the Winchester South tender. It appears that none of the documents relating to that tender is in the possession of the Mines Department today. I found quite a few of those documents among my files, including the 100 tender documents from the 33 companies involved at that time.

Mr Lee: People tell me that they are all yours, those 33 companies—every one of them.

Mr D'ARCY: I don't think I could have even afforded the public relations exercise that was involved in submitting the tenders.

Many companies that would otherwise have dealt with the Queensland Government walked away. I spoke to many principals of the companies that submitted tenders who told me that they were so disgusted that they would never do business in Queensland

again. Many of the companies that subsequently took up projects and continued production in Queensland were associated with the companies to which I am referring, but they never trusted the Queensland Government again. That is a tragedy.

Mr Katter: It is a fairly typical result in losing tenderers.

Mr D'ARCY: What a lot of rot. The Minister knows that that tendering process was a rort. It was set up. That much at least has been proven in the courts.

Mr Katter interjected.

Mr D'ARCY: I do not think that the Minister was a member of Cabinet in those days. I saw the tender that was submitted. I saw the Cabinet document that the former Minister for Mines brought out of Cabinet. It was handed to him by Bjelke-Petersen. It was a document that Bjelke-Petersen presented because it was leaked by a Cabinet Minister who was shocked at the way that the decision was made. I also saw the other documents.

Mr Lee: You shouldn't say that.

Mr D'ARCY: Come to think of it, Mr Lee was probably a member of Cabinet at that time. I am trying to recall which Liberal Minister leaked the document and it was probably the honourable member for Yeronga. Actually, I have a fair idea that it was the honourable member for Yeronga. I think it was Mr Lee who gave me the documents that ended up being published on the front page of the *Courier-Mail*.

Mr Lee: You forgot there was a vote on one night. You didn't turn up, so don't talk about memories to me.

Mr D'ARCY: Perhaps it was not Mr Lee who leaked the documents after all; but it was a Liberal Minister who leaked the Cabinet documents that ended up appearing on the front page of a major newspaper. In all fairness, I must say that that Cabinet Minister was disgusted at what had happened over Winchester South. The tenderers had been rorted by the Government. Nobody had a proper say. The decision was made behind closed doors on anything except the correct and proper information that was available.

Winchester South is a part of a long history of dirty politics that led to the Department of Mines—a department that had so much talent and so much background information—being mistrusted. It had been used by the National Party for political purposes. In saying that, I do not mean to cast a slur on any public servants who may have been involved, with the exception, possibly, of one or two who were just tools that were being used by the National Party. For the most part, the Department of Mines has been fortunate to have had officers who were brilliant and able enough to put together a comprehensive background dossier on the mining industry in this State. It is a tragedy that the department has been misused. The department made bumbling starts because of political interference. Earlier I referred to the failure of this Government to set up secondary industries that could add value to Queensland's mineral products. That is also an absolute disgrace.

The history of the electricity supply industry was outlined brilliantly by the Opposition's shadow Minister, Mr Vaughan. He has a great grasp of the subject and will make a brilliant Minister after the December election. On many occasions he has been proved correct, particularly where power generation has been concerned.

Recently the Government announced that it would sell the Gladstone Power Station for \$500m. I estimate its replacement cost to be approximately \$1.7 billion. The sale is being negotiated to protect a company agreement that the Government has with Comalco. Comalco has been an asset to this State because of the way in which it has developed its projects. The Comalco refinery in Gladstone has certainly been an asset to the central region. If the Government had been more assiduous in the task of negotiating the agreement, it would have located Gladstone as the centre of the industrial and mining

expansion that occurred in this State, instead of allowing diversification to take place. Diversification is quite evident when one refers to a map showing the distribution of power stations throughout Queensland.

A number of power stations have been made obsolete. I estimate that approximately 700 megawatts of capacity has been put into mothballs. The Bulimba Power Station was closed and the Tennyson Power House was closed shortly afterwards. Swanbank has been partly closed down. Collinsville has been closed down, and so has Callide. The recommissioning of those power stations would cost a considerable amount, but it probably would not be as expensive as the cost of constructing a new power station.

The Opposition has always been mystified by the location and construction of the Tarong Power Station. Every honourable member would realise that, from the date of its inception, the project was politically motivated. The power station should have been located at either Millmerran or Gladstone instead of on the present site. Its location at Tarong increased the cost of its construction substantially. It was patently obvious that the power station was built at Tarong for National Party political purposes in spite of advice given by senior public service officers at that time.

It is incredible that so many rumours abound about the siting of that power station. Numerous accounts of them have been published in newspapers and almost anybody one could ask would know some of the rumours that have been circulating. Although the rumours have not been proved true, I wonder why they persist. They originate from reliable sources and centre on the technical capability of the power station to produce energy. Figures mentioned in this Parliament seem to indicate that it is producing at about 90 per cent capacity, but I wonder why rumours about closure and technical default persist.

Why have power stations been built in unsuitable areas? Why is an oversupply of power being generated? Is it because of the phantom projects that are part of the National Party's grandiose scheme but have never eventuated? Every so often, the National Party Government announces another phantom project, but nothing ever happens. Could the reason be that on the grounds of political expediency the Government wanted to raise large loans?

The present trend is for the Government to make grandiose announcements about cutting power costs. One must not forget the debts that this Government ran up that should never have been incurred or the massive increases in charges that were passed on to consumers to meet the cost of capital works. Now the Government says, "Great! We're not building a power station. We're reducing the debt." The debt should never have been run up in the first place. In many cases it was caused by poor planning, poor organisation and bad judgment. The debt was never the fault of the public servants who were involved. The National Party overrode the advice given by senior public servants. It is disgraceful that that was the way in which the National Party Government managed its affairs during that period.

The Temporary Chairman represents the Gladstone area and he and everyone else knows that the region should have become the industrial centre of Queensland. Instead, the Government turned mineral-processing away from Gladstone and refused to make it an industrial centre that would have generated extra business. The Government pushed industry up north, out west and down south. It talked about building railway lines to Western Australia and other rubbish and referred to phantom projects. People in private enterprise are now saying that it is time the Queensland Government got its act together, and that industrial expansion should take place in Gladstone because it has all the facilities. Once facilities are established in a centralised location, industries, such as manufacturing industries and industries involved in the tertiary treatment of minerals, follow, and that benefits the State.

The generating authority is very distrustful of this Government because of the so-called power strikes that were organised and promoted by this Government. I am pleased that Wayne Gilbert is well and truly out of the industry, because I had dealings with him in private enterprise when he was with Carlton United, long before he entered the

electricity industry. At that time he was not a good person to do business with. The industry now has a good man by the name of Keith Hoffman who has come up through the industry, who understands the workers and who is asking for distrust to be replaced by a little trust and the sheathing of knives. I hope that the power industry is able to get its act together, which will certainly happen under a Labor Government. There will then be government by conciliation with the industry and not the political divisions that the National Party has created over the last two decades.

I am pleased that at the present time MIM is doing particularly well in Queensland. However, in the last two decades MIM has made some frightful financial decisions. To some extent the Queensland Government has been involved in those decisions. Over the last decade MIM has had massive failures and has lost share-holders' money. That company should hold a much higher place on the world stock-market. I blame the Government, as well as the maladministration of some of that company's top officials, for the company's failure to establish proper environmental and mining conditions. The company should have got on with the things that it is good at and not diversified into other areas. People such as Foots and other executives who keep getting promotions did not do the mining industry in Queensland a service. I am pleased to see that MIM is back on the rails and making massive profits for the State. It appears that the company has finally decided that it knows where its expertise lies.

One further matter I would like to raise—and it was raised by the Temporary Chairman during his speech—concerns the environmental impact of power stations. For years Queenslanders have been told that there were no environmental problems with power stations. That is not true. Comalco said, "If we buy this power station, we are going to improve its environmental record." That is an indictment of the political cover-up by the National Party. The National Party has been telling this Parliament that the power stations in this State are environmentally safe and their record is unbeatable, but we know for a fact that that has not been the case. No detailed information has been released on the environmental damage carried out by power stations. It is time that proper environmental surveys were carried out on a continuing basis on many of the mining projects being undertaken in this State.

Hon. R. C. KATTER (Flinders—Minister for Mines and Energy and Minister for Northern and Regional Development) (9.05 p.m.): There has been a dearth of comment from the members of the Opposition, and I am disappointed with the standard of the debate in this Chamber. I do not mind answering difficult questions. It is disappointing that there are so few sensible questions for me to answer.

I refer to the comments made by the Opposition speakers. The sale of the Gladstone Power Station was raised by a number of speakers from the Opposition. The media grab figures out of the air. I had no knowledge whatsoever of any figures being bandied around whilst I was in Cabinet. I do not know where those figures had come from, but the department has not substantiated them. Therefore, I cannot give them a great deal of credibility. In any event, this matter concerns the former Premier and he is no longer in Cabinet.

The second issue of the gas pipeline was raised on many occasions. I noticed that this evening the members of the Liberal Party were not squealing about the pipeline as loudly as they have done in the past.

One valid point that was raised concerns the absence of processing. It is of concern to all honourable members in this Chamber that Queensland does not process a large number of its metals. My department is trying to find imaginative ways in which to come to grips with this problem and it will certainly listen to any suggestions. I have strong feelings about the silicone industry.

The matter of electricity for the Torres Strait islands was also raised, and I was sorry that the project was denigrated by the honourable member for Cook. It is correct that a 10-amp system is installed at the present time, but the honourable member knows that that system is to be expanded once the photovoltaic cells are bought in bulk. That

will supply a great deal of power throughout the Torres Strait islands. When that occurs there will be an adequate power supply to those homes that, in any event, have had no outages in the short term.

In regard to electricity for the Karumba/Weipa area—the project has been delayed by one year, but it is continuing. The project is already in the planning stage.

Mr Scott: What's in place of it at the present time?

Mr KATTER: I am referring to the power supply to Karumba. I could give the honourable member details, but I will not take up the time of this Chamber on something that is parochial in nature. All I can do is assure the honourable member that the project is most certainly going ahead. I am proud to say that in the early stages I was involved in putting a lot of pressure on the Government to implement that project. It is a very important development project and the honourable member for Cook was quite right in raising it.

Among many extremely silly things that the honourable member for Cook said, and things that he will live to regret, were his comments on electricity for Weipa. There was, however, one modicum of sense in what he said. It is a project that should be looked at, but it is an enormously expensive one. That sort of project would place a great strain on the cost structure in the rest of the State, so the Government will have a look at the offsetting factors. I most certainly give the honourable member a commitment that I will have a look at that project.

I refer now to the Tarong/Millmerran argument. At the time, I was not fully au fait with all of the figures, but a power station cannot be built in isolation. That was a classic case. In one case there would have been simply a power station which would have benefited the State of Queensland. In the other case the State got a power station plus a dam with a large supply of water for agricultural purposes. The question is whether the agricultural purposes justified the \$230m extra that the Opposition spokesman referred to. I am not qualified to say, but I most certainly hope that no honourable member would say that, when a power station is built, the only matter to be considered is the power station and that the development should not be put in the context of the other requirements of society.

The honourable member for Mulgrave referred to the land at Queerah. That puts the lie to what was said by a number of Opposition speakers who claimed that the Government does not worry about environmental or quality-of-life issues. That is exactly what he was talking about in regard to that large area of land surrounding the Queerah meatworks. I give him an unqualified undertaking that I will be looking at that land and the possible usages advocated by him.

He expressed grave reservations about the Trinity Inlet. I have worries and concerns about that project and it needs to be looked at very seriously. I certainly give him an undertaking that I will be looking at it seriously.

The honourable member for Broadsound referred to the advanced technology in the department and pensioner rebates. I was pleased to hear his comments because pensioners have grave difficulties in keeping up with some of the charges. It is something that I fought for very hard when I was on the back bench. I imagine that every member in the Chamber would derive some pleasure from that particular change.

The honourable member for Callide referred to the gas pipeline in Queensland and said she was very proud of the project and pointed out how it would boost the economy of the State. I have never hesitated to say that I would have liked more emphasis put on the northern pipeline but it seems that it will work out to be an asset and a boon to the development of Queensland.

The honourable member for Cunningham spoke forcefully about the gold tax and the cheapness of power in the State of Queensland. I will refer to the gold tax later in my speech. He displayed his usual good sense. He is probably one of the best performing members on the front bench or the back bench.

Mr Vaughan: Why hasn't he been restored to Cabinet? Why is he the only one who missed out?

Mr KATTER: The honourable member would have to discuss that with other people.

The former Minister, Mr Tenni, was very impressive. He is regarded as having done a good job in this field and I should pay a tribute to him this evening. When he was on the back bench, he was a long-term, tough, hard, uncompromising fighter for north Queensland. On many occasions he and I found our necks stretched out together when we were protecting the interests of our region. I thank him personally for his solidarity—on many occasions, solidarity that extended to the other side of the Chamber—when he was protecting, I do not hesitate to say, parochial interests in north Queensland.

Mr Scott: But he doesn't say that about you now, privately.

Mr KATTER: He might not, and I regret it if he does not.

He paid a very fine tribute to all of the staff in the various departments with which he was associated and that spoke well for himself. We both served on the back bench for a considerable period—I a lot longer than he—and he was a great asset to the people of north Queensland, and there is no doubt about that.

The honourable member for Gympie spoke forcefully and well about a problem with which I, representing an old gold mining town, am very familiar, that is, subsidence. I will be having very serious discussions with the departmental officials to see whether more can be done about the problem. I will be looking at the problem, and I thank him for bringing it to the attention of the Chamber.

The honourable member for Glass House emphasised the streamlining systems that are being introduced into the department. He paid a great tribute to the officers of the department and the Government for producing something of which all of us can be very proud.

The honourable member for Barambah dealt with a number of matters that are near and dear to my heart. The rehabilitation issue can be very troubling to members such as the honourable member for Barambah and me who represent very large grazing areas to which very substantial damage can be done by mining. Both of us have been very surprised to learn just how much damage can be done and the difficulty that sometimes arises with rehabilitation. I hope that, in future years, rehabilitation will leave the land better than it was when the miners came onto it. That is not only a possible but also an achievable goal. I hope that the honourable member for Barambah who has fought long and aggressively for his area—in my previous Ministry he took me to Cherbourg many times to look at problems—will fight just as hard for the achievement of some of these rehabilitation objectives, and they will be achieved if people like him continue to fight as toughly as he has in the past.

I shall deal briefly with one other matter. Many honourable members claimed that the Northern Development Department is nothing but a PR machine. Yes, there are people there involved in the dissemination of Government information. There are not as many as are employed by the Federal Government or the Townsville City Council. That council employs more PR and journalistic staff than the entire Queensland Government.

Mr Casey: Rubbish!

Mr KATTER: Not only is that true, but the Federal members of the Labor Party in north Queensland also have journalistic staff. If the honourable member wants to talk about how much money is being spent on public relations, journalism or the dissemination of information, I point out to him that Government staff is outnumbered by Labor Party representatives, local and Federal, by four to one. If the honourable member wants me to embarrass him by naming them, I could do so.

An allegation has been made that the Northern Development Department does nothing. When I inherited it, I could not do very much with no substantive powers and no money. However, I thank the Deputy Whip, Mr Tom Hynd, who informed me that Hawker de Havilland was considering five sites throughout Australia, only one of which is in Queensland. The Northern Development Department invited its officials to the north, took them to dinner, organised a helicopter for them and found land for them which they could acquire for a very reasonable price. Those efforts resulted in our securing 35 jobs for Townsville. After the way that we looked after them and because of the excellent land that we found for them, Hawker de Havilland commenced operations in Townsville and has been a great asset to the city.

The mariculture industry is booming in north Queensland. This year, it will inject approximately \$25m worth of income into the north Queensland economy. I would not like to be quoted on that figure, but the last figures that I saw revealed that it would be at least \$20m.

The Department of Northern Development played a very substantive part in the opening of Sea Hatcheries, which is the biggest mariculture farm in Queensland, and possibly in Australia. The person in charge of Sea Hatcheries said that it was important to notify the press and the people of Queensland that it would not exist without the assistance of the Department of Northern Development. Knowing what occurred in great detail, I agree with what he said. The much maligned Mrs Victoria Kippin was responsible for much work in the mariculture industry.

Mr Scott: Who maligned her?

Mr KATTER: I do not suppose anyone did tonight. However, at least one person passed some comments and backtracked later after receiving criticism for those comments. He was ashamed of what he had said, and quite rightly so.

Victoria Kippin and a number of other officers played a large part in the development of the mariculture industry. They convinced the head of marine sciences, Dr Joe Baker, to visit Brisbane and talk to the Lands Department about the mariculture industry. I thought it related to jojoba beans. However, Dr Joe Baker came to Brisbane and convinced us to back the mariculture industry, and then we were able to convince the Lands Department. Therefore, those people were able to acquire land which they would not have otherwise been able to secure.

Feedlotting is vital to the north Queensland economy. Initially, there was not one feedlotting establishment in north Queensland, and now three are operating. Two of those were established as a result of the energies and activities of the people in the Northern Development Department. I pay them a great tribute.

A large fish-processing operation has been established in Townsville. It was rescued by certain activities that the Department of Northern Development carried out.

Approximately 30 stinger nets are protecting bathers in north Queensland. They have provided a great boost for the tourism industry. Initially, an experimental model fishing net was in existence. The Northern Development Department took up the issue, obtained a subsidy to assist with further development of the net and then secured a subsidy for local authorities. The result was that within two years 30 stinger nets were scattered throughout north Queensland. They have been a boon to that region.

The most important development project in north Queensland has been the Townsville water pipeline. It would not exist without the great energies of the member for Townsville, Mr Burreket.

Mr Scott: The Townsville City Council.

Mr KATTER: Not only did the Townsville City Council have nothing to do with the construction of the water pipeline, but it successfully stopped commencement of the project for almost 12 years.

Mr Smith: They paid for it.

Mr KATTER: The council most certainly paid for it. Every town has to pay for its water supply. As a result of the building of the water pipeline, the city of Townsville has benefited enormously.

I give credit to the member for Townsville for the building of that pipeline. I thank Ted Lindsay, the Federal member, for his belated support after the pipeline was in the process of being built. He agreed with everything that we had said on numerous occasions. He backed up the position taken by the Department of Northern Development and me on the water pipeline. I also thank Arthur Baldwin and Mick Curtin.

Action by the Department of Northern Development resulted in the establishment of the first export ships going to New Guinea.

I have outlined the success stories. We had some failures. We could not secure the development of Paluma Lodge, although the land is still there. The old Charters Towers project had a similar fate. It gives me no pleasure to admit that, but the projects are still on the drawing board. I am optimistic that they will take off in the next year or so.

I have mentioned Townsville, which is the biggest city in north Queensland. I turn now to the smallest town, Karumba. The Department of Northern Development was responsible for the commercial connection of electricity to a number of operations in Karumba. The honourable member for Cook might be interested in this matter, because he criticised us regarding it. One of those operations was OTC, which was able to start operating properly. The next year it produced \$1m worth of export earnings for the State of Queensland. We were very proud of getting the electricity connected for OTC.

Because of the actions that we took, the slipway, which was under four foot of mud when I first saw it, was operating again within one year. In its first year of operation, it secured half a million dollars of income for the slipway operators.

Two barges started operations out of Karumba. One of the principal businessmen at Weipa informed me that those barges cut the cost of supplying goods into Weipa by 40 per cent. We were very proud of our achievement with the barges. We called a public meeting, which resulted in the commencement of operation of those two barges.

The water supply was provided to Karumba as a direct result of the activities undertaken——

Mr Scott: Commonwealth money. I am pleased to see that you recognise it.

Mr KATTER: That is an interesting comment. It took four months to get the money from the State Government and it took two and a half years to get the money from the Federal Government.

The provision of grid-system power to Karumba was also an initiative of myself and the Department of Northern Development. I must also pay tribute to Martin Tenni who, like myself, boosted the project along. In addition, I must give some credit to the member for Cook.

Mr Scott: And John Gayler, the member for Leichhardt.

Mr KATTER: If the member for Leichhardt has done anything for the electorate of Leichhardt, I have not seen it. I have not seen a skerrick of evidence of any expenditure on anything in the whole of the Leichhardt electorate as a result of the representations of that person. I consider him to be one of the most useless representatives in this State.

The introduction of commercial television into Karumba was one of the greatest things that ever occurred in that town. The town had very little to offer its residents in the form of richness and quality of life. The coming to Karumba of commercial television left me feeling a great deal of pride in what this State Government was able to achieve. The State Government should not be putting in one cent. It should not be involved at all. However, the Queensland Government went outside its area of responsibility to do the job that the Federal Government should be doing and is not doing.

The Queensland Government undertook the promotion of mangrove jack and king salmon. Within three months of promotional functions being held in Brisbane, the price of kind salmon in Brisbane rose by 40 per cent. I must say that the QCFO and the DPI were involved in that and deserve to be thanked.

I have just run through a grab-bag from the smallest town in north Queensland and the biggest town in north Queensland. I do not hear any criticism from members of the Opposition because they know that in every one of those instances the Department of Northern Development was involved and got the work done. So it is possible to get these things done without spending huge sums of money and employing an army of people. If by some miracle or stroke of fate honourable members opposite ever get to sit on the Government benches, I think they will find that the department is a very useful tool in looking after north Queensland.

Finally, in the area of Mines and Energy, there is a very clear demarcation line between the philosophies, the policies and the administration of the Queensland Government under the National Party and those of various other Governments under the ALP. The whole of the electricity system in New South Wales collapsed as a result of the union bans that were agreed to by the New South Wales Government.

Mr Braddy: I don't think your holiday did you any good.

Mr KATTER: The honourable member says that.

This State did not have a collapse of the electricity system, as occurred in New South Wales.

Mr Vaughan: You came within that far of it.

Mr KATTER: The member for Nudgee knows only too well what occurred in New South Wales.

Mr Vaughan: Earlier this year, that far.

Mr KATTER: That is interesting. It is a matter that I can take up with the officers of the department. However, it did not happen.

When Queensland had an industrial dispute of major proportions, it took the Queensland Government just seven days to stop it. The Federal Government has had one of the most damaging strikes in Australian history, and it has now been at the coal-face for seven weeks and still nothing has been done except the glad hand-out of \$100m of tax-payers' money to Sir Peter Abeles, Mr Murdoch and Mr Australian Airlines.

In the last two to three years there have been only two significant growth areas in the Australian economy.

Mr Stephan: One is disputes.

Mr KATTER: Yes, but that was not one I was thinking of. In fairness, I was going to say tourism and gold.

The Federal Government, by its ineptitude and inactivity in regard to the pilots strike, has almost totally destroyed the tourist industry. Tourism has been destroyed by the Federal Government.

In regard to the gold industry, I will repeat the figures that I quoted before——

Mr Vaughan: What would you do about the pilots dispute?

Mr KATTER: This Government would do exactly the same thing as it did during the electricity industry dispute. During that dispute the Queensland Government leaned, and leaned hard, and took tough action. I will not go into details tonight. I am not the Minister for Industrial Affairs.

The gold industry, that other great growth area of the Australian economy, whose export earnings went from \$400m to \$3,500m in just four years—

Mr Vaughan: What is this?

Mr KATTER: I am going to explain this to the Committee because I think many people do not understand it.

In the four years following Hawke's announcement that he was going to introduce a gold tax, the value of the growth in the industry rose from \$300m to \$400m. He dickered with it for nearly four years. Virtually no gold mines opened anywhere in Australia. Over the next four years, straight after Hawke made the statement before an election that he was not going to introduce a gold tax, there was \$3,400m-worth of growth in that industry. If ever there was a lesson to be learned, that was it. However, like the Bourbons of old, the ALP has learned nothing and forgotten nothing.

Of the only two bright stars on the horizon of economic recovery in Australia, one has been destroyed by the ineptitude of the Federal Government in its handling of the pilots strike, and the other one will be destroyed by the gold tax. Despite that, tonight members of the Opposition have advocated a gold tax.

All I can say is that I will take great delight in taking copies of those passages in *Hansard* to the city of Charters Towers, as I am sure Mr Stephan will to the city of Gympie, to demonstrate clearly to the people of Queensland the huge gulf between the successful approaches used by the private-enterprise Government on this side of the Chamber and the attitude and philosophy of the socialists on the Opposition side.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr Vaughan interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I warn the member for Nudgee.

At 9.30 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN: Order! By agreement, under the provisions of the Sessional Order agreed to by the House on 26 September, I shall now put the questions for the Vote under consideration and the balance remaining unvoted for Mining, Energy and Electricity, Department of Mines and Queensland Electricity Commission (Consolidated Revenue Fund and Trust and Special Funds).

The questions for the following Votes were put, and agreed to—

	\$
Office of the Minister for Mines and Energy and Minister for Northern and Regional Development (Consolidated Revenue)	395,000
Mining, Energy and Electricity, Department of Mines and Queensland Electricity Commission (Consolidated Revenue Fund and Trust and Special Funds)	1,479,879,000
Economic Services, Office of Northern and Regional Development (Consolidated Revenue)	901,000

Progress reported.

STATUTE LAW (MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS) BILL

Hon. N. J. HARPER (Auburn—Leader of the House) (9.32 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

“That leave be granted to bring in a Bill to make various amendments to the statute law of Queensland.”

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

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

Second Reading

Hon. N. J. HARPER (Auburn—Leader of the House) (9.33 p.m.): I move—

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

I introduce the Statute Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 1989. This Bill is an innovation to the Queensland Parliament. Its purpose is to facilitate the making of amendments to numerous Acts where the amendments are concise, of a minor nature and are non-controversial. The Government does not believe that an amendment which introduces policy changes or issues of substance is appropriate for inclusion in a miscellaneous provisions Bill and accordingly no amendment of this nature is included in this Bill.

The Statute Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill amends 92 Acts of the Parliament—87 Acts directly and 5 Acts indirectly being amended by a principal Act—in the course of giving effect to consequential amendments to an Act related to the principal Act. An example of such an amendment may be referred to in the Bill in the amendment to the Corrective Services (Consequential Amendments) Act 1988 to correct an ambiguity occurring in that Act in an amendment to the Coroners Act.

About 12 months ago, Cabinet recognised that a miscellaneous provisions Bill could serve a useful purpose in streamlining the procedures necessary to give effect to minor legislative changes and directed that the Leader of the House should be the Minister charged with the carriage of the Bill through the House at regular intervals. This Bill, then, should be the forerunner of similar Bills in the future. All Government departments have been advised that they should utilise the Statute Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill for amendments which are concise, minor and non-controversial.

The Parliamentary Counsel's office has played a wider role than usual in relation to the preparation of this Bill. I take the opportunity to commend the Parliamentary Counsel and his officers.

Cabinet also directed that the Parliamentary Counsel have the authority to determine finally whether a proposed amendment should be included in the Statute Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill. Four departments requested certain amendments to their particular legislation. In one case the Parliamentary Counsel declined an amendment on the basis that the amendment was one of substance and should be the subject of specific amending legislation, and in another case amendments were declined because of a timing problem with the commencement of the Acts involved. Also, the Parliamentary Counsel's office has originated the correction of numerous minor drafting and printing errors which have occurred in Acts over a period of years and have not been corrected because no simple procedure existed for their correction prior to this Bill.

The Statute Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 1989 and similar Bills in the future will result in considerable savings of time and resources by departments, the Government and Parliament by the streamlining of the procedures for minor legislative amendments and reform.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Prest, adjourned.

STOCK ACT AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Hon. M. D. STONEMAN (Burdekin—Minister for Primary Industries) (9.37 p.m.),
by leave, without notice: I move—

“That leave be granted to bring in a Bill to amend the Stock Act 1915-1989 and the Local Government Act 1936-1989 each in certain particulars.”

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

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

Second Reading

Hon. M. D. STONEMAN (Burdekin—Minister for Primary Industries) (9.38 p.m.):
I move—

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

The principal purpose of this Bill is to allow for the amalgamation of a Queensland primary producer co-operative association with an interstate co-operative in those cases where the grower members of the Queensland co-operative have voted in favour of such an amalgamation.

Mr CASEY: I rise to a point of order. I believe that the Minister is reading the wrong speech. He should be reading a speech on the amendment of the Stock Act and the Local Government Act.

Mr STONEMAN: My apologies, Mr Speaker. I thank Mr Casey.

The Bill has two principal aims: to amend the Stock Act to provide for the orderly growth and development of the feedlot industry and to amend the Local Government Act to ensure that there will be no compromise of community, social or environmental objectives through the operation of feedlots.

The feedlot industry is an essential element in the continued development of the livestock industry and its allied meat trade in Queensland. Feeding cattle on grain for the export markets adds \$300 a head, which is a perfect example of value-adding in the primary industry sector.

Because of the anticipated growth in the Japanese market and the fact that Japan has a clear preference for grain-fed beef, the 90 000 tonnes of additional beef that Japan will take from Australia by 1991 will require an additional 630 000 head being grain fed.

As Queensland has 85 per cent of Australian feedlots, this will represent an extra \$160m to the State's economy and provide an additional demand for nearly 700 000 tonnes of grain. The capital investment in new feedlots will be approximately \$70m. Commercial feedlots have of necessity high stocking rates and continually draw upon large numbers of stock from diverse areas of Queensland. Concentration of cattle also has the potential to cause undesirable environmental effects, notably odours, particularly in instances of inefficient manure disposal in a wet environment. However, it is important to recognise and balance the economic significance of the industry with effective management practices to minimise environmental inconvenience.

In consideration of these matters and following consultation with my colleague the Honourable the Minister for Local Government, I am of the view that effective management of the feedlot industry would best be achieved through the combined application of the Local Government Act and the Stock Act, as proposed in the Bill which is now before the House. To this end the responsibility for approval of the establishment of cattle feedlots would rest with the relevant local authority under the Local Government Act

whilst responsibility for the licensing and supervision of day-to-day operations would be undertaken by my department through the chief inspector of stock and his officers under the Stock Act.

In line with the Government's stated intention to reduce the regulatory burden on small-business enterprises, guide-lines for the establishment and operation of cattle feedlots have been prepared by my department in consultation with environment and conservation officers, local authorities, the Australian Lot Feeders Association, the Cattlemen's Union and the United Graziers Association, as well as individuals who have an interest in feedlotting. These guide-lines, which have been made available to all interested parties, enable forward planning by feedlot-developers and consultants and will specifically assist local authorities in their assessment of feedlot projects in line with their town-planning obligations when considering applications for establishment of feedlots.

It is acknowledged that some of the factors that are shown in the guide-lines and which have an influence on the separation distance between the feedlot and residential dwellings are drawn from overseas studies and therefore have not yet been fully substantiated for Australian conditions. As a result, I give an assurance that my department will interpret and apply these factors in a pragmatic manner.

Additionally, the Department of Primary Industries, in association with the Australian Meat and Livestock Research and Development Corporation, will be undertaking a major research project to establish baseline data for incorporation in revised guide-lines. I therefore expect that the guide-lines will be reviewed from time to time as more reliable data, particularly on the control of odour generation, is obtained. It is for this reason that the guide-lines are not to be included in regulations.

To this end, in conjunction with the Local Government Association, I propose to hold a series of seminars throughout the State to discuss the guide-lines with feedlot-operators and other interested parties. I plan to hold the first seminar on the Darling Downs within the next two to three weeks and will announce details shortly.

The objective, therefore, is for these guide-lines to complement the legislative requirements of the Bill now before the House and to enhance the administrative arrangements between local government and my department in the effective operation of the feedlot industry in general.

Under the provisions of the Bill the chief inspector of stock will adopt the guide-lines as the standard criteria applicable to all categories of feedlots. When individual establishments are unable immediately to comply with these requirements, provision has been made for the chief inspector to require specific performance with a progressive upgrading of the feedlot that will enable satisfactory compliance.

To protect the considerable investment that is already committed by cattle-owners in the establishment and operation of their feedlots, it is proposed, upon application by existing feedlot-owners, to automatically grant a permit to continue feedlotting until such time as each individual feedlot has been classified according to the guide-line standards or specific requirements of the chief inspector. It is anticipated that all feedlots will be licensed within the first 12 months of commencement of these provisions. A feedlot licence will remain valid for five years but at all times will be subject to compliance with the Act.

The Bill makes provision for the appointment of advisory groups comprising representatives of industry and other parties to advise the Minister on matters pertaining to feedlots and the many related issues. In accordance with the Queensland Government's aim to provide new services for industry on a user-pays basis, this objective will be reflected in the establishment of a cost-recovery licence and inspection fees system.

I am concerned that existing provisions of the Act do not provide a practical approach to the control of hygiene and sanitation problems as necessary in the feedlot environment. To protect the environment, the Bill will provide inspectors with specific authorities to prohibit or suspend temporarily the use of certain yards and premises; to

require reduced stocking capacities; to repair or replace water and effluent disposal systems; and, in addition, to provide a general cleansing power.

It should be noted that the application of the more serious of these proposed powers may be the subject of appeal to the Minister, and I give the assurance that any actions such as cancellation of a licence will be undertaken only as a measure of last resort. No compensation would be payable in those circumstances.

In addition to these specific powers, provision has been made in the Bill to strengthen a number of definitions to encompass the feedlot situation and to define a feedlot so that the ordinary cattle-owner who is fattening a few head for himself and his immediate family and employees is not caught by the provisions of this Bill. Similarly, abattoirs, drought feeding, weaning and other emergency feeding of stock are also excluded.

I now pass to the second aspect of the Bill, that is, the enabling amendments proposed to the Local Government Act. It is the clear intention of this Government that local authorities will retain the right to approve the establishment of new feedlots. To this end, the provisions of this Bill are deemed to be an implied by-law in respect to cattle feedlots and shall apply to all local authorities. In so doing, it has been necessary to provide new definitions covering local authorities and cattle feedlots and defining the chief inspector of stock.

Other matters of concern include the procedure that local authorities will adopt in considering an application to establish a feedlot and the necessity for each application to be accompanied by a report on the proposal from the chief inspector. Provision is also made for the repeal of any existing local authority by-law that relates to the management or operation of a feedlot, the provisions for which will now be integrated into the Stock Act.

The Bill contains significant amendments in relation to the two Acts and will provide for the development and profitable operations of feedlots while minimising their environmental impact.

In conclusion, I again emphasise that the guide-lines are in the development phase, and it is for this reason that they are not to be included in regulations. They constitute principally an advisory document for intending applicants and existing operators.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Casey, adjourned.

PRIMARY PRODUCERS' CO-OPERATIVE ASSOCIATIONS ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Hon. M. D. STONEMAN (Burdekin—Minister for Primary Industries) (9.48 p.m.),
by leave, without notice: I move—

“That leave be granted to bring in a Bill to amend the Primary Producers' Co-operative Associations Act 1923-1988 to facilitate mergers with foreign associations and for related purposes.”

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

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

Second Reading

Hon. M. D. STONEMAN (Burdekin—Minister for Primary Industries) (9.49 p.m.):
I move—

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

The principal purpose of this Bill is to allow for the amalgamation of a Queensland primary producer co-operative association with an interstate co-operative in those cases where the grower members of the Queensland co-operative have voted in favour of such an amalgamation. At present, the Primary Producers' Co-operative Associations Act provides for the amalgamation of Queensland associations only. Following amendments passed last year, the Act also provides for a Queensland and an interstate association to form an "interstate federation" registered under the Act. In such a case, the relevant associations remain in existence and do not formally amalgamate or merge.

However, the Act currently does not provide for an amalgamation or merger of a Queensland co-operative association with an interstate co-operative. The absence of such provisions represents a barrier to structural adjustment and rationalisation which is occurring in a number of primary industries, notably the dairy industry.

In New South Wales, the co-operatives legislation has recently been amended to allow New South Wales co-operative associations to amalgamate with interstate associations. It is desirable to have similar, complementary legislation in place in Queensland so that it may be utilised by individual Queensland co-operative associations, if their members demonstrate strong support for such an amalgamation.

However, the New South Wales legislation contains a restriction which is not duplicated in this Bill. The recent amendments in New South Wales require that, when a New South Wales association amalgamates with an interstate co-operative, the resultant merged co-operative association must be registered in New South Wales.

I regard this as an unacceptable restriction. In contrast, the Bill now before the House proposes that, when a Queensland association amalgamates with an interstate association, the associations jointly will have the choice as to whether the resultant body will apply to be registered in Queensland or in the other State. The choice of place of registration of a commercial organisation should be made by the organisation itself with reference to normal commercial criteria and should not be a decision forced upon that organisation by Government. This principle already applies to companies and should logically apply to co-operative associations also.

My predecessor has written to the New South Wales Minister responsible for the co-operative legislation in that State, the Minister for Business and Consumer Affairs, Mr Peacock, requesting that the restrictive provision in the New South Wales Act be deleted so that, when a Queensland association seeks to merge with a New South Wales association, the new body may be registered in either State.

The Bill mirrors provisions in the New South Wales legislation that provide for the assets and liabilities of the participating co-operatives in an interstate merger to be vested in the resultant amalgamated association. This will protect the interests of share-holders as well as creditors and other parties doing business with the participating associations.

I stress that the Bill will not force any Queensland co-operative association into a merger. It is a fundamental principle of the Primary Producers' Co-operative Associations Act that the active grower members of a co-operative association, who are suppliers to that association, should control the destiny of their co-operative. This is consistent with the long-standing philosophy of the Queensland Government in regard to grower control of their own marketing, handling and processing organisations.

The Bill does not change that principle. A Queensland association will only be able to amalgamate with an interstate association if the grower members of the Queensland body vote by special resolution to agree to the amalgamation. A special resolution requires a minimum 75 per cent majority vote at a meeting of co-operative members at which only the active suppliers, the so-called "wet" share-holders in dairy co-operatives, who are producers and suppliers, may vote.

These are the same rules as apply in respect of an amalgamation of two or more Queensland co-operative associations, except that in the case of interstate mergers, the Bill proposes that the Queensland association must also obtain the consent of the Minister for Primary Industries before seeking registration of the new body. Before such consent

is given, the Minister will need to be satisfied that the interstate participant in the proposed amalgamation is a genuine primary producer co-operative organisation, that the proposed amalgamated body does have a choice in regard to place of registration and that the interstate participant has complied with any statutory requirements relevant to the proposed amalgamation as set out in the relevant interstate legislation.

The Minister will also have an important reserve power to withhold consent for the proposed amalgamation where he is of the opinion that the amalgamation is not in the best interests of the members of the participant Queensland co-operative association.

Where it is proposed that the amalgamated body be registered in Queensland, the participating Queensland co-operative association must also satisfy the registrar of primary producer co-operative associations that the requirements of the Queensland Act have been complied with, particularly in regard to the conduct of the meeting of grower members and the preparation of the necessary co-operative objects and rules, before a certificate of registration will be issued. Similar provisions apply where the amalgamated association is to be registered interstate.

The Bill also provides for the appointment of a deputy registrar of primary producer co-operative associations to assist the registrar in the administration of the Act. The deputy registrar will be an officer of the Department of Primary Industries, as is the registrar.

Mr Speaker, this Bill is only a short one but is nevertheless an important one in terms of recognising the changing commercial environment in which Queensland's primary producer co-operative associations operate.

The Queensland Government recognises the importance of encouraging the development of strong and financially viable primary producer co-operatives to assist growers in providing some countervailing power to that of the large corporate players in the agribusiness sector. The Bill is designed with that objective in mind.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Casey, adjourned.

TRUST (RESERVE 1030) VARIATION BILL

Hon. W. A. M. GUNN (Somerset—Deputy Premier, Minister for Finance and Minister for Local Government) (9.56 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

“That leave be granted to bring in a Bill to provide for the discharge of a statutory trust on portion of Reserve 1030 and for related purposes.”

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

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

Second Reading

Hon. W. A. M. GUNN (Somerset—Deputy Premier, Minister for Finance and Minister for Local Government) (9.57 p.m.): I move—

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

The sole purpose of this Bill is to facilitate the upgrading, by the Brisbane City Council, of Hale Street as part of the development of an inner ring road around the central business district of Brisbane.

Extensive investigations have been carried out over a number of years in relation to major roads in this area. It has now been agreed between the Government and the Brisbane City Council that the most appropriate location for the provision of additional road capacity in the general corridor of Countess Street/Petrie Terrace/Hale Street is the site now chosen along Hale Street.

The site chosen was selected after considering the total environment of the area, including land-use matters, the condition of buildings, the significance of buildings, topography and catchments for local services as well as traffic. In order to construct a road in the agreed location, it is necessary to acquire a portion of land in Hale Street which is currently a reserve for memorials.

The only other option would be to relocate the Baroona Special School with the consequent disruption to the disadvantaged children attending that school and their families. The small portion of land which is to be acquired for the Hale Street project was originally a part of a burial ground, but in 1911 it was resumed and became Crown land under the provisions of the Paddington Cemeteries Act. At that time, the land was reserved from public use in order to prevent any disturbance of worship in the church erected on adjoining property. In 1914 the land was set apart for the preservation of memorials, a legal status which it presently retains.

The Supreme Court has recently determined that it is unlawful for the Brisbane City Council to construct a road over the land in question. In order to allow this construction it will be necessary to extinguish the existing trust and to provide that the land may be used for road purposes. The Bill provides accordingly.

The Bill also provides that as only part of the reserve for memorials is to be acquired, the Brisbane City Council, before commencing roadworks, is to remove the memorials which are currently in the land and relocate them in the balance area. I have had discussions with the Lord Mayor of Brisbane and with church authorities in relation to this proposal and it has been agreed that the action now proposed to be taken is a reasonable course of action to adopt. There will be no major disturbance of existing rights as the memorials on the land to be acquired by the council are to be properly relocated on the adjoining land.

The roadworks proposed to be carried out are considered by the Council to be desirable for the alleviation of traffic problems in the area generally, and, as I have said, there is no other logical location for the road at this point without disturbing other major community uses.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr McElligott, adjourned.

SANCTUARY COVE RESORT ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Hon. W. A. M. GUNN (Somerset—Deputy Premier, Minister for Finance and Minister for Local Government) (10 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

“That leave be granted to bring in a Bill to amend the Sanctuary Cove Resort Act 1985-1987 in certain particulars.”

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

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

Second Reading

Hon. W. A. M. GUNN (Somerset—Deputy Premier, Minister for Finance and Minister for Local Government) (10.01 p.m.): I move—

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

The Sanctuary Cove Resort Act was passed in 1985. The legislation was the first of its kind in Australia and provided for the establishment and ongoing management of an integrated mixed-use resort on specified land at Hope Island in the Albert Shire. When eventually completed, it will be a self-contained resort community of world standard.

As a consequence of the very favourable response in the market-place to the initial development, the resort-developer subsequently negotiated to purchase a number of adjoining properties. The intention was that these additional lands would be developed into some 600 residential lots, an 18-hole championship golf-course and an administration and service centre to cater for the overall development. The Act was subsequently amended in 1987, to allow the adjacent lands to be absorbed into the resort proper and developed pursuant to the provisions of the Act. At the time, the purchase of some of these additional lands had not, however, been finalised.

As a result of the completion of detailed planning of the adjoining lands, it has become apparent that further minor amendments need to be made to the Sanctuary Cove Act and this Bill incorporates the necessary changes to the Act. For the information of honourable members, I will now outline the major provisions of the Bill.

As I pointed out, at the time the resort site was extended in 1987, the developer was still negotiating with certain owners of private property. These negotiations have now been concluded to a point where the extended boundaries of the site can be delineated with reasonable certainty. Accordingly, the Bill includes a new schedule delineating the modified boundaries of the resort.

Members will also note that, in terms of the Bill, any lands of which the company is not the registered proprietor at the time it first lodges an overall plan of survey with the Albert Shire Council, will be excluded from the resort area for the purposes of the Act.

The Bill also proposes that certain lands, which were originally intended to be used for administrative purposes, be used as a residential area. A marginal increase in density will enable the number of residential lots to be created to be increased from 600 to 1 100, thus allowing more effective use of the extended site.

The Bill also regularises a number of administrative and operational matters. Firstly, provision is to be made for annual general meetings of the primary thoroughfare body corporate and the principal body corporate to be held in September 1990 to enable sufficient time for meaningful budgets to be prepared and other administrative matters to be attended to prior to the meetings. The present time-frame for the holding of these meetings is not sufficient for this purpose. In subsequent years annual general meetings will be held in accordance with the times prescribed in the Building Units and Group Titles Act. The voting rights on the primary thoroughfare body corporate are to be adjusted to take account of the greater number of residential lots now to be created.

Easement rights are conferred by the Bill on the proprietors of multiple dwellings in group title lots where there is overhang of roofs, eaves, gutters, etc., onto an adjoining lot, for the purpose of carrying out repairs and the like. Another important aspect of the Bill is provision for the variation of zone boundaries in the resort, provided these variations are of a minor nature and that the rights of persons are not substantially prejudiced.

It is also to be provided that land that is not presently included in a residential zone may be subdivided in the manner outlined in the subdivision of land provisions of the Local Government Act, provided any such subdivision is generally consistent with the initial plans of survey.

I am quite sure honourable members will agree that the success of the Sanctuary Cove Resort development concept is beyond question. Quite simply, this Bill is designed to fine tune certain provisions of the principal Act to enhance the overall development and to facilitate the very desirable extensions to which I have referred.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr McElligott, adjourned.

POLICE ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Hon. V. P. LESTER (Peak Downs—Minister for Police and Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Affairs) (10.05 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

“That leave be granted to bring in a Bill to amend the Police Act 1937-1989 in certain particulars.”

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

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

Second Reading

Hon. V. P. LESTER (Peak Downs—Minister for Police and Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Affairs) (10.06 p.m.): I move—

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

I seek leave of the House to table my speech and have it incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

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

The provisions of the Police Act that provide for the appointment of the Commissioner of Police do not provide for his employment on a contract basis, do not permit him to be employed beyond the age of 65 years, do not specify his relationship with the Minister, are inflexible in relation to the delegation by him of his powers and as to whom may act in his absence and do not clearly spell out his responsibilities.

The amendments to the Police Act made by this Bill will mean that these issues are properly addressed.

Clause 4. By repealing section 6 of the present Act and replacing it with a number of new sections the following consequences will result:—

1. The Governor in Council will be the person responsible for the appointment of the commissioner—new s. 5A.
2. The responsibilities of the commissioner will be clearly spelt out—new s. 5B.
3. The relationship between the commissioner and the minister will be clearly spelt out—new s. 5C.
4. The commissioner's power of delegation will be more clearly spelt out than is presently the case—new s. 5D.
5. The conditions of employment of the commissioner will be left up to a contract between the commissioner and the Crown—new s. 5E.
6. A more flexible system of appointing an acting commissioner will be possible—new s. 5F.

Clause 5. Section 6A of the present Act will be amended by clause 5 of the Bill by repealing the present subsection (3) and replacing it with a new subsection which will allow for a more flexible approach to such appointments. The effect of the change will be to allow the deputy commissioner to be appointed on a permanent or temporary basis, to have his appointment revoked and to have conditions attached to the appointment, eg. performance requirements, conduct guidelines, etc.

Clause 6. Section 7 of the present Act will be amended by clause 6 of the Bill in the same way as section 6A of the present Act is to be amended by clause 5, and this will allow the same flexibility in respect of assistant commissioners as the amended section 6A will allow in respect of the deputy commissioner.

Clause 7. Sections 7A and 7C of the present Act deal with the appointment of a person to act in the place of the appointed commissioner if he is absent for some reason. These provisions are to be repealed by clause 7 of the Bill and are to be replaced by the new section 6 by clause 4 of the Bill.

Section 9 of the present Act deals with the creation of officers in the police force and the number of members of the police force being within the sole province of Parliament. This

section is inconsistent with the Government's need to be able to set the strength of the police force itself and the section is therefore to be repealed by clause 7 of the Bill.

Clause 8. Section 8 of the present Act will be amended by clause 8 of the Bill in the same way as section 6A of the present Act is to be amended by clause 5, and this will allow the same flexibility in respect of all other ranks of commissioned police officers as the amended section 6A will allow in respect of the deputy commissioner.

Clause 9. Section 36 of the present Act spells out the retirement age of the holders of the various offices within the police force. At present the Act allows the commissioner to stay on only until he is 65 years of age. Such a provision may provide an impediment to the Government appointing an outstanding applicant to the position of commissioner if such person is approaching this age. Consequently, the age of retirement of the commissioner is to be removed altogether thus enabling a person who may possess all the desirable qualifications to be appointed irrespective of age.

Clause 10. At present, the commission of inquiry is engaging in a system of "vetting" all appointments to ensure that police officers who have a background which calls into question their integrity are not appointed on promotion to any positions in the police force. Clause 10 inserts a new section in the present Act so as to provide legal protection to the vetting process and to suspend the promotional appeal system in cases where the chairman of the commission deems it necessary. Such provisions are in line with the recommendations of Mr Fitzgerald for the transitional period of reform and have been inserted at the express wish of the commissioner of the commission of inquiry and the chairman designate of the criminal justice commission, Sir Max Bingham, QC.

Debate, on motion of Mr Mackenroth, adjourned.

WHEAT MARKETING (FACILITATION) BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 6 September (see p. 451).

Mr CASEY (Mackay) (10.07 p.m.): I have read the remarks made by the former Minister for Primary Industries when he introduced this Bill into the House. This Bill is typical of the National Party's attitude towards industry generally because, in actual fact, the Bill covers what has happened instead of what is about to happen within the industry. This Government is always way behind instead of ahead; it is a Government of the past, not of the future.

Earlier this year the former Minister for Primary Industries introduced wheat Bills into this House with great gusto, claiming that they were designed to stop those terrible Feds from taking over the Queensland wheat industry. On behalf of the Opposition I pointed out at that time that, so far as the wheat industry in this State is concerned, the Government must co-operate with the Commonwealth Government and especially the Australian Wheat Board. This Bill does exactly that. It is not just facilitation of marketing; it is facilitation of marketing in conjunction with the Australian Wheat Board. The former Minister for Primary Industries, Mr Harper, now states that the industry has indicated that the Australian Wheat Board should continue to market Queensland's wheat. He was all set and ready to go it alone earlier in the year. He did not want Queensland's wheat to be taken over by the Feds. We said it should not be; but we must co-operate with the Australian Wheat Board because, firstly, we could not compete against 90 per cent of the Australian industry before we started competing against the rest of the world in the marketing of our wheat.

Most amazingly, in a hypocritical and false fashion and in a fashion that was totally misleading to the House, the former Minister, in his second-reading speech, blamed the Commonwealth for the delay in this Bill's coming before the Parliament. He would not even talk to the Commonwealth authorities. He would not even discuss the matter with them. He said he was not interested in them. He said he would go it alone with the Queensland industry. Now he is here eating humble pie not only in that respect but also because he is the former Minister for Primary Industries. His own Premier has moved him sideways because of not only the controversy over his portfolio and this

Bill but also, as we heard earlier today, the drought-relief matters. There is no doubt that he should be sacked for the things that he has done.

The new Minister's attitude is no better. I do feel sorry for him because, judging by what he said when he introduced legislation earlier, he does not know the difference between a dairy Bill and a beef Bill. The difference is that dairy cows are milked and beef cows are not.

Mr Stoneman: What a moving statement.

Mr CASEY: The honourable member talks about moving statements. What about the new Minister this morning with his Mary-had-a-little-lamb rubbish in regard to the beef industry and the garbage he went on with concerning the cattle in the waterhole dying of thirst? What do producers do? They get in the four-wheel-drive, back it down to the waterhole, tie a chain round the bullock's neck and drag him out. If his neck can stand it, the bull comes out; if his neck cannot stand it, they shoot the bull. Despite his Mary-had-a-little-lamb attitude this morning, all they are doing is feeding the bullock, cutting its throat and eating it. All of the emotional nonsense in the House this morning was absolutely amazing. It was one of the most amazing things I have ever heard from a Minister for Primary Industries or anybody else involved with primary industries in this State.

The Minister has failed to take the opportunity in this legislation to review the constitution of the State Wheat Board. It has been discussed. I have discussed it with representatives of the industry. I know that the former Minister has extended the life of those boards for a further 12 months and referred to additional discussions. The National Party Government has Ministers who are prepared to follow what happens on the world scene instead of getting out and being ready to meet the changes and challenges which the marketing authorities in this State will have to face.

There must be a willingness to co-operate. We have to get in there, co-operate early and realise that there are commercial changes being made in the world almost every day. Those commercial changes are bringing about a need to restructure our bodies in this State. There is a need to keep up with those changes and not follow behind them.

A good example is the Queensland Sugar Board. It is also under Queensland legislation, but the sugar industry has enough nous to force the Minister to recognise that there are changes and to get those changes made. There are, on the Sugar Board, members who are capable and able to recognise the commercial opportunities prevailing round the world and to get out and meet them. That is why the sugar economy is so buoyant.

Mr Harper: This has nothing to do with sugar.

Mr CASEY: The Minister says that it has nothing to do with me, and I admit that. I am not in charge of the legislation in this Parliament; the Minister is, as the former Minister was. But that was forced on him by the industry. The sugar industry has a pretty good record in that regard.

The State Wheat Board is big and cumbersome. People involved in that board admit it. They need expertise in areas other than in growing wheat. That is something that has to be attended to immediately. They need to have direct contact with the grain-traders who are also involved in this industry. Rather than being in competition with them at all times, they have to co-operate with the grain-traders so that Queensland can market its grain products—whether it be wheat, chick peas, sorghum or barley—in accordance with the commercial realities in the world. Queensland must get in, be flexible and act quickly so that it can take advantage of those markets.

I have no criticism of the current executive or staff of the board. They themselves recognise the need to be a smaller, more flexible group that can move more quickly to take advantage of the changing market environment in the world.

Mr Harper: They asked for more time.

Mr CASEY: I talked to them a few months ago. They were almost ready to go but they were not sure whether the Minister was ready to go. That was one of the problems. Certainly the Queensland Government was not ready to go, because one of its problems these days is that it is not too sure who will be the Minister tomorrow. The Government does not know what will happen. Now the industry has come to the realisation that it is not sure who will be the Government tomorrow and that it may be talking to the wrong people at the moment.

Mr FitzGerald: You'll always be the Opposition.

Mr CASEY: Well, we hear something from—who is he? The Minister for Justice, or what is he? He has had a few changes in a few weeks, too. Anyhow, he is still the honourable member for Lockyer, so I suppose he still represents Lockyer in this Parliament. After the next election he will go back to being just the honourable member for Lockyer.

Mr Harper: And he does it very well, too.

Mr CASEY: Yes, he certainly reflects his electorate.

I turn to the attitude of the former Minister for Primary Industries, the Minister who introduced this Bill on grain-handling in this State. Last month, he acted like an irresponsible parent on the sideline of a junior football game. He urged the Australian Wheat Board to bring on an industrial dispute that would have been bigger than the airline pilots dispute. He showed a completely uncaring attitude for the damage that would be caused to Queensland's grain industry. Former Minister Harper moved towards a situation in which the wheat industry in this State could have been crippled at the very time that it was commencing its biggest harvest in years. Typical of the National Party's attitude towards industrial relations, he wanted only confrontation on Australia's waterfront. Australia needs a major confrontation on the waterfront at the moment like it needs a hole in the head.

Everybody can see what is happening with the pilots dispute and the harm that it is causing the tourist industry. We would never want to see a situation in Queensland in which grain silos were filling up, the farm storages were filling up and the waterfront storages were absolutely full to the brim because of a waterfront dispute caused by the Government, which entered the dispute by saying, "We will show them." Government members know nothing about the wheat industry.

However, the cooler heads of the Australian Wheat Board prevailed. I congratulate Clinton Condon, a Queenslander, and the Australian Wheat Board on the forceful way in which they entered into negotiations to resolve the waterfront dispute. Contrary to former Primary Industries Minister Harper's assertions, the Commonwealth did not put pressure on the Australian Wheat Board. If honourable members want further evidence of that, they should examine the board's own documentation. The Minister has a copy of it. It gives a full perspective on what the Australian Wheat Board did and how it went about negotiations.

The Queensland Government was attempting to force a confrontation on the waterfront. However, instead of forcing confrontation over the loading of the Aegean Dolphin, the Australian Wheat Board, recognising that trouble was brewing at Fisherman Islands and also at Port Kembla, which has new facilities, entered negotiations in an endeavour to resolve the dispute. In the long term, its grain-loading enterprises will gain from the reform on the waterfront. The methods that the Australian Wheat Board has adopted will minimise costs and maximise returns to the growers. The reform was achieved through negotiation and co-operation rather than by industrial action, which was sought by a Queensland Minister. The Minister was in like a little fox-terrier yapping its head off, just as the member for Mount Gravatt is at present, because he does not understand the first thing about primary industry matters. He and the member for Aspley are plotting the downfall of another Premier now that they recognise that they are out of the frying-pan and into the fire with Premier Cooper. That was proven today by

Premier Cooper's reluctance to step in and get rid of Minister Harper from the Ministry because of the damage that he is doing not so much to his Government but to the State of Queensland and its primary industries. However, that is Queensland, National Party style. It would have imposed a cost burden on the industry through its negotiations on the loading of the Aegean Dolphin.

The Australian Wheat Board adopted a different attitude. It entered negotiations in a spirit of co-operation and it is getting there. Not only is it getting there with its own industry, but it has been able to put forward a timetable that will bring about total reform on the waterfront throughout Australia. It now has negotiated the timetable that it wants.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I ask the Ministers to come to order.

Mr CASEY: They have a lot to talk about. They have many concerns, but not for the people of Queensland. They are only concerned about their own thick hides in the south-east corner of the State, because they know that they are down the tube. Unfortunately, many of their country colleagues will go down with them at the next election.

The Labor Party supports the Australian Wheat Board's negotiations in the handling of the dispute on the wharves. Now that the Queensland Wheat Board and Bulk Grains Queensland have seen how it can be done, they will also support the Australian Wheat Board. The Government was going to use those two bodies as a tool to hit the waterfront unions with a big hammer. However, the grain-growers of this State were the ones who would have been burdened with the cost.

The grain-growers of this State can look forward to a much better deal under the Goss Government. The present Government has only recently discovered the Pacific rim, but it still cannot relate to its needs. It has no idea. It believes that, if it loads the grain on a ship and sends it away, it is doing the right thing by Australia.

The grain industry in Queensland needs downstream manufacturing. The manufacture of biscuits, specialty grain products such as cereals, pet foods and suchlike are the products that we should be exporting to improve the balance of payments of the country. We should be adding value to a product by four or five times before it is sold in an endeavour to improve export earnings and decrease the balance of payments with overseas countries.

Honourable members should visit the supermarkets and see the large quantities of tinned English biscuits that are being sold.

Mr Harper: They are importing pineapples.

Mr CASEY: The Minister talks about pineapples. I have seen Taiwanese pineapples alongside Queensland pineapples, and the Queensland pineapples are much better presented. I defy the Minister to tell honourable members what he did when he was Minister for Primary Industries to help to promote Queensland pineapples other than getting up on his platform and whinging about the Federal Government. That is not the way to go about things. Consumer surveys need to be carried out to see what the consumer is buying, whether it be on the State market, the interstate market or the export market, and then we need to produce for those particular markets.

Value-added guarantees jobs in this State. It guarantees sales of the primary products of this State. That is the way to go, and that is the way Queensland will go within a month or so under a Goss Labor Government.

Mr BEARD (Mount Isa—Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party) (10.24 p.m.): It is always wonderful to look at things through the other end of the binoculars and to listen to the member for Mackay talking about the dispute regarding the loading of the Aegean Dolphin from the viewpoint of the Labor Party, in which the farmers, wheat boards and so on are the villains, but not the wharfies, when we know that the use of WWF labour costs Australian grain-growers about \$30m a year.

We know that negotiations have been carried out with the ISC to resolve the problem at a cost of some \$300m or \$400m. There is a whole restructuring plan involving retirements, replacements and recruitment of new, young labour into the industry. However, in the meantime, when the grain-growers try to get a ship loaded to save themselves some money, so that they can compete fairly on international markets, that is seen by the Labor people as thuggery. I think that a more reasoned view might be that the farmers are trying to get their product overseas and that they are being subjected to thuggery by the WWF. Tas Bull's statements on the whole issue were certainly anything but conciliatory, and I do think that he played a very prominent role.

I agree with Mr Casey that Mr Clinton Condon and other people came out and said, "Okay. Look, for the sake of peace and getting on with industry, let's get it loaded by the WWF. It will take a little bit longer to resolve the problem." The point I am trying to make is that it is always the farmer, the producer, the grower or the exporter who is called upon to pay the cost, not the fellows who cause the trouble in the first place.

It is fair that negotiations take place. Yesterday, when I was talking about the air pilots dispute, I said that negotiations have to be entered into. Quite often it is much better to take a little more time over it and spend a little more money. I just think that it is very unfair of the member for Mackay to place all the blame on the guys who are trying to get their crop loaded and overseas so that they can compete on the world market.

Recently, on television, I saw a wharfie and a farmer who had swapped jobs for a day. Each had a go at doing what the other fellow did for the day. At the end of the day the farmer reckoned the docks were a piece of cake and the wharfie did not want to go and do the farmer's work for another day. That is not an entirely fair description, but that is the way they saw it.

Mr McLean interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Bulimba!

Mr BEARD: I sincerely hope——

Mr Gately interjected.

Mr McLean interjected.

Mr GATELY: I rise to a point of order. I find those words offensive and I ask that they be withdrawn.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member finds the remark offensive. I order the member for Bulimba to withdraw the comment.

Mr McLEAN: I withdraw it.

Mr BEARD: Actually, Mr Speaker, I find the carrying-on of both honourable members during my speech pretty offensive. I hope that I do not have to withdraw my comment that I found them both offensive.

Where was I? Actually, at this time of the night, at the end of three days of debate, I am inclined to say that this is a pretty reasonable Bill. The Liberal Party certainly will not oppose it. I think I might leave my comments at that, with this qualification: there is much that is wrong with the grain-marketing system in Queensland and in Australia as it stands.

I have in my possession a letter which at this time of night, after that interruption, I will not read into *Hansard*. However, in that letter the proprietor of Goondiwindi Grain Cleaners Pty Ltd speaks at some length about the madness of the grain industry in Queensland. For example, he found out that, if the growers were going to use seed that they bought from the neighbours to feed chooks, that was okay; but the Act did not provide for the seed to be planted and special ministerial approval was necessary.

He points out the craziness of the restrictions that prevent grain being sold for seed to be planted, except through the board.

There is much that is wrong with the system. If there were not, people involved in primary production would not be contacting politicians to tell them what is wrong. I just hope that even in the corrupt markets that exist in the world we can look at a slow but deliberate deregulation, a loosening of controls, in these grain-marketing boards, so that the way is opened up for the innovative, the efficient, the adventurous, the farmer who is prepared to produce, who is prepared to take risks to make a quid outside the system, while not throwing the others to the wolves.

We cannot continue to prop up inefficient and lazy people—and some of them are—at the expense of the innovative. However, as I have said, the Liberal Party will support the Bill because it is business. Business has to go on, and members of the Liberal Party are not here to hold up business.

Mr McLEAN (Bulimba) (10.28 p.m.): Over the last couple of weeks honourable members have witnessed a continual attack by the National Party and, of course, the Liberals on the waterfront and, in particular, the wharfies.

A little while ago a grain dispute was looming. When I hear the Minister and others blame the wharfies for that dispute, I become quite angry. It is obvious to me, and to anyone who knows the background to that problem that looked like occurring in Brisbane, that it was caused by the National Farmers Federation. It was caused by the extreme Right Wing in this country, which is trying so very hard to cause a blue. Anyone who has any common sense at all realises that the wharfies union, the WWF, and other waterside unions have bent over backwards to ensure that a strike did not occur.

I heard the Minister say that the Federal Government intervened in those negotiations. The truth of the matter is that, if that dispute had gone ahead at that time in Brisbane, if scabs had been allowed to come into that waterfront dispute, the whole Australian waterfront would have stopped. Two to three years of negotiations to form an agreement on how to improve the efficiency and productivity on the waterfront would have been lost. Hundreds of millions of dollars would have gone down the chute. I think at the time the National Farmers Federation was disputing some \$6,000 in wages.

The National Farmers Federation leads a handful of vested interest groups that appear hell-bent on wrecking negotiations to reform the Australian waterfront. Talks called by the Waterfront Industry Reform Authority—the WIRA—involving unions, stevedoring companies and the grain industry have averted a crisis, thank God. In comparison with the consequences of this dispute, if it had eventuated, the airline pilots dispute would have been lost in the wilderness. It is okay for the National Farmers Federation and the grain-growers to say, “We want a fight with the wharfies,” because it would not have ended there.

The National Farmers Federation has focused on the grain industry and container depots in an attempt to achieve its goals. In the grain industry, the NFF has shown no enthusiasm for the deregulation of the domestic marketing of grain. Opposition members have heard the moaning and whinging from Government members on that issue. They want the waterfront unions deregulated. Where are their principles? Where is their consistency?

A recent decision of Bulk Grains Queensland to attempt to load grain at Fisherman Islands, Brisbane, without members of the Waterside Workers Federation and other stevedoring unions was a gross provocation designed to remove the WWF from the stevedoring of grain vessels around Australia. The decision was taken at the insistence of the National Farmers Federation and had the support of the Grains Council of Australia at that time.

Initially, the Australian Wheat Board backed the Bulk Grains Queensland decision, but during last-minute talks it opted to allow grain——

Mr Harper: You know more about it than Mr Casey, don't you?

Mr McLEAN: I do know a lot more about it. Because of my background, I know the consequences. Obviously the Minister does not know the consequences. He is one of the people who stirred up the dispute. If he realised the consequences of this dispute—

Mr Casey: He's the bloke who wanted the blue.

Mr McLEAN: I know he did. He is part of the extreme Right Wing in this country—the National Farmers Federation. I will deal with that later. The Minister has been tonguing for a blue for a long time. However, he is pulling the wrong people on. Thank God they have the sense not to come in here. The pilots dispute would be nothing compared with what would happen if the Minister pulls on the waterside workers. They can stop every import and export—not just people travelling round the country—our life-blood. The Minister wants that. The National Farmers Federation has about \$20m that Mr Harper has helped put there for them to fight. It wants to knock the unions over, but the Minister is going the wrong way about it. Negotiation is the way around it—not confrontation, which is what the Minister wants.

The Grains Council and the NFF were engaged in a political stunt to break down the negotiating capacity of the Waterfront Industry Reform Authority. That is obvious to anyone who has followed this dispute.

On 1 June 1989 the Government issued a statement indicating 17 major points on which waterfront employers and unions had to agree as part of a three-year waterfront reform plan. WIRA was set up to oversee the negotiations. The Bulk Grains Queensland decision threatened to undermine the substantial progress being made in the WIRA negotiations. Employers, such as P and O Australia and Patricks—the two big employers in Brisbane—urged Bulk Grains Queensland not to proceed with this decision.

On 8 August 1989, in a letter to Bulk Grains Queensland, P and O Australia stated—

“To precipitate action in an isolated section of the overall reform at a time when all parties are attempting to achieve this ‘in principle’ agreement will in fact be counter-productive.”

That is exactly true.

Paul Houlihan was recently appointed by the Queensland Government. The new Minister for Primary Industries is laughing. He would probably know a lot about Paul Houlihan. He was appointed by former Premier Ahern as Chairman of Queensland's Waterfront Reform Task Force. He urged Bulk Grains Queensland on. This is the same Paul Houlihan who, as the National Farmers Federation industrial director, in May 1988 said—

“The farmer lobby was trying to provoke disputes on the waterfront so that it could use its multi-million dollar ‘fighting fund’ to take court action against unions. We keep sticking our chin out, but the waterfront unions have been careful not to hit it. When the showdown comes it will be big.”

That is the attitude adopted by Government members. They have been provoking the dispute. They are exactly the same as the pilots. They have been provoking the dispute and waiting for this blue for the last 12 months. They have got it. And the Minister wants a blue on the waterfront. I do not think that he knows what he is taking on. When it comes, it will be big and it will affect a lot of people. The Minister does not care, of course. He probably will not feel the effects of the dispute. However, the people of Queensland and those in other parts of Australia will feel the effects of it.

Bulk Grains Queensland, the NFF and the Grains Council of Australia have no rational reason for singling out wharves for attack. The facts are that the grain-handling is only a very small proportion of work undertaken by WWF members. The WWF is only one of a number of unions involved in grain-handling. The WWF has a good industrial relations record in grain-handling.

The talks called by WIRA on 23 August to deal with the threat by Bulk Grains Queensland culminated in an agreement to adopt a commonsense course of negotiated change. Only the National Farmers Federation and the Grains Council of Australia oppose that agreement. Subsequent WIRA discussions on 31 August laid the basis for all grain industry parties to review stevedoring manning arrangements on grain vessels to ensure maximum efficiency.

According to the *Daily Commercial News*, Lindsay Criddle, the GCA's president, has threatened to use the GCA's power as a selector or Australian Wheat Board members to force the board to toe the line. Clinton Condon, the person to whom Mr Casey referred earlier and who is the AWB chairman, commented, "I thought that he had more brains than that." Condon's remark reflects the AWB's commitment to consultation rather than confrontation.

In January 1989, the AWB's senior operations manager stated—

"I can confirm that the AWB considers that there is a role for stevedoring labour on wheat vessels . . . Our opinion therefore would be that an acceptable arrangement not only can be worked out with the current unions involved but that they are best placed to in fact implement that agreement . . . I can say that the AWB whilst not a direct employer of stevedoring labour in all cases is committed to and will ensure that any agreement is adhered to by those parties operating on our behalf . . . I trust the spirit of co-operation that has extended to date can be maintained throughout this exercise."

In fact, the WWF has not been seeking confrontation; it has accepted change on the waterfront but insists that that change must be achieved through regulation and consultation.

It makes me sick to hear the rubbish that falls from the mouths of some honourable members about the workers on the waterfront.

Mr McPhie: We've got the same trouble with you.

Mr McLEAN: You would be the worst example of that. Your tunnel vision is narrower than that of any other member of this House.

Mr McPhie: A glowing example! Keep talking. Keep talking.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Bulimba will address the Chair.

Mr McLEAN: The honourable member is a prime example of the narrow-mindedness of the Government. He does not know what he is talking about. If the word "union" is mentioned, he turns over. The workers are entitled to a voice.

If the Minister can break those years and years of tradition that have been put into formulating the unity and organisation within the National Farmers Federation—

Mr Harper: Economic waste.

Mr McLEAN: What is the economic waste?

Mr Harper: Overmanning of ships.

Mr McLEAN: That is not true.

Mr Harper: Of course it is.

Mr McLEAN: I am glad that the Minister said that.

In 1955, Australia had almost 27 000 waterside-workers. In June 1989 the figure was 5 900. The number of workers has decreased fivefold but the amount of cargo has increased. During the past 20 years, productivity measured by the average number of tonnes moved by each registered waterside-worker has increased by more than fivefold.

Mr Harper: Automated.

Mr McLEAN: Okay. Where has the money gone? There is five times more cargo but five times less labour. Where has the money gone? The consumers do not have it.

Mr Harper: Bob Hawke and Keating have got it.

Mr McLEAN: Okay. What about the joint ventures between waterside-workers and employers that have been started in seven ports throughout Australia? They have cut the costs of wheat-handling by up to 30 per cent.

Mr Harper: What about Mackay?

Mr McLEAN: Mackay is a good example.

Mr Harper: Why can't we do that at Fisherman Islands?

Mr McLEAN: The Port of Brisbane Authority will not allow a joint-venture scheme in Brisbane. Why does the Minister not do something about that?

The seven ports in Australia are all successful. Because the costs of wheat-handling in those ports have been cut by up to 30 per cent, the consumer is getting the benefits. This Government appointed the Port of Brisbane Authority, but it will not allow a joint-venture scheme in Brisbane. I invite the Minister to talk to representatives of that authority.

Mr Casey: They are only interested in looking after P and O and Patricks.

Mr McLEAN: That is exactly right. P and O has had the run of this port. Because it has had no competition, P and O has ruined the port. Last night in this House I started to talk about that matter. Competition must be allowed.

Brian Baillie, the manager of P and O, paid an enormous amount of money to the Bjelke-Petersen Foundation.

Mr Harper: Oh, come on!

Mr McLEAN: I invite the Minister to go back through the history of the Port of Brisbane Authority and to investigate Mr Baillie's association with the former Premier. Mr Baillie has received favourable treatment. If the Minister were to convince the Port of Brisbane Authority to allow joint ventures in this State, the farmers and wheat-growers would receive a 30 per cent reduction in their handling costs.

Mr GATELY (Currumbin) (10.43 p.m.): I found it absolutely incredible to listen to the diatribe of the previous speaker and his attack upon the National Farmers Federation, the National Party and the Liberal Party. The honourable member claimed that the attacks on the Waterside Workers Federation made him angry. It makes me a darned sight angrier to sit in this House and to listen to the arrant nonsense of the member, who is protecting the crime and corruption within the Waterside Workers Federation.

The best example of crime and corruption is those fellows who pilfer stuff from containers. The honourable member spoke about crime and corruption, but I want to talk about the other scabs. The best example of a scab is the Prime Minister of this nation.

Today Mr Hawke went into the Industrial Relations Commission in Melbourne to stop the airline pilots and the airlines from getting together. Mr Hawke and his friend Mr Abeles are inflaming the dispute even further by trying to stop the whole deal.

The honourable member spoke about scabs, but he would not know what the word means. A scab is the sore underneath the little bit of topping. The sore is the cancer on the wharves.

I remember very vividly when the Waterside Workers Federation stopped the loading of live sheep in South Australia and in Melbourne. The farmers said, "Hey, we have had enough of this. We will go in there and we will load them ourselves." I remember Mr Hawke backtracking so quickly that one would have thought he was on the front of a rocket from north Queensland. That is how fast Mr Hawke back-pedalled, because he knew that the farmers were fair dinkum. That was the only occasion on

which Mr Hawke has backed down. It is time that the farmers of this nation started to say to the Labor Party and its cronies on the wharves, "We have had a gutful of the way you have gone on and ripped us off."

Two years ago in Townsville I took my son to have a look at how the wharves were operated. He said to me, "Dad, what are those five men doing sitting there?" I said, "I really don't know but we will go and ask the gentlemen." I was informed that they were the supervisors who made sure that the ships were being loaded properly. Yet we talk about costs in this nation! By the living Harry! My son could not believe it. He saw bludgers sitting down playing cards when they were supposed to be watching the crane loading the goods onto the ship. That is what they were doing: sitting down bludging. No other word could be used to describe it. That is what is happening to this country. That is why it is in the state that it is. Blokes such as those have bludged, thieved and done everything possible to stop people in this nation getting their goods and services in and out at a bearable cost.

Mr Davis interjected.

Mr GATELY: I will tell Mr Davis something about his party and his union mates. The honourable member and his crony mob—all the little pressure groups—stop this country from exporting anything that can earn dollars that will get rid of the country's deficit. They are making us less than a Third World country. The honourable member and his union mates do not think about the real economics of this country. Neither does Bob Hawke. He will not let the pilots sit down and negotiate. That is what is wrong with this nation. I am fed up to the back teeth and to the top of my head with it.

A letter in this week's *Country Life* headed, "Hawke succeeds to 'bring this country to its knees' " states—

"After studying sections of the Federal Labor Government's spending, I am reminded of the statement Mr Hawke made when he was president of the ACTU, quote 'that he would bring this nation to its knees' end quote.

Well, it seems that he has succeeded, only this time he wears a different hat, that of prime minister.

A point to note is that the Federal Government Taxation Revenue in the 1982/83 Fraser budget was \$41,183 million against the 1989/90 Hawke budget figure of \$91,325 million and our balance of payments stinks along with our international credit rating. Our interest rates are far too high to allow any small business to even think or contemplate further development."

If a little business tries to establish itself and import goods and services from overseas, the Waterside Workers Federation keeps the goods stuck on a wharf. The operator of the business has his money tied up in those goods which he is not able to sell to earn money that will make a profit that will keep his employees employed. That is caused by the union mates of the honourable member for Brisbane Central. The poor little devil who is trying to make this country go is being affected by those tactics. Hawke and company will not allow small-businessmen to continue operating in this country. The wharfies stop them. Then Hawke rips them off with higher and higher taxes. And people wonder why this country is going nowhere! Hawke will go somewhere, all right—right out the back door.

The letter continues—

"I wonder whether the current pilots dispute is really about increased wages for the pilots or is it the climax of a power struggle between the Federal Labor Government, the ACTU and big business to increase the strength of the ACTU?"

The dispute continues and it is extraordinary that not one of the three groups that I have mentioned, appears to be capable of solving this dispute.

Mr Hawke should forget his big corporate mates and be seen to be doing what he is elected to do, act for the people of Australia and think of the well being of

the residents and taxpayers of this great nation and should be encouraging dialogue between the striking airline pilots and the airline owners.”

Instead, he is inflaming the dispute.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I ask the member to return to the Bill.

Mr GATELY: I will do that.

I am talking about the very same Mr Hawke who last year visited America to talk about wheat exports and the amount of wheat that the US was likely to sell to the Indonesians. He was so successful on that trip, during which he addressed about a quarter of the members of that country's House of Representatives, that they took him for a joke. He was not over there for the benefit of Australia. He was over there for the benefit of Hawke and Keating. When we consider the way in which the waterside workers have thrust this country down and down, the sooner they are off the wharf and private enterprise people are doing the job, the better off this country will be.

Hon. M. D. STONEMAN (Burdekin—Minister for Primary Industries) (10.50 p.m.), in reply: I thank honourable members for their contributions to the debate. I will not comment in any great detail on the somewhat facetious remarks of the honourable member for Mackay in relation to the cruel attitude that he obviously adopts to drought. I will stick to the Bill at hand.

The Government is responding to representations from the industry in which it requested the facilitating legislation. Both the State Wheat Board and the Queensland Graingrowers Association consider that the Bill will be in the best interests of growers throughout the State. In fact, one wonders where primary producers would be if ever this State had to contend with the double-whammy of Federal and State Labor Governments.

The honourable member for Mackay recognised that the Bill is a facilitating Bill. Regardless of the overbearing attitude of the Commonwealth Government, the Queensland Government is prepared to play its part in improving marketing mechanisms as requested by Queensland growers. The honourable member referred to the need to restructure Queensland marketing authorities. He should be aware that this is an ongoing process. However, in Queensland this task is undertaken in conjunction with growers, unlike the Commonwealth which introduces restructuring without consultation at all. I think Mr Casey would have to acknowledge that.

The honourable member for Mackay would be hard pressed to convince the grain-growers of Queensland that the Commonwealth Government, in the person of the Minister, Mr Kerin, did not put pressure on the Australian Wheat Board to back off on the waterfront issue. I notice that Mr McLean is not in the Chamber at present.

The Labor Party has previously strongly advocated a deregulation of grain storage, handling and transport arrangements, but apparently does not support the concept of deregulation of labour arrangements. The national grain-grower body, the Grains Council of Australia, was the body which originally requested the Australian Wheat Board to have the Aegean Dolphin loaded at Fisherman Islands with a more rational labour component. The Queensland Government supported the position of the Grains Council.

The support of the member for Mackay for the waterfront unions is understandable, even though over recent years they have cost Australia and its primary producers thousands of millions of dollars. Whether or not present overstaffing at grain-loading facilities is resolved before the onset of the harvest is yet to be seen. If it is not, the Federal Labor Government will stand indicted for its incompetence.

I thank the honourable member for Mount Isa for his support of the Bill and for his recognition of problems caused by past policies on the waterfront. I can assure the honourable member that Queensland marketing boards are now fully supportive of innovative marketing techniques.

I regret that the honourable member for Bulimba is no longer in the Chamber. One wonders how anyone could support wharf practices as they apply to the grain industry. It defies comprehension. Efficiency on the waterfront is a contradiction in terms. Although the honourable member for Bulimba might believe what he says—and I guess he is sincere in that belief—I can assure him that the grain-growers of Australia would look upon what he has stated as absolute nonsense.

Motion agreed to.

Committee

Hon. M. D. Stoneman (Burdekin—Minister for Primary Industries) in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 9, as read, agreed to.

Clause 10—

Mr STONEMAN (10.55 p.m.): Amendments are proposed in relation to three clauses of the Bill, namely, clause 10, clause 15 and clause 16. These amendments relate to two matters and have been requested by the Wheat Varieties Advisory Committee and supported by the State Wheat Board.

The first matter relates to the subject-matter upon which the Wheat Varieties Advisory Committee can make recommendations to the Australian Wheat Board and the State Wheat Board. At present the Bill provides for the committee to make recommendations on varietal classification and the premiums and discounts for varieties within a classification. I propose to move amendments to clause 10 and clause 16 which will allow the committee to make recommendations on other relevant matters connected with varietal release and classification, for example, matters relating to the production and release of new varieties and the susceptibility of particular varieties to disease.

The second matter relates to the membership of the Wheat Varieties Advisory Committee. I propose to move amendments to clause 15 to allow for the future appointment, if considered appropriate at the time, of additional persons to represent the users of wheat and/or to provide appropriate technical expertise. At present the Bill provides only for the appointment of one person to represent wheat-users and for one person with technical expertise to be appointed.

The amendments will also provide that if additional persons are appointed, then the expenses associated with that representation will be borne by the body or organisation that the person represents, or by the State Wheat Board in those cases where a person is appointed in an individual capacity and not as a representative of any particular organisation.

In all, four amendments are necessary to clause 15 to allow for additional representation on the committee in the manner requested by the industry.

I move the following amendment—

“At page 6, omit lines 22 and 23 and substitute—

‘section 15, that are made in accordance with section 16.’”

Mr CASEY: Rather than delay proceedings at a later stage, I will make general comments on the amendments that are proposed. In his second-reading speech, the former Minister for Primary Industries stated the great lengths to which he and his Government had gone to consult the industry in order to achieve what the industry wanted in relation to the Bill. However, within a week or so of its introduction to the Parliament, the new Minister has come forward and spoken about additional representations made by the industry, in particular the Wheat Varieties Advisory Committee, and has brought forward amendments. That bears out what I have been saying all along about the manner in which this Government operates.

I wish to comment on remarks that have been made about the cost of Waterside Workers Federation labour and labour costs on the waterfront that are associated with

the loading of wheat. For the moment I will forget about the idiotic remarks made by the member for Currumbin, who will be a once-only member of this Assembly for sure. I draw to the attention of this Parliament figures that have been compiled by the Australian Wheat Board. They show clearly that the total cost of loading a grain transportation vessel in Australia averages \$7.60 a tonne. Of that \$7.60 a tonne, \$5.20 is the cost of handling at the terminal. In addition, port costs amount to approximately \$1.90 a tonne. Most of those charges are paid to quangos established by this Government.

The average cost of loading wheat—the stevedore and labour costs that the present Minister, his predecessor and the honourable member for Currumbin have been whinging about—amounts to a lousy 50c a tonne. Labour and stevedoring costs amount to one-fifteenth of the total cost of loading wheat onto a ship—50c a tonne. The Minister ought to compare that cost with the on-farm costs of handling grain. He will find that, depending on the circumstances, the costs vary from \$1.90 a tonne to \$3.40 a tonne. Those figures were supplied by the State Wheat Board. The Minister can have a look at whichever figures he likes. He can refer to bulk grains or bulk handling.

The Minister's attempts to malign the Waterside Workers Federation in this State and in other places throughout Australia in relation to this matter are really a load of rubbish. That is why the Australian Wheat Board adopted a certain attitude towards the handling of the Aegean Dolphin in this State. It is also the reason why the Australian Wheat Board totally ignored the former Minister for Primary Industries, Mr Harper, and all his conservative Right Wing mates who wanted a head-on confrontation on Australia's waterfront, which would have resulted in further damage being caused to the economy of this great nation. The Labor Party will succeed through co-operation, not by provoking confrontation.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 10, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 11 to 14, as read, agreed to.

Clause 15—

Mr STONEMAN (11.03 p.m.): I move the following amendments—

“At page 9, line 1, after ‘comprise’ insert—

‘at least’ ”;

“At page 9, omit lines 12 to 14 and substitute—

‘(e) one shall be a person representing the users of wheat in Queensland;
and

(f) one or more persons may be appointed to represent such bodies, or to provide such technical knowledge, as the Queensland Minister may determine.’ ”;

“At page 9, line 22, after ‘paragraph (e)’ insert—

‘or (f)’ ”;

“At page 9, omit lines 27 and 28 and substitute—

‘paragraph (e) or (f) of subsection (2) as representative of the users of wheat generally, or under paragraph (f) of subsection (2) to provide technical knowledge, the State Wheat Board shall bear the expenses associated with.’ ”

Amendments agreed to.

Clause 15, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 16—

Mr STONEMAN (11.07 p.m.): I move the following amendment—

“At page 9, omit lines 35 and 36 and substitute—

‘basis of variety, the premiums and discounts for varieties within a classification and any other related matters.’ ”

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 16, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 17 to 28 and schedule, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, with amendments.

Third Reading

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

SUGAR MILLING RATIONALIZATION (FAR NORTHERN REGION) ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 6 September (see p. 452).

Mr CASEY (Mackay) (11.09 p.m.): Again an Act that is only two years old is being amended by this Parliament. It relates to the Babinda/Goondi deal that was entered into concerning the closure of the Goondi mill, so the title of the Bill should include the word "consolidation" rather than "rationalization". The Savage committee report, or the 100-day committee report as we knew it in 1985, was the blueprint for the biggest ever shake-up in the sugar industry in this State.

SMAC, or the Sugar Milling Adjustment Committee, was set up following the bringing down of that report jointly by the State and the Commonwealth. The first \$9m of Commonwealth money that was made available in Queensland went to the Babinda mill to assist in the purchase of the Goondi mill and its subsequent closure so that Babinda mill could build up its throughput. That has been achieved. There had to be a consequential readjustment of canelands which, unfortunately, was done by this Government under this legislation instead of, as was traditional, by the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board, which was the arbiter in the sugar industry for such a long period.

The people who went from Goondi to Babinda had no voting rights and there were certain things they could not do for five years.

Then along came the Bundaberg Sugar Company Ltd offer. Most members would be aware that, not long after the amalgamation of Goondi and Babinda, the Bundaberg company bought the Mourilyan mill and the Nambour mill from Howard Smith. Not very long after that, the Bundaberg company made an offer for Babinda and that put the cat among the pigeons. Other far-northern co-operatives found themselves under threat but, despite my urging them last year to amalgamate and become a bigger growing co-operative which would be stronger in the industry, they did not.

They should have followed the example set by the Mackay co-operative which, as the former Minister would know, is going along very well now. Some members of his own party did not want to be involved at first. They included the honourable member for Mirani, who was not a Minister at the time. Despite that, the Mackay people amalgamated and are going very well indeed. The co-operatives in the northern area chose not to accept my advice and they realised too late the advantage of accepting it. They endeavoured to form themselves into a major co-operative organisation in far-north Queensland, but the Bundaberg company had already captured the hearts, minds and pockets of most of the growers in Babinda. Negotiations are proceeding but they cannot be completed until the Bill is passed to allow a technicality to be got out of the road.

Bundaberg Sugar Company Ltd is a well-run and well-managed corporation. It is a great asset to this State and has been for a long period. It was the first company to concentrate the sugar-growing activities of the companies in its district and it has gone from strength to strength. It did have some mill closures but the sugar industry in that area has benefited because of that amalgamation.

The company is good at what it knows, that is, the manufacture of raw brown sugar crystals, the refining of sugar at the Millaquin mill and the manufacture of by-products, one of which you, Mr Deputy Speaker, and the Minister enjoy. I refer, of course, to that good Bundaberg rum that is so well renowned.

Queensland is fortunate to have its sugar industry. It certainly leads the world in sugar technology, much of it because of the institute in Mackay. It is a very well set up and managed organisation and is a world leader in its field. A man who has contributed much to the sugar research institute over the past 20 years is Roy Deicke. He was chairman of the Bundaberg company. He retired recently from the institute and I take this opportunity of placing on record the contribution that that man made to the sugar industry in this State. As chairman of the Bundaberg corporation, he is spearheading the take-over proposal at Babinda.

With this legislation, the Government is correcting its mistakes on the run. We have seen that many times in this House. The Opposition is prepared to support the legislation, not so much to help the Government out of a hole but to keep the equity for the growers who are supplying the Babinda mill. If 75 per cent of the growers do not support the Bundaberg take-over offer, they will remain in a co-operative in the north.

The cash-in-the-hand offer that is being made by Bundaberg Sugar Company Ltd could be at the expense of tax-payers. The tax-payers have contributed through the Sugar Milling Adjustment Committee to the amalgamation of the mills. It may not be a direct contribution, but it is a part of the transaction. Although a transaction could not be found in the accounts, it could be said that that is one of the major advantages that Bundaberg Sugar Company Ltd will receive from the proposed take-over.

The Savage report reveals that the sugar industry must be ready to react to change quickly. Another major recommendation of the Savage report that has been put in the too-hard basket is the recommendation that the industry have one authority to administer it. That could be achieved with one authority having three arms: a marketing arm such as the Queensland Sugar Board, a judicial arm such as the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board, and an administrative body within the industry to disseminate proposed changes quickly. The industry needs that framework to be put in place immediately. I foreshadow that it will be one of the challenges that will be undertaken by a Goss Government in this State.

This amalgamation clearly shows that the milling industry in Queensland is consolidating into three groups. Sugar is Queensland's major agricultural crop. The manufacture of a raw brown sugar crystal is Queensland's major manufacturing industry. The industry contributes an enormous amount to the economy of the State. Without the towns and cities along the coast of Queensland, which are totally reliant on the sugar industry, this State would have a poor economy indeed. Many service industries and back-up facilities in the towns and cities are in place to service the sugar industry.

Unfortunately, as the milling groups consolidate into the three major groups, the isolated co-operatives may encounter some problems. In future, some groups will be strong enough to stand alone, but others may not be. Some isolated individual corporate mills will also have problems. I refer to the mill at Nambour, which has been taken over by Bundaberg Sugar Company Ltd. With the readjustment under the Regulation of Sugar Cane Prices Act, under the 5 per cent expansion it may well be that 90 to 95 per cent of the growers in the Moreton mill area will request growers in the Burdekin district to grow their cane for them. That illustrates the point that we are running into problems in Queensland with the 5 per cent expansion. It is clear that a number of areas are not able to accommodate that expansion. The Babinda area is one of them.

Last week, Mr De Lacy, Mr McElligott, Mr Eaton and I, together with other members, visited the Babinda mill and talked with the board of directors. We inspected the mill and discussed its problems. That area cannot meet the 5 per cent expansion. In fact, because of the major wet season early last year, the growers are approximately 15 to 20 per cent down on their original crop estimate. It will be necessary for areas

such as the Mackay region, which has a big crop this year, to meet peaks for the whole industry in the State. Unfortunately, because of cyclone Aivu, the Burdekin's peak is lower than expected, but not as low as was anticipated shortly after the cyclone struck.

The roaming provisions under the Regulation of Sugar Cane Prices Act are causing problems. They are getting out of hand. Who is growing what and where they are growing it is like a pakapoo ticket. The controlled industry growth and the controlled production of cane and the raw sugar crystal was the very basis of the industry. However, at present mills are crushing the cane of growers from other mill areas. Unless some of those mills amalgamate, management will not be able to properly control adjustment. Because of the scene that is developing, those sugar Acts must be examined. They should either be adhered to or they should be thrown out the door. If they are not working, they will create an administrative nightmare in the sugar industry.

I have referred to amendments to this Bill and to other legislation that has been before the House recently. In the short period that the Minister will be in control of this portfolio, he should consider a provision in the legislation that the industry never wanted and wants removed, that is, the ministerial control that was brought in by Minister Harper. Unfortunately, he wanted ministerial control of all his legislation, whether it related to sugar, wheat, butter, dairy products or whatever. The sugar industry does not want that ministerial control. It is quite capable of looking after its own affairs under proper legislation. That provision should be removed from the legislation as quickly as possible. The industry requires consultation, which is what it will get from me in a Goss Labor Government.

Mr BEARD (Mount Isa—Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party) (11.23 p.m.): I do not know whether this is the third, fourth, fifth or sixth time since I became a member of this Parliament—which was only two or three short years ago—that I have seen the introduction of a Bill dealing with the Goondi growers. They have certainly been through the mill, one might say. It would appear that there is at least a good reason for the introduction of this Bill, that is, the financial commitments having been repaid in advance of the scheduled date.

Obviously this legislation needs to be passed. It is necessary for business; it is necessary for the growers; and it is necessary to enable the milling to continue.

It is worth commenting that the more highly regulated and controlled an industry is, the more legislation has to be introduced to deal with every exigency that arises. Mr Casey quite correctly identified changing circumstances external to Queensland and to Australia which are going to force our producers in all sorts of industries—but I think particularly our great primary producers—to react fairly quickly to change which will be imposed on them. I think that the sugar-growers, the producers and the manufacturers are right in the forefront of having to meet that change.

For example, it is interesting to see what might be regarded outside this place as not being of earth-shaking importance—the social impact on a community—when there is talk, as there is now in Ingham, of moving to continuous crushing. There is opposition to that. The community is facing a couple of unattractive options and it has to choose one of them. Because of the rationalisation of sugar-mills and the increased cane crop, it either has to extend the season, put a lot of capital—some \$40m or \$50m—into increasing the capacity of the mill, or move into continuous crushing over six or seven days to get, say, a 35 per cent increase in crushing. That sort of change has a significant impact on a community which has existed for a long time with one particular mode of life.

That is just one example of change that people have to adjust to. Growers and producers have to be ready for that. However, I will not waste the time of the House by saying any more.

The Bill is necessary and, of course, the Liberal Party supports it.

Hon. M. D. STONEMAN (Burdekin—Minister for Primary Industries) (11.25 p.m.), in reply: I thank the honourable member for Mackay for his generally supportive comments and the member for Mount Isa for his supportive comments.

I take this opportunity to pay tribute to the role played by my predecessor, the Honourable Neville Harper, who came in for a considerable amount of criticism from honourable members opposite in relation to the financial and legislative processes that supported the maintenance of the Babinda mill. I think honourable members are now seeing the great success of the processes that Neville Harper put in place. I commend him for that. I pay tribute to him for that success, which I believe will continue, and which will be facilitated by this legislation.

The Government is determined in its intention to support the great sugar industry of this State and will continue to facilitate its expansion and consolidation as a major primary industry not only in this State but also, of course, in Australia. The industry is located almost totally in Queensland. As the Minister responsible, I am determined to maintain that position.

I also pay tribute to the role that the Sugar Board and the grower and miller organisations play in the maintenance of the industry. It was wonderful to see various representatives of those groups coming together the other night when I was fortunate enough to meet, in their presence, the presidents of three Korean companies who are visiting Queensland. These gentlemen and the companies that they represent purchase a considerable amount of sugar from Queensland. The obvious respect that those people had for people like John Andrews, Harry Bonano, Roy Deicke and the other members of that group, as well as millers and growers generally, was very heartening to see. Those gentlemen are obviously greatly respected.

I place on record my support for the sugar industry as a whole and acknowledge that changes will continue to be required so that the challenges of the future can be met. In particular, as Minister, I look forward to visiting the Babinda area, as well as other sugar districts throughout the State.

I assure honourable members that I will be receptive to any further constructive comments that they might make as we move forward in support of the sugar industry in Queensland.

Motion agreed to.

Committee

Clauses 1 to 4, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

Third Reading

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

COTTON INDUSTRY DEREGULATION BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 7 September (see p. 581).

Mr CASEY (Mackay) (11.30 p.m.): The Cotton Industry Deregulation Bill, which is the third of a group of primary industry Bills to be debated this evening, shows clearly one of the paradoxes of this hypocritical National Party.

The former Minister introduced the Wheat Marketing (Facilitation) Bill with great gusto and talked about the regulatory controls that were necessary for this and for that and the need to maintain regulation within the industry. Of course, the Sugar Milling Rationalization (Far Northern Region) Act Amendment Bill also refers to the need for

additional regulations. Now honourable members are debating the Cotton Industry Deregulation Bill, which by its very title indicates that it involves deregulation. It is a Bill to completely deregulate the cotton industry in this State. That is fair enough. It comes at a time when "deregulation" is one of the dirtiest words in the book as far as all industries in this State are concerned. It has been the corner-stone of criticism by this Government of the Commonwealth as to what should or should not happen to various industries, such as the wheat and sugar industries.

That word is also the source of the National Party's rumour-mongering against the Labor Party. Yesterday, I met with representatives of the Queensland Dairymen's Organisation who were concerned about the rumours circulating through their organisation that, with the Labor Party in Government in this State, their industry would be completely deregulated. I denied that rumour and condemned it as an absolute lie. I told the representatives that quite clearly. I heard a similar rumour from a number of other sources in the bread industry. It has been suggested that, in Government, the Labor Party will totally deregulate that industry. Again, I condemn it as an absolute lie. As the rumour-mongering is not in the interests of the Labor Party, it must emanate from the National Party.

I would be the first to accept that this Bill has been introduced at the request of the cotton-growers of this State. More than 90 per cent of the growers voted in favour of setting aside their co-operative and their marketing board and forming themselves into a corporate structure. When the Bill becomes law, they will change to a fully commercial corporation. Of course, regulations are contained in the Bill to protect the current ginning ownership and the capacity of ginning operations in this State. The Bill protects the Naomi Cotton Co-operative from New South Wales, which is operating at Goondiwindi. The Bill also protects the new Dunavant Ginning Company, which is constructing a new gin at Yamala, east of Emerald. The project is being undertaken by a major American corporation. It shows what is happening in the cotton industry not only in Australia but worldwide. The big international corporations are moving in to the very source of ginning, right down to the growing scene. Throughout the world cotton-growers have become merely mendicants—slaves, so to speak—on a share-farming basis for some major corporations.

If one wants to make a comparison, one could say that we are going back to a situation that existed in the United States in the mid-nineteenth century when slave labour was used to produce cheap products. Fortunately, at the moment cotton prices are very good. As I said, the establishment by the Dunavant corporation from the United States spells out the direction in which the industry will go. Not only the big boys in the international scene but also those in Australia are moving in. In the Northern Rivers country, where the rivers flow into the Darling River system in New South Wales, people such as Kerry Packer have established big organisations to control the cotton industry.

Knowing full well what is happening in the corporate structure that is being set up in Queensland, I sound a note of warning to the growers that in the future they will be susceptible to take-over and control of their industry by the large corporations. I do not think that the growers have really thought the matter right through. Once the take-over occurs and the honeymoon period during which ginning is controlled in this State is completed, the growers will be in open competition with all those big corporations on the world market. All honourable members know that that market is manipulated.

Queensland has a big need for industry—not so much for the ginning industry, but for the processing industry, such as further processing, spinning and cloth-making. I referred to that matter in a recent conversation with cotton-growers. Growers seem to be content to grow cotton, to gin that cotton and to export it to Korea, Taiwan and other countries. If a suitable price can be found, the cotton is sold to neighbourhood areas and other places throughout the world. However, Australia turns round and buys back shirts, T-shirts, singlets, underwear and dresses from Korea, Taiwan and those other countries at five times the value of the raw product. It does not say much for our own industry in Australia. As soon as this is mentioned in National Party circles, the

reply that is made immediately is, "It is because of the high wages in Australia." That is the greatest load of rubbish I have ever heard as far as the cotton industry is concerned.

Mr Gygar: I don't know. Ron McLean was speaking earlier.

Mr CASEY: Honourable members would know that the deadly enemies of the members of the Liberal Party who mouth on in the background are the unions—the workers—the ordinary people trying to make a quid in the community. Mr Speaker, as a former teacher, you would know from the history of cotton-spinning and cotton-weaving that the cotton industry is one of the most mechanised manufacturing industries in the world. It has now become the most computerised industry in the world. When one visits major factories in Taiwan and Korea one finds that very few people are employed in them. The only employees who can be found in the factories are those who are engaged in maintenance activities, such as greasing and operating particular machines. The electronic people are looking after their computers. As the cotton industry is one of the most mechanised industries in the world, it cannot be the labour cost that is adding to the price of the finished article; it is Australia's industry sitting on its backside instead of doing something.

I do not hear members of the Liberal Party bleating out now. They are supposed to be the champions of industry in this country. However, they have done absolutely nothing in Federal Government or in coalition Government in this State to try to get off the ground industries such as the cotton-spinning industry and the cotton-weaving industry. Rather, on many occasions they have done the opposite.

A few years ago in Victoria I visited a factory that had been manufacturing shirts since the war years because it had received contracts to make shirts for the army. At that stage it looked as if the factory was about to close down and that it was going to be taken over by a Queensland corporation. The Victorian Government, which is much maligned by the National Party and the Liberal Party in this House, sat down with the industry and looked at restructuring. What happened? To the disgrace of this Government one of the very few cotton-manufacturing industries that might have come to Queensland was lost. It was reconstructed in Victoria. The Victorian Government looked after its industries.

Mr Gygar: Do you think Queensland's economy should run the same way as Victoria's?

Mr CASEY: That is the sort of thing that has been happening in this State. Actions speak louder than the words that are being mouthed by the Liberal back bench.

Instead of ranting and raving about Governments in other States, members of the Liberal Party should get off their backsides and see for themselves a few of the things that are happening in this nation and which could be happening in Queensland. It is all very well to be critical, but it is far better to be positive about the industries of this State.

Queensland is one of the major cotton-growing areas of Australia. It has the most potential to expand. This State should have the best opportunity of becoming a manufacturer of cotton goods that could be supplied to Australians and exported to other countries.

Instead of sitting on their backsides and whinging, members of the Liberal Party and the National Party should do something about Australia's balance of payments. That is the way that Labor would go about things in this State. Labor will take the economy of this State by the neck and will get on with the job. Labor would use Queensland's primary products without worrying about special zones, trade-development zones and the export of some products that are then imported as manufactured goods. Let us get on with the job of using our own raw materials, manufacturing them into finished articles and making a quid out of them for all Queenslanders.

Mr GYGAR (Stafford) (11.41 p.m.): The Liberal Party supports wholeheartedly the Cotton Industry Deregulation Bill. I compliment the Minister on a number of sensible

provisions that have been included in the Bill. Firstly, this legislation is an acknowledgement that industry should be able to manage its own affairs without strictured and strait-jacketed methods such as those that would be imposed by the Labor Party and rammed down its neck whether it liked it or not.

The cotton industry is determined upon deregulation. The Minister has sensibly agreed to that and has introduced legislation that will allow a transitional phase so that industry can shake itself out and phase in grower organisations. By December 1992 the industry will be completely deregulated.

The Bill contains another intelligent provision in that it will only cover the area of Queensland south of the twenty-second parallel; so that if there is to be further independent development of what could be called a new cotton industry outside that area, it would operate on a level playing-field right from the start and would be able to develop in such ways as it wished under its own arrangements.

I applaud the Minister for including in the legislation a provision that the expiration of the legislation on 31 December 1992 may be speeded up if, by its own processes, the industry determines that new cotton-gins should be constructed and operational by that period. The Liberal Party supports the Bill.

It is perhaps appropriate to mention rural land management. As the Minister would be well aware, one of the problems of the cotton industry has been the reactions of people to the use of pesticides and poisons, the introduction of irrigation schemes and the general management of the land on which cotton is grown. That a few mistakes have been made within the industry emphasises the need for appropriate land and environment policies and the recognition of the importance of rural land management.

Throughout Australia it has been acknowledged widely that the great conservation issue that this nation has faced and will face into the next century is the management of its land resources to ensure that Australia's great rural heritage is not sent down the rivers and into the oceans or destroyed by inappropriate management resulting in salination.

Policies that allow appropriate management of our rural lands must be considered so that those lands are passed on in good condition to the next generation. It would be remiss of anyone who has an interest in that subject not to draw attention to the platform of the Australian Labor Party on this issue, which is a ticking time-bomb waiting to destroy rural Queensland or rural Australia if, by any chance, that bunch of doctrinaire socialists should be allowed to impose their ideological views on the lands of this State and therefore destroy them. One thing is certain about the Labor Party; it will never admit that its ideology does not work.

Mr Ardill: It does work.

Mr GYGAR: The honourable gentleman says that it does work. I invite him to tell the House about the soldier settlement scheme, which was one of the Australian Labor Party's wonderful socialist mechanisms that led to the greatest decline in rural land quality in this nation.

Mr Ardill interjected.

Mr GYGAR: The honourable gentleman is upset. Does he or does he not support the platform of the Australian Labor Party to reintroduce into Queensland the disasters of the soldier settlement scheme that destroyed so much?

Mr Ardill: You never, ever give a solution, do you?

Mr GYGAR: Perhaps that is because I am horrified by the honourable member's solution. I will give him a solution: do not vote those yobbos in, because rural Australia will be destroyed.

At present the Labor Party is running around putting out policy documents. It has two sets of policy documents. One comprises the documents that are given to people in

the cities, and the other comprises the documents that are given to the people who will actually have to live with the policies.

Mr Ardill: You are talking rubbish.

Mr GYGAR: I agree, I am talking rubbish. I am talking about the rubbish that is in the ALP's land and environment policy on page 52 of that party's platform. Section 1.1 of that policy states—

“... that land should be classified according to its optimum usage potential ...”

In other words, the boys from Canberra, the trade union hacks and the has-beens from Trades Hall who Labor wants to put in power, trot out to western Queensland and tell experienced farmers and graziers what they can and cannot do with their land and tell them that they know what the optimum usage potential of their land is and what they will be able to do with it.

Mr Eaton interjected.

Mr GYGAR: Mr Eaton wants to buy into it now. Perhaps he can explain what is meant by section 2.1(m) of the Labor Party's policy, which states that Labor will—

“... exercise the right of Governments to resume land in areas suitable for closer settlement, where social, economic and environmental considerations make closer settlement desirable and practical.”

When I read those words, they seemed a little bit familiar to me.

Mr Eaton: Are you going to throw everybody out?

Mr GYGAR: Is the Labor Party going to throw them all out?

Mr Eaton: That's what you fellows are going to do, you're going to stop closer settlement coming in.

Mr GYGAR: The honourable gentleman wants closer settlement. That is another familiar phrase. As I am sure all members of this House who have had any rural experience will know, that is the very phrase that the Labor Party used in New South Wales when it went out to break up the squatters, to get rid of the squattocracy, to resume their properties and break them down so that honest toilers could have a chance. What does the Labor Party want to do to the honest toilers? It wants to “initiate an improved system”—telling the rural people of Queensland that they have totally fouled it up—“of land settlement with emphasis being on the lease of living areas of land to family units.” In other words, it wants to reintroduce the peasantry in Queensland in the same way as it tried to do it in New South Wales with its disastrous soldier settlement scheme.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr GYGAR: I can understand why members opposite are irate. That was the biggest rural disaster in the history of Australia.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I now ask the member for Stafford to return to the Bill.

Mr GYGAR: Of course.

What I am talking about in this Bill is the potential for the degradation of the cotton lands of Queensland if this disastrous scheme should be introduced. As I mentioned earlier, the cotton lands are very sensitive.

Mr Ardill interjected.

Mr GYGAR: Unlike the honourable member, I do have a rural background and I happen to know a little bit about farming. I do not become lost once I get off the bitumen. The honourable gentleman ought to try it some time. If he could ever see through his facial fungus he would know that there is a real Australia out west where

people do get their hands dirty, where they are not, like the honourable member who is dying to get in on the act, professional students or party political apparatchiks.

Mr Ardill interjected.

Mr GYGAR: I am talking about the goose behind the honourable member.

As I was saying, it is a place where there are some people who work for a living. Many of them are called farmers.

Mr Ardill: You have never done a day's work in your life.

Mr GYGAR: I will take that interjection. I will match my record with any of the jobs and trade union hacks on the honourable member's side of the House any day of the week. By his prattling and wailing, the honourable member displays his total ignorance of the proper methodology that is necessary for rural land management.

What has been shown over the years in Australia, but which still is not accepted by the caterwauling ratbags on this side of the House, is that in the management of rural lands, a farmer cannot be put on the minimum amount of land that some socialist bureaucrat deems to be necessary. Funny things happen on the land—things such as droughts, floods and bad seasons.

Mr Henderson: Tell Mr White that.

Mr GYGAR: We have heard a lot about droughts. Under Mr Harper they were a growth industry in Queensland.

These things do occur. If some bureaucrat can work out how many acres a person can make a living on and then tell him that he is not allowed to own any more—which is exactly what the policy of the Australian Labor Party is——

Mr Ardill: That isn't true, and you know it. Rubbish!

Mr GYGAR: I will read it again for the sake of the honourable gentleman who obviously has never read his own party's land and environment policy. Section 2.1(m) states—

“... exercise the right of Governments to resume land in areas suitable for closer settlement, where social, economic and environmental considerations make closer settlement desirable and practical.”

Section 2.1(h) states—

“... initiate an improved system of land settlement with emphasis being on the lease of living areas of land to family units.”

They are exactly the same phrases as were used to introduce the soldier settlement scheme.

There are four things that have caused the massive decline in rural land quality in Australia. One was rabbits, the second was drought, the third was flood and the fourth was the Australian Labor Party socialist policies which brought it about.

Mr Beard: The rabbits are first and fourth.

Mr GYGAR: Yes, the rabbits are first and fourth, as the honourable member said.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! For the second time I ask the honourable member for Stafford to return to the Bill.

Mr GYGAR: Certainly.

My great interest is in saving the rural lands of Australia and the way in which their quality can be preserved from degradation so that farmers in the west of this State can have real futures. That is not done by strait-jacketing them into tiny little pocket handkerchief-size blocks on which only in good years can they make a living.

We have surely learned in this country that droughts do not occur regularly and that floods do not occur regularly; that a good year is not necessarily followed by another good year and that a bad year is definitely not followed by a good year. There may be runs of bad seasons. The people who are on the land know about that. That is why, when they manage their properties properly and appropriately, they take them to a size at which they can survive those lean years. If this State ever saw the introduction of the disastrous soldier settlement scheme, as the Labor Party proposes for Queensland, it would be sentenced to the greatest bout of rural degradation since the last long drought.

When property sizes are not large enough and when the bureaucrats get it wrong, bad seasons cause undercapitalisation and bring about a destruction of rural lands. Pasture improvements cannot be made. Over the years overstocking has been the bane of rural Australia. Overstocking with cattle and sheep destroyed the western plains of New South Wales. Overstocking with rabbits virtually destroyed one-third of arable properties.

Mr Casey: Ha, ha!

Mr GYGAR: By laughing, the honourable member merely displays his ignorance of rural management. I wonder what he thinks the rabbit problem is.

Mr Beard interjected.

Mr GYGAR: I agree that the honourable member's problem is between his ears.

Rabbits basically created the problem of overstocking because they ate all the feed and there was none left for any other animals. They virtually destroyed the land.

Mr Casey: This is what Angus reckons he is going to win all the rural seats on. Ha, ha!

Mr GYGAR: I make no pretension about holding rural seats, but I have enough respect for the land that my generation inherited and wishes to pass on to the next generation to wish not to see a similar disaster occur. Only a person who lives with his head in a brown-paper bag would fail to appreciate what the history of this nation should teach us. Appropriate rural land management depends upon letting the farmer do his own thing with appropriate support from the Government, not upon a Government resuming land because the farmer has bought too much and then chopping it up into pocket-handkerchief size lots, thereby instituting inevitable disaster when bad seasons occur.

I think that every member who represents an electorate west of the Great Divide should photocopy page 52 of the ALP's policy and distribute a copy to every person who has anything to do with rural Australia. Just as environmental problems of the cotton-fields have caused difficulties, so will mismanagement of land be an even greater disaster. Land degradation and environmental problems that can arise in micro-environments could spread throughout the whole State if ever the socialist ALP members are able to throw productive and prosperous farmers off their properties. They would divide the properties and reintroduce the peasant class that was introduced in New South Wales through the implementation of exactly the type of policy that is set out on page 52.

Hon. M. D. STONEMAN (Burdekin—Minister for Primary Industries) (11.56 p.m.), in reply: Again I thank all honourable members for their contributions to the debate. I take this opportunity to state that, although I have had considerable contact with growers, I look forward to gaining a more intimate and detailed knowledge of the cotton industry in the future. I look forward to visiting the cotton-growing areas throughout this State to update contact that I have had in recent years with growers in areas such as Emerald, Biloela, St George and so on. I look forward to maintaining those contacts and gaining a greater understanding of the problems that confront all primary producing areas from time to time.

The honourable member for Mackay missed the fundamental point of this whole exercise. In Queensland, deregulation of the cotton industry is occurring only at the request of the growers. This contrasts with the attitude adopted by the Commonwealth Government, which has imposed deregulation on growers without adequate prior consultation. I do not think any thinking person would disagree with my comments in relation to that matter.

I thank the honourable member for Stafford for his comments and support in his somewhat wide-ranging speech. It was obvious from the comments he made that he had done his homework. By virtue of its sunset clause, this legislation will expire after three years, which is a key feature of the Bill. The honourable member recognised this fact. It is certainly the wish of the growers that the industry should be totally deregulated after a period of adjustment. I know that the honourable member for Stafford recognises the important components of this Bill and the intent of this Government to support the industry and its growth.

I acknowledge the importance of land management and the comments made by the honourable member for Stafford. I give an undertaking that land management will continue to be a major focus of my attention in my capacity as Minister for Primary Industries. My predecessor adopted an innovative attitude. I compliment him for the groundwork he established. Undoubtedly I will support his efforts and carry on his good work.

Motion agreed to.

Committee

Clauses 1 to 15, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

Third Reading

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

ELECTIONS ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 7 September (see p. 580).

Mr WELLS (Murrumba) (12 midnight): Mr Speaker—

“ ’Tis now the very witching time of night,
When churchyards yawn and hell itself breathes out
Contagion to this world.”

I think that is an appropriate remark from Shakespeare to cite during this midnight session of the Parliament when Honourable Ministers opposite are absolutely hell-bent on legislating in the dead of night. However, it is appropriate to give credit when it is due.

It seems like only yesterday that I made congratulatory remarks to the honourable member for Lockyer on his first Bill as Minister for Justice. It was his last Bill as Minister for Justice. Tonight I am able to make pleasant, congratulatory remarks to the honourable member for Mount Gravatt on his first Bill as Minister for Justice. It remains to be seen whether or not it is his last. It is pleasing for a member of the Opposition to stand up in the middle of the night and congratulate this new, fledgling Minister on achieving something that is quite rare for National Party members—a good Bill; a singular legislative reform that will benefit the people of Queensland.

This Bill is a fine, democratising Bill and it would be churlish of me to say that it was only capable of being a fine, democratising Bill because the system which existed

prior to the legislation was so undemocratic and skew. It would be an unfair, low and disdainful act for me to say that this Bill only goes a small distance towards redressing the electoral malapportionments, improprieties and rorts which bedevil the system that we suffer in Queensland. In fairness what should be said is that it does go some distance towards doing that.

This fine, democratising Bill alters a situation which previously existed whereby the only people who could obtain a copy of the electronic roll were members of adjacent electorates, thus massively benefiting National Party members, since there were more of them than anyone else by virtue of other provisions of the Elections Act. This Bill replaces that unequal, unfair system which the previous Minister—but it is the energy of the present Minister which has brought this Bill to fruition in this House—described in his speech as something other than a level playing-field, with a much fairer system; a system whereby any member of this House can obtain a copy of the electronic roll, as can any relevant candidate or municipality. This is why I describe this Bill as a fine, democratising Bill.

It would be churlish of me to explain to the House what brought this action about. It would be reasonable to mention that it was due to the acute embarrassment suffered by the National Party during the Merthyr by-election. Honourable members will recall that at that stage the National Party embarked upon a bit of a mail-out on behalf of its then candidate for Merthyr. It was obvious that the National Party had access to an electronic electoral roll, but that was not within the law, because the Bill that this House is amending tonight said that a member could not have access to an electronic roll unless he or she was a member of an adjacent electorate. A member of the National Party did not hold any adjacent electorate, nor did that party hold the electorate of Merthyr. The members of the National Party were using ill-gotten gains—goods that they had no right to have their naughty, grubby little hands on. What acute embarrassment for the Nationals, who were so anxious to win this seat!

The Labor Party boldly stepped in and sought a Saturday morning injunction to stop the National Party from continuing with this electoral naughtiness. This was one piece of electoral naughtiness that it was possible to stop by the processes of law, even the law corrupted by this National Party Government.

Mr Ardill: It was the only one in the history of Merthyr in recent times.

Mr WELLS: I thank the honourable member for his interjection.

By the Monday after the Saturday injunction sought by the Australian Labor Party, the National Party had a sudden conversion. It had suddenly been converted to the proposition that the electoral roll should be available to every member.

Mr De Lacy: It was a road to Damascus conversion.

Mr WELLS: I thank the honourable member for Cairns. I am sure that the Minister for Justice will understand me if I say that the Nationals had a sudden road to Damascus experience. This Bill represents the National Party's after-the-fact conversion on this point.

In the past the members of the National Party undoubtedly sinned as far as the electoral laws were concerned, but they have made it up. They have had their road to Damascus conversion. Unfortunately, Queensland now has a Minister who not only has a capacity to identify sin, but also has a similar capacity for repentance. This Bill represents his contrite act of penance. On behalf of the Opposition, I am pleased to grant him his absolution.

Mr GYGAR (Stafford) (12.06 a.m.): It is only appropriate to congratulate the Minister on the production of his first Bill in the House, and I join with the previous speaker and say that it is auspicious that the Bill is such a sensible piece of legislation. I hope that the rest of the legislation that the Minister introduces into this House in the few short days left to him will be equally sensible, if not more so. I also congratulate

the Minister on the openness of the attitude that he has displayed since taking up his portfolio. This Bill—although it is not his creature—is perhaps a good Bill for him to tie his name to, because it, too, aims to open up the public records of this State.

The Opposition member who has just spoken had his facts a little confused, because he could not work out the Electoral Districts Act and the Elections Act. It is worth saying that the Elections Act is the Act which manages the conduct of the elections in this State. Successive Governments of this State should be proud of this Act. It is the best Elections Act in Australia, because it was written to try to ensure that elections were conducted cleanly. There is no way that people can be stopped from pulling rorts, but the Elections Act is designed to make sure that they get caught, as they were a couple of weeks ago—but more of that next week when we reveal names, dates, places and records of conviction.

There are a number of aspects about the legislation which cannot be taken on board immediately by the Minister; but, in reality, all that is under consideration in this amendment is the method of communication. It does not matter whether it is written on a piece of paper, a cassette, a compact disk or a computer disk; it is a piece of information. As information technology progresses, I can see no difference between a person walking into a post office or the Government Printer and putting \$6 down to buy an electoral roll printed on paper and a person putting his \$6 down and walking out with a computer disk.

The second point I raise is the cost of these things. The price that the Government charges is absolutely horrendous. I can understand why, in the initial stages, high charges were necessary, because the Government had to recover cost on all of the machinery that went into making up the programs—the software—necessary to strip these disks down. But these days, with the Government's tax-free status and its bulk-buying capacity, I doubt very much whether the little disks cost more than 50c a piece.

Given the high speed of modern technology and the fact that the software has been developed and should have paid for itself by now, I wonder why it costs hundreds of dollars to buy these things. I would have thought that the real cost to the Government of their actual production, assuming that the initial setting-up costs had been recovered, should surely not exceed \$50 and, if it does, the Auditor-General should be asked to find what has gone wrong at CITEC. It is simply a matter of pressing a couple of buttons to load program X and throw it down to disk. I acknowledge that high initial charges were justified and reasonable to recover the cost of the software development, but the stage is rapidly being approached at which the pricing structure of these things should be re-examined and made a little closer to reality.

The Bill merely opens up another field of technology. There is not much difference between printed rolls and electronic rolls. If anyone can buy a printed roll, eventually we will arrive at the stage at which everyone can buy the electronic copy. We do not hasten into these things overnight. It is appropriate that, at the initial stage, they are made available to people who have, as the Minister said in his second-reading speech, serious intent to use them as part of the democratic process. Therefore the restriction to members of the Legislative Assembly is possibly not inappropriate at this time.

I would hope that the Minister will continue to display an interest in the Elections Act and the electoral rolls, because there are significant problems with them. We all know that the Labor Party is out there putting phonies on the electoral rolls at the moment. Mechanisms are needed to prevent these things happening.

I commend the Minister for the Bill and I urge him to redouble his efforts to make sure that the electoral rolls of this State are clean and so protect the democracy of this State.

Hon. I. T. HENDERSON (Mount Gravatt—Minister for Justice and Minister for Corrective Services) (12.11 a.m.), in reply: It gives me tremendous pleasure to hear the comments by both honourable members. I am pleased to know that my honourable friend opposite is so happy to know that the electoral naughtiness in this State has been

tidied up. He mentioned that it was an experience of the road to Damascus type. I remind the honourable member what happened after that experience. Paul went on to much greater things and the ultimate climax was the resurrection. Honourable members will see that over on this side of the House at the end of the year.

The other thing I would like to comment on is the contribution of my friend the honourable member for Stafford. He is probably one of the better organised members in terms of electronic equipment. I take on board his comments about the cost and I shall, almost immediately, ask the Principal Electoral Officer why they cost so much money.

I extend to all honourable members the following invitation. If they have any concerns about the electoral system, all they need do is address them to me. I give an undertaking to the House that they will be looked into. To my honourable friend opposite and the honourable member for Stafford, I again repeat the invitation that, if they have any concerns, I will give them every opportunity to speak to the Principal Returning Officer and the Principal Electoral Officer.

Motion agreed to.

Committee

Hon. I. T. Henderson (Mount Gravatt—Minister for Justice and Minister for Corrective Services) in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 and 2, as read, agreed to.

Clause 3—

Mr WELLS (12.13 a.m.): I thank the Minister for his gracious invitation for a further briefing on the workings of the electoral office. May I ask him, in the context of clause 3, which is the clause which carries the main purport of the Bill, whether he will take early action to ensure that the provisions are proclaimed, because an election is coming forward?

Mr HENDERSON: The answer is, "Yes."

Clause 3, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

Third Reading

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

The House adjourned at 12.16 a.m. (Friday).