

NOTE: There could be differences between this document and the official printed *Hansard*, Vol. 314

THURSDAY, 29 MARCH 1990

Mr SPEAKER (Hon. J. Fouras, Ashgrove) read prayers and took the chair at 10 a.m.

BRIEFING ON AIDS AND AIDS CONTROL

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I have to remind honourable members that a briefing on AIDS and AIDS control will be held today from 1.45 p.m. to 2.15 p.m. in the conference room on level 5 of the Parliamentary Annexe.

PETITIONS

The Clerk announced the receipt of the following petitions—

Brisbane Limited Rail Service

From **Mr Hamill** (1 722 signatories) praying that the Brisbane Limited train between Brisbane and Sydney be retained in its present form.

Daylight-saving

From **Mr Stoneman** (1 494 signatories) praying that daylight-saving be rejected permanently and for businesses to be encouraged to commence work one hour earlier.

Petitions received.

PAPERS

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

Report of the Department of Mines for the year ended 30 June 1989.

The following paper was laid on the table—

Report of the Miners Pensions Tribunal for the period 1 July 1989 to 19 February 1990.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Brisbane City Council Rates

Hon. T. J. BURNS (Lytton—Deputy Premier, Minister for Housing and Local Government) (10.02 a.m.), by leave: I draw honourable members' attention to an article in this morning's *Courier-Mail* headed "Rates move obstructed, says council". Let me set the record straight. Recently, the Brisbane Town Clerk wrote to my director-general seeking a meeting to discuss rate issues. The Deputy Mayor also wrote to me seeking a meeting. As usual, my department responded quickly and a meeting between senior officers was held on Monday. The council's officers advised that they had a legal opinion casting doubt on their ability to apply a minimum rate across the full range of classifications. My officers asked for a copy of the opinion and agreed to examine the issue as a matter of urgency.

My director-general recommended to the Town Clerk and to me that it would be sensible to defer for a week the meeting that had been set down for today between myself and the Deputy Mayor to allow reasonable time to obtain Crown law advice on the points of law raised by the council. I object most strongly to Alderman Denman's suggestion that this was somehow unreasonable.

On 14 December 1982, differential rating and minimum rating provisions were introduced into legislation for Brisbane. The Liberal Party has had control of the council since 1983—the past seven years. To accuse the Goss Labor Government of delaying tactics is flying in the face of those facts.

After the last council election, this matter became an issue between the council and the Government. At that time it was the desire of the council that it be given authority to levy a very wide range of differential rates to the extent that the whole process would have completely destroyed any relevance to the application of the unimproved capital value approach to rating. Indeed, because the proposal by the Brisbane City Council at that time was found to be completely impractical and, in many ways, inequitable, it was rejected by that Government.

My department will always examine issues and submissions made in respect of rating and problems confronted by specific local authorities—as it is prepared to do now. However, to claim any interference or deliberate obstruction on the part of this Government is absurd and, indeed, untruthful.

Mr Denman's outburst raises more important philosophical issues about rating policy. He is quoted as saying that the council wants to change the rating system so that "it makes the people who are paying too much pay less, and those who are being subsidised by others pay more". He describes this approach as equitable. My officers asked if the council's proposal would limit steep increases for every category. Council officers confirmed that it would not stop steep increases for all categories and that it would only limit the increases for those at the top end in the most valuable properties.

The Liberals clearly see equity as everybody paying the same regardless of their income or value of their property. This is the same approach which has led to the Lord Mayor's mentor, Margaret Thatcher, introducing the poll tax in Britain, which has caused riots and sent her popularity plummeting. I will not be a party to a Liberal plan to subsidise its rich supporters at the expense of the battling workers and pensioners. This Government will not approve a Sallyanne poll tax for all Brisbane citizens. It will also not sit back and allow the Brisbane City Council to pass onto the State Government the blame for the shambles of its administration of rates. The current review of the Local Government Act will allow an opportunity for reasoned debate about rates policy.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Road Toll Statistics

Hon. D. J. HAMILL (Ipswich—Minister for Transport and Minister Assisting the Premier on Economic and Trade Development) (10.06 a.m.), by leave: Last week in this House, I tabled a report on the 1989 road toll. That report detailed a significant reduction in road fatalities. I now have details from the Department of Transport's Division of Road Safety for the first three months of this year. I am pleased to report that the promising trends of 1989 have continued into 1990.

Until 27 March this year, 81 road deaths were recorded in Queensland—eight fewer fatalities than during the same period last year, which recorded the lowest toll since 1963. The statistics show that, between 1 January and 27 March, there was a 9 per cent drop in road deaths compared with the 1989 figure and a 27 per cent improvement on the average for the past four years.

I am in possession of a table that compares road statistics since 1986. I seek leave to table it and have it incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

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

Road Crash Fatalities: Jan 01-Mar 27

	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	Change from Previous Year
Motor Drivers	48	37	46	35	30	- 5
Passengers	46	39	36	22	23	+ 1
Motor Cyclists	21	17	15	8	7	- 1
Bicyclists	3	3	6	4	6	+ 2
Pedestrians	11	12	13	20	15	- 5
TOTAL	129	108	116	89	81	- 8
Change in road toll		- 21	+ 8	- 27	- 8	
% Change		- 16%	+ 7%	- 23%	- 9%	

Mr HAMILL: The table explains in detail the improvements and the trends. Although those improvements are welcomed, the fight against road trauma is an ongoing battle that involves everyone in the community.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Queensland Branch of Victorian Association of Guide Dog Owners and Friends Association

Hon. G. R. MILLINER (Everton—Minister for Justice and Corrective Services) (10.08 a.m.), by leave: In the light of certain matters raised during an investigation into the Victorian Association of the Guide Dog Owners and Friends Association and the subsequent laying of charges and the resulting investigations into the Queensland branch, the operations of the Lady Nell Seeing-eye Dog School at 10 Cronin Street, Annerley, will be restricted until such time as the court case in Victoria is determined. Until that time, funds raised in Queensland by the association must be applied to activities within the State, in line with section 19 of the Collections Act.

Following the Victorian investigation, the Queensland branch was asked to show cause as to why it should be allowed to continue to operate as a charity here, particularly when many of the Victorian management committee members were also on the Queensland branch committee.

The reply to that show cause indicated that grossly inaccurate information had been given to the Queensland Corporate Affairs Office about the number of dogs trained—in particular, the 800 dogs allegedly trained was reduced to the range of 150 to 250, although the charity was unsure of the exact totals.

From 1982 to 1988, some \$624,000 was transferred to Melbourne. During that time, only 11 dogs actually received training, and of those 11, only seven actually passed their training tests.

Because there is very little return coming to Queensland in contrast to the high level of funds being sent to Victoria, the activities of the Queensland branch will be restricted until the Victorian court case is over.

I stress that this incident has no connection whatsoever with the Guide Dogs for the Blind Association, which continues to work well within the guidelines for charities.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Flood Damage from Cyclone Ivor

Hon. E. D. CASEY (Mackay—Minister for Primary Industries) (10.09 a.m.), by leave: Some concern has been expressed about the flood damage caused by the rain depression from cyclone Ivor. Natural disaster relief arrangements are provided by way

of concessional loans to primary producers and small-business owners whose assets have been significantly damaged by a natural disaster and who are unable to obtain commercial finance but who nevertheless have sound prospects of long-term viability.

Such natural disasters include droughts, floods, storms, cyclones, bushfires and earthquakes. Assistance is usually available in the form of concessional loans for essential family living expenses, carry-on requirements and the restoration of land, buildings, plant and machinery. Carry-on requirements may also include payment of rates and rent, purchases of fuel, seed and fertiliser. Assistance is not intended to compensate for the losses suffered. However, assistance can also be provided through the QIDC with maximum loans of \$80,000 available per applicant for carry-on assistance plus \$80,000 for restocking, with a maximum aggregate of \$120,000. Interest rates are low and range from 6 per cent to 13.5 per cent, depending upon the assessment.

Most of the major damage that has been caused by cyclone Ivor has been suffered by 40 pineapple-growers in the Yeppoon area. The damage that has occurred includes soil erosion and loss of new crops that were planted recently in freshly broken soils. A survey of 14 of the 40 affected growers indicates that it will cost approximately \$200,000 to repair lands, purchase replacement plants and replant the 40 farms. No damage has been reported to their existing crops in the areas, only to those just freshly planted.

In the banana industry in the Tully/Innisfail area, the \$10m damage done to banana crops, as reported on the front page of this morning's *Courier-Mail*, has been confirmed. The main damage, which was caused by storms off cyclone Ivor, has been confined to plantations in the Innisfail/Mission Beach area. Some minor damage has also occurred on a few plantations north of Cairns.

In exposed locations, the strong south-easterly winds snapped off plants bearing bunches. The extent of damage on plantations has varied from 2 per cent to 80 per cent. Subsequently, the rain depression moved south into the Tully area. It will be another four to six weeks before root-rot damage as a result of flooding in that area will be able to be properly assessed.

In relation to other horticultural crops—apart from some losses of capsicum and pumpkin in the Burdekin/Bowen area, the rains have been beneficial. The central Burnett area has also benefited greatly from the rains.

As to the sugar industry—the rain has generally been beneficial, with additional value of production being greater than losses from flooding. In the Innisfail area, limited damage to less than 5 per cent of the crop has occurred. The Herbert area has suffered some damage, with low-lying areas being covered and a moderate lodging from wind damage, but it is still too early to assess the value of losses.

Within the pastoral industry, the rain has been highly beneficial. Most of the State's sheep and cattle areas have received some rain and are in a good position for the current season.

Financial counsellors and agricultural economists located at offices in Innisfail, Ayr, Rockhampton and Biloela are available to assist primary producers adversely affected by the recent floods. In order to assess eligibility, a formal declaration is required if there is major damage. At the moment, this is being handled on an individual and an area basis.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Small Business Development Corporation

Hon. G. N. SMITH (Townsville East—Minister for Manufacturing and Commerce) (10.13 a.m.), by leave: I rise today to again clarify the Government's motives for reviewing the operations of the Small Business Development Corporation. I am forced into this action because of untrue and misleading statements made both in the House and in the press by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

Despite my constant reassurances, both publicly and in this place, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition has continued a single-minded campaign of outrageous distortions with a view to causing grievous concerns within the small-business community and the public at large. It is unfortunate that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition has seen fit to cause anguish within the ranks of the SBDC by suggesting that I am merely conducting a vendetta against them and the organisation.

In his latest feeble attempts to justify his nonsensical claim, he has attempted to suggest that an advertisement placed by my department for a business consultant position proves that I am seeking to transfer the role of the SBDC to my department.

To set the record straight on this matter, I wish to advise the House that the position to which Mr Borbidge refers is within the Business Advisory Services Centre in Townsville and is responsible for the National Industry Extension Services function in north Queensland. I am surprised that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition confuses the role of the SBDC with the advertised position within the Business Advisory Services Centre. I am further surprised because, on 20 April last year, as the responsible Minister, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition himself opened the centre. He must have a short memory. He should also know that the position in question is not a new position created since the announcement of the review of the SBDC; rather, it was advertised following the resignation of the incumbent. Incidentally, the incumbent is very interested in the quality control council and has expressed the wish to retain a position on that council.

I repeat now what I have said publicly in the past. The Government fully recognises that a healthy, vibrant small business sector is a vital part of Labor's economic strategy for Queensland.

The review of the SBDC, which I announced on 12 March this year, will ensure that the organisation is providing the best possible services for small businesses. The business community will be consulted during the course of the review and after the report is received, before deciding on the future of the SBDC.

I can assure the small-business community and the staff of the SBDC that the Government remains committed to small-business development. Regardless of the outcome of the review, there will definitely be an organisational unit in place to ensure that assistance to Queensland small business is delivered in the most effective way.

ADDITIONAL SITTING DAY, FRIDAY, 30 MARCH 1990

Hon. T. M. MACKENROTH (Chatsworth—Leader of the House) (10.17 a.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

"That pursuant to Standing Order 26 the House will meet for the despatch of business in addition to the days agreed pursuant to the Sessional Order of 1 March 1990 at 10 a.m. on Friday, 30 March 1990, on which day Government business shall take precedence of all other business."

Motion agreed to.

Mr BORBIDGE: Mr Speaker, before the question is put—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I put the question.

Mr BORBIDGE: No. I am asking the Leader of the House: I take it that that means there will be no question-time tomorrow? Is the Government having question-time or not?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! It will be a normal sitting day. There will be an hour of questions. I inform the member for Surfers Paradise that the motion had been put and he is totally out of order in raising it now.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Gentlemen, let us get on with business.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr KATTER (Flinders) (10.20 a.m.), by leave: In the House this week I and the former member for Townsville, and also the former Minister for Land Management, Mr Glasson, were maligned by a member of this House.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Before the member for Flinders goes further—he sought leave to make a personal explanation. He is entitled to speak only about how he personally was affected or misrepresented. He cannot explain on behalf of other members. I will sit him down if he does so.

Mr KATTER: I have no necessity to bring in the other members. I have mentioned my own name and that is what I am rising to talk about.

It was alleged that we three had been responsible for a land scam in an effort to introduce what was called a diversionary facility in the State of Queensland. It is very important that the attention of the House be drawn to that fact.

In a major article in the *Australian* newspaper recently it was reported that in recent years 105 Australians, both black and white, have done away with themselves or have died whilst in custody—some 44 in the last two years.

Those deaths have been the subject of three ministerial conferences and one conference of the Prime Minister and all the State Premiers. It is a matter of national significance and it has been regarded——

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Flinders started off talking about a land scam. How has he been personally misrepresented?

Mr KATTER: We have had to proceed with the diversionary facility because of pressure from Canberra and because of the reality of the deaths in custody. That was the reason——

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Flinders will resume his seat. Under the Standing Orders, that is not a matter for personal explanation. Is there any other business?

Mr KATTER: I rise to a point of order. The allegation is that we were responsible for a land scam. It is my privilege to be able to deal with that matter in this House. I am not dwelling on the subject of diversionary facilities, I am simply standing up here to explain to the House the full details of what occurred with respect to what is quite a serious accusation, Mr Speaker.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! It is not the honourable member for Flinders' right to debate the issue. All he is entitled to do is say how he personally was affected or misrepresented. He does not have the privilege of debating the issue at length, as he is trying to do. Could the honourable member get to the point of saying how he was personally affected or personally misrepresented and be brief about it?

Mr KATTER: Mr Speaker, I accept your ruling. I state again to the House that the allegation is that there was no diversionary facility, that it was simply a land scam to enable a piece of land in Townsville to be given to a lady who was a National Party supporter.

In rebutting that statement, let me state clearly to the House, firstly, that two men were assigned to secure for us a piece of land in Townsville. They produced 13 sites which the Government could have purchased. Of those 13 sites——

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member has made his point about being misrepresented. I am not going to allow him to debate the issue. Is there any other business?

Mr KATTER: I rise to a point of order. I have given no explanation to the House whatsoever.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member will resume his seat. I warn the member under Standing Order 124 that if he continues to disobey the Chair, he will actually not have the privilege of sitting in this House.

QUESTIONS UPON NOTICE

1. Gladstone-Rockhampton Gas Pipeline

Mr INNES asked the Minister for Resource Industries—

"With reference to the transportation of natural gas from Gladstone to Rockhampton for each year in the period 1991-1996—

(1) What was (a) the expected cost of the gas at the well head, (b) the expected cost of transporting the gas, i.e. the State Gas Pipeline Unit cost, (c) the expected cost of operating the pipeline, (d) the expected delivered price of the gas to be received by the Government at Rockhampton and the expected number of customers, the expected volume of gas usage of each customer and the delivered price for each customer if it is significantly different from that provided in (d) above?

(2) What is the internal rate of return or cost of capital being used by the Government in calculating the economic cost of the project?"

Mr VAUGHAN: The Rockhampton branch of the pipeline will be built as a transportation facility. Its economic viability was determined over a 20-year period.

(1) (a) The expected cost of gas at the wellhead is a matter between the gas-users and the gas-producers and does not involve the State gas pipeline.

(b), (c) and (d) The basic tariff for transporting gas from Wallumbilla to Gladstone is \$2.15 per gigajoule for general industry. Prices currently being negotiated for Rockhampton relate to that price, but are higher to account for the longer distance. Each contract is negotiated individually, taking into account all the circumstances. Details of the exact conditions for individual customers and their expected usage are commercially confidential information and will not be disclosed.

(2) The minimum internal rate of return required is the cost of providing Government capital funds with the prospect of an additional long-term margin for risk.

2. Feedlot Industry

Mr BOOTH asked the Minister for Primary Industries—

"With reference to recent events in the feedlot industry and the death of a large number of cattle and to some of his comments in regard to the matter-

(1) Has he made a decision in regard to feed allowed to be fed to cattle in feedlots?

(2) Is the feeding of chicken litter to be banned?

(3) Does he agree that it is in the best interests of the cattle industry that some firm decisions should be made in regard to this important aspect of feed lotting?"

Mr CASEY: (1) Following recent losses attributed to botulism sustained by feedlots on the Darling Downs, I decided to review the existing controls affecting feeding of cattle in feedlots.

(2) After extensive consultation with all interested parties, I announced on 1 March 1990 that I would move to ban the feeding of chicken litter to cattle in feedlots. This initiative has the support of the cattle industry, lotfeeders, animal welfare groups and the general public. The consuming public is concerned that manure or manure products should not be fed to animals destined for human consumption. I have sought to allay these concerns and intend that the ban I have proposed will prevent manure emanating

from animals and humans from entering the food chain. Therefore, will this will not only address an animal health issue but also further establish the high standards achieved by Queensland's animal industries in regard to human health.

(3) The change to previous feeding practices is in the best interests of feedlotters, the cattle industry overall and the general public. The necessary legislation to effect this change is being drafted, and these changes can be expected to be proclaimed within three weeks.

I would like to place on record my appreciation of the excellent work achieved by officers of my department involved in the recent feedlot botulism deaths. The response to those tragic losses was professional in every respect and reflected the technical excellence of the team of scientists and technicians which assembled to handle this emergency. The work culminated in the successful confirmation of the diagnosis of botulism. Field officers acted quickly and responsibly to limit losses and to assist, wherever possible, those feedlotters so severely affected by those losses. Throughout this incident, every effort was made to provide open and up-to-date information via the media to the general public to allay fears regarding public health.

I am also currently having prepared a comprehensive report that will be available Australiawide to be used as a detailed reference publication on the best methods of handling any future outbreaks of botulism on such a large scale.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Freeholding of Land

Mr COOPER: My first question is to the Treasurer and Minister for Regional Development. Given the widespread concern resulting from the Government's decision to freeze freeholding of land pending the findings of the committee of review, I ask: will he advise the House of his confidence that the security base of many enterprises involving the widest range of activities, from grazing to urban development, will not suffer in terms of financial support, equity depreciation and investor confidence, following this turning back of the clock on the Land Act after some 50 years of progress?

Mr De LACY: Yes, I think I can give that. I might point out that the freezing of the conversion of leasehold land to freehold is only a temporary measure pending the outcome of the review of the system in Queensland.

Mr Cooper: During that time?

Mr De LACY: I have already given the Leader of the Opposition the assurance that he was looking for. If he is looking for more information on this matter, he should direct a question to the relevant Minister, and that is the Minister for—

Mr Cooper: You are the relevant Minister as far as the financial markets are concerned.

Mr De LACY: I have just given the member that assurance in answer to his question.

State Taxes

Mr COOPER: My second question is to the Treasurer and Minister for Regional Development. In view of the likely stance of the Federal Government at the Premiers Conference that borrowings by State Governments will be cut—and that is a pretty fair bet—I ask: can he give an unequivocal assurance that further tax options, such as petrol tax and financial institution duty, will not have to be considered in Queensland, and will he guarantee that Queensland will retain its low-tax status? I remind the Treasurer that the former Leader of the Opposition, who is now the Premier, is on record as saying that, sooner or later, Queensland would have to come into the mainstream forms of taxation, similar to those applied in other States.

Mr W. K. Goss interjected.

Mr COOPER: He is on record, so he need not laugh about it. We want an unequivocal assurance.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition asked a question and he is not allowed, during the answer, to engage in a debate across the floor. I will not allow it.

Mr De LACY: The honourable member seems to have a habit of asking a question and then answering it before a Minister is given an opportunity to do so.

I am concerned about what the Federal Treasurer said concerning the borrowings of the States. One of our concerns is the apparent turnaround in the Queensland situation from being a net saver to being a net borrower during the past 12 months. They were the figures that concerned me most of all.

If we can believe the ABS figures, they show that the total States' net financing requirement—NFR—has increased from \$1.6 billion in 1988-89 to an estimated \$4.3 billion in 1989-90, and Queensland's NFR has gone from a surplus of \$659m in 1988-89 to a projected deficit of \$331m in 1989-90—a turnaround of \$990m—almost \$1 billion—or 37 per cent of all the States' turnaround in net financing requirement.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr De LACY: Do Opposition members want to hear this story or not?

Opposition members interjected.

Mr De LACY: The Leader of the Opposition asked a question and I am giving the answer.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I would like to hear the answer.

Mr De LACY: We feel that we will be able to deal with the Federal Treasury and that, because of our responsible attitude to borrowings, taxing and spending, we will be able to ensure that we get a fair deal from the Federal Government.

Mr Cooper: You were asked to guarantee that there would be no petrol tax.

Mr De LACY: What the Leader of the Opposition seems to want us to do——

Opposition members interjected.

Mr De LACY: Do they want the answer or not? What he seems to want us to do is to say things that suit his agenda and not our agenda. We will not be increasing taxes. We will maintain a responsible financial economic management system in this State, and he may be assured of that.

Drafting of Wills in Plain English

Mr PREST: I ask the Attorney-General: is he aware of the trouble that many people in the community have interpreting wills which are drafted in complex legalese?

Opposition members interjected.

Mr PREST: If so, what steps has the Attorney taken to address the problem? I would have much pleasure in administering the wills of a few Opposition members.

Mr WELLS: I have instructed the Public Trustee to commence the drafting of wills in plain English. In a couple of weeks I will be launching the first wills written in plain English by the Public Trustee. In making this decision, I was much encouraged by the example of the honourable member for Port Curtis, whose commitment to plain English is well known to all members of this House.

This initiative is a precursor of many more initiatives to demystify the law. The National Party Government left the Labor Party an inheritance of a legal system which costs too much and which nobody can understand. This Government will change all that, because the demystification of the law is essential if it is to be used as a useful weapon for the protection of the rights of citizens. There are people in the general community and in the legal community who will be opposed to this process of demystification of the law. They will say that certain words and phrases have been interpreted by courts throughout the centuries and if they are changed the exactitude of the law will be changed and the law will lose its precision. I do not believe that. We will take care during this process to ensure that that exactness is preserved at the same time as making the law intelligible.

For the benefit of those who would oppose the demystification of the law, I will say something to them in their own language that they will understand—*ut res magis valeat quam pereat*. In plain English that means—it is better that legal words should be capable of being interpreted so they make sense.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I will speak Greek to the Attorney-General one of these days.

State Funding Cut-backs; Victorian State Debt

Mr INNES: It is perfectly clear that the Attorney-General should start with Dorothy Dix and teach her some plain English.

In directing a question to the Premier, I take up the strand followed by the Leader of the Opposition and refer to the reports in today's paper that Mr Keating has warned that the States will face big cuts at the next Premiers Conference. I also refer to a feature in this week's *Business Review Weekly*, which states that, at the Loans Council and Premiers Conference this year, Victoria will attempt to pass on some of its massive debt problems to other States. I ask: firstly, at the Premiers Conference and Loan Council will the Premier oppose any attempt by Victoria to pass its debt problems on to other States; secondly, at the Premiers Conference this year will he oppose big cuts to the States, as outlined by Mr Keating; and, thirdly, if big or significant cuts take place, can the Premier guarantee his election promises of extra teachers, nurses and police officers without any real increase in this State's taxes or without implementing new taxes?

Mr W. K. GOSS: I have not seen the BRW article, but I am aware of the suggestion—although I do not know whether it is true or not—that the Victorian State Government may endeavour to pass on some of that State's debt to other States. I give an unequivocal assurance that this Government will resist that move. We are not interested in inheriting the problems of any other State, be it a Labor, Liberal or National Party Government.

It remains to be seen whether there will be cuts in funding to the States. I am not bothered about hypothetical situations. Members on the other side of the House seem to have a mad passion, both pre-election and post-election, to get this Government to impose new taxes. They must stop putting the pressure on us. We are trying to resist their pressure for new taxes, and will continue to do so.

In regard to the question of cut-backs in spending by the public sector, it is curious that the Opposition and the Liberal Party have put up this proposition, because during the recent election—at which they were thrashed and beaten—they promised to bring in massive cuts in spending in the public sector. These characters cannot have it both ways. Primarily, their lack of credibility is what resulted in the overwhelming rejection of the coalition as an alternative to the Hawke Labor Government. It is about time that they worked out which side of the fence they are on.

I do not have any details about the statement Mr Keating made today except what is contained in the newspaper. I understand from the newspaper report that the Prime Minister will write to us and we will have a look at it when it arrives. I stress that the

ABS figures which have been released, and which are referred to in the newspaper reports, are estimates only. In the case of Queensland, they are based on the Budget estimates of the previous Government. We do not believe that it will be as bad as that. If people had paid close attention to the recent Treasurer's statement on State debt, they would have seen that this Government has paid \$104m off State debt, which will further improve Queensland's position and underlines the commitment and principle laid out by the Treasurer in that statement, which he has confirmed again today. This Government will continue to maintain a responsible approach to fiscal management in terms of the Treasury of this State.

Retrospective Heritage Legislation

Mr INNES: I address a further question to the Premier, who is both the head of administration generally and a lawyer, and refer to the announcement made on Sunday at Fort Lytton by the Minister for Environment and Heritage concerning legislation to protect certain buildings from unauthorised alteration, repair or demolition by the creation of offences involving massive fines, and the retrospective application of those laws—whenever they are passed—to that date, and I ask: had Cabinet approved the announcement of retrospective legislation at the time when the Minister made that announcement and had it approved any list of buildings to be involved in such legislation? Is it true that, although the National Trust's list is said to have been used, the trust has not been directly consulted? Is it also true that neither the owners of any buildings which may be on any list nor relevant local authorities have been advised that their properties will be the subject of this retrospective legislation? How can he justify people not knowing that they might be committing serious offences that attract massive fines?

Mr W. K. GOSS: Mr Speaker, once again we have a bit of a dog's breakfast for a question, which has about seven parts to it.

Mr Innes: Give it a chew.

Mr W. K. GOSS: I am happy to give it a chew, and I might just spit most of it back.

The member for Sherwood asks me this question as a lawyer, administrator, candlestick-maker and everything else. The situation is that the announcement was approved by Cabinet. The effect of the legislation is prospective from the date of the announcement, which is not unusual. That occurs from time to time, particularly in taxation matters. It occurs from time to time because there is a necessity to safeguard public interest in a situation that could cause damage to the public interest.

Concerns were raised by the community and by the Minister over the possibility of a rash of demolitions taking place in an attempt to beat comprehensive heritage legislation. For that reason, the Minister for Environment recommended an interim measure to Cabinet, and his recommendation was accepted. In consultation with the National Trust, the Minister has compiled a list. The trust was consulted. The list and draft legislation were to be circulated this week and, if it has not already been circulated, that will be done within the next day or so. In relation to buildings that are on the list and perhaps should not be, or buildings that are not on the list and perhaps should be, I point out that the Minister has set up a representative committee, which includes representatives of organisations such as BOMA, to sort the matter out in a fairly expeditious way so that people are not unduly prejudiced.

Let me make it plain that every other State in Australia has heritage legislation. The Labor Party made a commitment to bring in comprehensive legislation, and it is going to do that.

Mr Elliott: The legislation was brought in by Bob Katter.

Mr W. K. GOSS: In the meantime, this Labor Government was not going to allow significant buildings to be destroyed by people rushing in to demolish them in advance

of comprehensive legislation. Preparation of the legislation will take until later in the year because the Minister has given an undertaking to issue a Green Paper and engage in very comprehensive consultation, which is only right.

As for the squawks from the member for Cunningham to the effect that Queensland already had heritage legislation—I recall that he was such a success in that area that former Premier Bjelke-Petersen turfed him out of Cabinet because he dared to actually suggest that the National Party Government should bring in heritage legislation. As for the legislation which he failed to bring in and which he claims the member for Flinders later brought in—I point out that the legislation brought in by the member for Flinders is a paltry, pathetic excuse for heritage legislation, which is not acceptable to this Government and which is not acceptable to the community.

Waste-water Recycling

Mr PALASZCZUK: I ask the Minister for Primary Industries: will he give consideration to establishing within his department an investigation into the means of reducing the waste of urban water supplies throughout Queensland to reduce the need for dams, which would take over fertile farmlands, with particular emphasis on recycling waste water for industrial purposes?

Mr CASEY: This is a very important question. The recycling of water in a number of areas is very important in terms of the future of Queensland, particularly in relation to the recycling of waste water. It is unquestionably true that, despite cyclone Ivor and the rain that fell recently in south-east Queensland, this State has a dry climate. Governments throughout Australia will have to look more and more to recycling waste water.

I wish to cite an instance in which I am proud to say my friend and colleague the honourable member for Mount Isa, as an active member in local government, took part—a very important scheme involving waste-water recycling. Mount Isa is Queensland's furthestmost city and Australia's largest inland city. Waste water from the sewerage treatment plants of that city is used on the city's golf course, sporting ovals, parks and in many other places to maintain a good ground cover. Those honourable members who have visited Mount Isa from time to time would appreciate the value of that particular recycling and waste disposal program. The recycling of waste water is a very important matter.

Mr FitzGerald: What has that got to do with Wolffdene?

Mr CASEY: I hear an honourable member opposite trying to bleat a little about Wolffdene. I wish to inform the House that a further study that has been undertaken to ascertain the water requirements of south-east Queensland has taken into account recycling, which is a very important aspect of the study. As the member for Archerfield pointed out in his question, this type of conservation could have a big bearing on the future costs of water storage facilities used for the purpose of maintaining urban water supplies. It is very important to the people of south-east Queensland that every aspect of water-storage resources be examined.

Mr Lingard: These surveys have been done, and you're just stalling.

Mr CASEY: Despite the bleatings coming from the honourable member for Fassifern, I point out that he has been working with real estate developers in the Albert valley, which was the site of the proposed Wolffdene dam, and continues to raise these hairy old stories about this Government going ahead with the Wolffdene dam. Time after time I have said that that will not happen.

All land-owners who live in the Albert valley area have been personally notified that the Wolffdene dam proposal is finished. The proposal will not go ahead. I am proud to say that this Government is responsible for taking the bit between its teeth and declaring its policy in relation to that matter. What the Government has said is what

will occur. The proposal will be locked up to ensure that, if the accident of members of the National Party forming a Government ever occurs again, there will be no way in the world that they would be able to proceed with the Wolffdene dam proposal. I can assure the people of south-east Queensland, the real estate sharks who are chasing up this matter and the member for Fassifern that that will be the case.

The need for water in this State is of paramount importance. The need for safe water consumption by the people of Queensland is also very important. Members of this Parliament and especially the people of south-east Queensland can rest assured that this Government will endeavour to put into place as many practical ideas as possible, such as those mentioned by the member for Archerfield, to maintain a supply of safely treated water for them and for future generations.

Abolition of Tertiary Entrance Score

Mr PALASZCZUK: In directing a question to the Minister for Education, I refer him to a National Party advertisement in the *Courier-Mail* of 30 November last year in which it was claimed, among other things, that the former Government was responsible for the abolition of the TE score. Given the recent announcement of a review of the tertiary entrance system, I ask: will he inform the House of the current situation regarding the TE score.

Mr BRADDY: It is one of the amazing episodes in Queensland's history that on 30 November last, just prior to the election, the National Party put an advertisement in the *Courier-Mail* headed "What the Nationals have done for you". Amongst its claims for rewriting history, which would have done Joseph Stalin proud in his efforts to rewrite Soviet history, was a claim that the National Party had achieved the abolition of the TE score.

As all honourable members know, that was an outrageous lie. Of course, that lie was not lonely in the advertisement. Two columns above it, another claim was that the National Party had achieved Statewide rail electrification. I wonder what the residents of Redcliffe, Roma, Mount Isa, Townsville, Mackay and all the other areas that have not been electrified by the National Party thought about that claim.

As for the TE score, the previous Government had meandered along for years and, because of its dithering, had never succeeded in abolishing the TE score. The Government has now appointed a review, which is being conducted by Professor Nancy Viviani of the Australian National University. She is working hard and is well down the track to producing the report requested by 30 June this year. She is receiving significant assistance from the Queensland educational community in the form of a reference committee chaired by Professor Wiltshire of the University of Queensland. On that committee are representatives of the teaching community, the parents and citizens associations, the non-Government schools, the universities and QTAC. The committee is now well set and well advanced towards replacing the TE score, which was not abolished as claimed by the National Party in the advertisement on 30 November last year, but has been abolished by this Government. The new system will be in place for the students graduating in 1992.

Small Business Development Corporation

Mr BORBIDGE: I ask the Minister for Manufacturing and Commerce: further to his ministerial statement this morning, will he express his full support for and confidence in the board and the senior management of the Small Business Development Corporation?

Mr SMITH: The whole question of the Small Business Development Corporation is subject to review. At the end of that review, I will give the honourable member an appropriate answer.

ALP Policy on Environment

Mr BORBIDGE: In directing a question to the Minister for Environment and Heritage, I refer to proposals by his Federal counterpart, Senator Graham Richardson, to entrench in ALP policy the right of the Commonwealth to override the States on environmental matters. I ask: do he and the Queensland Government support Senator Richardson's motion that is to be submitted to the next national conference of the Australia Labor Party which will bind all Labor Governments across Australia?

Mr COMBEN: Clearly, the honourable member is looking for membership of the Australian Labor Party. He knows more about motions to go to the next Federal conference than I do.

A Opposition member: He knows more than you do!

Mr COMBEN: In fact, he knows considerably less than I do. He is only making it up. I do not believe that any motions have yet been circulated.

As far as any moves in that direction are concerned, much discussion is taking place in Australia about who should have responsibility for environmental matters, including environmental problems that extend over State borders. I refer to problems such as those created in the Condamine River in Queensland, the results of which are carried down that river to the Murray River. That occurred as a result of the difficulties that the National Party Government had in managing the environment.

This Government is adopting a cooperative approach. It is cooperating with the Federal Government, and will continue to do so in order to maintain the rainforests and the Great Barrier Reef. We will also cooperate on arid lands and soil conservation. Both the Federal and State Governments will cooperate on those issues.

The Government is getting on with the business of managing the economy and the environment in this State, and that is the way that it will continue to go.

Flood Damage from Cyclone Ivor

Mr PEARCE: I ask the Premier: can he provide to the House an estimate of damage to public property arising out of the flooding associated with cyclone Ivor and details of assistance available to local authorities?

Mr W. K. GOSS: I thank the honourable member for Broadsound for the question. His electorate has been greatly affected by considerable wind and flood damage. Over recent days, he and other honourable members would be aware of wind and flood damage caused by cyclone Ivor. Under the Commonwealth/State Natural Disaster Relief Arrangements, assistance towards local authority restoration costs can be granted once anticipated State expenditure goes beyond \$100,000 and each council's expenditure on eligible works is in excess of a trigger-point amount.

In the case of a number of local authorities, including Livingstone Shire, for example, expenditure is over the trigger amount. The preliminary damage estimates for Queensland are in the range of \$13.1m or \$13.2m. We expect that the figure will probably end up in the range of \$15m. We will closely monitor that situation. Of course, that figure refers to public property. The damage to private property is probably of a comparable order.

In order that assistance can be provided to local authorities and Government departments affected by the cyclone and severe flooding, I have approved the implementation of the natural disaster standard assistance measures. That will enable protection and emergency and repair works to be carried out by local authorities and other agencies. In accordance with the terms and conditions of the Natural Disaster Relief Arrangements, I have given the appropriate notification to the Commonwealth Minister for Finance.

I have been provided by my department with the damage estimates of the local authorities and the trigger-point amounts that apply in relation to Livingstone Shire.

The damage estimate for that shire at this stage—and I am sure that it would have increased since this estimate was prepared—is \$600,000, which, of course, is well over the triggerpoint amount. So that shire and other shires will be eligible for the assistance that the Government has now arranged. As quite a number of shires are affected, I will table that list.

Whereupon the honourable member laid the document on the table.

Workplace Health and Safety Act and Regulations

Mr PEARCE: In directing a question to the Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations, I refer to the regulations under the Workplace Health and Safety Act, and I ask: is he aware that some sections of industry and some individuals are claiming that some of the regulations are too restrictive and, in some cases, unworkable? Will the Minister advise whether any action is being taken to correct this situation?

Mr Warburton: It is correct to say that there have been some hiccups and that problems have been identified with the regulations under the Workplace Health and Safety Act. It is also true to say that the problems are being properly and constructively addressed at present.

The major problem has been the lack of industry committees, or the setting-up of industry committees. That very essential ingredient was not there. The setting-up of those committees was not pursued as vigorously as it should have been. It is something that is essential to the functioning of the Act and, of course, the functioning of the regulations. I have to say that it is a sorry state of affairs that that in fact occurred. It seemed apparent to me that, previously, the ministerial drive, or the ministerial thrust, was not there. I reiterate the point that the establishment of the industry committees was a very, very important part of the whole process.

For the benefit of the honourable member, I reiterate that those matters are now being properly and constructively addressed. In future, it will be possible to forward complaints to the secretariat associated with the various industry committees, and that will overcome as quickly as possible any problems associated with the regulations. I simply say that the matter is now well in hand.

Comments by Senator Evans and Senator Richardson on Timber Imports

Mr STEPHAN: In directing a question to the Minister for Primary Industries, I refer to statements made in the media on 24 March by two of his Federal colleagues—Senator Evans and Senator Richardson—concerning timber imports. Senator Evans said that he did not support the banning of the importation of tropical rainforest timbers, while Senator Richardson made the comment that the Government would be pushing strongly for a ban on it. I ask: what is the Minister's version of that particular statement? Will the Queensland Government support the importation of tropical rainforest timbers, as suggested by Senator Evans, or will it push for a ban, as suggested by Senator Richardson?

Mr CASEY: The honourable member would well know that imports and, for that matter, exports, are the sole responsibility of the Federal Government. They are areas in which the State Government has no rights whatsoever and has made no declaration whatsoever.

Mr Borbidge: The Premier is setting up a Queensland export service.

Mr CASEY: I am afraid that what the honourable member for Surfers Paradise is saying is a little bit misleading. For the good of Queensland, the Premier—quite proudly—is setting up a trade development branch within his department to deal with exports. Over the last 32 years of National Party Government, Queensland's export program has lacked drive. That Government had a farm-gate philosophy. It was interested only in

getting produce off the farm. It was not interested in development or value-adding in this State and earning a greater economic reward not only for Queensland but also for Australia as a whole. That is the point that this Government is very interested in. That is under the control of this Government, and it is something that will be well developed by this Government.

In regard to the other part of the honourable member's question—he alluded to the timber requirements of the State of Queensland and what is going to happen in the future in that regard. He is trying to drive a wedge between this Government and the Federal Government. That is just not on. It is not going to be on at any stage because, thankfully, last Saturday the people of Australia decided to again support a Federal Labor Government. Whether it be in relation to our forest products, our sugar products, the products of our grain belts or our mixed farming, fruit and vegetable or horticultural industries—even the products from the area of Gympie—this Government is interested in this State and in making sure that the value is added to the produce of this State and that the people of Queensland benefit as a result. This Government will cooperate fully with the Federal Government in order to get that extra value and that extra economic benefit for the people of Queensland and this State.

Mr Stephan interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Instead of interjecting, the member for Gympie can now ask a question.

Mr STEPHAN: I did not get an answer to my last question, Mr Speaker.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Proposed Amalgamation of Federal Environment Portfolio

Mr STEPHAN: In directing a question to the Minister for Environment and Heritage, I refer to comments made by the Federal Minister for Primary Industries and Energy, Mr Kerin, in which he urged the dropping of the Environment portfolio because the work in the environment area could be undertaken by other departments—those are his words—thus aligning himself with Senator Walsh, and I ask: does the Minister agree with his Federal colleague that, as tough decisions on the economy need to be taken, having an Environment portfolio by itself is a luxury in these difficult economic times? In addition, does he believe that there is merit in merging environmental issues with other ministerial portfolios so as to obtain a more responsible balance between economic development and environmental concern?

Mr COMBEN: No, I do not believe that the position of Minister for Environment in this State should be abolished. I am quite clear on that. That position should be listed under the historical buildings legislation and totally protected.

Mr Stephan interjected.

Mr COMBEN: The honourable member said that he did not get an answer last time. This time he will not let me give him an answer.

Hard, economic decisions must be made about development in this State and in other parts of Australia. As well, hard, environmental questions must be considered. This Government is adopting a balanced approach.

The Department of Environment and Heritage is saying quite clearly that there is a proper way of doing things. That will be the Government's approach. There is no need to amalgamate the position of Minister for Environment and Heritage with that of Minister for Transport or any other. The role of the Government is to give advice. It will certainly be supporting economic development and environmental protection. That is the prime role of the Government; that essential role will continue.

The National Party in Queensland would be the only political party in Australia that wants to abolish the Department of Environment and Heritage. Certain discussions

are being undertaken in Canberra. That is a healthy position to adopt. However, I would much rather have Senator Richardson on my side in this debate than all of the Opposition members put together.

Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages Act

Mrs WOODGATE: I ask the Minister for Justice and Corrective Services: can he inform the House of when the Goss Government intends to bring Queensland into line with the other States by amending the Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages Act to allow parents to nominate their children's surnames?

Mr MILLINER: I acknowledge the honourable member's interest in and concern about this matter. Unfortunately, Queensland lags far behind the rest of Australia on this very important issue.

As honourable members would be well aware, families and their composition are changing. Unlike they did many years ago, families no longer consist of the traditional mum and dad and three children. Now there are lone parents and all sorts of situations.

Unfortunately, Queensland is the only State in which parents cannot nominate their child's surname—be it the father's name, the mother's name or a combination with or without a hyphen. I give a clear indication that the Government is considering that legislation with a view to amending it. In the not-too-distant future I hope to be in a position to take the appropriate action.

Defamation Laws

Mrs WOODGATE: I ask the Attorney-General: is he aware of the inconvenience caused to several branches of the media by the lack of uniform defamation laws throughout Australia? If so, what is he doing about it?

Mr WELLS: Because honourable members opposite have a special interest in questions of defamation, this matter is very near and dear to their hearts.

The nation of Australia has a number of different defamation laws across the different States. That hotchpotch creates great inconvenience to people in public life and the media, who can never be exactly sure about what they can say and where they can say it.

Approximately five years ago in the Standing Committee of Attorneys-General, a concerted move was made to introduce uniform defamation laws across Australia. That eventually failed. The procedure was that the Attorneys-General would try to achieve consensus with media outlets as to the guidelines for uniform defamation laws. However, the media outlets were not prepared to accept court-imposed corrections. The view of the Standing Committee of Attorneys-General was that, without court-imposed corrections, uniform defamation laws would be ineffectual. As a result, the matter was dropped from the agenda of the Attorneys-General.

At the last Standing Committee of Attorneys-General I raised the question again and asked that it be put back on the agenda to see whether or not the situation had changed. The resolution of the standing committee was that the paper that was circulated in 1985 should be recirculated and that we should try again.

When that paper arrives I will be consulting with media outlets in this State to ascertain their present position on court-imposed corrections. Hopefully, we will be able to achieve a uniform standard of defamation laws throughout this nation.

School Bus Transport

Mr LESTER: I direct a question to the Minister for Transport. No doubt the Minister is aware of considerable concern that has been expressed by those who have been affected by a review of school transport bus services. Whenever such reviews are in train, many rumours—some ill-founded—abound. I now ask—

- (1) Can the Minister give an ironclad assurance that school bus runs will not be reduced?
- (2) Will the remuneration for school bus owners continue to be adequate?
- (3) Within reason, will Queensland schoolchildren have access to school bus conveyance?

Mr HAMILL: I could not have arranged the question better if I had done so myself.

The Government is addressing the issue of school transport.

Mr FitzGerald: We're not always against you; we try to help you sometimes, especially today.

Mr HAMILL: I ask the honourable member to give it a break. Perhaps people in his electorate might be concerned about my answer to this question.

The Government is actively considering the issue of school transport. The existing arrangements are wholly inadequate and cover a range of contradictory and very confusing regulations. The situation varies between rail and road transport. For example, in relation to bus conveyance—many parents find it quite difficult to understand why their children up to the age of 10 can obtain assistance if they live more than 3.2 kilometres from the nearest school, but after their children reach the age of 10 their parents have to pay their fares when previously they received assistance.

For the honourable member to say that the existing level of support for school bus operators is adequate—I believe that he would provoke a heated argument with many bus-operators on that score. The whole issue of school transport is being thoroughly examined. In the near future I will be in a position to give full details about it to the House and the honourable member.

Increase in Government Home Loan Interest Rates

Mr LESTER: I ask the Deputy Premier: at a time when nationally interest rates are beginning to move down from Labor's record high levels, could he please explain to the House why the interest rate for flexible term loans and Housing Commission loans is being increased to 15 per cent as from 1 May? Does this not represent the State Labor Government's first step to cutting assistance to home-buyers?

Mr BURNS: My departmental officers advise me that 2 890 people in Queensland are receiving loans at 13.75 per cent, when the department is borrowing the money at 14.75 per cent. If it continues to borrow at 14.75 per cent and lend at 13.75 per cent, it will go broke.

The advice I received was that I should try to make it at a level of 15 per cent. To do that, I would increase it to the price the department is paying for the money and add 0.25 per cent for the cost of administering it. I have announced that, as from 1 May, I will do that to those 2 890 people who have loans.

Baroona Special School

Mr BEATTIE: I ask the Minister for Administrative Services: in relation to the years of neglect of the Baroona Special School at Petrie Terrace for physically and intellectually disabled children by previous National Party State Governments, what action is he taking to reduce the noise problem from Hale Street, which is seriously

affecting the well-being of the children and teachers at the school? What action is he taking to provide hot water to assist in dealing with the children's soiled clothing? What action is he taking to remove the other problems at the school to overcome health risks to the children and the teachers?

Mr FitzGerald: Write a letter. For goodness' sake, write a letter.

Mr BEATTIE: It happens to be very important to the children at that school.

Mr McLEAN: It is important that this matter is put on record, because it is an issue that has caused quite a deal of concern to the principal and the parents of the handicapped children at this school. I thank the member for the opportunity to put a few facts on the record.

As soon as the honourable member drew the conditions at the school to my attention, the very same day officers of my department inspected the school with the honourable member and found deplorable conditions.

The dedicated teachers were regularly having to deal with handicapped children who had soiled themselves and their clothes. The floor of the shower recess sloped the wrong way so that water did not drain away when children were showered, and they stood among faeces. Because they could do nothing else, the teachers had to rinse the clothing in the toilet. I am told that these Third World conditions existed for years. I am also told that the matter was raised with the National Party Government about three years ago. That Government—the Government of the honourable member for Lockyer—which claimed to care about families, gave the teachers and handicapped kids at this school such a low priority that the necessary improvements were unlikely to receive funding in the near future.

I am informed by my department that works totalling approximately \$4,700, which is not a fortune—it is a very small amount of money in public works terms—have already been approved for the Baroona Special School and other works are also being planned. The works approved in this particular program have included the replacement of the existing hand basin in Block B with a stainless-steel laundry tub. This work has been completed. The topping and retiling of the floor in the toilet for the handicapped in Block B has been done. The relocation of a sink unit on the Block B veranda has also been completed, and the provision—

Mr FitzGerald: Standing Orders need to be changed, if this is allowed to go on.

Mr McLEAN: The honourable member should wait his turn. He will hear a little bit more in a minute.

The provision of a washing machine and clothes drier located on the veranda area of Block B has also been completed. The installation of a stainless-steel tub in the female toilets is another project that has already been completed. The installation of a sink in class room C4 has also been completed.

In addition to this, a new hot-water system has been approved for the school. A floor repair project is scheduled to take place in the April school-holiday period. The department is working on the design of a new glazing and ventilation system for the school.

Of all the things that I have seen since I have been a Minister, this would be one of the most disgusting. It highlights very clearly the difference between the Labor Party and the party opposite. It highlights to me exactly why its members are sitting over there.

Mr Lingard: How is it that you didn't build a high school for 30 years? Thirty years—1922 to 1952, you didn't build a high school.

Mr McLEAN: Let us have a look at the mouth opposite—the mouth from Fassifern. And let us have a look at the member for Surfers Paradise. The reason that pair are sitting opposite and have taken all their friends with them is that they are the sort of

people who introduced the National Party to the brown paper bag. They are the sort of people who introduced the National Party to the white-shoe brigade, the sort of people who in the Works Department building put up a big map of Queensland with electorates marked in red——

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I think the honourable member should answer the question.

Mr McLEAN: I thank you for that, Mr Speaker. But it is important that we point out the anomalies that existed in the previous Government.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr McLEAN: I am answering the question on this point. There are many questions that the Opposition should answer. Why was there in the Works Department building a map with electorates coloured in red, green and blue? I ask Mr Cooper: why were the electorates coloured that way? Neglected!

Mr RANDELL: I rise to a point of order.

Mr McLEAN: I appreciate the question from the member for Brisbane Central and I congratulate him on his efforts to have that problem fixed.

Mr RANDELL: I rise to a point of order. You were a bit late taking my point of order, Mr Speaker. I think question-time is becoming a farce when a member——

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! It is unbelievable that a member on my left wants to take a point of order and other members on my left are not letting me hear it.

Mr RANDELL: Mr Speaker, I would ask your ruling on this. Question-time is becoming a farce when a member can be asked a Dorothy Dix question like that.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. The honourable member will resume his seat.

Violence in Queen Street Mall and the Valley

Mr BEATTIE: I ask the Minister for Police and Emergency Services: in light of the problems involving crimes of personal violence in the city mall and in the Valley, I ask: are youth gangs operating in the Queen Street Mall and in the Valley? How successful has the special police task force established for the Queen Street Mall been? Is the long-term solution to the problem more police foot patrols? In recent times, has the crime rate in these areas reduced or increased?

Mr MACKENROTH: Violence not only in the mall but in the central city, is being addressed by this Government. The Government had a special task force operating over the whole of the Christmas period. The superintendent of the city police station has advised me that, as a direct result of that extra policing effort, violent crime, such as assaults, in the central city area has decreased. Gangs are operating in the city centre. The police have undercover officers operating within the city mall and throughout the city centre during the whole of the week, but particularly on Friday and Saturday nights.

In a city as large as Brisbane, there will always be some violent acts. The Government is attempting to address those problems by increasing the number of police officers.

On 2 December when this Government took office, the manning of the city police station was 55 below its nominal strength. Therefore, there were 55 fewer police than were necessary to police the city centre. That shortage needs to be addressed, and I have raised that matter with the Police Commissioner.

Mr Lingard: You've had four months and all you've done is speak about it.

Mr MACKENROTH: I have done something, in fact.

Mr Lingard: You've spoken about it.

Mr MACKENROTH: No. The Government has had a task force there and has done something positive about stopping some of the violence in this city.

Mr Lingard: Four months!

Mr MACKENROTH: The Government has done something. The honourable member obviously does not listen.

The Government is taking action. The long-term solution is to allot more police officers to the city centre and other areas throughout Queensland. Yesterday I addressed that particular part of the question from the honourable member for Brisbane Central.

Gladstone/Rockhampton Gas Pipeline

Dr WATSON: In asking a question of the Minister for Resource Industries, I refer to an announcement that he made, jointly with the Premier, on 5 February concerning the extension of the natural gas pipeline from Gladstone to Rockhampton. Did the Government examine alternative ways of delivering natural gas to Rockhampton? If no other alternatives were considered by the Government, why did the Minister announce a commitment of \$34m of taxpayer funds without considering viable alternatives? If the Government did consider viable alternatives, what were the full cost comparisons between extending the pipeline and the alternatives?

Mr VAUGHAN: Upon becoming the Minister for Resource Industries, I ascertained that there was a commitment by the previous Government to supply gas to two proposed magnesite projects in the Rockhampton area. One is at Kunwarara, a \$200m project that will employ about 400 people at the construction stage and another 170 people when it is up and running. It was suggested to me that another way of getting gas from Gladstone to Rockhampton was by tankers. My department looked at that project and decided it was completely not feasible and that, because of the advantages that it would have for the two magnesite projects in the Rockhampton area, the most feasible proposition was to extend the Wallumbilla-Gladstone pipeline through to Rockhampton.

The undertaking given by the previous Government to the promoters of the prime magnesite project was that gas would be delivered to that area by May 1991. Because of that commitment—a definite decision had to be made in relation to that commitment by February this year—the officers of the Department of Resource Industries recommended to me that the Government undertake that pipeline project as quickly as possible to meet that previous commitment.

Sale of Properties Resumed for Wolffdene Dam

Dr WATSON: In directing a question to the Minister for Primary Industries, I refer to the previous answer he gave to the member for Archerfield on the Wolffdene dam. As several weeks have now passed since the decision by the Government to cancel the Wolffdene dam project, why has the Minister not instructed the Brisbane and Area Water Board to sell the properties purchased for the construction of that dam and, in view of the deteriorating economy and the falling land prices in that vicinity, will the Government make up any difference between the sale price and the purchase price of those properties when they are sold by the Brisbane and Area Water Board?

Mr CASEY: The actual question shows the inverted logic of the Liberal Party in Queensland and why it has been reduced to the very, very small rump that it is in this Parliament.

In actual fact, there is clear evidence to indicate that land values in the Albert valley, rather than reduce, have risen substantially since this Government took the step to cancel the Wolffdene dam project. A very real problem faced those living in the valley who under the previous Government were allowed to develop their

properties without any proper planning being undertaken. The previous Government's decision to go ahead with the Wolffdene dam considerably reduced the value of those properties.

I remind the members of the Liberal Party, and the questioner in particular, that the decision to cancel the Wolffdene dam project was not taken in the last few days; it was taken in the very first week of this Government. It was one of the first decisions confirmed by Cabinet.

Despite that decision, members of the Liberal Party in the Albert valley, and certain direct contacts with the Liberal Party—they have also been working in liaison with the member for Fassifern—have deliberately taken action to try to stimulate rumours in the area.

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

BREAD INDUSTRY AUTHORITY BILL

Hon. E. D. CASEY (Mackay—Minister for Primary Industries) (11.22 a.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

"That leave be granted to bring in a Bill relating to the stabilization of the bread industry, to establish the Bread Industry Authority and for related purposes."

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

Bill and explanatory notes presented and Bill, on motion of Mr Casey, read a first time.

Second Reading

Hon. E. D. CASEY (Mackay—Minister for Primary Industries) (11.23 a.m.): I move—

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

The purpose of this Bill is to repeal the Bread Industry Committee Act 1979 and replace the former committee with a new, effective body, the Bread Industry Authority. Bread is the most staple of food commodities. It must always be available to consumers throughout Queensland at fair and reasonable prices.

The existing legislation was incapable of dealing with the changing nature of the industry and the effect that new entrants have on the marketplace. Instability resulting from the unwillingness of some members of the industry to comply with a code of trading practice has rendered the Bread Industry Committee Act that was introduced by the former Government ineffective—if it ever was effective.

To correct that unmanageable situation, the Government has introduced the Bread Industry Authority Bill 1990. As I have already outlined, the Bill will repeal the Bread Industry Committee Act, thereby removing the ineffectual Bread Industry Committee. The new Bread Industry Authority will be established with a membership of five appropriately skilled people. Appointments to the authority will be on merit.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr CASEY: Yes, there will be a considerable change from the methodology used by the previous Government which was in power until 2 December and which dealt completely in cronyism and supported people who were prepared to support that Government. It put those types of people on so many of its committees.

The five members of the Bread Industry Authority will be—

. an independent chairman;

- . the Commissioner for Consumer Affairs;
- . a member well versed in the business of baking bread; and two members skilled in business, commerce, finance, accounting or industrial relations.

The principal power of the authority will be to fix minimum wholesale and maximum retail prices for the standard loaves of bread. They are the 680-gram and 900-gram sliced and packed loaves, which are the most commonly traded in the industry.

Most importantly, and unlike the position in the existing toothless legislation, the rulings of the authority will be enforceable. Penalty provisions are incorporated into the Bill and are of sufficient scale to act as a real deterrent. The aim of these penalty provisions is to protect consumers from unfair pricing and to protect from destructive pricing practices those sections of the industry complying with the Act. No longer will small elements of the bread industry disrupt the successful operation of the whole industry. Yet, at the same time, consumers will be able to enjoy the advantages of bread discounting when offered by retailers.

Another important aspect of this Bill is the public accountability which the legislation will introduce. Unlike the former legislation, authority price hearings will be public, and can be requested by any person or organisation. At the same time, I advise the House that there will be provisions to protect business confidentiality. The public hearings will provide all interested groups with the opportunity to state their case and will ensure that the prices established are subject to the appropriate degree of public scrutiny.

I now turn to the funding basis of the authority. In line with the Goss Government's aim of reducing the public money spent on running Queensland statutory authorities, the Bread Industry Authority will be 100 per cent industry funded. Under no circumstances will funds be paid from consolidated revenue for any purpose relating to the establishment, maintenance or operation of the authority.

Finally, I wish to draw members' attention to the Government's desire to ensure that the authority is fulfilling the role that we envisage for it. In that regard, the Government has decided to review the authority and its effectiveness in 12 months' time. After implementation of the legislation, the Bread Industry Authority will be required to report back to the Government on the efficiency and effectiveness of the legislation and regulations, including a comparison of wholesale and retail prices in Queensland and those elsewhere in Australia.

The introduction of this Bill is concrete evidence of the Goss Labor Government's desire to provide for the continued proper and orderly development of the bread industry in Queensland without risking workers' jobs or disadvantaging consumers.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Lingard, adjourned.

PUBLIC SECTOR MANAGEMENT COMMISSION BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 20 March (see p. 488).

Mr HAYWARD (Caboolture) (11.27 a.m.): It is certainly a pleasure for me to rise to speak on the Public Sector Management Commission Bill. Its introduction is supported by the National Party and I understand that it will be supported by the Liberal Party.

The area on which I wish to concentrate is the provision of a detailed management review of all public sector units. It is pleasing that this is finally to occur in Queensland. Time is running out. Mr Keating made it very clear in the *Australian* this morning that the squeeze is on the States and that the States will have to examine what they do with their public sectors. So the pressure is on.

What I want to do is develop an overview of where we are heading in Queensland and emphasise the importance of this Bill to Queensland and Queenslanders. Queensland enters the 1990s with a large and growing public sector, which will be a dominant feature of its economy in the foreseeable future. We only have to go to the Budget papers last year to realise what a big business Government is in Queensland. Consolidated revenue receipts were over \$8 billion. The major sources of revenue were \$3.2 billion from the Commonwealth, nearly \$700m from payroll tax and \$1.2 billion from railway income. On the other side, the outlays from consolidated revenue totalled more than \$8 billion. The major outlays were \$1.4 billion for health, \$1.4 billion for transport and \$1.4 billion for public services.

It is also important to emphasise that the public sector in Queensland accounts for almost 30 per cent of the total employment in this State. More than 400 000 Queenslanders are employed within the public sector. Between July 1983 and June 1989, the public sector employment growth in this State was 4.5 per cent, so the public sector is a big business in Queensland.

The present high level of national and State debt and the decline in Australia's international competitiveness require the private and public sectors to operate at maximum efficiency and cost effectiveness. Recently, there was a debate in this Parliament on the State debt. Academic people, such as Mr John Pitchford from the Australian National University, argue, in brief terms, that if there is no public debt everything is okay provided it is all held in private hands and provided the existing external private debt can be serviced. That is the Pitchford argument. The 1990 data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics is very clear. It points out that \$500m a year is being paid out in interest.

It must be recognised in Queensland that the fastest-growing expense burden for Queenslanders is that interest. This is important and is why this Bill must be introduced. The public sector must be made more efficient and more effective, and this Bill is an attempt to do that.

Mr Ahern spoke about the debt during his speech in the Address in Reply debate, but failed to recognise that in many ways that the debt is what interest is paid on. It is not a matter of the net debt, or anything of that kind. The interest commitment is based on the amount that has actually been borrowed. This morning an example was given in an article appearing in the *Business Review Weekly* in which the serious question of the size of Victoria's debt was raised. Emphasis was placed on the fact that the international rating agencies do not distinguish between the States on a State-by-State basis. They simply regard Australia on its own. The time may come when States are rated individually according to their borrowings, which will then force a State such as Queensland—and the other States which have also made the decision to consider efficient and effective operations—to perform well and borrow moneys at a cheaper rate of interest. The Public Sector Management Commission will act to reduce this debt burden. Because it is very important, that point must be clearly emphasised.

A debate on debt certainly reflects on Queensland more than on other States, because Queensland is an export-oriented State. It is oriented towards agriculture and mining. Honourable members opposite and those sitting behind me on the cross-benches would be aware that in recent years Queensland has become more exposed than the rest of Australia to the variability of international commodity prices. During the Address in Reply debate a number of members opposite and members on the Government side of the House have spoken about their own electorates. One speech from the other side of the House that interested me came from Mr Perrett, the honourable member for Barambah, who spoke about the confusion felt by rural people and farmers in his electorate, who feel that the Government has a responsibility to ensure stability in rural industries. The honourable member spelt out the frustration experienced by many people. He referred to the withdrawal of schools and hospitals from his electorate, which is something that all honourable members must be aware of and concentrate on. The honourable member for Moggill raised the question of micro-economic reform. One of

the things that the Queensland Government can do towards micro-economic reform is to concentrate on getting the Public Sector Management Commission up and running.

There has been a decline in Queensland. During 1985, 1986 and 1987 there was a dramatic and extended decline in world prices in the mining industry and that imposed significant financial pressures on many mining operations in this State. This had the effect of reducing Queensland's overall income, or receipts. Nevertheless, Queensland continued to borrow and was forced into the position of having the expense of an ever-increasing interest burden. The establishment of the Public Sector Management Commission reflects a worldwide trend towards public sector efficiency, effectiveness and economy. There have been a number of examples of this in Australia and other parts of the world. One of the best-known examples occurred in New South Wales in 1988 when the Curran Commission of Audit concluded—

"The key means of enhancing efficiency of Government operations is to adopt a more commercial market oriented approach . . . immediate move to the corporatization of Government business undertakings and prepare the way for later possible privatisation of some operations."

In the United Kingdom, Thatcher talked about the sell-off of nationalised industries. This has had an unfortunate effect, because it was for the benefit of a few at the expense of the majority. A number of other honourable members in this House would have other examples which readily spring to mind, but one of the best examples was the privatisation of the Plant Research Institute in that country. As a result, the public property in plant research has become the private preserve of a few people.

Both Curran in New South Wales and Thatcher in the United Kingdom have blindly pursued these ideological goals. In his report, Curran refers to the "fundamental changes in attitude for Government and the community" and refers to the Government meeting genuine community needs. These are the questions that must be addressed by the Public Sector Management Commission. A good example occurred on the *7.30 Report* recently when people being interviewed were asked why they did not vote for Charles Blunt. A man from Murwillumbah said, "I didn't vote for Charles Blunt because they took the sleeping and dining cars out of the train that goes from Murwillumbah to Sydney." That is an example of the sorts of measures Curran has introduced. He wants to determine what is a genuine community need.

The Public Sector Management Commission is not about the pursuit of ideological aims. This is clearly spelt out in clause 2.16 of the Bill which states—

"It is the duty of the Commission—

(a) to act independently, impartially, fairly and in the public interest".

Its duty is also to provide objective information. This can be contrasted in many ways with the activities of the previous National Party Government. Later on I will give this House a number of examples of how those matters were not considered within the public sector in this State.

The Public Sector Management Commission is not about the simplistic notion that the private sector is efficient and economical and the public sector is not. These are the mouthings we hear from people on the conservative side of politics. The establishment of this commission makes the point that public administration is not necessarily about importing private-sector solutions. It is certainly not about the Curran solution, as stated in his conclusion to his report to the New South Wales Parliament. One of the comments was—

"There is no inherent need for the Government to be a provider of those goods and services which can be provided effectively by the private sector."

That is a matter on which the Public Sector Management Commission will not draw conclusions. The commission does not assume by the terms of this Bill that private industry is necessarily good and that the public sector is necessarily bad, which is what happened in Thatcher's UK and in Greiner's New South Wales Government. As I said earlier, the Public Sector Management Commission is not playing an ideological

game; it is simply concerned with policies that have worked and that will work in Queensland. It recognises that the public sector can learn a great deal from the business sector.

It is important for all members to understand that the Public Sector Management Commission recognises the unique nature of Queensland and the extent of decentralisation in this State. In Queensland, the public sector operates not only in Brisbane but also in other regional areas. In many ways, that distinguishes this State from the other States in Australia. As all honourable members would know, Queensland has a more widely dispersed population than that of other States. Only 45 per cent of the State's population lives in Brisbane, whereas in other mainland States between 63 to 70 per cent of the population lives in the capital city.

I am pleased that the National Party and the Liberal Party are supporting this Bill. It is important to understand that the Public Sector Management Commission does not have an interventionist role. It will provide assistance to public sector agencies as they adapt to the 1990s. In this morning's *Australian*, Mr Keating made very clear the suggestion, which has appeared in numerous articles in business magazines and public sector journals, that time is running out.

It is the function of members of this Parliament to serve not only the people who live in their electorates but also the majority of the population of this State. Services have to be provided. By the introduction of this Bill, the Government has signalled its rejection of the Curran and Thatcher solutions. The 1989-90 Budget Papers contain good examples of the services that would not be provided if either Margaret Thatcher or Curran was in control and in search of a solution to a financial problem. For example, \$100,000 for the Leukaemia Foundation is mentioned in the Budget. Do honourable members think that that type of funding would survive in a Curran or Thatcher solution? Another example is \$275,000 from Special Allocations for the provision of full-time medical services at Laura. Those examples are important aspects of regional life in Queensland and they are matters to consider. Another example is the provision of \$500,000 to enhance State subsidies paid to creches and kindergartens located in country areas. This Bill recognises the peculiarly regional aspect of Queensland. Other matters that are mentioned in the Budget are issues that people do not talk very much about—for example, land care, timber and schools. These items are not necessarily association with profit. Not everything relates to profit, and that is recognised in the terms of this Bill.

This legislation distinguishes this Government's approach from the approach adopted by the Thatcher Government. Queensland has a higher proportion of its population and work force outside Brisbane. It is curious that the income and wages levels of people who live outside Brisbane tend to be lower than those of comparable areas in other States. I understand that the Queensland Treasury is proceeding to investigate this important issue because, coupled with the decentralisation of Queensland's population, the annual population growth of this State, which is 2.5 per cent compared with 1.5 per cent nationally, means that greater pressures are being placed on public resources.

Queensland now has 16.8 per cent of Australia's population. Over the next 20 or 30 years, Queensland is expected to attract an increasing share of the nation's population. No member of this Parliament would deny that. Given the decentralised nature of the State and that people who live outside the capital city receive lower incomes or wages than those received by people in similar areas in other States, the demands for facilities and resources will increase. The Public Sector Management Commission will examine issues of economy and effectiveness in the public service. In doing so, it will also recognise that Queensland is a decentralised State. The point I make about high rates of population growth is that they create additional demands on services and on the provision of a social wage. As people continue to move to this State to live and as decentralisation expands, capital infrastructure has to be provided. Each honourable member would have received demands for hospitals, schools, police stations and roads that they have mentioned later in Parliament.

When the Premier introduced this Bill, he emphasised that the Public Sector Management Commission will have four principal roles. The commission will undertake a detailed management review of all public sector units, recommend appropriate management standards for application across public sector units and establish adequate procedures for staff grievances, which is a very important matter. It will also develop and implement the Government's proposals for new executive services, the Chief Executive Service and a Senior Executive Service.

Clause 2.13 of the Bill spells out very clearly that the object of the commission is to achieve efficiency, effectiveness, economy and impartiality in the management of this State's public sector. I intend to concentrate my remarks on the first three matters. I understand that the honourable member for Yeronga will address the issue of impartiality when he speaks later in this debate.

I believe that a number of issues will have to be addressed by the commission. They are issues such as finance and asset replacement management that certainly have confronted the previous Government and other Governments throughout Australia. I know that you, Mr Deputy Speaker, would be aware of this because you have given a great deal of thought to those issues. Many of the expenditure items such as schools require capital resources. Organisations such as the Brisbane Port Authority are capital hungry. Those public sector establishments demand finances to keep going. In addition to that, the problem of asset replacement also confronts the Government. The big question is whether to sell or maintain existing assets.

The commission will undertake a huge task in firstly developing a methodology for attacking these issues and then formulating procedures for how objectives are to be accomplished.

Other issues, such as pricing, which directly affect Queenslanders will have to be addressed. Those pricing decisions include things such as how much is charged to travel on a train, how much an industrialist pays to move goods through Brisbane ports, and whether a number of services that were previously free will have to be paid for. That again raises the question about decisions that will have to be made about cost recovery or profit. What will we do with some of these industries and statutory authorities? Will they be put into a pricing position which enables them to make a profit, or are they merely to recover their costs? When emphasising the regional nature of Queensland, the extent of the decentralisation and the population growth, we must look at which statutory authorities and departments should be subsidised. They are important questions that must be addressed.

Over the last few years in Queensland much talk has occurred with public sector reform, but there has been very little action. Many recommendations were made by Savage in his report, but they were not all carried out. The former Government did not tackle the hard questions such as public sector superannuation.

In recent years in Queensland, quangos have expanded and have been set up with zeal. What concerns me and many other Queenslanders is that most of the statutory authorities became the exclusive preserve of National Party identities. Many of them were put in place for the convenience of friends of the National Party. I will remind the Parliament of some of those examples. Last year, the Queensland Industry Development Corporation, with its notable figures on the board, and the other great statutory authority, Suncorp——

Mr Littleproud: It returned record profits last year.

Mr HAYWARD: I will talk later as to how the profit was generated. We can address that question at another time.

The Public Sector Management Commission must address whether bodies such as the QIDC should receive a subsidy from Treasury which, in its case, the corporation counted as a management fee to enable it to boost its income in order to record a profit.

The commission will have to decide whether it will allow that to occur in order to keep the corporation going. It clearly provides a service to many regional people in Queensland.

Mr Littleproud: Venture capital.

Mr HAYWARD: Exactly. This Bill will address those questions.

The development by the previous Government of statutory authorities in this State reached the stage at which no-one could identify how many existed. If we do not know how many of them exist, how can we know what they do? What is worse, we do not know how much they cost the public purse.

By examining the register of statutory authorities between December 1984 and February 1987, I have determined that, in February 1987 in Queensland, 983 statutory authorities were operating. I have used 1987 figure because it emphasises the inadequacy of the statistics. The latest issued figures by the registrar of statutory authorities in this State is dated February 1987—and it is now March 1990.

Between 1984 and 1987, 14 new statutory authorities were established in this State. I will name a few: the Yambocully Water Board, the Mortgage Secondary Market Board, the Fraser Island Recreation Board, the Fraser Island Recreation Authority, the Patient Review Tribunals, the Queensland Industry Development Corporation—which was mentioned previously—the Suncorp Insurance and Finance Board, the Royal Children's Hospital Foundation and a number of others. As well, between 1984 and 1987 a number of statutory authorities disappeared. A couple of those bear interesting reading: the Charleville Rabbit Advisory Committee, the Cunnamulla Rabbit Advisory Committee, the Goondiwindi Rabbit Advisory Committee, the Rural Reconstruction Board, the Prices Commissioner—that is interesting—the State Fire Services Council and the Townsville Public Abattoir Board. A number of other statutory authorities disappeared during that time.

The register of statutory authorities is inadequate. February 1987 is the last time that one was published. It reflects what has happened with statutory authorities in Queensland. We do not know what they do, how many exist and, worse still, what they cost the public purse. That is the area in which the commission will be operating. It will address some basic questions about the role and operations of each statutory authority. It will address the questions: is the organisation needed; would its policy role be better incorporated into departmental structures; does it allocate resources sensibly and rationally; and are its activities consistent with the economic and social objectives of the Government and of all Queenslanders? That is a sensible approach.

Why should not the Yambocully Water Board, whatever it is, have those questions asked of it? That is what the management commission is all about.

Mr Littleproud: How do you know a Minister who has jurisdiction over it doesn't ask those questions?

Mr HAYWARD: I will cover that issue shortly when I discuss the reporting procedures to Parliament.

Those statutory authorities were set up, and dominated in many ways, by National Party cronies. The result of that for honourable members was that, for every crony who sat on a board or got a job because he was a political affiliate of some kind—which applied with many statutory authorities—a school was not built, a teacher was not employed, a child was not taught or a police station was understaffed—that is, if a member had a police station in his electorate.

Society and members of Parliament must recognise that there are unlimited wants but limited resources. When those limited resources are abused to satisfy a minority, the whole community suffers.

I cite a good example that appeared in the *Sun*, which published an article on how people are put on boards and suddenly become instant experts. The article headed "State 10 years behind: doctors" stated—

"Mrs Betty Byrne Henderson, the chairman of the Royal Women's Hospital Board, accused the State Government of a political witchhunt to axe the boards."

She has got to be kidding! Quite simply, no person could be more identifiable with the National Party in this State than Betty Byrne Henderson. She then goes on to bag the Minister for Health over what has been happening in the area of health in this State. How long has Betty Byrne Henderson been an expert or had any knowledge of health—

Mr Littleproud: She chaired the Royal Women's Hospital Board.

Mr HAYWARD: She got to chair that board quite simply because she is a friend of the former Government.

Concurrent with this political influence in quangos, there developed a slackness about reporting to Parliament. During the time since this session began, many annual reports for 1988-89 have been tabled. Section 46J of the Financial Administration and Audit Act is very clear. Any statutory authority should have its report ready within four months of the end of the financial year, and the relevant Minister should have that report tabled in Parliament within 14 days. There are a few examples where that has not happened. I cite the example of the Mortgage Secondary Market Board, the State Service Superannuation Board and the Queensland Treasury Corporation.

Section 46 goes on to state the only way in which that procedure can be interrupted. It says—

" . . . the appropriate Minister may, in a particular case and after consulting with the Treasurer thereon, extend or further the period of four months by notice in writing furnished to that statutory body."

So if they were not shredded by the previous Treasurer, there should be a lot of letters on the desk granting extensions and permission to extend the time for the reporting of those statutory bodies. This Parliament should know which statutory authorities have not yet reported. In its recent report on the timeliness and quality of annual reports, the Senate Standing Committee on Finance and Public Administration said—

"Timely reporting is of paramount importance for the effect parliamentary scrutiny of the activities of the Executive Government.

Without timeliness, information loses much of its relevance, its quality and its usefulness as a tool of accountability.

Little remains other than historical value."

As the Premier said during his second-reading speech, for far too long areas of Government in this State have been allowed to operate without rigorous review. It is obvious to me that where a statutory authority is granted an extension of time for the presentation of its annual report, an explanation should be provided to this Parliament. I can find 907 of those organisations. I will cite some examples of statutory authorities whose reports have not been tabled in this Parliament within that time limit of four months. They may have written those letters, as required. However, this Parliament certainly does not know. The Raine Island Corporation, which is to do with the National Parks and Wildlife Service, the Brisbane and Area Water Board, the Rice Marketing Board and the Bread Industry Committee are a few examples.

In my opinion, the first test in accountability and reform of public administration is to ensure the timeliness of reports to this Parliament. The Act is very clear. The Act says that unless they have permission not to table their reports within four months, these statutory authorities have breached the Financial Administration and Audit Act. The Public Sector Management Commission will undertake this task as part of its review within two years. There is a sunset clause. It has to be done. The detailed management review will ensure that appropriate performance standards are established and monitored.

In regard to the annual reporting standards of the QIDC and other statutory authorities, in its third report the Parliamentary Committee of Public Accounts concluded—

"At the present time it is difficult to judge the corporation's performance in these areas without an intimate knowledge of the workings of the financial market. However, it is not a reason for the presentation of a report which produces insufficient

information to Parliament on whether or not the corporation is achieving what the Government intended."

The QIDC is not alone in this regard. Many quangos have seen fit to produce marketing-style reports for the sake of relevant data.

The aim of this State Labor Government is to promote initiative and enterprise in public sector corporations——

Time expired.

Mr INNES (Sherwood—Leader of the Liberal Party) (11.57 a.m.): On behalf of the Liberal Party, it is my pleasure to join the debate on this very important Bill. As the Premier stated in his second-reading speech, this Bill is designed to bring about a fundamental change in the way in which Government is conducted and managed in this State. The Liberal Party is absolutely committed to an independent, professional, apolitical public service, and it will support the Bill.

The Liberal Party believes that Government exists for the benefit of the citizens as a whole and not just for the benefit of those who govern or those who support them. The Fitzgerald commission of inquiry found that democratic and accountable government and administration in Queensland had been derailed. The flaws in the system had become institutionalised in some areas. Fortified by the finding of the Fitzgerald report, members of the Liberal Party formed certain clear intentions with regard to public service reform, which I published before the State election.

Governments exists to provide a range of essential services and structures and to provide the mechanisms to facilitate and adjust competition or conflict in a range of areas. Government also has a role in leadership and the encouragement and facilitation of a range of desirable community objectives. The foundation of the public service is legislation. It can spend and use money only by the passage of Acts and motions through the Queensland Parliament. It can act only with the force of a backing Act of the Queensland Parliament. So, ultimately, the public service will operate properly and efficiently only if it is based upon quality legislation passed by a thoughtful and wise Parliament and upon thoughtful and wise policies which are formulated pursuant to that legislation in order for the Executive—the Ministry—to pursue the ends of that legislation.

According to the Fitzgerald report, the role of the public service is "to provide independent, impartial, expert advice on departmental issues". Fitzgerald goes on to say—

"Public officials are supposed to be free to act and advise without concern for the political or personal connections of the people and organizations affected by their decisions."

That is a quote from page 130 of the Fitzgerald report. However, when the public service is peopled by the Government's own supporters or staff, who are afraid to provide politically unpalatable advice or who are carefully selected to provide political advice, the Government is deprived of the full range of options, with the result that wrong decisions are made and good government suffers.

In the interests of good Government and the integrity of public servants, it is essential that the public service be depoliticised. The Liberal Party accepts that the public service had become politicised. During the election campaign the Liberal Party announced that it would establish a public service management board—a structure, if one likes, similar to the one that is proposed, although not with precisely the same powers. That board was to be in charge of recruitment at large, staffing and remuneration advice and criteria, job description, discipline and the supervision of management policies. From my understanding of the Bill, a similar role will be held by the Public Sector Management Commission by establishing effective personnel standards for departments.

The Liberal Party believes in a substantially permanent, apolitical public service with contract employment limited only to the higher echelons. We have looked at the American model and the traditional British/Australian model. The Liberal Party prefers

and deliberately chooses the permanent public service structure because it believes that it does give a better service in the long term.

Under Liberal Party policies, contract employment would have applied to genuine short-term Government needs and services and to positions above level I-22. Under a Liberal Government, the chief executives of the departments and the Ministers would have been required annually to sign performance agreements. Whereas those agreements were recommended by the Savage report, they were not adopted by the previous Government. I have not heard that they will be part of the proposals of this Government. The aim of such agreements is to clarify for the head of the department and the department itself the goals, aims and management tools to be used in that year. In other words, it concentrates the minds of the head of the department, the political overseer and the department itself on what their tasks are. It reminds them annually of their principal tasks and what they are trying to achieve and sets goals to be achieved.

The Liberal Party welcomes the emphasis in the Bill on the importance of improving the management skills of senior public servants. That is vitally important to the efficiency of the Queensland public service. The Liberal Party had proposed to establish a centre for public service management excellence in association with the faculty of one of our major tertiary institutions. Although that institution was not chosen, the Liberal Party believes that an institution of that nature would be of benefit to the State.

Some senior executives in the public service are lucky enough to be chosen to attend the staff college in Victoria. However, the Liberal Party believes that this State could benefit by having such a centre available to a greater range of people in the upper levels of public service management and to those with ambitions and aspirations to the top levels of management. At that centre public service management and prospective management would have been exposed to the best of public service as well as private-enterprise management techniques. The Liberal Party certainly approves of those links which can be forged for an exchange of personnel, experience and discipline between the public and private sectors.

The concept behind the Government's plans to improve the management skills of public servants has gained great currency during the past few years, both in Australia and overseas. There must be established formal mechanisms for senior executive selection, recruitment, development, deployment, evaluation, reward and/or redeployment or separation. The public sector will obtain top-level executives who are highly professional and effective providing that the job in hand is clearly designated and the rewards are appropriate for the standard of person that one is seeking to attract.

The Liberal Party welcomes also the detailed management review of all public service sector units that are covered by the Bill. An organisational review which focuses on results and goals rather than procedures in Government departments and quangos is long overdue.

I digress from the Bill for a moment and ask the Government itself to give serious consideration to reintroducing one of the more potent units within the previous Government, namely, the Internal Operational Audit Unit. The fascinating history of that unit is that it was headed by Mr Peter Forster. That unit was capable of being requested by a departmental head or a Minister, who believed that attention was needed, to move into Government departments.

The highly skilled people within that unit possessed great audit experience and management-analysis skills. They had the capacity to move into departments of their own volition or at the request of the Premier's Department, a responsible Minister or a departmental head. Such was the quality of those people that, when the unit was disbanded by the former National Party Government, they became consultants. Not only Mr Forster but also a number of his staff were engaged by the Expo Authority. More latterly, Mr Forster, as the head of the implementation unit, has been engaged by the former National Party Government, which rediscovered his skills and abilities, and the Labor Government, which has maintained his role. Within the previous public

service, which was not all bad, highly efficient units existed. Because the Internal Operational Audit Unit provided a very significant function, it should be restored.

The Liberal Party welcomes the review into the management and operation of statutory authorities and Government enterprises. I support the sentiments expressed by the Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee, the member for Caboolture, Mr Hayward, in relation to quangos. The Liberal Party has spoken about quangos for almost as long as it has spoken about public accounts committees. Quangos grow like topsy, achieve a level of independence and frequently maintain a monopoly situation while being under the umbrella of Government legislation. As a result, to a very substantial degree they have been able to operate independently.

Mr Hayward: There are some very capital-hungry ones, too.

Mr INNES: There are some very capital-hungry ones.

Predictably, because many of their operations are capital hungry, those quangos contribute enormously to the public debt. Frankly, I was personally staggered and appalled that one quango head was given a BMW for his personal use. Such was the level of devolved oversight that oversight was non-existent. Perhaps some people became cross-infected by what other people can do in their own private companies. However, I do not believe that the head of any quango should receive a BMW as part of his package. The need for oversight was clearly there.

The Liberal Party promised to abolish one-third of the quangos in a three-year period. It will support the Government insofar as it pursues the sentiments articulated by the member for Caboolture.

In the past the Liberal Party called for the setting-up of a Victorian-style statutory bodies review commission. It still supports the idea. As a matter of practicality, the Parliament is probably approaching saturation point in the number of committees that it can effectively mount, maintain and staff at one time. If this Parliament is ever evolving new committees, members of those committees will not have the time to pursue effectively multiple responsibilities, and that will be self-defeating. If there is no active participation because of overburdening problems on members of Parliament who are on the new committees, the committee system will not work.

We in the Liberal Party have strongly supported what the Victorian Parliament has maintained, that is, its Statutory Bodies Review Committee, which generally operates through the technique of moving upon some particular statutory authorities each year. All of them cannot be attacked but they can certainly be viewed in terms of efficiency and effectiveness and in terms of the maintenance of their functions.

With limited exceptions such as tertiary institutions, which we recognise have a permanent role, we believe very strongly that sunset clauses should be incorporated in all legislation relating to statutory authorities or in pieces of blanket legislation. As a result, there is the equivalent of a performance agreement. Every three to five years, or whatever period is deemed appropriate, the statutory authority would have to justify itself to the Parliament. There has to be an active process to continue its functions, or to modify its functions, in precisely the same way as we proposed amendments to limit the EARC, believing that there will be a very real difference between the number of personnel, the staff and the structure necessary for the first two or three years and what might be an ongoing function with regard to some residual matters.

The new Government cannot be commended in all areas of public service reform. The false impression was given in documents that the Labor Party sent out before the election on 2 December that the number of Cabinet Ministers would be reduced from 28 to 18.

Mr Hayward: The number of departments.

Mr INNES: I hear what the honourable member says. But the document that was promulgated and distributed at large talked about reducing the number of Ministers

from 28 to 18. Was it a mistake? That is the question I ask. I did not see it corrected. I received the document a number of times, and the statement that the number of Ministers would be reduced from 28 to 18 never changed. Was that part of an intention to have people believe that there was to be a reduction in the Ministry in this State? Certainly, the gullible and the people who did not know would have formed that conclusion.

The National Party was not blameless when it came to finding offices and "make work" schemes for discredited top executives—far from it. There were a couple of well-known departmental heads who were bushed into back offices and given nominal jobs to do. However, because that practice existed before does not, in my view, justify the behaviour in which the new Government has engaged. It is completely the right of the new Government to redeploy top executives. Frankly, I would have done the same. But it is wrong to create the Normanby Gulags. If it is inhumane for an ordinary worker to be deliberately put in a situation with no staff and no job function so that he feels demeaned, it is equally wrong for that to happen to people at the top of the department. They were deliberately put in a place with no staff, no equipment and no job.

Mr W. K. Goss: Do you think we should have followed the Greiner example and just sacked them cold?

Mr INNES: That is a lot more honest than creating a psychological condition in which they are expected to resign.

Mr W. K. Goss: Do you support the Greiner option? You would urge on us the Greiner option?

Mr INNES: The Government had to face certain contracts. It inherited certain contracts. It might have argued about them. It was a question of paying out those contracts or not. I do not think that in almost any of the cases involved the Government could dismiss the people as being of no worth. Most of them were people with some substantial skills or knowledge. Some beneficial public job could have been found for them. Albeit, the Government might have wanted a period of negotiation to see whether it could terminate their employment and pay them out. I do not for a minute question the Government's right of redeployment and appointment of people who are more akin to what the Government believes is the new direction that it was justified by its mandate to chart. However, I think it was wrong to find non-jobs, hoping that the people themselves would buckle and resign. The Government should have faced up to it. Either it should have given them a job in which the public gets something for their services, or it should have bought them out.

Mr Hayward: On the question of buying them out—what it really means is you go without a school or a police station in this State, or you pay them out.

Mr INNES: Let me respond to that. The alternatives are very simple, are they not? So long as they are on the public payroll, the Government could find them a gainful job to do. I would have thought that the public purse would demand that. If they have to be paid, they should be paid to do something effective. It is either that, or the Government makes the decision to buy them out. It has to be one or the other. I do not think it is honest to try to deliberately create a psychological climate in which the person is treated so badly that out of self-respect he is forced to resign.

Some of the new appointments by the new Government do not exactly give me the comfort that the apolitical criteria for appointments to the lofty apolitical public service are being applied. I refer to the latest appointment to the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Commission. This person has to perform a judicial-type function. People going into that job should know, if they are equipped at all for the job, that they are being transposed into a judicial-type activity. Ms Glennys Fisher proudly announced that she was an ALP activist, that she was against the abolition of VEAs and that generally she was

in favour of the trade union side of arguments. That was a completely improper statement for such an appointee to make. It indicated that that person did not know what her functions were and was poorly equipped to carry them out.

That person's job is to make decisions that are fair for both employers and employees. It is not to be an ALP activist and not to say, "I favour one side." If VEAs continue and if that person is involved in the industrial process, it is her job to make judgments on VEAs. That person is not there to declare an attitude towards policy matters. That is a matter for the Government. It is the Government's right to take action in regard to VEAs—if it does the Liberal Party will say that the Government is wrong—but it is not right for a person going into a judgmental situation to declare bias from the word go. My word, that is an invitation to any party to an industrial dispute to claim bias from the outset.

I ask the Premier about the position of Dr Glyn Davis, the coordinator of the Public Sector Management Commission implementation unit and about Professor Peter Coaldrake. Is it the situation that Dr Davis had little public service background, and did he go from a \$40,000 readership at the Griffith University to an \$88,000 to \$92,000 job with the Queensland public service?

Mr Foley: What is the relevance of that to the Bill?

Mr INNES: In terms of suitability, the members of the Liberal Party would like to know the background and qualifications of the people being promoted and appointed to very, very high, well-paid public service positions. If people are going to be brought in from outside and appointed over the top of public servants, this House should look at their qualifications. Dr Davis has sought and been given a public position, not a private position.

Mr Hayward: You are making assumptions about his income, and saying that that somehow disqualifies him from accepting a position in the public service.

Mr INNES: I have gone further. I have asked what is his background in the public service? Is he a member of the Labor Party? Why has a person from a much lower position been elevated to a very highly paid position? What precisely is Professor Coaldrake's role? Is it true that he is the author of the hit list? Is he the person whose advice is being sought as to those public servants who are to be removed and who have been removed? What precise advice is Dr Coaldrake giving to the new Government about the public service and about governmental matters?

Mr Foley: Surely it is good to have some independent input to the decision-making process?

Mr INNES: Of course. I have no objection to some independent input, but just tell the members of this House what that input is. That is all I am asking for.

Mr Foley: These people are distinguished academics.

Mr INNES: I am not quite sure. A person might be an academic. I would apply the word "distinguished" to Dr Coaldrake. I do not think that many of Dr Davis' peer group would say that he is particularly distinguished. He was an academic. He might become distinguished in the fullness of time. He has certainly been used by the Labor Party. In fact, I think he was the person who put together the seminar at which the Premier, the former Premier and I gave our views on the public service. Did Dr Davis write the speech at that time? Did he have a significant input into the Labor Party policy at that time?

Mr W. K. Goss interjected.

Mr INNES: It depends on one's political bias, but certainly some bodies, including one of the public service unions, thought the Liberal Party had something to offer in its speech, which was not there in the other speeches.

I question what precisely the new Government's policy will be on trade union membership and the public service? I make no bones about it: I do not believe in compulsory unionism. I do not believe in strongly persuasive unionism. I believe absolutely in the freedom of people to join trade unions, including the public service unions, or not to join them. I would like to hear what the Government's policy is going to be?

Will there be a closed shop in the Queensland public service, or will there be a highly-persuaded preference for people who join and maintain union membership? Some of the documents that the Labor Party promulgated at its recent conference required union membership for people seeking jobs and union membership for people gaining promotion. Just precisely where does this Government stand on trade union membership and the public service?

The growth in Queensland in the last two decades has been phenomenal. Many areas of the public service have responded to that phenomenal growth in a professional, efficient and cooperative way. For many years, many extremely competent and distinguished public servants have worked diligently in the interests of Queensland. It is the responsibility of an enlightened political administration—a modern public service administration—and those who comment upon it or are involved in the education of public servants to ensure that decisive steps for reform and review are taken now and that self-review is institutionalised for the future.

The members of this House will recall that the Liberal Party did not support very crucial parts of the former Government's public sector legislation. In particular, the Liberal Party differed with the previous Government on the question of contract employment and contracts down to the lowest levels. We believed that one had to have something of the nature of the Public Sector Management Commission to coordinate conditions and particularly to preside over the selection of people for public service positions.

The Liberal Party supports many aspects of this Bill, and it will support the Bill. Nevertheless, further improvements can be made. I have made a few specific proposals relating to improvement. I would like to more fully understand some of the policies that will be used selecting people for employment in the public service. I have directed some questions to the Premier.

Mr FOLEY (Yeronga) (12.22 p.m.): Equal opportunity for Queensland women will be a step closer to reality as a result of this important law reform. The Labor Party in Opposition campaigned on a promise to introduce equal opportunity laws. This is the first important step in honouring that promise.

The Public Sector Management Commission will have a statutory function to ensure that equal opportunity principles apply in management and in employment within the public sector in accordance with clause 2.14 (1) (j) of the Bill. The commission will have teeth to put these principles into operation by its power to issue public sector management standards under clause 4.13 of the Bill. These standards will be binding upon public service departments and quangos in accordance with clause 4.14 of the Bill.

For too long, women have been effectively denied access to the senior ranks of the public service. This legislation will be a powerful force to give women a real chance to obtain senior positions. One would hope that the commission, in setting standards, would rely not merely upon quotas or targets, but also on ensuring that the necessary infrastructure is in place to allow genuine equality of opportunity. This may include such matters as training programs, work-based child-care facilities, developing career-path opportunities and an examination of work-sharing arrangements. Our public sector can no longer afford to exclude, from its senior ranks, the great wealth of female talent which is undoubtedly available.

In the Department of Education, for example, no women hold positions in Band 2, that is, \$64,000 and above, whereas 68 per cent of the department's work-force are women, and only 7 out of 133 positions in Band 3, that is, \$50,000 and above, are held

by women. Queensland public service annual statistics for 1987-88 show that, in the public service generally, 2.5 per cent of males are in Band 3 and above while only 0.3 per cent of females are in this category. There were only eight females in Band 2 out of a total public service of 28 368 in 1987-88.

Equal opportunity principles cover not only women but also other groups that have been the victims of discrimination, such as Aboriginal people and migrants. We are a multicultural society. It is neither necessary nor desirable that the senior ranks of the public service be dominated by white, Anglo-Celtic males. The women of Queensland expect change. This legislation will help to ensure that they get it.

The scheme of this Act is set out in Part II of the Bill in so far as it deals with the Public Sector Management Commission and its functions. Those functions include the review of the management of the whole of the public sector within two years or such longer period as the Minister may approve. The power to set standards is a power which the people of Queensland will welcome. We need higher standards—indeed, we need the highest possible standards—in the public service and in the public sector generally.

Under the scheme of this Bill, the commission has power, pursuant to clause 4.1, to conduct investigations into any matter relevant to the discharge by it of its functions in the public sector management arena. Following the investigation stage, the commission has power to make reports pursuant to clause 4.11 and as set out in Part IV, Division 3 of the Bill. The commission's reports to the Minister are required to be furnished pursuant to clause 4.11 (2), which provides that—

"It shall be the duty of the Commission to furnish to the Minister within the meaning of this Act any report requested by the Minister relating to its prescribed object and functions or to its activities."

Then the action phase of the Public Sector Management Commission may be seen in Part IV, Division 4 of the Bill, which confers the power to issue public sector management standards. Those standards are provided by clause 4.14 to be binding upon the units of the public sector, bodies and persons to which or to whom the relevant standards apply. That scheme includes a provision that any standard, before being issued, be presented to the Minister for approval; thus one has a rational system in place for investigation, for report to the responsible Minister and for the issuing of standards which will have binding effect.

That performance standards function was discussed by the Honourable the Premier as the fourth matter in his second-reading speech. My learned and honourable colleague the honourable member for Caboolture dealt with the first three matters in his contribution to the debate.

It is relevant to consider the relationship of this reform to that other great reform introduced in the post-Fitzgerald era, namely, the process of electoral and administrative review. The EARC, that is the Electoral and Administrative Review Commission, has functions under section 2.10 of the Electoral and Administrative Review Act to investigate and report on the whole or part of the public administration of the State, including any matters pertaining thereto specified in the report of the commission of inquiry of Mr Fitzgerald of Queen's Counsel. One notes in the Fitzgerald report at page 370 the recommendations concerning matters to be reviewed by the Electoral and Administrative Review Commission included at recommendations 10(c) to 10(f). They are as follows—

- "(c) formulation of codes of conduct for public officials
- (d) establishment of guidelines in respect of Ministers involvement with public service appointments, promotions, transfers and discipline
- (e) establishment of guidelines to govern the appointment of all chief executive or equivalent positions in Government service (including statutory authorities and instrumentalities), and judicial appointments

- (f) review of the advertising of vacancies and the appointment and appeals against the appointment of people to positions within the public service."

Some of those matters fall within the province of this Bill and, in this respect, the Electoral and Administrative Review Commission has, pursuant to its legislation, a power to monitor the implementation of those reforms. That brings with it that vital spark of accountability which is the central element to a reform of the spirit of the law in the post-Fitzgerald era. That function of the Electoral and Administrative Review Commission is complementary to the functioning of this important commission proposed to be established by this Bill, the Public Sector Management Commission.

This reform brought in as the very first Bill by the Honourable the Premier to this Forty-sixth Parliament is a Bill which reshapes the foundations of our public sector, both the public service and the quangos which have abounded in this State. It is time for probity, honesty and higher standards in the discharge of public functions by public servants and by those engaged throughout the public sector. This Bill will do much to see that those aims are achieved.

Mr BORBIDGE (Surfers Paradise—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (12.34 p.m.): Yesterday afternoon I received an answer from the Premier to a question concerning the staffing of ministerial offices. The Premier referred me to the document, the Queensland Government Directory, which he kindly forwarded to me in the Chamber.

Yesterday afternoon staff in my office tried to carry out an exercise using that directory. They attempted to contact a number of staff listed in the directory only to be told in one particular instance, and I quote, "They are in Canberra working for the Federal Government and are not expected in Brisbane for a while yet." In particular I tried to contact the Health Minister's private secretary and was told, almost four months after the election, that this person, who is listed in the Government directory, had not set foot in the ministerial office. His name is proudly displayed in the Government directory, but apparently he is a missing person.

If that is an example of the way in which the Goss Government operates—that some four months after the State election a member of the public or a member of Parliament cannot contact a Minister's private secretary—then it does not augur well for the Goss Government's ability to manage the public service. Obviously, it is having some difficulty getting even its ministerial offices in order.

Mr W. K. Goss: Have you given up lurking around the garage?

Mr BORBIDGE: And it shows.

The talk of the town is that people cannot get return phone calls from ministerial offices or replies from Ministers. There is absolute incompetence behind the charade of this fraudulent Premier and Government. A cynical person would suggest that some of these Canberra-based public administration gurus who have been recruited may never make it to the sunshine State. The same cynics are suggesting that these gurus were appointed as an interim measure, pending the results of the Federal election. If they were tossed on the scrap heap with the Prime Minister—as they themselves expected—they could then seek refuge in the new regime in Brisbane. Now that they are guaranteed three more years in Canberra, at least some of them have chosen to stay down south and forget about the Queensland alternative.

Mr Foley: What is the evidence for that proposition?

Mr BORBIDGE: I just gave the honourable member the evidence. People trying to telephone officers who are listed in this interim Government directory find that they are not there. They are told that the officers have not arrived and are probably staying in Canberra.

Mr Foley: You pose an explanation for that without a shred of evidence.

Mr BORBIDGE: I gave the honourable member an example. I referred to the missing person in Mr McElligott's ministerial office.

As the Leader of the Opposition has indicated, the Opposition has major concerns about the Public Sector Management Commission Bill. This legislation will preserve the hiatus in public administration in Queensland that has effectively existed since the election of the Goss Government. The legislation paves the way for Queensland to be a branch-office Government based on the proven administrative failures of South Australia, Victoria, Western Australia and Canberra. It is now accepted that the Premier is an administrative failure. His advisers upon whom he is so dependent lack the basic practical knowledge of operating a Government.

Since the purge that took place in the public service, the failed creation of superdepartments, the public humiliation and career execution of senior departmental heads and the undermining of long-accepted conventions of public service administration, there has been a growing crisis of confidence in this Government on the part of both the business community and the public service sector itself. People are unable to get in touch with Ministers because they will not come to the telephone. Ministerial staff will not make appointments. The whole administration of Government in Queensland is a shambles, despite the facade that the public relations machine in this State keeps trying to present.

In the *Courier-Mail* on Friday, 16 March, the Treasurer made the following proud statement—

"Unless we can put a cap on it soon, we are not going to be able to deliver on other very important programs we were elected on."

This genius, this man who holds the office of Treasurer, has now discovered what it costs a Government to maintain the momentum of a far-reaching and comprehensive inquiry into all aspects of the State's administrative and political framework. If this Government intends to be true to its stated convictions, it must now provide the necessary funds and resources to implement inquiry recommendations, establish the accountability process and deliver the ongoing investigatory mechanisms demanded by the people of Queensland. Already the Treasurer is heading for the hills. His protestations were repeated in last Wednesday's *Courier-Mail*.

It is important that honourable members accept that it was the previous Parliament that was the great reformist Parliament of the State of Queensland. It was the National Party in Government that created the CJC and EARC and gave Queensland a Parliamentary Committee of Public Accounts, a Parliamentary Committee of Public Works and a Parliamentary Service Commission. This Parliament is treated with contempt by this fraudulent Premier who lacks the basic decency to be present in the Chamber while this particular measure—which he claims to be a keystone of Government policy—is debated.

Mr Schwarten: You can't blame him for that, with the tripe that you are going on with.

Mr BORBIDGE: I can understand the sensitivity of honourable members opposite.

The CJC, EARC, the Parliamentary Committee of Public Accounts, the Parliamentary Committee of Public Works and the Parliamentary Service Commission were not the inventions of the Premier or his comrades, such as Dr Davis, Professor Coaldrake and Professor Weller. They were the initiatives of the former National Party Government and not of the merry band of Griffith University and ex-Griffith University intellectuals who, unelected and unaccountable, are effectively running the Government of this State.

When members of the National Party formed the Government, they knew and accepted that these initiatives would be far-reaching and costly, but they did not back away, or seek to back away, from the reform process. When the going got tough and the National Party Government was being accused quite wrongly by the Labor Party of backing away from Fitzgerald reform, the full thrust of that commitment was maintained.

Members of the National Party are now faced with the spectacle of Queensland's Treasurer—for the time being, at least—publicly stating that unless the Government puts a cap on expenditure soon, it will not be able to deliver its election promises.

Is the Treasurer really suggesting that the framework for ongoing reform presented by the CJC and EARC should be scaled down or, more deceitfully, starved of funds over a period of time? In the same breath, the Treasurer lamented that he had a \$50m tiger by the tail that was on the verge of escaping, owing to what has been described by his leader as "market forces in the legal profession." Would not this Labor Government love to kill off the Cooke inquiry?

The Opposition is not at all convinced by the Premier's assurances that the Labor Party will not back away from the reform process. The Premier has referred to this legislation as the completion of the Fitzgerald trilogy of reform. This Bill is not a Fitzgerald initiative, and I stress the word "not". This legislation, conceived in the corridors of the Griffith University, owes its existence to the desire on the part of the Labor Party to subdue the public service—the public service that the Labor Government despises, distrusts and detests, but which, in reality, is the only good and stable structure that the Government has going for it. This Government would sooner take advice and riding instructions from unelected and unaccountable academics—people who would not know proper management principles if they fell over them on the campus—rather than from experienced, competent and dedicated senior public servants who are ready and willing to serve the duly elected Government of the day.

This legislation establishes a Public Sector Management Commission—a new public service board—which, in Division 3 of the Bill, is accorded a vast array of functions. When these functions are analysed, one finds that the primary function and ongoing theme of the Public Sector Management Commission is review. The Labor Party has defined "government" to be a charter to undertake never-ending reviews that will keep an army of academics and Labor mates busy for years. With more than 55 reviews being implemented within the first 100 days of Government, the Labor Party has created a new growth industry in Queensland. More and more Queenslanders, quite rightfully, want this Government to stop reviewing and start governing.

Without delving too deeply into the wordy and ambiguous functions of the commission, any reasonable person would be able to see the potential for very considerable overlap and duplication of roles between the various investigatory and reform bodies that have been established. In addition to the Treasurer's newly found financial concerns, the very important, effective and impartial role played by the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administrative Investigations seems to have been forgotten. What about the role of the Auditor-General and the internal review mechanisms that were provided in departments by the in-house operational audit units? The Internal Operational Audit Service was established by the previous Government to ensure that no loss of accountability or efficiency occurred following the abolition of the body known as the Public Service Board. Some of those units were quite large and provided a highly effective impetus to improving internal efficiency.

It seems that we are to have such a proliferation of investigators, consultants and advisers, all competing for a slice of the public administration reform cake, that they will be tripping over one another in their competition for territory. The Premier has the hide to call this formula for an administrative nightmare a strategy for making Government work. It is a strategy that has failed everywhere that it has been implemented. It is the Wilenski model implemented by Whitlam. It has failed under Wran; it is failing under Bannon; it has failed under Cain; and it has failed under Hawke.

What about the statutory obligations upon the chief executives of departments for the efficient management of their organisations? Where does that now rest? They will have so many people tramping through asking questions that they will not know to whom to report in the new dynasty until they are summoned. The Government has made plenty of provision for that in this Star Chamber legislation.

Mr De Lacy: You wouldn't have a clue.

Mr BORBIDGE: If I were the Treasurer, I would not object too much. His time is coming. He is on the ropes. He is effectively and totally discredited. He is a joke.

I do not deny the right of the Government to implement measures designed to achieve accountability of decision-making, effective administrative processes and principles of fair play in personnel and management policy. The Bill before us is a legislative overdose. It is ill-conceived, poorly thought through and heavy-handed. It is completely consistent with actions of the Treasurer and the Premier. It is an arrogant response to reform issues that will affect public-sector management for years to come. It is a source of some regret that some members of the Government do not appear to have grasped the fact and the nettle of the legislation.

If this commission is such a great idea as the Premier and the Treasurer would have us believe, let it report to the Parliament and not just to the Premier, which is what is provided in clause 2.15. Let us not confine its reporting arrangements to some sneaky back-door or corridor discussion between the commission members, the Premier and the members of the "A team"—who are the effective Cabinet of this State today. The Government talks about accountability, yet it is about to lock the Parliament out of it. That shows the massive hypocrisy and the fraudulent double standards of the Labor Party in Government compared with when it was in Opposition. Let us bring this commission's progress in reviewing every unit in the public sector within two years into the light of day and under the proper scrutiny of the Parliament and the media. Whatever happened to the Premier's and the Labor Party's commitment to accountability? It is totally and utterly shallow.

Let the commission be made subject to a sunset clause, under which it is terminated unless it is able to argue a case to this House that it or some replacement body deserves an ongoing existence. What will the investigators do when the review process is completed? How many times will it be necessary to traverse the same patch, hot in pursuit of inefficiency, evil deeds and political persecution? There are too many unanswered questions in respect of the Government's motives and the Government's performance to date.

Honourable members would do well to consider the important public interest questions underlying this sweeping assumption of the Labor Party. We are entitled to question the financial implications of establishing such a body, which the Treasurer himself estimates to cost \$5m, which would conceivably disappear after two and a-half years of endless reviews which will merely provide a field day for consultants and academics.

I urge honourable members to acquaint themselves fully with clause 4.4, titled "Summonses", which is at the heart of the quite extraordinary powers of this commission as contained in the Bill. It appears that the chairman of the commission has the power to command any person—I stress "any person"—not only public servants, to appear by summons in the belief, however misguided, that the person may have information relevant to the subject matter of a commission investigation.

Where are the great civil libertarians in the community who used to fawn so much after the Labor Party when it was in Opposition? Apparently these sweeping powers are quite acceptable to the civil libertarians both inside this Parliament and in the wider community. The yet-to-be-appointed chairman will have the power to command any person to appear before the commission at a time and place of the commission's choosing and to inform the commission of such information. A similar provision compels a person who is believed to be in possession of any records relevant to an investigation to attend and to produce the records in question.

Mr Harper: The true Gestapo.

Mr BORBIDGE: As the member for Auburn said, the true Gestapo. It will be very interesting to witness how members opposite defend their actions when the Opposition proposes amendments at the Committee stage.

The Premier may like to inform this House how many other legislative enactments in this country, supposedly referring to public-sector management, contain the power to summon private citizens on the basis of a belief in certain alleged facts. The commission is an administrative body; it should not be a court of law.

The powers accorded under clause 4.4 are unprecedented in their application and exceed the fairly severe provisions of the repealed Public Service Act, which governed the operations and powers of the now-abolished Public Service Board. How Labor Party members forget! Members on this side of the House remember how strongly the ALP criticised the Public Service Board for its wide powers and detailed control of the public service. At least the powers of the Public Service Board extended only to the public sector; its tentacles did not attempt to implicate and to intimidate private citizens.

If a matter arises for investigation in the public sector and this commission—this apprentice Star Chamber—ultimately discovers some form of misconduct involving a member of the public, let the matter be properly resolved in the normal way, that is, by obtaining the opinion of the Crown law office to establish whether an offence has been committed which is punishable at law and, if so established, by handing it over to the proper authorities. Would not that scenario fall fairly and squarely within the investigatory jurisdiction of the Criminal Justice Commission?

This commission is a weapon that will enable the Government to get at people outside the public service, to elicit information and to gain access to private documents that might not otherwise be available to the Government under power of penalty for disobedience. What type of documents is the Government talking about? The privilege extended in clause 4.7 is limited to self-incrimination, legal professional privilege, Crown privilege for public interest and parliamentary privilege. What about doctor/patient information? What about client/accountant information? To say that the protection afforded by that clause is loose and incomplete is being exceedingly charitable.

The Government will argue, no doubt, that the rights of the public are adequately protected by clause 4.7, namely, the provision which enables a person to approach a judge of the Supreme Court to obtain a ruling on a claim of privilege. How could the ordinary man in the street be expected to know about such matters? Most people have never set foot in a Magistrates Court, let alone been required to approach a judge of the Supreme Court in chambers to protect themselves or their records from violation by the secret police from the Public Sector Management Commission.

This legislation is a classic example of this fraudulent and phoney Premier saying one thing and doing another. Perhaps Steven Keim and his mates have been too busy——

Mr De Lacy: Has it ever entered your head that you are making a fool of yourself?

Mr BORBIDGE: The one Treasurer in Australia who has managed to have his name appear in the *White Mercantile Gazette* is getting excited. I suggest to him that his credibility is not very good.

I repeat that this legislation is a classic example of this fraudulent and phoney Premier saying one thing and doing another. Where has Steven Keim been? Where have the civil libertarians been? This legislation has serious implications. What have members of the Labor Party, who allegedly have this great commitment to getting it right, been doing? In reality, this legislation is potentially very dangerous indeed.

The Opposition will be pursuing these matters of concern at the Committee stage. I would have hoped that in accordance with this Government's alleged commitment to parliamentary reform, Government members might have been prepared to engage in some sensible discussion in the Chamber rather than make the inane interjections and level the abuse that honourable members have witnessed.

Mr Ardill: That is all you understand.

Mr BORBIDGE: I wonder whether the honourable member has read the Bill.

Mr Ardill: Yes.

Mr BORBIDGE: I would be very surprised if he has. I take it that he agrees with the power of summons, that he agrees with the Star Chamber that is being established, and that he agrees with the provision that allows one of his constituents to be called before this commission, despite the fact that he is not a public servant. I take it that that is acceptable to the honourable member and to the other honourable members opposite. If that is the case, we are seeing a Labor Party in Government in Queensland that is vastly different from the Labor Party that was in Opposition in this State.

The Opposition will not be opposing the second reading of the legislation. However, it will be proposing certain amendments and making suggestions to the Government at the Committee stage which, if it is fair dinkum, the Government should be prepared to take on board.

Sitting suspended from 12.58 to 2.30 p.m.

Hon. K. E. De LACY (Cairns—Treasurer and Minister for Regional Development) (2.30 p.m.): It is unusual for a Minister to speak on a Bill that is the responsibility of another Minister. However, because this particular piece of legislation is so vital to the Government's programs in Queensland, I thought it important that, as Treasurer, I state and stress our support for this particular piece of legislation and to make clear the way in which the Treasury proposes to cooperate and work with the PSMC in the implementation of its responsibilities.

This Bill represents one of the most important pieces of legislation that the Government will introduce. It is needed to provide the framework for change in public sector management, to boost morale and to enable the Government to carry out its programs in a thoroughly professional way. As two of the central coordinating agencies of Government, the interrelationship between the commission and my own Treasury Department is particularly important.

The object of the commission as set down in the legislation is to achieve efficiency, effectiveness, economy and impartiality in the management of the public sector of Queensland by providing leadership, oversight and direction. The object of the Treasury in the broadest sense is to improve the efficiency and effectiveness with which the Government's finances are raised, allocated, accounted for and managed, leading in the ultimate to the enhancement of the financial, economic and social welfare of the State.

Together with the Department of Premier, Economic and Trade Development, which has the central role in establishing the overall strategic focus of Government, those agencies, namely, the PSMC and the Treasury, will provide a well-balanced approach to the overall strategic management of the public sector in Queensland.

In broad terms, the macrostrategic policy, that is, what outcomes the Government wishes to achieve, will be coordinated by the Department of Premier, Economic and Trade Development. Public sector management policy, that is, the organisational and management structures, philosophies and practices, which are most appropriate to the strategy, will be overseen by the PSMC. Financial management policy, that is, ensuring that the financial resources are employed with maximum effectiveness and efficiency toward achievement of the strategy will continue to be the focus of the Treasury.

Whereas departments will be responsible for management of their resources and activities, the three central agencies will ensure proper management standards and policy coordination. It is clear to me that the PSMC in particular needs to address some major shortcomings that have occurred in current departmental management in the human resources area. The Office of Public Service Personnel Management did not have sufficient legislative or central agency influence to perform that function and, overall, public sector management suffered as a result.

Of course, that is not the only area of activity that is proposed for the commission. It is perhaps in other areas such as organisational review where the commission's relationship with the Treasury needs to be understood by all the players. It is important

to ensure clarity of roles as between the central agencies to avoid any confusion or overlap of activities.

There is a real spirit of cooperation between the Treasury Department and the PSMC Implementation Unit which may not be as evident as it should be. Officers of the Treasury have been consulting closely with the PSMC Implementation Unit, which, in fact, includes a Treasury representative. Discussions have taken place regularly to ensure that both organisations work constructively together. It is proposed to continue with that consultative process at senior management level. As a result, any possible areas of overlap will be avoided. I am fully confident of close cooperation between those agencies, which is vital to the overall success of the commission.

More particularly, I wish to highlight some of the areas of close interaction so that there is no misunderstanding of the important roles that my department and the Public Sector Management Commission will be required to play in the future. As a clear example of commitment to reform, the Treasury will be among the first departments to be reviewed by the PSMC. In essence, the Treasury will be seeking to act as a role model for the PSMC to follow in its review of other departments and will assist the PSMC in developing and refining its review methodology and general management standards.

To assist the PSMC with its review task, the Treasury is currently reviewing its strategic plan and organisational structure to ensure that they are consistent with the Government's policies and expectations. It is also developing internal program management and performance evaluation systems which are consistent with the plan to ensure that the Treasury is doing comprehensively by example what it will be expecting other departments to do.

Key management strategies are being implemented in terms of client communications, technology and human resource management to ensure that the Treasury is better able to achieve and sustain the high standards of performance that are required by the Government. A particular thrust of those strategies is towards a more consultative approach and open-communication style with departments, business and the community generally in all areas of the Treasury's activities, including fiscal management, economic development, taxation and capital markets.

I wish to take a few minutes to outline some of the financial management reforms which the Treasury has in train and which, by their very nature, will provide important support for the activities of the PSMC that are provided for in this legislation.

Those reforms include—

- restructuring of the public accounts to complement the new departmental arrangements and to simplify the public accounts structure so that the Government's financial statements become more informative and more useful to users;
- introduction of public finance standards to replace the existing highly prescriptive Treasurer's Instructions—

I will refer to the public finance standards in more detail shortly—

- review of the Financial Administration and Audit Act to ensure that Queensland's legislation is up to date and produces maximum efficiency and effectiveness in the management of public sector resources;
- introduction of program management and performance evaluation systems which encourage all public sector managers to focus clearly on goals and results and ensure that performance is kept under constant review;
- improved Budgetary processes, including multiyear planning cycles which support the principles and philosophy which underpin program management;
- improved Budget presentation, including provision of comprehensive national accounts statements and expanded program information, particularly in terms of performance in evaluation;

- commercialisation strategies including user pays, interdepartmental charging and corporatisation to ensure that, where practical, the market forces of supply and demand impose a discipline on managers to achieve efficient use of resources; and
- evaluation of risk management strategies, to ensure the State's exposure to a variety of risks is identified and managed. This will extend the current high standard of management of financial assets and liabilities to physical assets, infrastructure and other risks.

All of these initiatives have the aim of improving efficiency and effectiveness in the public sector resource utilisation.

The agenda for financial management reform will be further developed in consultation with the PSMC to ensure that—

- the commission's review activities assist in adoption of appropriate financial management systems;
- the commission's general management standards and systems, particularly in the human resources area, are consistent with those in the financial management area; and
- the outcome of PSMC reviews is reflected in budgetary planning and program structures.

A number of consultative mechanisms will be used to assist this process, including use of joint working parties and agreed responsibility areas on issues of common interest. A good example of this occurs in the area of program management, particularly program performance review, on which I wish to comment specifically.

The public finance standards released recently for public comment specify policies and principles for financial management which are aimed at providing Queensland with the most modern and comprehensive code in Australia for management, accounting and reporting by departments and statutory bodies. I am pleased to say that they have been very well received. The most common comment to me is that they were long overdue.

As members who have read them will realise, among the issues which are addressed in the standards is the prescription of a system of program management which not only will improve management in departments and statutory bodies but also will produce a degree of disclosure and accountability never before seen in Queensland.

The system of program management which has been adopted by the Government and set out in the public finance standards has three main components—

- a strategic planning process which will set clear goals and directions for each department;
- systems of resource management which will be based around programs and will, as a consequence, focus on the results or desired outcomes of the department's activities; and
- processes for the evaluation and review of performance to ensure that the department's services, once on track, remain on track.

This system moves attention away from the traditional focus on inputs, such as dollars and staff numbers, to a focus on goals and results. This is not to say that accountability for inputs will not continue to be important. What it does mean is that our Government is more interested than its predecessor in the results achieved from the application of those inputs. We want value from the taxpayers' dollar.

While departments have prime responsibility for the implementation of program management, the Treasury has an oversighting and coordinating role. The Treasury also has a specific role in relation to the evaluation of program performance. With our Government's focus on goals and results, evaluation of program performance will obviously be a critical input into resource allocation decisions for the State Budget.

Most evaluations of program performance will be undertaken by departments themselves as part of the normal function of management. The Treasury has, however, also established a specialist branch which will assist departments to establish their own evaluation programs. It will monitor the quality of departmental evaluations and will also undertake its own evaluations of selected strategic programs. This branch in the Treasury will have a role which is complementary to that of the review teams to be established in the Public Sector Management Commission to review the management of the public sector.

Given the need for close links between organisation and human resource management and financial management, it is vitally important that interfaces between the Treasury and the PSMC be clearly defined and that both organisations work in close cooperation.

In undertaking its evaluation tasks, the Treasury will concentrate on a detailed assessment of the effectiveness of a program in contributing to the achievement of the Government's goals. The emphasis will be on financial management. Results of these evaluations, and those undertaken by departments themselves, will assist the Government in making resource allocation decisions in the Budget context.

In undertaking its reviews, it is intended that the Public Sector Management Commission adopt a much broader focus. The commission will review the operations of entire departments and statutory authorities, rather than a specific program, with a view to assessing strategic direction and gaining a broad appreciation of the efficiency and effectiveness of overall service delivery. As distinct from the Treasury, the commission's interest will primarily be in the quality of all aspects of management, not only financial management.

The PSMC will also address key issues outlined in the policy document "Making Government Work", particularly to ensure that proper accountability exists between Ministers, departments and statutory bodies.

In summary, it needs to be stressed that the Treasury's evaluation interest is more micro and focused on financial management, while the commission's interest is more macro and related to general management and structure of Government issues. Both organisations have some common aims—for example, to improve resource allocation and management—but their emphases are quite different.

Let me say in conclusion that the objects of the PSMC and the Treasury are complementary. During the review phase and in the introduction of financial management reforms, the Treasury will be cooperating and consulting fully with the PSMC. The end result will be a major advance forward in the standard of management of the public sector in Queensland. This is long overdue, as is the establishment of a PSMC, as proposed in this legislation.

I support the Bill.

Mr HARPER (Auburn) (2.45 p.m.): I share the thought that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition expressed earlier in this debate in regard to the absence in the House of the Minister who has responsibility for this legislation.

The Treasurer has just indicated that the Treasury Department will have some input and will share some responsibility, but the Bill makes no mention of shared responsibility. The Bill gives exclusive responsibility to the one Minister, who will have the ability to and will in fact intrude into the areas of responsibility of other Ministers.

I hesitate to use the words, but I find the Premier's absence during the debate arrogant and disrespectful to the Parliament of Queensland. The absence of the Minister responsible for the legislation is in contempt of his own espoused ideals. This is not the first time. The Premier should give a lead to his Ministers. Earlier in this House honourable members noted other Ministers showing contempt for the Parliament by not being present during the debate of their legislation. That practice did not happen under the previous Government.

It is a very disappointing start for this Government. I expected more of Wayne Goss than that type of attitude.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I appreciate that really we should have Dr Davis in the chair to hear and consider what is happening. Be that as it may, it comes as no surprise to me——

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Campbell): Order! That remark reflects on the Chair.

Mr HARPER: I am sorry. I did not mean that. I certainly cast no reflection on the Chair. I meant the chair opposite. Perhaps I should have said "on the frontbench."

It comes as no surprise to me that this Government is intent on trying to justify every move it makes by turning to Mr Fitzgerald. Members of this House have heard it in the debate on the Police Service Administration Bill and elsewhere. In the second-reading debate on the Police Service Administration Bill, members heard the Minister rely for support on the words "Fitzgerald said". Now members of this House have heard the Premier claiming that this Public Sector Management Commission Bill is needed to provide a third and complementary organisation to the EARC and the CJC. So, he gives birth to yet another commission.

The not-so-hidden agenda in this Bill should concern those on the Government benches who believe in fair play for public servants. The whole community should recognise that this is just the first step, the foot in the door, by the Goss academic Labor Government to be followed by similar excursions into private enterprise and into private industry. What a mixed up lot those on the Government benches are.

As one member of the Government claimed in the House earlier in the week, Government members are really still old-time socialists at heart. Those were the words that the member used, "A real old-time socialist".

This Bill will bring about Government intrusion into so many sectors of what are, in reality, private enterprises—grower owned and controlled enterprises—that one cannot but believe that it is a deliberate, giant stride into the very communistic principles, those old-time socialistic principles, that are today being scrapped in Eurasia.

Government members interjected.

Mr HARPER: The actions of this Government since taking office have sent a clear message to all public servants, their families and to the community generally that public servants no longer enjoy any security in public sector employment.

A Government member: Don't you believe it.

Mr HARPER: This Bill merely confirms that fact.

Among the commission's functions will be an ability "to investigate the establishment of a Chief Executive Service, a Senior Executive Service or other specified divisions". Doesn't Dr Davis know that those have been tried, and proven failures, elsewhere?

The Public Sector Management Commission will have the ability to interfere with the rightful responsibilities of every corporate entity, other than a local authority, that is constituted by an Act which either collects revenues or raises funds under the authority of an Act— in other words, probably every corporate entity connected with primary industry. Indeed, this provision is so wide-reaching that it will catch an incredibly broad spectrum, independent building societies included, because it encompasses every non-corporate entity established or maintained pursuant to an Act which is funded to any extent with moneys of the Crown, or is assisted in a financial respect by the Crown. How far reaching is that provision?

The Bill goes even further. I suggest that some of the members of the Government who are laughing and thinking that that is a joke should read the Bill. The Opposition will demonstrate during the course of this debate that Government members have not read the Bill. I wonder how many Ministers have read it?

The Bill goes even further, because it allows a body or corporate person to be declared as a unit of the public sector by proclamation. The Public Sector Management Commission has an ability to become the Gestapo of this Government. Included in the commission's functions are—

"to achieve processes of appointment to positions within the public sector based upon a proper assessment of merit;
to ensure that public sector employees obtain fair and equitable treatment;
to ensure that equal opportunity principles apply in management and employment within the public sector".

Additionally, the responsible Minister, the Premier, may require the commission to "discharge" other functions. So, there is no isolation of this commission from political interference, and honourable members should remember that principle is a prerequisite of everything that Mr Fitzgerald, QC, said in his report. The Public Sector Management Commission will be an instrument of the Premier or, more correctly, his puppeteer. It will be a Gestapo-like authority transgressing into the areas of responsibility of other Ministers. What hypocrisy on the part of this Government that claimed it would give us open government. I am pleased that the Premier has now paid to the House, not to the Opposition, the courtesy of listening to the debate.

It has been clearly demonstrated in this House on a number of occasions by members of the Opposition that for appointments under this Government political affiliation is a prerequisite in considering what is called "assessment of merit".

As for ensuring that public sector employees obtain fair and equitable treatment—if it were not so serious or devastating to the careers and the future of so many public sector employees, that would be the joke of the decade. This Government or this Premier, albeit through his puppeteer, has determined a course of manipulation not only to destroy the careers and job opportunities of both senior and junior public sector employees but also to deny them their rightful entitlements as a result of contract terminations and retrenchments—certainly not resignations.

It is now becoming apparent that this process is developing chinks of inconsistency leading to further injustices. I hope that the Premier takes that on board. I have known him for the years that we have both been in the House together and I do not believe that he is personally aware of what has been happening. It is time that he acquainted himself with the facts. He is not an unreasonable person in himself and I really do not believe that he is aware of the facts.

If the Government wants to be taken seriously in promoting the ideals that are prescribed in this Bill, it must take immediate steps to play the game, to remedy the injustices that are being dealt out to former and present public sector employees who were effectively retrenched in the political purge which was embarked on by Labor following the election. I know that all sorts of reasons can be given and that what happened in New South Wales can be referred to, but we are talking about apolitical Queenslanders in the main who have served this State well over the years.

Government Ministers should hang their heads in shame for allowing the deceptions that are being carried out by their officers; not all Ministers it would seem but some, or their officers, have been prepared to acknowledge that contract terminations and retrenchments are just that, and not resignations. Therein lies the chink in the despicable conduct being practised by some chief executives and their Ministers.

In this regard, recently I wrote to the Attorney-General. Actually, I set out to ask a question in the House but, because of the tactics in the House and the time constraints, I eventually decided to put it in writing. I have not yet received a response, but I am sure that I will. I believe it is important that the question I raised with the Attorney-General be put on the public record. Rather than take the time of the House in reading it all, I seek leave to have incorporated in *Hansard* this question that I addressed to the Attorney-General by way of letter.

Leave granted.

As the chief law officer of the Crown in an unique role which, to quote Fitzgerald QC, requires "independance and impartiality and freedom from party political influences " I ask the Attorney whether the stance taken by departmental chief executives who have contended, in memoranda to the Government Superannuation Board, that permanent public servants whose contracts of employment were involuntarily terminated, that is, terminated unilaterally by the Government, resigned from the positions which they held under those contracts is consistant with his advice or with that of his advisers, in particular the Solicitor General, the Crown Solicitor or with that of senior counsel who may have been briefed in the matter?

If not, what is your opinion, on advice available from those sources, as to the status of such former Crown employees; and will you table or provide a copy of any opinion available to you in that regard?

Do you acknowledge that such employees positions became redundant when the Government advertised similar positions at different levels of classification and requiring applicants to have qualifications not required of the incumbents of the previous positions; and if not, on what advice do you form such contrary opinion and will you table or provide a copy of any opinion which may be available to you in that regard?

Do you agree that former Crown employees whose employment was involuntarily terminated by Government direction were legally as well as factually re-trenched: and if not, on what advice or opinion do you base that view: and will you provide or table a copy of any opinion available to you in that matter?

Mr HARPER: All of this must cause continuing concern when one reads that this Bill centralises power under one Minister. It is not as the Treasurer attempted to allude to, that is, that the power would be under two or more Ministers. The Bill centralises the power under one Minister, for the commission is to be directly responsible to the one Minister with respect to all matters relating to the administration of this Bill and the Public Service Management and Employment Act and, of course, members of the so-called advisory board are to be appointed by that same Minister and from time to time they may be removed by him. From time to time he may make appointments and he may remove those who have been appointed. There is no question of the matter going before Cabinet or the Governor in Council. The whole centralised control and responsibility rests with one Minister and, as I indicated earlier, through him, with his adviser or advisers.

Most important are the powers of the commission. This commission cannot be attributed to any recommendation of Mr Fitzgerald, QC, but it is being clothed with the same powers as those given to Fitzgerald-recommended commissions. I ask the open-minded members of the Government where democracy is going in this State. There is no excuse for another CJC or another EARC with those powers. This one was not recommended by Fitzgerald. It is the brainchild of this Government to use, manipulate and take advantage of recommendations that Fitzgerald made in quite different areas.

The authority of the Chairman of the Public Sector Management Commission to issue warrants effectively is incredible.

Mr Hayward: What is wrong with reviewing the economy?

Mr HARPER: I wonder whether the honourable member for Caboolture can tell the Parliament how well his constituents react—and how will the constituents react—when they know that that chairman, who is not a judge of the Supreme Court and not even a judge of the District Court, can issue a summons on any person? I know that the honourable member for Yeronga disputed that fact but, if he has read the legislation—and I suggest that so many honourable members, including the honourable member who interjected earlier, have not—he will know that the Bill affords that chairman the ability to summon any person, not just a person whom the Premier can prescribe as being a public unit. The Premier does not even have to do that because any person can be summonsed.

Clause 4.1 of the Bill states—

"The Commission may investigate any matter relevant to the discharge by it of its functions under this Act and for that purpose may require, and shall be afforded, the co-operation of any unit of the public sector and its officers."

That is very wide-reaching. The legislation goes even further and states that a person does not have to be a prescribed person or part of a unit of the public sector—any person can be brought before the commission by means of a summons. Fitzgerald cannot be given any responsibility at all for the establishment of this commission. This legislation has resulted from the far-reaching Big-Brother attitude adopted by this Government. If the Government had a track record of equality of opportunity, reasonableness and understanding during its three months in power, these concerns may not be so severe. However, they are very severe and very real.

The Opposition will deal with a number of these matters when the clauses are discussed during the Committee stage. Surely members of the Government must rebel against their leader, Cabinet and advisers when they read provisions such as clause 4.7 (5), which states—

"The burden of proof upon an application shall be on the person who seeks to withhold the information, record or thing."

Adolf Hitler would have been proud of the work that has been undertaken to bring about this commission. The commission is not bound by rules or practice. It has a number of powers similar to those of the CJC and EARC and has been covered with the same cloth.

The Opposition will raise its concerns during the Committee stage, but in the meantime, during this second-reading debate, I appeal to the Government and to the backbench members to rebel, because they will be affected when their constituents find out that the chairman of this commission can summon anyone off the street. He simply has to decide that that person might be able to give him some information. He does not have to have any knowledge; he simply has to think that perhaps that person might be able to help him, and he can issue a summons. I ask Government members to reconsider the effect of so many clauses and provisions contained within this legislation.

Hon. M. J. AHERN (Landsborough) (3.04 p.m.): Today I rise to address the concept and perception of this legislation rather than the detail. I rise with some 22 years' experience in this Parliament and 10 years' experience in the Cabinet behind me to discuss how I believe this legislation is couched, the ideals and zeal behind it, and why I feel it is ill-advised legislation.

I know the mandate that the Labor Government has in Queensland and the idealism that is behind this legislation. I know that the Labor Government promised to introduce it, but I believe it is totally and completely wrong. At some time in the future the Government may well realise that fact and attempt to map a track away from it.

This Government is going backwards in terms of what the rest of the world, the rest of Australia and other Labor Governments in Australia both at State and Federal level are doing. These Governments are making changes for good reasons in the international context in which we live. Because of increased accountability and management challenges and the other new innovations, such as information technology, quality assurance, and so on, it is becoming increasingly clear to people who manage the private and public sectors that, if they are to be successful, they must simply let managers manage; indeed, they must make managers manage. I cannot emphasise the "letting managers manage" syndrome enough. Today, this syndrome is abounding throughout the world because enormous challenges are being thrust upon private as well as public administrators. Today's information technology is mind-boggling in its impact and the changes which it is thrusting upon those people in areas of responsibility are truly intimidating. However, if we are to be successful, we must grasp all of these opportunities

comprehensively and thoroughly. These opportunities must be used to their fullest degree in every area of public and private administration. There is no way it can be locked away.

Today, the computer chips of the world talk to each other continuously, 24 hours a day, which is what has destroyed the Communist barriers throughout the world. The Communists have found that they could not function in the world and the man-made barriers were beaten by technology. Information is money, and it moved in an avalanche which finally lowered all the iron and wooden curtains in the world. It is an enormous challenge.

The new issue of accountability must also be addressed. This is not only accountability to taxpayers, or the people proving the funds, but also to the corporate sector. Today, people want to invest and get value for their money. They want to know that all their money has been spent and where it has been spent, and to be sure that it is not misspent or misappropriated. That represents another challenge.

In today's modern world—in particular, in the public sector environment—people are better educated. It is no longer possible to put a Jacky Howe singlet, a pair of football shorts and a pair of sandshoes on a person and say to him, "Go out and work, and do as you are told by a fellow who drives up in a Rolls Royce and a pinstripe suit." It is no longer the case that someone can simply tell a worker to do as he is told and to do the job thoroughly and well, because it will not work. People are better educated. They want to be involved. The issue is participation.

Any manager who sets out to prove that he is all-knowledgable and all-powerful and that employees deny him at their peril will simply fail. People will make him fail. Decision-making must involve participation.

The modern business world offers a range of challenges because an enormous number of changes have been wrought in private and public enterprises. Those challenges can be met adequately, provided that the operations of business are brought under the umbrella of a contemporary management strategy that involves everybody concerned with the enterprise. The manager must keep people informed all the time. If he does that, the strategy will work, and the business enterprise will be competitive.

The big issues in the modern world are competitiveness and quality. Quality is not something that exists only in Japanese motor cars; it is a universal ethic that relates to the expectations in the hearts and minds of people of every project in which they participate. People expect quality in terms of service delivery from Government as well as from private industry.

A quality standard cannot be achieved by putting white coats on people and saying, "They are the quality officers; therefore we have quality. See, there are people in white coats with appropriate labels attached to them. Therefore, there is quality within our organisation." These days, everybody is a quality manager, from the top person in charge of an organisation down to the lowliest. If a quality product is the desired outcome, then everybody must be involved.

I tell honourable members with all the conviction that I can muster that, based on three years' experience in handling the Industry portfolio and two years as leader of the Government, after two years of travelling around the world and seeing how successful organisations work, achieving a quality product and competitiveness comes back to the proposition that is advanced with unanimity throughout the world, namely, make managers manage; let them manage; give them no excuses; pay them properly; and give them access to the best strategies and equipment. If that proposition is made into reality, the end result will be competitiveness and the best outcome possible, which is what the State of Queensland is looking for.

Mr Hayward: How do you measure performance?

Mr AHERN: The honourable member for Caboolture rightly asks how performance can be measured. The answer to his question is more profound than simply saying, "There will be a soldier at the end of the line who will be assessing your performance."

The truth is that everybody must assess his own performance. Although managers assess performance as part of the overall management strategy, everybody must know and be prepared to report on the level of his own performance. The proposition I have mentioned is the basis of successful strategies that are used everywhere throughout the world today.

There is no doubt in my mind that Australian industries have found that the implementation of hardware and software strategies has enabled them to become totally internationally competitive. Some Government agencies have utilised the best equipment that can be obtained and have been able to provide better services at lower cost in this State than can be provided anywhere else in the world. Some of the Labor Governments have demonstrated that that is possible. I do not contend that successful management strategies are the province of the conservative side of politics. I intend my contribution to this debate to be apolitical. I simply say to the Government that although in its search for better management the ideals and goals are right, it has got the exercise wrong.

Every public service is looking for better management practices. This Government has gone about improving management strategies in the wrong way. The Government's contention that it can achieve better management by appointment of a commission—the PSMC—is wrong. A similar organisation that previously operated in Queensland was known as the Public Service Board. The statements that were read out by Mr De Lacy earlier are computer lift-outs from the statement outlining the role of the former Public Service Board. The problem in the past was that the board did not work and it, along with similar organisations that could be found in other parts of Australia, went by the bye.

With the benefit of 10 years' experience as a Minister behind me, I can inform the House that the Public Service Board was not an agent of good management but, rather, an excuse for mismanagement. If a Minister were to ask a departmental head, "Why is that happening?", he would reply, "Because the Public Service Board decided that that is what should happen." If a Minister said, "Why don't you fix that problem?", the departmental head would reply, "For a year we have been asking the Public Service Board to fix that up and they haven't got around to it. We must get on to Col Brennan." He was the fellow who was in charge of the board and he was the fellow blamed by everybody for mismanagement. Another person who is blamed is the Treasurer. Managers who are questioned about performance sometimes reply, "We haven't done that because we haven't got enough money." Of course, the position of Treasurer has always existed and it must continue to exist. However, everyone in Australia knows that the new strategy is to give departmental managers a budget and say to them, "You manage that budget, and if you make savings, you can spend those extra funds. In earlier times, when economies in the departments could be made, the surplus funds went back into the Consolidated Revenue Fund. I suppose that that could happen again.

If members of the Labor Government want to know how to run, for example, the hospitals of this State, they should ask the people who are already doing it. They should ask members of the Western Australian Labor Government that has been in office for years how the hospitals are run. I can inform the House that the Western Australian Government has made its hospitals boards into statutory authorities. The Government gives the hospitals some money and a charter and says, "This hospital will take care of heart transplants and liver transplants. That hospital will undertake a different form of medical service, such as cardiothoracic and psychiatric medicine. Here are the funds. If either hospital overspends, it will have to make up the shortfall in some way. If through good management, economies can be made, the surplus of funds can be spent by the hospital."

The people who are doing the job are the best people to make the decision. From time to time they need advice, and a public service consultancy might offer that. The National Party always thought that, because it provided more perspective on the issue, consultation should come from outside the public service. That is why it went totally to outside consultants, so that they could draw on overseas experience in terms of a rapidly changing world.

In other States of Australia, Labor Governments are running hospitals. That is an area in which the budget always blows out through the roof. This State could inject an additional \$1,000m into hospitals and we would not see where it went. It would evaporate into an endless pit.

If the Government wants value for money, it should give the money to the administrators and say, "Run that hospital. If, through consultation with your people, you can make better management economies within it, we will let you spend it." It is as simple as that. It is devolution of decision-making. The present proposal is the inverse of that.

I accept that the proposed commission was brought about because of the dramatic issue of accountability which was raised last year. The Government, at the behest of the public service union, has decided that the PSMC is the way to achieve accountability in the public service. I am sure that is wrong. This State has too many people involved in accountability in the public service. We have the Public Accounts Committee, the Public Works Committee, the Criminal Justice Commission, the Electoral and Administrative Review Commission and, now, the PSMC. Accountability is being held out to be an end in itself. It must not be an end in itself; it must be simply a set of guidelines, parameters and checks and balances. The end must be good, progressive, innovative, constructive management of scarce funds to achieve the goals that are established by the elected Government of the day.

This legislation provides the fifth wheel in the coach of accountability in Queensland. It was put forward by the public service unions because it is the easy way for them to be involved in the process. I accept that a Labor Government may wish to have the public service union more directly involved in management issues in the public service than a conservative Government might. That is its right; it is expected. However, the unions should not be involved at the top; they should be involved at the coalface. To construct an organisation at the top makes it easy for the public service union, but it runs counter to the way in which the remainder of the world is working. I understand that other Labor Governments around Australia have realised that. They are abolishing their public service structures and commissions and reforming them. They are putting the Labor union input further down the line where it ought to be, near the coalface, where the better management decisions will be forthcoming.

In future, if one walks into any Government department to find an answer to any management problem that arises, the reply will be, "We are waiting advice from the PSMC on that." If one were to ask people in the hierarchy of the public service whether it is desirable to establish a PSMC, none of them would have any trouble in answering, "Yes." That is because it is easier and much more comfortable. They will have someone to share their decision-making—someone to whom they can allocate blame when things that ought be done are not done.

The rest of the world is finding out that scarce resources are available to the public sector, that they must be managed more carefully and strictly, and that the priorities must be more tightly focussed. Because of its mineral resource development and careful husbandry of resources over the years, Queensland has had a honeymoon compared with what the other States of Australia have had. This year, the Queensland Budget was \$180m over estimate; so poker machines are being introduced. I suppose that there will be a flush of money for a while, but it will be short-lived. We will arrive at the stage that the rest of the world has reached—that is, scarce resources will be available for public service provision regardless of who is in power.

When we sit down behind closed doors with Robert Hawke and Paul Keating and the TV cameras are switched off, the gloves come off and we talk on a person-to-person basis, they tell us that is what we have to do: tighten up our priorities, make our public service leaner and make certain that we are doing all that we can to enable the money that we have to go as far as it can. To establish a big, unwieldy Public Sector Management Commission is totally the wrong way to go about it.

The Government will staff the commission with a lot of hot-shot, young people who are fresh out of academic institutions and who have great zeal and enthusiasm. I have no doubt that they are all very keen to be involved and to make changes throughout the public service. However, at the end of the day, they will not do it as well as the people who are there now. The Government would be better off appointing its hot-shots to the chief executive positions. I have examined successful organisations throughout the world, such as IBM. They put their hot-shots in the management section where they can make decisions in concert with people who have to carry them out immediately. That enables very successful management through quick innovation and implementation. It also enables economies to be made and priorities to be properly directed.

This was something that was done in a rush before the election. The public service of Queensland, as a union, went to the Labor Party and said, "We have got to have a bigger input in the future.", and this organism was born. I would like to think that a lot of care will be given to its structure and that it will not grow like Topsy, because it is totally the wrong way to do things. Unless the Governments of Australia let their managers manage, and make their managers manage, they will get it wrong. It will cost more, and it is just contrary to the way that the rest of the world is operating. When one is doing that, one has to ask oneself whether it is right.

I do not think that Wayne Goss and the Labor Government want to do that, and I hope that they will measure very closely the outcomes, because that is basically what it is all about. I think the Government should say to these young people who it has recruited and who are so full of zeal and enthusiasm, "At the end of the day we want to see the outcomes that would not have come about if you were not there." That statement should be put to them regularly, and it should be balanced against what might have happened if these young managers had been in direct positions of authority within the public service, which is where I believe they should be.

Conceptually, this legislation is totally wrong. A Public Service Management Commission ought to exist, but not in this form. I hope that it will shortly become an endangered species in Queensland and that management will be returned to the place where it rightly belongs in the modern context, that is, in the hands of managers.

Mr KATTER (Flinders) (3.26 p.m.): I would very much like to back up the words of the previous speaker. I think he put in perspective very well the sort of problems that need to be addressed.

I think that what honourable members are seeing in this legislation is an attempt by a Government to take control of decision-making. The Government feels that it is having some enormous difficulty in securing control over, and imposing its will upon, the public service. I do not have any hostility towards that approach on the part of the Government. I think that, having won the election, it is the Government's right and privilege to impose its will upon the public service. I personally had the experience for some five years of being in command of a portfolio in which very dramatic—almost 180 degree—change had to be imposed upon people who felt very, very strongly that no changes should be made. At the end of the day, when the dust had settled, some 20 per cent of the people who were employed in that department at the start of that change were no longer employed there. Most of the upper echelon of that department was also removed.

I want to leave the macro-approach and move on to the micro-approach, which seems to be the buzz word these days. I want to talk about one specific instance which I tried to raise this morning and again this afternoon. It is a classic example of public servants and other people trying desperately, for various reasons, to frustrate the will of those who are trying to do something decent for the people of Queensland. I refer to the black deaths in custody.

This is a very tragic phenomenon that has in recent years seen some 105 Australians die in cells throughout Australia. From the latest figures that I was able to obtain, the royal commission alone has cost the Federal Government \$60m. The National Party

Government made an attempt to do something about it. The only way to do that is to work through the people who are employed by the Government. Those people have worked very, very hard in attempting to secure the changes that were advocated by the previous Government. What has amazed me in this particular case is that a very large number of members of this Government—they were then members of the Opposition—were very much in favour of what the former Government was doing. Only one or two people have been able to frustrate what I consider to be very much the will of the people of Queensland in this particular case.

I return to the specific example that I want to use to illustrate the point that I am trying to make. The Powder/Law report was produced and it proposed what was in fact part of Aboriginal culture—the first Australian culture, if you like. It said that where people misbehaved and continued to misbehave, they should be sent away from society and told to stay away until they modified their behaviour. Only then could they return. We would call it banishment.

The second proposal was that people will not die in cells if they are not put in cells in the first place. So there was an approach of non-gaoing. That was an approach that was agreed to by all of the States of Australia, and I think that most of the States of Australia have attempted in one way or another to try to avoid gaoing people for drunkenness. The way that the National Party Government was approaching the problem was to attempt to set up diversionary facilities.

The worst case in Queensland, and the place with the greatest necessity for something to be done, was Townsville. Not only does Townsville have the greatest concentration of people of Aboriginal and Islander descent in Australia but also, statistically speaking, it had far and away the biggest problem. Cairns and Mount Isa had rehabilitation centres which were in some way attempting to cope with these problems. I refer to Mr Ah Wing's project in Mount Isa and Rose Colless' operation in Cairns.

For the benefit of those honourable members who think that this was some sort of an endeavour carried out exclusively by the National Party, I point out that the term "diversionary facility" was coined by the Federal Government. In fact, the first person to use it was Gerry Hand, who applied it to the project we were undertaking in what were then the old missions, which are now called "community areas", in Queensland. When Gerry Hand referred to the Queensland experiment and used the term "diversionary facility", we took up that term. He agreed to provide 50 per cent of the funding for those projects in Queensland. That was some two and a-half years ago. In the meantime, according to the most recent figures that I have, 15 people have died in cells in Queensland.

Why has neither the Government nor the Opposition been able to secure action? Why have we not been able to implement a policy that has been agreed to right across the board by all parties concerned? To answer that question one must consider very closely what occurred in Townsville.

I have referred already to the Powder-Law report. Mr Eric Law——

Mr W. K. Goss: What's this got to do with the Bill?

Mr KATTER: I have just explained what it has to do with the Bill.

This Government is trying to implement the Labor program for Australia. There are two ways of doing that. The Government can pass laws in this House but, if it wants to carry them out, the only way to do that is through its servants—to use the legal expression—who are the employees of the Government. This Bill represents this Government's effort to control those people. If one tries to analyse a particular case——

Mr W. K. Goss: Your speech is as irrelevant as you are.

Mr KATTER: Because the Premier visits that part of Queensland only very occasionally. If he is not interest in the fact that a number of people have died and

that his Government is doing nothing about it, he might like to go out and have a cup of coffee while I am discussing this. Otherwise, he might like to change the subject.

I am getting out of sequence. We approached the Townsville City Council, and Mr Dalton, who is a very successful operator in the field of Aboriginal affairs in this State, was employed specifically for the task of getting the diversionary facility operating in Queensland. Mr Dalton secured 13 sites from the real estate agents within the Lands Department in Townsville. He submitted those sites for analysis, but I said that I was not interested in looking at them until someone picked out a site that he wanted or until the number of sites had been reduced to two or three. Mr Dalton narrowed down the number of sites to three. Of those sites, two had very serious problems associated with them.

Mrs Edmond: This one—this Bill. This is the Bill.

Mr KATTER: I will not explain it again. On four occasions I have explained the relevance to the Bill of what I am talking about. If the Deputy Speaker wishes to, he can most certainly ask me to explain it again.

As I was saying, of the three sites that were selected——

Mr W. K. Goss interjected.

Mr KATTER: I hope that the Premier will attempt to do something about this matter. Because he is the leader of this State, he should listen to what I am saying and act upon it. If he does, he will prove statistically that he will save 13 lives this year. That would be rather a good use of his time, unless he considers that 13 lives are of no particular relevance or importance to him.

Mr W. K. GOSS: I rise to a point of order. For nine minutes I have been listening to the honourable member's speech. So far he has made no relevant comment on this legislation. It is a thinly veiled pretext to talk about a diversionary facility in north Queensland, which was ruled out of order in this House this morning. Mr Deputy Speaker, I ask you to require the member to show the relevance of his speech to the legislation before the House.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hollis): Order! The honourable member for Flinders will ensure his speech has some relevance to the Bill.

Mr KATTER: On two occasions today in this House, the Labor Party has tried to gag me and to cover up what has occurred in Townsville. The truth will come out.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I take exception to the honourable member's comment. That was not a gag. I asked the honourable member make his speech relevant to the Bill.

Mr KATTER: That was no reflection upon you, Mr Deputy Speaker. You most certainly have made no attempt to gag me. I very much appreciate that you have allowed a wide-ranging debate. There are no first-reading debates in this House because they were cut out approximately six or seven years ago. At that time honourable members were told that, in their place, fairly wide-ranging debate would occur at the second-reading stage.

I repeat what I was saying before I was interrupted, that no matter how many times members of the ALP try to gag me, the truth of what has occurred in Townsville will come out.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Flinders will ensure relevance to the Bill. This is his last warning.

Mr KATTER: Mr Deputy Speaker, please feel free to take me off this subject if you feel so inclined. On four occasions I have explained to the House the relevance of what I am saying. I will continue to speak on this subject until someone says that I am not allowed to speak any further.

As I was saying, three sites were chosen. Two of those sites——

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member will resume his seat. I call the member for Fassifern.

Mr LINGARD (Fassifern) (3.38 p.m.) I am very pleased to join in this debate. It would have been interesting to sit in the party room of the ALP State Government and listen to how this Bill was explained to the back bench by the Premier and whoever else presented this legislation. I would have been interested to hear whether it was said that this was Wayne Goss' story—the new Queensland story—or whether the real truth of the matter was presented to the back bench.

I entered Parliament in 1983. When I was checking my notes after I had presented my speech and read it, I found in my files a little booklet titled *Reforming the Australian Public Service*, dated 1983. This work on a quality Queensland that has been presented by the Premier in his second-reading speech is a direct lift of that little booklet *Reforming the Australian Public Service*. If honourable members trace the source of that little booklet, they will understand why Gough Whitlam was in Queensland. The link on this little booklet——

Mr Beattie: That's a longbow, that one.

Mr LINGARD: Let us have a look at the whole story. Let us have a look at the longbow. I ask honourable members to remember a person named Dr Peter Wilenski. When he joined the Australian public service he was the principal private secretary to Gough Whitlam. What did Wilenski write in 1983 which was the basis for that? The *Labor Essays*. What did the *Labor Essays* talk about? They talked about reforming the social service, or reforming the bureaucracy, using the public service.

Where did Dr Peter Wilenski go? In 1983, he was put in charge of the Australian public service. With whom was Wilenski linked? He was linked with the *Labor Essays* of 1983 and with a lady named Ros Kelly from the ACT. With whom was Ros Kelly linked? Who lived in Ros Kelly's home? A man named Michael Delaney. Who was Michael Delaney? A private secretary to Gough Whitlam.

Mr Beattie: What sort of allegation is that?

Mr LINGARD: I just asked, "Who lived in Ros Kelly's home?" It was Michael Delaney. From where did Michael Delaney come? He came from Gough Whitlam's office; he was a private secretary. Where did Michael Delaney go to? In 1983 he went to the office of a man named Dawkins. Who was Dawkins? He was the political leader of the public service. So a whole link is established.

Mr Beattie: What sort of conspiratorial nonsense is this?

Mr LINGARD: Does the honourable member say that it is not true?

Mr Beattie: It certainly is not true.

Mr LINGARD: I will establish the link. If I asked my schoolchildren to write a precis of that booklet to which I referred, what would they do? They would look at that book titled *Reforming the Australian Public Service*. What is the heading? It says, "Labor and quality of Government". What does the document presented by the Premier say? The name has been changed. It is titled *Making Government Work*.

Mr Beattie: Great minds think alike.

Mr LINGARD: Let us have a look at the introduction. Dr Glyn Davis was so naive in his lift of the booklet that even in the introduction, instead of changing the number of subheadings—namely, four—how many has he used? Four! Let us compare them. One would certainly think that he would have made them a bit different from each other. If he was going to precis a booklet of 1983 and if it was going to be different, even if he was so stupid as to make four subheadings, one would think he would make

them slightly different because this, after all, is to be the basis of the new Queensland public service, the PSMC.

What does the Hawke document say? In its introduction it uses the words "precludes discrimination on the grounds of political affiliation". Wayne Goss walked into this place and what was one of the first things he said? He said that the Government appoints and promotes its employees on the basis of merit and not on political or personal connections.

Mr McGrady: Is that good or not?

Mr LINGARD: It might be all right, but I am saying that this is a direct lift from the 1983 booklet. However, the Premier is presenting it as a completely new thing for Queensland.

The second point is that the 1983 document uses the words "promotes equality of employment opportunity". What did the Premier say in his presentation? He said that the Government gives equal opportunity to all people. My young children could have precised it in a different way.

What does Bob Hawke say in his third point? He uses the words "recognises the right of staff to participate . . . in decisions which affect them at work". What did the Premier say in his presentation? He said that this is a Government "that conscientiously attacks waste and management". It is almost exactly the same as what appears in the 1983 document.

Mr Beattie: Tell us what's wrong with it.

Mr LINGARD: What is wrong with thieving?

Mr Beattie: What's wrong with it? Give us the substance of it. What's wrong with the substance of it?

Mr LINGARD: It does not matter if at least it is acknowledged that it goes back to Gough Whitlam, if at least it is acknowledged that it is the work of Dr Peter Wilenski, if the Government at least admits what happened to Dr Peter Wilenski.

Exactly what did happen to Wilenski? What happened to Michael Delaney? What happened to Dawkins? The Government presents in this Parliament a precis of a booklet which was published in 1983. I will guarantee that Government backbenchers sat there like little lambs and listened to Wayne Goss present his new story. I will guarantee that the member for South Brisbane did not have enough guts and courage to stand up and say, "I know that is Dr Peter Wilenski's work."

Mr BEATTIE: I rise to a point of order. I would appreciate it if the honourable member would please get my electorate correct. It is Brisbane Central.

Mr LINGARD: I will guarantee that the member for Brisbane Central did not recognise——

Mr Mackenroth: You should know where it is.

Mr LINGARD: No, I do not. I live just outside Brisbane Central.

This is supposed to be a completely new theory. The introduction is exactly the same. What else does the Premier's document talk about? It speaks of a CES and an SES. They are to be the two new things. Exactly the same things as were presented in 1983 are being presented to us in 1990 and we are told that they are the Government's new theories. Yet honourable members opposite have the cheek to sit there and criticise me for saying a thing such as that. I quite honestly believe that the Premier should be disgusted and ashamed. If the person named Glyn Davis is present in the place, he should be utterly ashamed to think that he has obviously been paid to write a new document that is a precis of the 1983 booklet. It is an exact copy. If I gave that booklet to schoolchildren to precis, they would give up to me the Premier's second-reading speech.

In his second-reading speech the Premier suggested presenting separate legislation to establish a Chief Executive Service and a Senior Executive Service. The member for Landsborough and other speakers have spoken about the failings that they have already seen in this Bill. I quote to the Premier the failings of Canberra that Dr Peter Wilenski, the person who failed as leader of the Federal public service, experienced. The public will not accept people paid out of the public purse presenting an ALP platform. That is what this Government is presenting in this Bill. I quote the Premier—

"The Chief Executive Service will comprise top management positions. It will offer incentives for maximum performance, opportunities for mobility and avenues for exchange between sectors".

The Opposition has shown that people are flying into Brisbane on Monday morning and flying out again on Thursday afternoon. That has caused a ruckus down in Canberra amongst the public servants. They are all looking around. Wait until the Opposition asks for a complete costing for flying these people into Brisbane. How much is it costing for those advisers to stay at the Gateway Inn?

Government members know as well as I do that the Queensland public will not cop that. They will not accept that sort of abuse of public moneys. It is like the State of Origin footballers. People are very, very proud of their own State. Although the Government might present them as our upper echelon of people coming here to advise the Government, the people of Queensland will not cop it. The Government knows the people will not cop it. This House has seen already what a ruckus the Opposition's question to the Honourable the Deputy Premier about people flying in on Monday morning and flying out on Thursday afternoon has caused. I guarantee that that practice will not last very long. The Government will soon stop it, and so it should.

I again quote the Premier—

"All senior managers included in, or recruited to, the SES will be required to possess core management skills and competencies".

Perhaps the Premier could enlighten this House about the precise nature of such skills and competencies. Judging by his Government's performance so far, a high degree of skill and competence in working in an atmosphere of ambiguity, lack of clear direction, absence of leadership and uncertainty of one's fate will go a long way in working under the new administration.

Opposition members can already see this with the way the media works. It is all right to have people such as Tony Koch at the top, supposedly the only one who can release information to the media, while everyone underneath has to follow the little flow charts to get to the top people. That sounds good. The Premier will control the problem for a little while, but all members know as well as I do what will happen. The media will get completely jack of not being able to get complete access to all of those ministerial people and that media will pull this Government down.

For the first two or three months, that will work well. The Government will be able to control the media, but then the media will control it. They will control the Government from the fifteenth floor.

Mr Goss also said—

"Members of the Chief Executive Service and the Senior Executive Service will provide a skilled and flexible management group, well able to deliver sound policy, and well able to manage complex programs".

The Government knows as well as I do that that just is not possible all of the time.

One can say that one is going to find the top people able to handle those jobs, but those people are not necessarily always available. It is an ideal theory which, in reality, is obviously going to fail.

If one disregards this slur upon the competence of senior public servants, many of whom were making important decisions with skill, impartiality and competence long

before the Premier entered politics, what are the real facts underlying the Chief Executive Service and Senior Executive Service concept?

Those are the policies which brought Wilenski down. In Canberra those policies failed because the public will not cop any hint that the Government has politicised the public service. The public will not cop any thought that this upper echelon of people is appointed by political people to do a political duty.

That will be all right while the Government has the very top people who can present themselves well. At lunch-time, some members saw the mighty experts coming in from Canberra. I saw the expert who had flown in from Canberra just to make a speech at lunch-time. What did he do this afternoon? He flew down to Melbourne. If any other member was at the same meeting as I was here at Parliament House at 1 o'clock, he would have the same thoughts as I do about these top echelon people who fly in just to make a speech of a couple of minutes' duration. It is okay if they are very, very impressive people but if they are not, then the Government will find that an undercurrent will turn into a flood that will pull it down.

Firstly, the Executive Service concept, which is elitist by definition and totally at odds with the merit principle, has a dismal track record wherever it has been implemented. Some honourable members may have studied history. I know that George Orwell's story has been mentioned before in this Chamber, but once upon a time George Orwell also embraced the concepts of socialism and communism. He thought that they were great principles, until he returned to England in the 1920s and saw the failures in socialism. He wrote his story *Animal Farm* based on his impressions. What did he do? To start with, he put all animals together—a great idealistic theory—thinking that they would all work well together. *Animal Farm* portrays how everything is successful until a special group—the pigs—start to climb the ladder. Slowly the pigs took over and the other animals got very upset. That will happen with the public service.

At least if seniority is taken into account, in most cases people who do not gain promotion realise why they have not climbed the ladder. If this Government starts to make appointments on political grounds or brings people in from interstate, it will find that the lower echelons will become completely and utterly disenchanted. They will know that unless they belong to the right political group or they know the right people, they just cannot climb the ladder. As the honourable member for Landsborough said today, that will bring the Government down.

Rumour has it that there is a large number of unattached SES personnel inhabiting the corridors of Canberra doing either menial work or, worse still, no work at all. Judging by this Government's recent efforts, Queensland will soon be leading the field in inventive personnel practices. What a dubious distinction!

The idea is that executive service members, in particular SES recruits, should be able to step into any senior management role in any organisation without any prior knowledge of the subject matter or policies of that organisation. Some people might have the ability to do that very well but, in general, a large group of such people just does not exist. The failures in the system will pull the Government down.

Initially, people will look at the successes and say what a great system it is, but sooner or later they will get to the lower echelon, who will say, "The system just does not work". This naturally encourages short stays in any one organisation and frequent movement on to the next. The experience derived by officers may ultimately prove beneficial to them, but surely it must be disruptive and detrimental to the organisations, which gain little continuity of decision-making or commitment to long-term programs by officers looking forward to their next promotion. This is not conducive to rational, long-range planning.

Secondly, the Premier talks about alleged National Party politicisation of the public service. If one looks more closely at the facts, the SES has in the past provided, and will continue to provide, an ideal vehicle for widespread politicisation of the service. Is this the hidden agenda? The SES not only allows for ongoing manipulation

of the career service concept but also encourages elitism, cronyism and a club environment in the upper levels of the public service which, once begun, will take years to eradicate. Queensland cannot afford this Labor club.

Cronyism breeds more cronyism, and the bureaucratic type of cronyism is the very worst kind. This will be the order of the day and anyone without the right political credentials will not get within shouting distance of this executive group, which is composed of drop-out academics and Canberra imports. The long-term impact in policy terms will be disastrous. If honourable members have any doubts, they should just turn their attention for a moment to the proliferation of people recruited to the office of the Premier. There were more than 30 at last count, I am reliably informed. What about the Government's Cabinet office, which is a classic example of the Labor growth syndrome? That office has more than 30—18 Cabinet officers to be scattered around departments and 12 in the Cabinet office itself, which is located in the Premier's Department. I have been informed that the Cabinet secretary has recently been appointed without advertisement of the position. Is the Premier's facade of honesty and integrity in personnel selection?

I also understand that a limitation of 20 has been imposed on the number of submissions being referred to Cabinet for consideration each week. Even allowing for the possible attention span of some Ministers, the business of government of this State will invariably suffer if Ministers are not prepared to perform their functions and make some decisions.

Obviously, this is a Government of indecision. The public service is crying out for leadership and none is forthcoming. The Government is receiving its advice, not from the stable and experienced resources of the public service, but straight out of textbooks, in some cases the Griffith University and, as I have already proved—and I ask backbenchers to look at this—a direct lift from 1983. If they go right back through Labor essays and check Wilenski, Ros Kelly, Delaney and Dawkins, they will find that this is a lift from 1983, a system which has already failed in Canberra and a direct link with Gough Whitlam.

The Labor Government's relationship with the public service is already tarnished by distrust, discontent and hostility and it is not a proper footing on which to base important decisions, especially those affecting the future performance of this State.

Mr BARBER (Cooroora) (3.57 p.m.): Unlike the two members who preceded me—the honourable member for Flinders and the honourable member for Fassifern—I wish to speak about the Bill. Some National Party members have brought a new meaning to the phrase "wide-ranging debate." Like the chooks that people do not lock up, they have engaged more in a free-range debate.

My experience prior to coming to this place was in the private sector and, more particularly, the professions. Because of my experience, I bring with me a healthy scepticism, disapproval and prejudice concerning the public sector. I learnt very early that, in dealing with the public sector, one had to consider it a special case when it came to expectation of returned phone calls, efficiency, cost-effectiveness and courtesy. The standards of the business world evidently did not apply to the public sector. At the same time, I noted that public servants often laboured under substandard conditions. Some were not able to deliver an effective service because budget starvation hobbled them.

Queensland's economic future requires a public sector which is efficient, effective and, most of all, affordable. Together with the Goss Government, I look forward to achieving these goals with the assistance of this legislation. The Queensland public sector should be treated as a resource that needs to be harnessed and managed responsibly for the benefit of the public it serves. This review and fine-tuning need to be ongoing.

The public sector is one of the three clover-leaves, as I describe them, in the Westminster separation of powers—Executive, legislative and judicial. It falls within the

Executive arm of government. Its role in the Westminster model is to provide independent, expert and unbiased advice to the Government of the day. It serves the Government with the same degree of efficiency and expertise, regardless of the Government's political colour. It does not change with a change of Government; it serves whoever is the Government.

This model was described by Mr Tony Fitzgerald, QC, in his report. Having described the model, he went on to allude to the wrong decisions and misconduct that occurred when a Government waters down the proper Westminster independence of the public sector. At page 130 he said—

"Not only are wrong decisions made, but some are tainted by misconduct . . .

It has . . . emerged that the structures and systems which exist—"

and this is at the time he examined the public sector—

"and the practices and procedures which have been followed are not adequate to prevent or detect those errors and offences when they occur."

Standards and systems review is what this Bill is all about.

It has been alleged that Government members have not read the Bill. I intend to confine myself entirely to the Bill. I can describe the Bill's mission, again applying the private sector concept, as efficiency and fairness for the public sector. The interpretation section of the legislation makes it clear that the Bill refers to the broader concept of a public sector, including Government departments, bodies corporate and non-corporate Government entities, which are to be compared with the narrower concept of a public service which includes only Government departments.

Part II of the Bill establishes the commission as a permanent body. The three positions of commissioners will be advertised nationally. Clause 2.3 states that academic pursuit is an inclusive qualification for a commissioner. In my view, a teaching knowledge of public policy and administration is a desirable qualification in a commissioner, combined with experience in the field.

Clause 2.13 contains a clear statement on the thrust of this Bill and the object of the commission. The clause states—

"The object of the Commission is to achieve efficiency, effectiveness, economy and impartiality in the management of the public sector of Queensland by providing leadership, oversight and direction."

Those are very concise and commendable objects. Economy and effectiveness are to be achieved through leadership and direction. To achieve what I have just mentioned, the commission will begin an immediate review of the Queensland public sector. This is the first part of the Bill that I wish to consider. This immediate review is anticipated to take two years and will avoid the problems of a royal commission. Royal commission findings are expensive to achieve, yet are often ignored. The list of non-implemented royal commissions in Queensland is legion. The review provided in this Bill will lead to implementation, which will lead further to a permanent body of public sector management.

Economy is a catchword in the legislation, and costs will be modest. I understand that the costs for its first full year have been estimated at \$4m. These costs are expected to shrink after the initial review of the public sector. The initial number of staff is estimated to be 58, which will shrink to approximately 43 at the completion of the review. I am pleased that the review process will include the big question that is often asked by observers of the public sector, "Should this agency exist at all?" This commission will be empowered to ask that sort of question, particularly of the statutory authorities which have proliferated in Queensland. I am sure that members of the public have asked this question many times. In the interests of a better and more cost-effective public service, the Goss Government is honest enough itself to ask this question. As alleged, the members of the National Party really were agrarian socialists and their socialisation of agriculture left a legacy of quangos whose future existence must be investigated.

The thrust of this legislation can be found in the commission's stated duty, which is contained in clause 2.16, which states—

"It is the duty of the Commission—

(a) to act independently, impartially, fairly and in the public interest".

Another major thrust of the legislation is to investigate the setting up of a Chief Executive Service and a Senior Executive Service. These bodies should achieve the desirable commodity of career mobility in the public sector. The State's most senior public sector managers will be expected to give the leadership that is so badly needed in the public sector. Much has been said in previous debates in this House about morale in the police force. Morale in the public sector can be expected to be boosted if there is the leadership, career paths and career mobility as proposed in the commission's terms of reference.

Merit is a solid plank of the legislation. It is not seniority, privilege, patronage, or the green and gold card, but merit. The public of Queensland will applaud this return to basic values. Succinctly stated, the legislation requires that people be recruited and promoted exclusively on, firstly, their qualifications and, secondly, their performance. During his speech in this debate the member for Auburn stated that qualifications are not the be-all and end-all for such appointments. Much was said to denigrate qualifications; it seems that the university of hard knocks is recommended to us from the other side of the Chamber.

This legislation sensibly seeks to combine qualifications and performance in appointments in the public sector. Members on this side of the House are realistic enough and have had enough life experience to appreciate that the combination of experience and prior preparation is the optimum one for any responsible position in our economy. In the private sector, market forces usually lead to the idea of merit being dominant in workplace movements and promotion. Seniority is a concept that is less revered in the private sector. Officers in the public sector will approve of merit being brought to the fore by this Bill.

"Equity" is another catchphrase that I will discuss; I will read clause 2.14 (j).

Mr Beattie: They don't understand equity or fairness in a place like this.

Mr BARBER: I do not think they can spell them.

Clause 2.14 states—

"The functions of the Commission are—

(j) to ensure that equal opportunity principles apply in management and employment within the public sector".

I listened with interest to the honourable member for Yeronga when he applauded this provision; Queenslanders will overwhelmingly approve of it. In accordance with longstanding Labor policies, the Government is committed to future programs of recruitment to the public sector of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and other minority groups.

"Cooperation" is another catchphrase of the legislation. The Bill repeatedly refers to the commission's need to receive cooperation from the public sector in undertaking reform and in carrying out its processes. Of paramount importance is clause 5.5, which reads—

"The Commissioner for Public Sector Equity may establish procedures within the Commission with a view to the disposal by agreement between the parties of matters relevant to an appeal instituted under this Part to an appeal tribunal without the necessity of a hearing and determination."

The resolution of disputes and the entire review process are to proceed on the basis of cooperation, not dictation from the top, and not by virtue of the unwieldy and quasi-legal procedures that were a feature of previous Governments.

The provisions relating to implementation are also commendable. The legislation sets out the steps that should be followed in executing the reforms that may arise as a result of the review. The Public Sector Management Commission will not simply be another expensive commission of inquiry that presents a report which remains on the shelf and becomes part of a collection—for example, the report of the Lucas inquiry. The procedures set out in this legislation will lead to execution of the reforms.

Part IV of the Bill requires the commission to report to Ministers on the performance of their departments. It will also report to units of the public sector and it will require responses from those units regarding the reports made by the commission. The commission can also issue public sector management standards, which means that honourable members will be able to see the results that flow from this legislation instead of merely considering the Bill and handling a great deal of paperwork. I believe that the commission will show the public sector the way to achieve results on a lean and well-priced budget.

In conclusion, I point out that, if the public sector does not become a well-oiled, constantly tuned and closely monitored machine, this State will not prosper and our fellow Queenslanders will be unable to pursue happiness. The Goss Government is committed to Queensland becoming a strong and free State. This Bill is a most important beginning in unravelling the public sector tangle that was inherited by the Goss Government. I support the legislation before the House.

Mr HOBBS (Warrego) (4.10 p.m.): Mr Deputy Speaker——

Mr Hayward: This will bring down the Opposition.

Mr HOBBS: I will see how members opposite go.

It is my pleasure to join in debate on the Public Sector Management Commission Bill. I was interested to hear the views expressed by other members during the debate. It should be borne in mind that people talk broadly about the public service, the State Government sector, so the issues have to be considered in a wide context and not simply in terms of the Bill. It must also be remembered that a philosophical basis underlies any management structure and that the work of the commission is no different.

It is my intention to offer general support for the proposals contained in the Bill. However, many provisions concern me and other members of the Opposition. I hope that the points I make will be taken into consideration by the Government before the Bill is passed by the House.

The main problem I have with this legislation is that enormous powers are being given to the commission. It appears as though the Government is setting up a type of Gestapo organisation that will be looking over the shoulders of public servants. The probability is that departmental heads will be victimised by the use of powers given to the commissioners and the executive services that have been mentioned. I can understand that in those circumstances, only one option would be available for a departmental head, and that would be to leave the public sector. The problem with such an outcome is that he or she would then be replaced by an inferior yes-man, which really is not what is needed. The whole crux of the operation of any business is the level of management and efficiency, and that is what this legislation should address.

If too many restraints are imposed on management, the end result is management by straitjacket and by fear, and costs increase and efficiency is reduced. I understand the principles that underlie this legislation. The main principle for which I must give the Labor Government credit is that it has recognised that most people would like to see greater efficiency in the public service. I think it is important to discuss the aspect of efficiency, and I think it is time that this matter was placed on the level.

Mr Hayward: You are supporting the Bill?

Mr HOBBS: I support the Bill, but some of the provisions are pretty hairy. Some of my shearers out west could do a better job of trimming up this legislation than is being done by the Government.

The reality is that the Government has gone overboard in its attempts to reform one sector in particular and in trying to impose efficiency measures. Later in my speech I will discuss the issue of politicisation of the public service, but at this point I simply observe that, at the moment, Queensland is going backwards.

The important factor in relation to this legislation is that more consultation with business is necessary. The public service is the largest single enterprise in this State. This legislation should be discussed with people who have some knowledge and experience in managing large organisations.

It is all very well for academics and theorists to say, "This is the way that it should work." It does not always work that way. Unless people have managerial experience behind them, it is difficult. All the wonders of the world will not be solved by theory; it is hands-on experience. It is a shame that the Government does not have more members with more hands-on experience in the business world. If that were so, they would realise that they cannot rule by fear, which is what will happen.

Mr Beattie: How does it rule by fear?

Mr HOBBS: The honourable member has just walked in. He should sit down and listen for a while.

I repeat that organisations should have experience within their business structures. It is obvious that not enough thought has been put into the real functions of business. As the member for Fassifern pointed out, this legislation was drafted from a paper that was delivered by somebody else. I will deal with that later.

The public service plays an important part in the role of Government. It is the engine room of Government. The Government is given direction by the elected representatives, and the public service is the body which makes everything happen.

All public servants need confidence in their employment. They need confidence in their direction. That does not necessarily mean that the public service can become complacent. All businesses, all companies and all Governments must review, on a reasonably regular basis, their labour component, and sometimes restructuring may be necessary. The Labor Party's policy of having no redundancies, quite frankly, is unreasonable. We do not know what the future brings; we hope security, but not complacency.

I turn now to the Government's proposed review of the Public Service Management and Employment Act. Although I accept that it is the Government's prerogative to carry out a review, I make the comment that that Act, although it may not be perfect, did improve and modernise the employment principles in the public service, particularly in regard to contracts.

The Labor Party's objection to contracts is well known. Labor members are particularly vocal in talking about VEAs. The irony of it all is that many people are in fact on contract. One could say that we, as members of Parliament, are on contract. At the election, many National Party members did not have their contracts renewed. However, at the next election, many Labor Party members will not have their contracts renewed. The very people who are opposed to these "terrible" contracts are on contracts themselves.

Bob Hawke, our caretaker Prime Minister at this stage, wanted to put the pilots on contract.

A Government member: Peacock has resigned.

Mr HOBBS: He will be there when the whips are cracking. I am pleased that Government members are awake. I thought that they had gone to sleep. Now that I have their attention, I will talk about contracts.

Bob Hawke wanted to put the pilots on contract.

Mr Hayward: Talk about the Bill.

Mr HOBBS: If the honourable member had been in the House, he would have heard Opposition members say that there was a need to talk about issues not directly related to the Bill. Why should we wear blinkers when we are talking about legislation as important as this is? The public service affects people throughout Queensland; therefore, while debating this legislation, issues arise which must be discussed.

Some public servants are on contracts. Strangely enough, the Labor Party is envisaging five-year contracts for the positions of chief executives and senior executives. It seems that contracts are coming into vogue with the Labor Party. There are many contracts about; it is just a matter of whom it suits at the time. I wonder how much consultation was had with the rank and file of the public service about this legislation. My understanding is that there was very little. It is marvellous how the so-called champions of the working man do not want to know him when they get into a position of power.

We have in place many commissions and parliamentary committees. We have the EARC, the CJC, the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administrative Investigations and many parliamentary committees. Now we seem to be talking about more committees, more investigations and more looking over people's shoulders. It makes one wonder who is making the decisions of Government. Is the Government making the decisions, or are they being made by committees. Many reviews and committees are being established. When the Premier was Leader of the Opposition, he made many disparaging remarks about Mr Ahern's use of committees. Now that he is Premier, he must hold the record for the number of committees established in Queensland.

Mr Beattie: They were set up under your Government, half of them.

Mr HOBBS: The Government is setting up more. They are coming in in droves. Since the election, 35 committees have been established.

Mr Neal: Committees looking into committees.

Mr HOBBS: The member for Balonne said that he has committees looking into his committees. I do not doubt that. This Bill does exactly that: it establishes a commission to look into committees.

Mr Palaszcuk: You had to use a song so that you could win.

Mr HOBBS: That song worked pretty well in the election.

Mr Palaszcuk: You had to use a song so people could recognise who you were.

Mr HOBBS: That is right. It was better than the other fellow, who was yapping on the radio.

Just who is going to be appointed to these commissions is a cause for concern. Apparently the Labor Party cannot find suitable Queenslanders to fill the important positions in the public service. People have to be imported from the deep south. That is not fair. There must be people in Queensland who could fill those positions.

Mr Beattie: That is untrue.

Mr HOBBS: What does the honourable member mean when he says that it is untrue?

Mr Beattie: They are overwhelmingly Queenslanders.

Mr HOBBS: But how many thousands of public servants and how many heads of departments has the Government got?

Mr Beattie: Name them.

Mr HOBBS: Did the honourable member say that it has got seven?

Mr Beattie: Name them.

Mr HOBBS: The honourable member said that the Government has got seven.

One hears about these people coming up to Queensland all the time. The member for Fassifern made the point by asking how many floors of the Gateway motel would be taken up by these people from down south. Surely there are Queenslanders who would be able to do these jobs for Queensland. There is no need to bring people up from down south.

Mr Hayward: What about John Stone?

Mr HOBBS: John Stone lives in Queensland and has done so for many, many years. That is totally irrelevant.

Mr Randell interjected.

Mr HOBBS: The member for Mirani says that perhaps Mr Kerin and Mr Hawke are sending these people up to Queensland to show this Labor Government how to run this State. Perhaps that is the case.

Mr Randell: God help us!

Mr HOBBS: That is right. Nothing would surprise anyone these days in Queensland.

The public service in Queensland is going to be run on a temporary basis by people from outside this State. No-one knows whether they are going to be flying back and forth between Brisbane and Canberra, Brisbane and Sydney or Brisbane and Melbourne. Soon, this Government will have people arriving on international flights to fill these positions. Surely there are Queenslanders who could undertake these important tasks. I am sure that competent people with ability would much prefer to work in the private sector in Queensland, where they could be rewarded for their work and could make their own decisions, than in the public sector.

I said earlier that I can understand one of the principles that this Labor Government claims is behind the introduction of this Public Sector Management Commission Bill, namely, efficiency. I accept that; that is good. However, the second principle is a total politicisation of the public service. In regard to the CES and the SES—that structure did not work in New South Wales. It was thrown out. Some people say that a good guide to the future is what happened in the past. If it has not worked before, why try it again?

As the Opposition understands it, the people who work for the Chief Executive Service and the Senior Executive Service will be able to be moved around between different departments. The management structure in each department is very different, although perhaps the broad principle regarding the first couple of people at the top may be fairly similar. However, the structure at the bottom end where it all happens—at the coalface—is totally different from the management structure at the top. I think it is very important that honourable members know who will take up those positions and what their role will be.

The member for Cooroora—unfortunately, he has left the Chamber—mentioned that clause 2.14 (1) (j) states that one of the commission's functions is "to ensure that equal opportunity principles apply in management and employment within the public sector". The SES and the CES will be the bodies that oversee that. It is just not going to work because the people at the top are going to be the ones who select those who go into the system. They might have no ability at all might not be able to understand the particular structures. No man is an island—

Mr Beattie: Appointments by merit. Talk about merit.

Mr HOBBS: Who determines the merit?

Mr Beattie: Haven't you read the Bill?

Mr HOBBS: I have read the Bill. It is very easy to say that it is going to be determined by merit. However, somewhere along the line someone is going to have to

make a decision. People are going to make a decision about who is going to run a department when they do not know anything about that person.

A Government member interjected.

Mr HOBBS: I do not know whether the honourable member has a business. If she does, she will know that there are different structures in business, and they all vary. Some people are good at one particular business and other people are better at other businesses. It is a matter of horses for courses. I do not believe that the structure that the Government proposes will be efficient or the best thing for Queensland.

I want to say something about the proposed review of statutory authorities. I do not have any objection to reviews that are carried out properly. In some ways, reviews can be healthy—provided that there are not too many under way at the one time. I noted that in his second-reading speech the Premier said that the roles of some of the statutory authorities may be reviewed and that their responsibilities may become departmental responsibilities. The Government is virtually reducing the number of statutory authorities, which are usually put in the hands of local people who know the problems of the local area. Those people have an important role to play in the whole public sector of Queensland.

If statutory authorities are to be revised—and I am only pre-empting that insofar as it was targeted in the Premier's second-reading speech—that could very easily mean that those structures once again will become politicised. It is bad enough if the public service is completely inundated with political appointees, but it would be totally unacceptable if that were to occur in statutory authorities.

I endorse the remarks of the member for Landsborough about management of the public service. Efficiency is the most important aspect of this legislation. If the public service returns to a non-political basis, efficient management will keep costs down and efficiency up. There must be authority within those structures but, by the same token, management must have a clear goal and be able to function efficiently without fear of Big Brother.

If the overall structure of this Bill is so good for Queensland, why has similar legislation been rejected everywhere else? As the member for Fassifern said, in 1983 Gough Whitlam introduced similar legislation. Because that exercise failed, I ask: why should the provisions contained in this legislation succeed in Queensland?

Hon. W. K. GOSS (Logan—Premier, Minister for Economic and Trade Development and Minister for the Arts) (4.33 p.m.), in reply: I thank all honourable members for their contributions to this debate. This legislation is the first to be introduced into the House by me and this Government. We are very proud of this legislation and have high hopes for its capacity and potential to reform, review and revitalise the public sector in this State.

I thank members on both sides of the House, including members of the Liberal Party, notwithstanding their rhetoric and strutting, for their contributions. There is a basic commitment amongst all members of this House to an efficient, well-run public sector that is based on a professional service that is well managed and well led.

I must confess that, after listening to some members of the Opposition, I wonder where they have been for the past 32 years. For heaven's sake! The problems in terms of the management and integrity of public administration in this State are manifest. In recent years they were exposed in the Fitzgerald inquiry and elsewhere. Those problems have not related solely to corruption. Almost inevitably, when any party has been in power for too long and has lost its way, things get out of control. That could not continue. The people of this State voted for a change, and this Government received a mandate to do the sort of things that it is doing, namely, to bring into practice the sort of principles that were behind the Labor Party's campaign during the past two years or so.

The Government inherited a public sector that was moribund and had serious problems in terms of inefficiency, morale and so on. These measures needed to be undertaken. At least six or seven months ago, the Labor Party made its intentions clear in great detail when it published a detailed paper on public sector reform. That paper, which was widely circulated in the public sector, public sector unions and amongst people who have an interest in public administration, was very well received in all of those circles. Despite the superficial protestations of members opposite, I believe that it is now being well received.

Irrespective of whether or not members opposite agree about the efficiency and the poor morale and irrespective of whether or not we can agree on the extent to which those problems existed, in fairness all honourable members should be able to agree that, whenever any large organisation has not been the subject of a review or reform for a long period, a review and reform become inevitable. Certainly that is a healthy process that can only be good for that organisation.

I believe that I can dismiss summarily the ridiculous suggestions that this was a communist plot, a Whitlam plot, an academic plot——

Mr Hayward: And a Fabian plot.

Mr W. K. GOSS: That is right. It was suggested that it had more plots than the Morningside cemetery.

My Government has a mandate for and a commitment to reform, change and efficiency in our public sector. I remind honourable members that this whole effort is subject to a review after the Public Sector Management Commission carries out its review and reports in two years hence.

The Leader of the Opposition expressed a number of concerns. In the course of doing so on six or seven occasions he indicated that the Opposition would be supporting the legislation. The Government appreciates and accepts that indication of support. In particular, the Leader of the Opposition expressed concern about the Senior Executive Service.

The Government believes that, in addition to a commitment from Government, the processes of change and reform demand a group of competent, versatile, mobile managers and policy personnel. A key issue for our Government is to create new opportunities for those with talent and, in addition, to establish where necessary a vehicle to infuse new talent from outside the public sector. The Government's agenda is not simply to create a new senior management structure but to create a new senior management culture.

I would have thought that those representatives of the parties who claim to be the champions of free enterprise would have been the first to acknowledge that we should not only encourage the talent that exists within our public sector but also open the way for talented people from the private sector and from other public sectors to enter into our own public sector and infuse new talent, new energy and new ideas.

For staff, the SES will create opportunities for the talented. The Government wants to recognise and encourage that group of people. The SES will also, at this Government's direction, afford greater opportunity for women to aspire to its ranks. The PSMC will be concerned with quality control; chief executives will determine SES staffing.

The member for Sherwood indicated his support for the Bill. I thank the Liberal Party for that and for the prospect of a management review. The member for Sherwood criticised the redeployment of chief executives. That, of course, has been a theme that has been carried on for some weeks by members of the previous Government. We are quite satisfied with the manner in which that exercise was carried out. It had to be carried out. We are the new Government and we have the right to appoint those chief executives who we feel can do the job that needs to be done to implement the new Government's programs. In the future, we will not hesitate to make similar decisions where we consider that they are appropriate and necessary.

Let me ask the question: what is the alternative? The Liberal Party and the National Party in New South Wales were absolutely ruthless in the most cold-blooded way when they won Government and simply summarily sacked people. We have not done that. We gave an undertaking that there would be no redundancies and no sackings. We placed people in the Government research unit on a temporary redeployment. A number of those people have now been successfully redeployed and are carrying out useful, although different, functions in other parts of the public sector. Of course, some people exercised their opportunity to leave the public sector. We wish them well in their future endeavours. It is good to see some people taking up exciting opportunities in the private sector.

Mr Innes and some of the members opposite have a paranoia about the assistance that the Government has obtained from Dr Davis since the election and have questioned his credentials or his ability. I want to make a brief comment on that. We have found that, in making the decisions and in formulating the policies that we as a Government, and as an Opposition coming into Government, have formulated, not just Dr Davis but a wide range of people in the public sector unions, who are interested in public administration from an academic point of view, have been invaluable in their assistance.

Given that Dr Davis has been working in the Public Sector Management Commission implementation unit and assisting with some of the mechanics leading up to this legislation and with some of the early work, and given the unfair and politically motivated comments that have been made in this place about him, I think it is proper that I record very briefly some of his qualifications. As I said, at present he is coordinating the implementation of the PSMC unit. He is a senior lecturer in politics and public policy at Griffith University. He is a principal researcher at the centre for Australian public sector management and a deputy director of the Brisbane project.

In terms of his own academic qualifications, he has a Bachelor of Arts from the University of New South Wales and first-class honours in political science. From 1982 to 1985, he carried out very worthy post-graduate work with a doctoral thesis at ANU, and post-doctoral work. In 1988 he was a visiting fellow to Harvard University. As well as that, he has the practical experience to overcome the queries raised by the member for Sherwood and other members opposite about people from academia. They criticise people from academia as true champions of pure ignorance. We on this side are not so blinkered and we will seek advice from wherever we think it may be helpful.

To add to that very impressive academic record of Dr Davis, let me say also that he has been employed full-time as a consultant to the committee of review for the Commonwealth administration—often referred to as the Reid report. Over the last seven or eight years, he has regularly contributed to, or been involved extensively in, a range of public service training courses in Canberra and in Brisbane. So he has had practical contact with the public sector as well as having a very impressive academic history. We have full confidence in the assistance that we have received from that particular quarter.

In relation to the comments by the member for Surfers Paradise—it was a disappointing effort from somebody who aspires to higher office. It was nothing less than a pompous attack, quite inconsistent with the support expressed by his own leader. He claimed that this commission was not a Fitzgerald reform. Any sensible reading of the Fitzgerald report and any sensible assessment of what has been revealed in this State over the last few years would indicate that those circumstances would inevitably lead to this kind of reform.

Indeed, some seven months ago, we described this commission as completing the Fitzgerald trilogy; that this, together with the other two commissions, was necessary to complete the process of reform. In fact, we sought advice and presented a copy of the original document published last year to the Fitzgerald implementation unit to confirm, during the course of implementation, that this body and the role that we were proposing for it did not conflict but were in fact complementary, as we argued, to that Fitzgerald reform process.

I think we should accept the fact, even though some people in this House are not prepared to accept it, that management needs external review and supervision, but that this need not and, indeed, should not lead to intrusion on the proper and legitimate role of chief executives.

I thank also the honourable members for Caboolture, Yeronga and Coorooora for their supportive and perceptive comments. The comments made in relation to our commitment to equal opportunity are ones of which we are proud, and they should be noted.

The Treasurer also took the opportunity to make some comment and to place on the record the attitude and role of he and his department in terms of their complementary commitment to bringing efficiency in management to the public sector.

The member for Auburn attacked the Bill. I think he really failed to address the crying need for reform and review. As I said, leaving aside the revelations of the Fitzgerald process, I think that a fair-minded and open-minded person would acknowledge that any organisation that, for such a long period, had not been the subject of a comprehensive management review should, as a matter of course, be subject to review. That is my attitude. That is the attitude of the Government and that is the attitude it will bring to bear in Government. To do otherwise is to adopt an attitude of simply maintaining the status quo, which is an attitude that really borders on complacency.

The member for Landsborough expressed concern, which appeared genuine, but, unfortunately, was very general in his comments. It was hard to know what the detail of his complaint was. He spoke at some length of the principle that he said applied around the world of letting the managers manage. He repeated that in various forms on numerous occasions. It sounds great. This Government does not have any argument with it. By all means let the managers manage, but the reform that the Government is proposing here today does not prevent that. Every organisation needs a shake up and a review from time to time.

I understand from recent media reports that even the National Party itself has commissioned an outside consultant to review its operations. I am sure that if that review is done efficiently, it will lead to a shake up. It will be very good for the National Party. It is a very healthy exercise. The Labor Party undertook such an exercise some years ago.

One associated goal of this Bill obviously is accountability. Accountability as well as managerial autonomy is consistent with modern management practices. That point was unfortunately overlooked by the member for Landsborough in his comments which, as I say, appeared to be genuinely motivated, but it was hard to pin down exactly what his complaint was in that regard.

The member for Landsborough went on to talk about the former Public Service Board as being an agent of mismanagement, as being some sort of ogre. My recollection of and advice in respect of that body is that it was just starting to develop a facilitatory role as well as a regulatory role when it was axed, largely for political reasons and, I think, some inter-service rivalry.

As for the OPSPM that was operating when the Labor Party came to power, it was an office, frankly, with no real teeth and no real accountability. Too much responsibility was simply devolved.

The member for Katter—perhaps that is more accurate than the member for Flinders—anyway the member for Flinders—anyway, made a speech that was as irrelevant as he is.

The member for Fassifern trotted out most of the complaints that had been made by the other speakers on his side. There was an assertion that the executive service arrangements elsewhere are a thorough failure. That is nonsense.

The member for Warrego raised the same sort of complaints that had been made by other people before him—a large amount of repetition. He did make a specific point

of questioning whether or not there had been any consultation with public sector unions. Let me assure him that there was extensive consultation in the August/September period leading up to the publication of the original document.

At the publication and release of that document there were senior representatives of those unions present. They took copies. It was well received. I subsequently addressed a separate meeting of public sector unions in more detail on the Bill and they were quite impressed with it, too. There were some aspects on which there was not complete agreement but, on balance, they were prepared to accept it as a clear and positive improvement.

Let me say this: there was further consultation in the course of actually drafting this legislation. One had a period of consultation over a period of some six months, and that was consultation on the back of the publication of a very detailed paper in about August/September last year.

In conclusion, the ultimate goals of this legislation are manyfold, but they include accountability, integrity, efficiency, equity and professionalism. Members can argue about the means by which those goals can be achieved, but I think that there is generally agreement in the House that those goals are worthy goals and that the Government should strive for them.

I express my appreciation for the indications of support that I have received from the Leader of the National Party and from the Leader of the Liberal Party in relation to those goals and those principles. I recognise the extent to which, in that sense, their comments have been bipartisan.

In the Queensland public service the Government has many good people. I have certainly been impressed with senior people in my department. I know many of my Ministers have been impressed with their senior people. There have been areas about which we have not been so happy, but it should be acknowledged that there is a large body of people in the Queensland public sector who are able and committed to serve whoever is in Government in the best traditions of the public sector.

My Government looks forward to working with those people. We believe that with this new framework and, indeed, with the new culture that my Government hopes and believes this framework will engender, we can have every confidence that we will be able to achieve our goals of revitalising and reforming the public sector to serve the people of this State in the best traditions of the public service as it is known in parliamentary democracies in the Western World.

Motion agreed to.

Committee

Hon. W. K. Goss (Logan—Premier, Minister for Economic and Trade Development and Minister for the Arts) in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1.1 and 1.2, as read, agreed to.

Clause 1.3—

Mr HARPER (4.52 p.m.): The Opposition seeks clarification of the word "investigate." We believe that the interpretation is much wider than "examine and consider." We seek clarification from the Premier as to any wider implications which may be adduced.

Mr W. K. GOSS: The words bear their ordinary meaning. There is nothing sinister. There is no second agenda there. The commission does have some powers, including the power referred to by some honourable members, to summon people to a hearing. That obviously will be involved in what we mean by the term "investigate". This power will be exercised in a sensible and responsible way as it is, for example, in the case of the Electoral and Administrative Review Commission. It is necessary. It may need to

extend, in some cases, beyond people in the public sector because there may be people who have left the public sector and have some relevant information to offer.

It may go some part of the way to answering what the honourable member is on about if I remind honourable members that the powers are limited to carrying out the functions and achieving the objects of the commission. It is not a wide-ranging brief. It is not an open-ended or blank-cheque situation. The commission will have to examine and consider certain matters. It goes without saying that it will have to do that and it will have to have that power to carry out the review properly.

Clause 1.3, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 2.1 and 2.2, as read, agreed to.

Clause 2.3—

Mr HARPER (4.54 p.m.): The Opposition notes that this clause contains no interpretation of the terms "equity" and "merit". We seek clarification from the Premier of the interpretation placed on those two terms.

Mr W. K. GOSS: I do not see the need for a specific definition of these terms. I think they carry their ordinary meanings. Any attempt to define them would only lead to further problems and questions of interpretation. The classic comparison is with the term, "beyond a reasonable doubt" in the criminal jurisdiction. Volumes have been written on what that phrase means. The best that our courts have been able to come up with is to tell juries that the phrase means exactly what it says; that it bears its ordinary meaning. I consider that that is the principle that can and will be applied to the terms, "equity" and "merit" as used in this legislation.

Clause 2.3, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 2.4 to 2.13, as read, agreed to.

Clause 2.14—

Mr HARPER (4.54 p.m.): The Opposition is opposed to clause 2.14 (1) (a) (i), and refers also to clause 2.15. The subparagraph to which we object reads—

" . . . to commence an investigation into units of the public sector for the purpose of reviewing the management of the whole of the public sector within two years or such longer period as the Minister may approve".

The discretion extended to the Minister to approve a review period in excess of two years is not sufficient. We believe that a compulsory reporting arrangement with the Parliament should be established. Already, the two-year limitation can be extended at the whim of the Minister, and the Opposition considers that this is too open-ended.

The Premier referred previously to the trilogy and the belief—and I repeat "belief"—of himself and his Government that the trilogy forms part of the Fitzgerald recommendations. I do not agree. I cannot agree with his interpretation that the Public Sector Management Commission is part of a trilogy, together with the CJC and the EARC, referred to by Mr Fitzgerald, QC. Be that as it may, I guess that we just have to agree to disagree. If it does, in fact, complete the trilogy of reform bodies, the question that the Opposition asks is why this commission is not required to report to the Parliament in the same manner as the other two elements within that trilogy—the CJC and the EARC. The Opposition is opposed to this clause.

Mr W. K. GOSS: Let me clarify one aspect. While there is a general provision to report within two years, and there is that discretion, let me indicate and record in the Parliament for the benefit of members that, in practice, what we propose is not just a complete review over the period of two years but that there will be rolling reviews through individual departments or groups of departments, so that in fact there will be successive reports.

The results of the review will be contained in reports that will be presented well before the two-year period has elapsed, in other words, on a progressive basis. The

Government hopes to complete this review within the two-year period, but it may be that, if particular problems arise, or if other aspects of the investigation prolong certain reviews in the case of particular departments or groups of departments which will be reviewed together, the overall task may be completed a little beyond that time. It will not be the case that the Government and Parliament will be left to wait for two years to see what is going on, and then that period being extended. There will be progressive reports so that members of the Opposition will be able to debate those reports and see the results of the review as it goes through, as opposed to waiting two years and then finding that the review is extended. It will only be a partial extension relating to specific aspects of the review.

Mr HARPER: I invite the Premier's attention to the fact that he has not answered the fundamental question asked by the Opposition. If one accepts his theory that this commission completes the trilogy of reform bodies which could be construed as having been recommended by Fitzgerald, why is this commission not required to report to the Parliament in the same manner as the other two elements of the trilogy, that is, the Criminal Justice Commission and the Electoral and Administrative Review Commission?

Mr W. K. GOSS: I do not fully understand the point or what the Opposition requires. Does the Opposition want another parliamentary committee or a body that has the same powers as the CJC or the EARC? Whilst there are some similarities, there is no automatic inevitability that the other two bodies should be duplicated. That is not necessary.

Clause 7.10 deals with the provision of annual reports. As I said before, a number of reports will come through on a progressive basis over the next two years. In fact, there will be some similarity with those other two bodies, in the sense that from time to time the EARC and the CJC will report on various issues, whether they be electoral reform or Police Service reform, and from time to time this commission will provide progressive reports in a similar way. I give the Opposition that assurance. I do not know whether it will satisfy the honourable member or not, but I am prepared to indicate this on the record of Parliament because that is what is proposed. It is not one overall review that will be presented to the Government and Parliament when the commission and Government are ready; it will be a successive, rolling progression of reviews on a regular basis.

Mr HARPER: The Premier was at some pains to claim that this commission is part of the trilogy. It seems strange indeed that when drafting this legislation clauses were lifted holus-bolus out of the legislation that set up both the EARC and the CJC—I suggest quite unnecessary provisions, such as those concerning summoning and the ability of the chairman to issue warrants and the like. All of those things were done, and undoubtedly they were considered decisions made by the Government. The Government has failed to give this Parliament the same privilege to debate and has failed to insert a requirement that this element of the Fitzgerald trilogy reports to this Parliament. The Premier cannot have it both ways. On the one hand he cannot shelter behind Fitzgerald and say that this commission is simply the third of the Fitzgerald trilogy and on the other hand not give the same responsibility to this commission. As the member for Landsborough pointed out, this commission is the fifth in a group of bodies which have been established to make the Government more accountable. Why is this commission not required to report to Parliament in the same manner? No doubt the Premier will say that he has already explained that he will do what he can to bring forward reports to the Parliament, but that does not excuse the Government for not including that necessary provision in the legislation.

Mr W. K. GOSS: I have answered that before.

Question—That clause 2.14, as read, stand part of the Bill—put; and the Committee divided—

DIVISION

Resolved in the affirmative.

Clause 2.14, as read, agreed to.

Clause 2.15—

Mr LINGARD (5.15 p.m.): The Opposition's request of the Premier in relation to this clause is very similar to the one that was made in respect of clause 2.14. The Opposition requests that the words "and Parliament" be added after "Minister", so that the committee will report to both the Minister and the Parliament.

The Opposition's arguments on this clause are very similar to those advanced in respect of clause 2.14. It may be that the Premier's response will be similar to his previous answer. However, the Premier previously stated that progressive reports would be furnished and that both the Minister and members of Parliament would be able to see them. The Premier said that the Opposition could trust him because he gave his word that that would happen. I ask why it would not be possible to add the words "and Parliament" after the word "Minister" in paragraphs (a) and (b).

The Opposition believes that if the life of the commission is to be extended in the future and if a recommendation is made for an enlarged and more powerful, ongoing review body, the taxpayers who have contributed so much money in establishing the commission certainly deserve to have the report debated in Parliament.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! There is too much audible conversation. Will members please resume their seats?

Mr LINGARD: The request made by the Opposition of the Premier is that in clause 2.15 (a) and (b), the words "and Parliament" be added after the word "Minister", so that it is imperative for the reports to be presented to both the Minister and the Parliament.

Mr W. K. GOSS: I reiterate the comments I made in relation to the previous clause. I simply add that the reports will be presented to the Minister and the Minister will report to the Parliament.

Clause 2.15, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 2.16 to 4.3, as read, agreed to.

Clause 4.4—

Mr HARPER (5.17 p.m.): Subclause (a) of this clause empowers the commission to summon a person holding office in the public sector, or any other person, to provide information relevant to an investigation. Similarly, subclause (b) empowers the commission to summon a person holding office in the public sector, or any other person, to provide documents relevant to a commission investigation.

In the other two elements of the Premier's trilogy—the EARC legislation and the CJC legislation—provision is made to summon persons and to take steps of this nature. The Opposition does not find particular fault with provisions in those two pieces of legislation. It is saying that this Bill is essentially about the establishment of a Public Sector Management Commission and the provision for appeals in relation to grievances. This Bill differs very significantly from the EARC and the CJC legislation. It is about promoting efficient and equitable management practices in the public sector. It is not about quasi-criminal behaviour and provisions to compel the giving of information. Production of documents should be confined, if provision is made for it at all, to public sector employees and not to members of the public. The Opposition raised the matter in the second-reading debate.

I find it difficult to believe that Government members—both Ministers and backbench members—are aware of that provision. If they are not, I expect the Government, through the Premier, to admit that it is a folly—and it is a folly. The power conferred on the chairman of this Public Sector Management Commission is far too wide. If a Public Sector Management Commission investigation reveals some unlawful conduct involving a person who is not a public sector employee, that conduct should be referred to the appropriate authority, that is, the Solicitor-General, the Director of Prosecutions or the Criminal Justice Commission, so that it can deal with it under the powers vested in that authority. Those powers were given to the Criminal Justice Commission for that very purpose.

The Public Sector Management Commission established in this Bill is intended to be an administrative body; it is not intended to be a court of law. I stress to Government members that private citizens should not be subjected to this compulsion. As far as the Opposition can ascertain, there is no precedent for such far-reaching powers in public sector management legislation anywhere else in this country.

Accordingly, I ask the Premier if he is prepared to delete the words "or any other person" where they appear in the Bill.

Mr W. K. GOSS: The short answer is, "No." I will expand on our reasons. It may be because the Leader of the Opposition has been unable to be here for this important debate, but it reflects poorly on the Opposition that on two clauses now it has apparently proposed amendments but has not been able to draft and circulate them. If that is what the Opposition is purporting to do, that is its responsibility. If it is genuinely purporting to move amendments or to change the legislation, it should be doing it. The processes have not been followed. The Opposition has to wake up to itself. In Opposition, the Labor Party had to follow that process, and it is the responsibility of an Opposition.

I will deal now with the thrust of the honourable member's proposition. The power is there—and necessary—for the commission to investigate. The review is intended to occur over a period of two years. At the end of that period, there will be a review and a report of the overall tasks undertaken by the commission and a decision made as to its future. It may be that this particular power does not last beyond that time. I would certainly hope not.

In relation to the reference to persons other than people in the public sector—as I said before when a related point was raised, not all people from whom the commission seeks information will be the holders of appointments within units of the public sector, for example, people who formerly held such appointments or persons who have had dealings with a unit, or other persons who in an infinite number of ways may have

relevant information or records. It would be impractical to limit the power solely to persons who currently hold appointments within a unit of the public sector.

As honourable members have discussed, the commission is part of the Fitzgerald reform process and should at least have some—not all, but some—of the powers of bodies such as the Electoral and Administration Review Commission. As I have said, the Government intends that this commission—at least until a review of its activities takes place—shall have this power. It should be noted that, unlike EARC, this commission does not have power to enter premises or seize documentation. Under this legislation—as opposed to the EARC legislation—people are not deprived of the lawful excuse to refuse information. In addition, under this legislation—unlike the EARC legislation—demands for information can be challenged if they are too intrusive. That is provided for in clause 4.7 (2).

I think that the Government has struck a reasonable balance and has given this commission proper and legitimate powers to investigate without intruding too much on the rights of citizens. As I said in my related comments on the other clause, the powers are limited to carrying out the functions and achieving the objectives of the legislation under which the commission is established.

Mr HARPER: The Premier made the point that the Opposition has not circularised the proposed amendments. With respect to the honourable gentleman, let me say that it is a very simple matter for him to say to this Committee, "We are prepared to delete the words 'or any other person'." It really does not require a great deal of paperwork. It simply requires a resolution on the part of the Government—

Mr W. K. Goss: You haven't raised it before because you're not prepared. You're a poor excuse for an Opposition.

Mr HARPER: Of course, if the Honourable the Premier had been in the Chamber during the whole of the debate on the second reading, he would have heard members of the Opposition—including the Leader of the Opposition, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and me—say quite clearly that the Opposition is concerned about this particular clause and that it would be moving amendments at the Committee stage.

The Opposition is proposing amendments at the Committee stage. It would be a very simple matter for the Premier to agree to the proposed amendment to this clause. It is not an unreasonable request. The Opposition is certainly unable to support the clause while it continues to contain the provision that "any other person" may be dealt with in this way.

Mr INNES: In regard to this issue, the Liberal Party has some sympathy with the Opposition's argument. However, one simply cannot operate in this Chamber without the formality of moving amendments, notice of which has been given in writing. One can vote against an entire clause. This clause cannot be knocked out in its entirety because that defeats the scheme of the legislation. If one wants to move a responsible amendment, one simply has to commit it to paper and have it circulated.

As I have said, the Liberal Party has some sympathy with the Opposition argument, but it is not going to vote against the whole clause. That, if it was successful, would just emasculate an important part of the legislation.

Mr Lingard: It wouldn't have hurt if your speaker had turned up so we could have gone until after dinner.

Mr INNES: I did not want to pick a quarrel, but if the interjection suggests that the Liberal Party has a responsibility for the Opposition not being ready, then that is a flaw. The fact is that the Liberal Party spokesman is in fact presently taking part in the selection of the investigative staff of EARC. One of the problems with committees is that honourable members have two obligations. The Liberal Party happens to place a high priority on EARC. So the honourable member should not blame the Liberal Party.

As I have said, I have some sympathy with the Opposition's argument, but my party cannot support opposition to the entire clause on the basis of a couple of words. The Liberal Party would have supported the Opposition if the words proposed to be deleted were contained in a written amendment.

Mr HARPER: In regard to the contribution that has just been made by the Leader of the Liberal Party—I point out to him that no interjection from the Opposition side would imply that the Opposition was blaming the Liberal Party for not being ready because the Opposition was ready, and is ready. I might say to both the Honourable the Premier and the Leader of the Liberal Party that it was a considered decision of the Leader of the Opposition that he would not put forward written amendments. That was not just a failure by me or the Leader of the Opposition to be ready; it was a considered decision of the Leader of the Opposition.

The Honourable the Premier and the honourable Leader of the Liberal Party are both astute lawyers. For his part, the Premier is quite capable of answering the concerns that the Opposition has expressed in regard to this clause and reaching agreement with the Leader of the Liberal Party, who has expressed concerns similar to those of the Opposition, simply by saying that he is prepared to delete the words "or any other person" which appear in clause 4.4 at page 13, line 11. It is not a great deal to ask. With his legal ability, the Premier could do it off the top of his head. However, he chooses not to because he does not want to delete the provision that the chairman of this Public Sector Management Commission should have the right to bring any one of the constituents of any electorate—any person, irrespective of any connection to the public service—before him by way of summons. That is the reason that the Premier will not accede to the Opposition's amendment. He wants to retain for this appointee of the Government the power to be able to summon any of the people who reside in any of the electorates in this State in the manner of a criminal.

The reason the Premier will not accede to the Opposition's request is not because of any difficulty in drafting the framework. The Premier has officers who could do that. Many members in this House could do it. Even Peter Beattie could do it, because he is a fast learner.

The Government will not accede to our request because it does not want that provision deleted from the legislation. It wants the chairman of the Public Sector Management Commission to be able to summons anyone in Queensland to appear before it. If that summons is not responded to, that person will experience the full process of the law.

The Opposition is proposing not the establishment of a criminal court but the establishment of an administrative commission to administer the public sector. In all fairness, the Premier should agree to the Opposition's request to delete that provision.

Mr INNES: I will have to keep talking for a couple of minutes because I am waiting for the arrival of a very poorly written document, which is being photocopied, to formalise the amendment that the Government should have drafted. This is not the way to do business. I do not believe that the member for Auburn helped his leader when he put him in the can by saying that it was a deliberate decision not to draft amendments.

Mr W. K. Goss: I trust you are going to send them a memo of fees.

Mr INNES: It is the old story: free advice is worth what you pay for it.

The reality is that the Liberal Party has some sympathy for the proposal. If honourable members will excuse the very poorly written amendment that I have circulated, I move—

"At page 13, line 11, omit—

'or any other person'."

I do not know what other amendments the Opposition wishes to move. I am not in the business of writing out amendments for it all afternoon. That is not the way to

do business. The Liberal Party will bear no responsibility for the deficiencies that the Government might have in formulating its arguments.

If this Chamber is to be run sensibly, the traditions are that a motion must be moved for an amendment. It is very simple. There must be a motion. The Chair cannot operate, nor can the Government operate, by words of sentiment flowing across the Chamber.

Mr D'Arcy: This is a very public disagreement.

Mr INNES: No, it is not. It is a gentle chiding with a disclaimer of responsibility.

The point made by Mr Harper, the member for Auburn, is correct. On the face of it, somebody who is not in the public sector and who is not even restricted to being a former public servant can be summoned to give evidence to the commission, and if he does not comply with the notice, that does become an offence. The Liberal Party believes that that is too wide ranging. If there is a problem, the EARC or one of the more formal tribunals can do the work. The EARC can look at any form of administration in this State. The Liberal Party believes that only such bodies should have penal powers. I hope that the Opposition supports our amendment.

Mr W. K. GOSS: We do not accept the amendment.

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

DIVISION

Resolved in the affirmative.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Honourable members, for all further divisions the bells shall ring for two minutes only.

Clause 4.4, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 4.5 and 4.6, as read, agreed to.

Clause 4.7—

Mr HARPER (5.43 p.m.): The Opposition queries a number of points in this clause. The Premier may care to comment on them. In subclause (1) (a), although a similar ground of privilege against self-incrimination is contained in the Electoral and Administrative Review Act, it would appear that any claim on this ground of privilege would virtually amount to self-incrimination. In other words, a person virtually has to incriminate himself in order to gain the protection offered by the Supreme Court. Although

this may be necessary in the EARC legislation, given its wide investigatory charter in matters outside the public sector, the Opposition questions——

The CHAIRMAN: Order! There is too much audible noise in the Chamber.

Mr HARPER: As I was saying, the Opposition questions whether that sort of a provision is necessary in legislation dealing with management of the public sector. I suggest to the Premier that, if that is so, it should certainly be confined to officers of the public sector and not extended to any private citizen. The Criminal Justice Act provides that a person does not have the right to remain silent or to withhold information on the ground that by doing so it would tend to incriminate him. However, section 3.24 of the Criminal Justice Act provides that incriminating evidence given by a witness shall not be used in evidence in any civil or criminal proceeding, except in certain limited circumstances.

That sort of protection against the use of incriminating evidence given to the Public Sector Management Commission in later civil or criminal proceedings is not given by the Public Sector Management Commission Bill. We in the Opposition wonder why. Perhaps the Premier may be able to explain. In other words, the incriminating material given to the Supreme Court in the process of claiming privilege is on the record for any purpose to which it might be put in later proceedings. The major issue here is that procedures relevant and necessary to criminal justice have no place in the legislation now being considered. We are really talking about something that has nothing to do with unlawful conduct.

Subclause (1) (b) refers to legal professional privilege as a basis for not complying with the direction to give evidence or to produce documents. What about other types of privileged communications such as the doctor/patient or accountant/client relationship? Are they covered?

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The level of audible conversation is too high. I warn all honourable members under Standing Order 123A.

Mr HARPER: I will repeat that so the Premier can hear it. Subparagraph (b) refers to legal professional privilege as a basis for not complying with a direction to give evidence or produce documents, the same as section 2.20 of the Electoral and Administrative Review Commission Act.

The Opposition asks: what about other types of privileged communications such as doctor/patient or accountant/client relationships? Are they to be covered? We ask: what about the public interest basis for a privilege claim referred to in subparagraph (c)? Is that intended to cover situations when embarrassing information might be in the possession of a public sector employee such as a chief executive?

The Minister or the Government might be enabled to claim privilege against the disclosure of information which they find embarrassing to their administration but which the public has a perfect right to know. If public interest is a ground for privilege, it should be properly defined and not used merely as a means for the Government to avoid public criticism for poor management.

The Opposition suggests through you, Mr Chairman, that this Bill is fundamentally different to the Electoral and Administrative Review Commission Act, which is all about the public interest. This Bill is really about public sector management.

Mr W. K. GOSS: In relation to the first point about self-incrimination, the query by the member for Auburn is legitimate but misconceived on two grounds.

Firstly, it is simply providing the normal protection against self-incrimination that should be provided as a matter of course in this kind of situation. Secondly, when one is before the court and it is testing a claim of privilege, there is no forcing out of all the details of the claim. There is simply a very limited inquiry to establish the danger and not, as the member fears, a complete exposure by the individual of all self-incriminating evidence or material.

The question of legal/professional privilege is a specific and recognised category and should be in the Bill. The Government does not believe that one needs to identify various other cases of privilege, whether it be for doctors, accountants or priests. The Government has provided a wide-ranging protection in the third element that the honourable member has already identified, which is the public interest protection. That is a very broad protection.

I point out to members that this provision is basically the same as that provided in section 2.20 of the Electoral and Administrative Review Commission legislation, although if one goes to the next subclause, 4.7 (2), one sees that the protection is taken even further. It is an important provision and an important protection that ultimately comes down to something as broad as public interest.

In certain circumstances that could bring under its umbrella the kind of other privilege situations that the member is referring to, but it does not help. The identification of every possible case of privilege does not help achieve the result the honourable member is seeking. One only ends up with an endless list to which one always thinks of endless factual variations.

The Government has provided the usual specific categories, plus a general public interest provision. If one links that with subclause (2) which follows, one sees that if the court finds that on balance it is not justified, given the adverse or potentially adverse effect on the financial interests of the unit or of any person and, secondly, the intrusion on the privacy of an individual through disclosure of private or confidential matters concerning the individual, there need be no compliance.

I acknowledge the concern that the honourable member raised on the previous clause about "any other person". It is a legitimate question to raise. I am not dismissing it out of hand. The Government thinks that it is necessary for a limited purpose for a limited time. Combined with this range of protective measures, the clause provides sufficient protection. The honourable member would be aware that the citizen is protected in respect of legal costs as well. The Government considered that clause carefully before it put it in because it does not expect that this problem is going to arise, except perhaps in an exceptional situation. Nevertheless, the Government believes it has struck a reasonable balance in terms of giving the commission the power to investigate. They are part of a building-in of important wide-ranging protections that will enable a citizen with a legitimate concern to protect his interests, whether it be from a financial or purely from a privacy point of view.

Clause 4.7, as read, agreed to.

Clause 4.8—

Mr HARPER (5.51 p.m.): The Opposition wishes to raise its concerns regarding 4.8, the power to override both the oaths of secrecy. We invite the Premier's attention to this subclause and suggest that this is a subclause which does need further consideration. Obviously the Government is not prepared to consider it at this stage, but the Premier has given an undertaking that he will give consideration to amendments without waiting for any defined period.

The Opposition believes that this subclause protects persons who give information to the commission in circumstances in which they would otherwise be liable to charges for breach of secrecy. It virtually allows the commission to override the secrecy provisions contained in other legislation. In other words, it simply permits breaches of privacy.

I give as an example one of many that could be brought forward: if, for argument's sake, this Public Sector Management Commission was conducting a review of the Department of Family Services, and the adoption processes came under scrutiny, confidential personal information could, with impunity, be disclosed to the commission. We do not see that as being desirable. I accept that it is an element which may not have been considered by the Government, so the Opposition asks that further consideration be given to this clause, which overrides the oath of secrecy provision.

Mr W. K. GOSS: I make two points in response. I cannot see that the kind of factual situation that the member refers to will arise. In any event, this provision is the same as that contained in section 2.22 of the Electoral and Administrative Review Commission Act. It was not a matter of concern there, and that is a body dealing with administrative matters. This one is in a different stream. It was not a matter of concern there for the then Government or for the Labor Party when it was in Opposition at the time, and I do not believe there is any need for greater concern by the now Government or the now Opposition.

Mr HARPER: In view of the response of the Premier, I again make the point that there is a fundamental difference here in the attitude of the Opposition and the Government, that is, that we really do not see this trilogy as being a correct interpretation of Fitzgerald. We accept that the provisions in the CJC and the EARC legislation are of a special nature, but we think that the Public Sector Management Commission is quite a separate entity, it really does not have the same purposes and it should not have the same capabilities to intrude into privacy as perhaps could be justified in either of the other two pieces of legislation.

Clause 4.8, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 4.9 to 4.11, as read, agreed to.

Clause 4.12—

Mr LINGARD (5.55 p.m.): The Opposition asks the Premier to explain why clause 4.12 seems to allow the commission to by-pass the chief executive and report to the Minister. To the Opposition, this clause appears to override the discretion of the departmental chief executive to either accept or reject the recommendations of the commission following an investigation. The chief executive is accorded powers under the Public Service Management and Employment Act 1988 to manage his department and is fully accountable for departmental efficiency. We understand the potential need for this provision in the case of chief executives who are ineffective and fail to respond to legitimate commission recommendations for improvement. However, the Government should exercise caution in preventing or discouraging chief executives from performing the role assigned to them by legislation and for which they are paid. The clear intention of section 12 of the Public Service Management and Employment Act is to enable chief executives to manage and be accountable for their performance. Excessive direction does not encourage that end. I should like to hear the Premier's comments.

Mr W. K. GOSS: We do not wish unnecessarily to intrude on the right of a chief executive to manage but we do want to introduce an element of accountability. That is important, especially for this initial period of review. What we are talking about here is the commission having the power to make a recommendation and, subsequent to that, having the power to take follow-up action in terms of monitoring the response to its report and recommendation and, indeed, reporting on that. I think that the recommendation approach is the way to go and I again point out that this is similar to the provision in section 3.1 of the Electoral and Administrative Review Commission Act, although it is less elaborately expressed. I think it is the correct approach.

Clause 4.12, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 4.13 to 6.1, as read, agreed to.

Clause 6.2—

Mr HARPER (5.59 p.m.): We ask the Government to consider this clause. We express opposition to it, as well as to clause 6.3, actually. A person—meaning any member of the public or any private citizen—is liable to a penalty for failure to comply with the commission's direction to give evidence or produce documents. If this is required at all, the Opposition suggests that it should be confined to officers of the public sector and should not extend to private citizens.

We ask: what is the purpose of this penalty section? The construction could be put on it—and I bring this to the Premier's attention with a degree of uneasiness because I do not believe it would be the intention of the Government—that it could be to enable the commission to victimise the friends, relatives or associates of public servants who are identified as belonging to an opposing political party, or to compel the production of material relating to private communication between such people. As I have indicated, this may—and I trust it would be an exaggeration—be the construction placed on the purpose of the penalty provisions. The potential is there and, once a charge has been made, it would be very difficult and very expensive for a person charged with an offence under this clause to defend himself. The simple solution would be for the Government to make provision for the commission to meet the expenses associated with any defence.

Mr W. K. GOSS: Let me say first that, ultimately, if there is to be cooperation or compliance, there must be some sanction, or people could simply walk away and ignore it. So, in my view, there must be some sanction. Considering the previous stage of the process, clause 6.2 refers to a person to whom a notice under clause 4.2 or clause 4.3 is addressed.

A person to whom such a notice is addressed has the right to go to the Supreme Court and object to the production of that information on a range of grounds, including the public interest, and to have the costs of those proceedings borne by the commission. That is a prior stage. I acknowledge that there is some force to the honourable member's point that a person would then be involved in the matter, but that would be only after that person had been to the Supreme Court and failed there—at no cost to himself. If the claim or argument is dismissed by the Supreme Court, I believe that that person has had a fair go and that he should then cooperate. There must be some sanction, and I believe that it is a fairly modest one.

Clause 6.2, as read, agreed to.

Sitting suspended from 6 to 7.30 p.m.

Clauses 6.3 to 7.13 and schedule, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

Third Reading

Bill, on motion of Mr W. K. Goss, by leave, read a third time.

ELECTORAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW COMMISSION **Investigation of Local Authority Electoral System**

Hon. T. J. BURNS (Lytton—Deputy Premier, Minister for Housing and Local Government) (7.32 p.m.): I move—

"That this Legislative Assembly, pursuant to the provisions of section 2.10(4) of the Electoral and Administrative Review Act 1989; authorises the Electoral and Administrative Review Commission to undertake investigations in accordance with section 2.10(1)(b) of the said Act into—

(a) the whole of the Local Authority electoral system of Queensland and, in particular, whether such Local Authority electoral system provides for fair and equitable representation for all electors of Queensland and, if not, what Local Authority electoral system should be introduced to achieve such representation;

(b) that part of Local Authority administration as relates to the factors affecting the determination of the areas of Local Authorities and, in particular, whether the existing boundaries of the areas of Local Authorities are the most appropriate having regard to fair and equitable representation for all electors and the proper, economically viable and efficient discharge of the responsibilities of each Local Authority and, if not, what changes (including amalgamation) are

necessary or desirable in order to achieve such fair and equitable representation for all electors and the proper, economically viable and efficient discharge of the responsibilities of each Local Authority;

and further requests that reports of such investigations be submitted to this Assembly, so far as is possible, by—

- (i) August 17, 1990 in relation to the matters in paragraph (a);
- (ii) July 1, 1991 in relation to the matters in paragraph (b)."

One of the recommendations for reform of the Fitzgerald commission of inquiry was that an Electoral and Administrative Review Commission be established; a commission that is independent and impartial of the Government and a commission that is obliged to act fairly in the public interest in pursuing the ultimate objective of improving the quality of public administration in Queensland.

Mr Tom Sherman has been appointed under the Electoral and Administrative Review Act as Chairman of the commission. Ms Virginia Hall, Mr Brian Hunter, Mrs Marie Watson Blake and Professor Hughes have been appointed as part-time commissioners. Under the Act, the commission is required to forthwith investigate the Legislative Assembly electoral system. One of the many other functions of the commission is to investigate and report on the whole or part of the local authority electoral system or local authority administration.

Under the legislation, if the commission is to report on the local authority system, it needs the authority of the Legislative Assembly or the Governor in Council to exercise certain powers.

The proposal to review the local authority system at the outset of the commission's life also reflects the key role that local government has played and will continue to play in Queensland. In addition, this step recognises that the last major overall review of local government occurred in 1928 after a royal commission was set up to look at local authority boundaries and other matters. No-one will seriously argue that it is not time for another examination.

The motion requests the commission to provide a report, so far as is possible, on paragraph (a) of the terms of reference by 17 August 1990. This paragraph raises the question of whether or not the existing local authority electoral system provides for the fair and equitable representation of electors, and what changes should occur to achieve that end. It asks the commission to lay down the principles on which local authority elections should be based, such as internal ward and divisional boundaries and the method of voting, etc.; principles that could further enhance the democratic features of the system or, in the words of the Act, principles to achieve and maintain honesty, impartiality and efficiency in such elections.

Paragraph (b) of the terms of reference authorises the commission to look at the external boundaries of local authorities and seeks the submission of a report by 1 July 1991. As stated in the terms of reference, the external boundaries of local authorities are to be examined on the basis of fair and equitable representation, community of interest, economic viability and efficiency. Who could argue against those sentiments?

It is also a matter for the commission as to the basic principles of operation that it chooses to adopt. However, I would take the liberty of quoting on this issue from a recent address by Mr Tom Sherman to the Royal Australian Institute of Public Administration. In particular, he said—

"EARC must practice what it preaches. It must apply to itself the highest standards of good public administration.

EARC in fulfilling this responsibility must achieve the highest standards of accountability, independence, public access, and consultation.

I attach great importance to consultation processes. If persons and organisations affected by Commission reports are not properly consulted, there is a great risk that our reports will be flawed, and not implemented."

The Government supports these principles of accountability, independence, consultation and public participation, and we have decided as an endorsement of those principles that Parliament should refer the matter of the local authority electoral and administrative review to the EARC for its consideration and determination. The alternative was to refer the matter to EARC via the Governor in Council, as the legislation permits, but the Goss Government determined at the outset that it was essential on a matter as important as this that the Parliament should debate these issues fully and express its collective and individual views. I am sure that the views that will be expressed in this debate will be useful in providing guidance to the commissioners.

Honourable members would know that the Parliamentary Committee for Electoral and Administrative Review met with the commissioners on Friday, 23 March 1990. I am very pleased with the positive and constructive outcome of that meeting. However, I would like to take this opportunity to comment upon a point of concern which was raised at the meeting, namely, at the apparently tight deadlines of 17 August 1990 for paragraph (a) of the terms of reference and 1 July 1991 for paragraph (b).

When the Government drew up the terms of reference for EARC we were guided by a number of principles and we understood the constraints. Firstly, we fully accepted that EARC was a totally independent body which will conduct the inquiry into local authorities as it sees fit. This Parliament will refer matters to the EARC, but the running of that inquiry and the recommendations which will be forthcoming will be the result of a process which is completely independent of this Parliament.

In accordance with those principles, I have decided that the Department of Local Government will not make a formal submission to EARC. The commission will not be constrained in its determinations by having to consider a Government position on electoral and administrative changes to local authorities, because the Government will have no preferred position. I want to make that perfectly clear. Naturally, the department will be available to EARC to provide information and other assistance as requested by the commissioners. Secondly, we were very mindful of the dates by which the reports were requested of the commission, namely, 17 August 1990 and 1 July 1991 for paragraphs (a) and (b) respectively.

Let me state categorically that those requested dates are not deadlines; they are dates by which the commission is requested to report, so far as possible. The Government is fully cognisant that the timetable for the review may appear tight. It is because we do not wish to constrain the commission in its deliberations that we have requested the commission to endeavour to meet these dates as far as is possible, but we realise and accept that that may not be possible.

The reason that 17 August 1990 was requested for recommendations on fair and equitable representation for all electors in Queensland is that the recommendations have to go from the commission to the EARC parliamentary committee and then to the Parliament itself for discussion. After Parliament approves of the recommendations——

Mr FitzGerald: Or otherwise.

Mr BURNS: All right. As I was saying, after Parliament approves of the recommendations, I intend to ask local authorities to review their own internal boundaries, using the principles and guidelines as determined by EARC and passed by the Parliament. Local authority elections will take place in March 1991. In the end result, 17 August was determined as a date which would allow for the recommendations to be debated by the committee and Parliament, and implemented by local authorities. It is my intention to ask local authorities to review their electoral systems in line with the recommendations of the independent commission.

If 17 August proves impracticable, I am sure that the Parliament will understand and appreciate the position of the commission. I emphasise that the date 1 July 1991 is a request which was chosen to allow the EARC select committee and the Parliament

to consider—before the end of 1991—the recommendations that EARC might bring down.

Again I wish to remind members that this is the first systematic review of local authority, electoral and administrative systems in Queensland since the 1928 royal commission. During that time, there have been numerous calls for reviews—calls which have fallen on deaf ears. A review of local authorities was provided for in the EARC legislation which was passed in this House last year at the instigation of the National Party Government. This Government is just the body implementing that legislation. Previous changes initiated by the National Party and the Liberal Party to local authority divisions, boundaries and electoral systems were either rushed through the Governor in Council, thereby avoiding public debate before the decision was made, or they were steamrollered through the Parliament without due inquiry.

Members will recall the regular, undemocratic alteration of the City of Brisbane Act in the futile attempts by previous Governments to unseat Clem Jones, the most popular Lord Mayor that Brisbane has ever had. In 1972, the Act was changed at the instigation of the Liberals so that the Lord Mayor was elected by aldermen instead of by popular vote by all electors. That attempt to unseat the Mayor was rejected out of hand by the electors of Brisbane who saw it for the shabby trick that it was. The press was saturated with objections to the move to unseat the Lord Mayor, and a mass rally was held at city hall to express the people's opposition to the attempt to unseat him by changing the electoral system. Needless to say, Clem Jones was re-elected by a mile. Again they tried in 1984 to unseat a Lord Mayor when the voting system was switched back from the Mayor being elected by the aldermen to an election by popular vote, yet they have the hide to say that someone is trying to rush things through now.

The purpose of these deliberate and vicious actions by the National Party and the Liberal Party was their cynical attempt to unseat popular Lord Mayors through manipulation of the electoral system. A further abuse of the system was perpetrated in 1982 when, against the wishes of the local authorities and despite strong objections from the electors, the then National/Liberal Government imposed internal divisions and preferential voting on the cities of Rockhampton, Townsville, Maryborough and Toowoomba. In Rockhampton, the National Party and the Liberal Party instigated the imposition of 10 divisions on the city for electoral purposes. Council strongly objected to the proposed changes and 4 671 objections were received. Nevertheless, the Liberal/National Party Government approved the imposition of electoral divisions for Rockhampton on 21 January 1982. The elections were to be held on the last Saturday in March 1982.

In Townsville, it was the Townsville Progress Association and Townsville and District Ratepayers Association that argued that Townsville should be divided into 10 electoral divisions. The council strongly opposed the idea, and 918 objections and 3 424 signatures on a petition opposing electoral divisions were received. The Government ignored the objections and pushed the changes through the Liberal/National Party Government on 21 January 1982.

In Maryborough, the Civic Development Association and the Liberal Party branch pushed for the division of Maryborough into eight electoral divisions, against the wishes of the council and many petitioners. Again the Liberal/National Party Government ignored the objections and approved the changes on 4 February 1982. In Toowoomba, the local Liberal member, Dr Lockwood, argued for the imposition of 8 electoral divisions and, again despite council's representations and 5 019 signatures on a petition against the proposal, the Liberal/National Party Government approved it and pushed it through.

In all these cases, the divisions were established under a very tight timetable, as the local authority elections were held just two months later on 30 March 1982. Clearly, the proposals were not fully investigated in respect of community of interest, valuation and the number of electors. The only reason for the changes was the desperate attempt by the National/Liberal coalition Government to defy the will of the people and to impose on them an electoral system which it felt would be more favourable for its own political cronies. As a result, Queensland today has a ludicrous situation in which 12

local authorities are elected using preferential voting and 122 are elected by a first-past-the-post system. Moreover, 22 local authorities have no internal boundaries and 112 are divided into divisions and wards.

After consideration of all that evidence, one could be excused for using the word "hypocrites" to describe Liberal/National Party politicians who complain of a rush when the Labor Government deliberately seeks a public debate and requests an independent commission to report, if possible, in five months' time so that an election can be held in March 1991. Unfortunately, some politicians, in their anxiety to get in the press, have made comments which either display their ignorance of the terms of reference or that they have deliberately chosen to misrepresent the terms of reference for reasons best known to themselves. In each case these Liberal Party and National Party politicians have cast slurs on the independence of the commission and upon its members.

The member for Somerset, Mr Gunn, displayed the talents for which he is famous when he cast slurs on the independence of the commission and spoke nonsense about whether the Brisbane City Council was to be included in the review. He claimed that if it indeed was the case, then it was a sly attempt to get rid of the present Lord Mayor. I have a detailed list of the times he was involved in rorting the system in this Parliament—against the wishes of the people, against the rights of the people, and never having allowed the people the chance to have a say. Clearly, the former Deputy Premier is presupposing that the present independent commission will adopt the same tactics that he and his Liberal Party and National Party colleagues used to rort the system.

The member for Toowong got his imagination working on possible link-ups between the Gold Coast City and Albert Shire Councils. I can only advise the honourable member to put his views and proposals before the commission rather than in the press. The independent commission will make the decision.

The member for Burdekin convinced himself that "fair and equitable" meant "one vote, one value"—a term which I have not used in relation to this review. Again, I can only advise him to put his views before the commission instead of attacking the commission and its members' impartiality.

It is the Government's intention that this review of local authorities will strengthen the foundations upon which local authorities rest. Local authorities cannot be seen to have legitimacy unless the system upon which representatives are elected is judged to be fair and equitable.

Local authorities will not be efficient and have long-term viability, nor will they be able to fully meet and promote the needs of the shires and cities throughout Queensland unless they are based on economically and financially sustainable boundaries. They will not have long-term cohesion unless they reflect communities of interest. Presently, there are far too many local authorities which cut across communities of interest. In the review we must ensure that communities of interest are preserved and maintained by any new boundaries, but we must equally recognise that no good purpose is served where clearly established communities of interest are split up by existing boundaries.

I therefore urge all interested parties to make submissions to EARC so that it will be in a position to make the best possible judgement on the matters before it. I invite councils, political parties, community groups, local associations, MLAs and individuals to take this opportunity to express their views and opinions on these matters. The terms of reference are broad and will not constrain consideration of the issues.

I appreciate that there may be some concerns within local authorities as to their future because of the review to be undertaken by the commission. However, at the end of the day it must be accepted that a review by an independent body is long overdue. The current system is not perfect and changes will occur. All involved in local government should see the commission's review in a positive light and cooperate wherever possible.

The aim is to end up with a better system of local government for all those directly involved in local government and the communities those local authorities serve.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Before calling upon members to address this notice of motion, I remind them of Standing Order 141, which refers to relevance of debate. This is not a Bill, and I would ask honourable members to stick to the terms of the motion, which concerns local authority boundaries and their effects.

Mr GUNN (Somerset) (7.47 p.m.): I have no problem with that, Mr Speaker.

The Minister just made a feeble attempt to justify the haste with which this motion was brought forward. The Opposition appreciates that Labor's local government policy has endorsed the recommendations of the Fitzgerald inquiry that EARC should review the local government electoral system.

The existing Act does not provide for the creation of new local authority areas. The enactment of special legislation is necessary. It is interesting to note that in the Local Government Act review discussion paper of November 1989 there was no indication or suggestion of the boundaries being reviewed. The proposal for external boundaries comes within the province of the Governor in Council, which may alter local authority boundaries, without giving notice of intention, for the purpose of including in one local authority area land that is included in more than one area, where the local authorities and the land-owners concerned are agreeable to the alteration. That has worked very well over a long period.

The proposal for internal boundaries is to preserve existing divisions for electoral purposes only and to abolish financial divisions and local authority areas. I personally have always been against financial divisions. When I was in local government, I remember an example in which one shire had all financial divisions. The fact of the matter was that it had virtually four or five councils. The parochial attitude of councillors representing those divisions was evident. One of the divisions had a bridge destroyed, which took its funds for the whole year.

The first that we heard about a review of the local government boundaries was on 3 January, when Mr Sciacca, the Labor member for Bowman was reported as having said that—

"The gerrymander in Queensland's local government boundaries was far worse than the one which governed the State."

The Minister for Local Government, in an off-handed comment, said that EARC would review local government boundaries along with the State boundaries.

Then Mr Goss bought into the argument and was reported to have said—

"Queensland's local government boundaries will be investigated by the EARC . . . although the State zones would be the commission's first priority, local authority boundaries would also be reviewed."

He emphasised that State electoral boundaries were the priority. The Opposition accepts that. He went on to say that the Local Government Minister would discuss the proposed review with local authorities and EARC.

As I said earlier, the fire for such a review emanated from the Labor member for Bowman. That is the reference! It is a political reference! No reference is made to the parliamentary committee; it had not even been formed then. To his credit, Mr Foley—the EARC parliamentary committee chairman-elect—said that it was something he would discuss with his parliamentary committee. Unfortunately, it did not meet before the matter was cut and dried.

The legitimate concern for all Queenslanders and for local authorities is that the review is politically inspired. It did not emanate as a reference from the parliamentary committee. It was foisted on the parliamentary committee.

It would appear that the State Government is laying the groundwork to carve up shires and redraw the boundaries of various cities. The political interference of the Labor Government in the affairs of EARC shows that it has broken an election promise. It said that it would not interfere in the affairs of those authorities. The right and proper

authority to give a reference to EARC for a review of local government boundaries would have been the Local Government Association. That was not so! It was the member for Bowman—as I said before, a Labor member. ALP cronies and members have been attacking various local authorities throughout the State. It is clear that the Labor Party wants some drawn off the face of the map.

For example, the Minister for Local Government is at the moment in dispute with the Hinchinbrook Shire Council. It is of concern that the parliamentary committee, of which Mr Foley is the head, should be so passive about the erosion of his committee's authority. After all, he is supposed to be its watchdog.

EARC itself, including the chairman and its part-time commissioners, has railed against the 17 August deadline for the commission's local government boundaries review. I do not blame it for that. One of the commissioners, Mr Hunter, said that, if the intent of Mr Fitzgerald's report was to be realised, "realistic deadlines were required if results were not to be inferior". Mrs Marie Watson Blake, another part-time commissioner, said that it was wrong to expect the commission to meet impractical deadlines, and went on to say that "time constraints motivated by political expediency should not apply". However, in this case they do. For the benefit of honourable members, I repeat—"political expediency should not apply".

If ever there was an example of political expediency, this is it. The chairman himself, Mr Sherman, backed the commissioners. He said that he could have no ironclad guarantee on the 17 August deadline. I ask honourable members: how can the review of the State's zoning system be a priority as well as the local government boundaries, freedom of information, administrative law mechanisms and public assembly laws? Indeed, this will be one overworked commission in Queensland. Furthermore, honourable members are told that the EARC expects to report its recommendations on any changes to Queensland's electoral zones by the end of September. That seems to me to be an impossible task.

The National Party supports completely the review of the State electoral system and, indeed, the review of local government boundaries. What it is opposed to is the political reference to the EARC to review the boundaries. To clear up the awful political mess that the Labor Party has created, we now have this motion before the House to give some credibility to the request. I inform the Minister that the Opposition is not going to be part of a face-saving exercise for him. Certain shires are themselves pushing for a review, and I repeat that the Opposition has no problems with the review; it merely objects to the improper way that this Labor Government goes about everything. The corridors are abuzz with talk that the Labor Government feels restricted by the powers of the EARC. The Minister should tell honourable members something about that. There is a tendency for some people on shire councils to talk about one vote, one value and about imbalances, for example, between the Kingaroy and Burke Shires. Burke, for example, has 206 voters, and the Gold Coast, with 76 000 voters, has the most.

The secretary of the Local Government Association, Mr Greg Hoffman, said—

"Few Queensland local authorities have similar make-ups but the one vote one value system could not work for local government."

The question that has to be asked is: what is this Labor Government on about? Is it punting for one vote, one value for local authorities? If so, are Brisbane people going to subsidise the roads for the Burke Shire and some of the other little shires out west? It is clear that the Labor Government does not know what it wants. It is on record as saying—

"There will be no changes to local government boundaries before the 1991 election."

Why then the hasty review? Why then the pressure on the EARC to complete that review by 17 August? The Local Government Association warned the State Government that it should act cautiously when undertaking a review of local government boundaries. The honourable member has been around a little bit. He would know how touchy that

subject is. He has visited quite a few shires. I will guarantee that in every one of those shires he was questioned about his intentions in that regard.

The president of the association, Mr Jim Pinnell, said—

"There would be widespread opposition to any changes seen as politically motivated."

This is politically motivated. The reference came from the Labor member for Bowman. Honourable members should listen to this: the Minister for Local Government said that he was sure that the EARC would move to introduce uniform procedures and boundaries. That is what he said. No matter how unbiased the Minister for Local Government tries to be today, he is damned by his own words. The Labor Government is damned by the reference from a Labor member.

The Local Government Association said that it should not be assumed that every local authority had an imbalance in its boundaries or that the imbalances were politically motivated and constituted a gerrymander. According to the Local Government Association, some imbalances were due to historical factors such as the drift of population from rural areas to towns and cities, while others resulted in spill-overs from cities into neighbouring rural areas, or from new towns developing in mining areas. That has happened in areas contiguous to Brisbane, as the Minister well knows. There has been a spill-over. We have had the five-acre subdivisions, and so on. I know that in the shire of which I was chairman, some of those subdivisions do need looking at. I will grant the Minister that. However, that is the reason for that particular imbalance. I think that the Minister would agree with me on that. The Minister for Local Government is on record as favouring a "uniform voting system".

In conclusion, I believe that in this case local authorities have every right to be skeptical about the motives of the Labor Government. This matter is too important to be rushed through the Parliament. I therefore regret the haste with which the motion was moved. I await the Minister's reaction. He has done some explaining; I accept that. As I have said, I know that the Minister has already met with a large number of local authorities throughout Queensland. No doubt he has been told of their concerns. I hope that the Minister takes those concerns on board. Like me, he has been in politics for a long time, and I am sure that he will take them on board. It is an old political trick to test the waters. No doubt that is what the Minister set out to do. I know him very well. He came into this place at the same time as I did. I am sure that the Minister was given an indication of the feeling of all of those councils.

Mr Burns: They supported it.

Mr GUNN: Let us wait and see. That is not my information.

The Local Government Association is very concerned, and that association represents all these people—

Mr Burns: In many cases they said to me, "We'd like to get rid of those councils."

Mr GUNN: Of course. People will always say, "I do not mind, as long as it does not affect me and I stand to benefit." The Minister will hear a lot of that. That is the oldest trick in the book.

I think that it should be done in due course, but not hastily. I do not think—and I think the Minister now realises this—that there is any hope of getting it done within the time limit. What I am saying is that the EARC should not be hurried. It has a major job to do. I hope that the Minister will once again give this House an assurance that that will not happen.

Mr FOLEY (Yeronga) (7.59 p.m.): This motion puts into operation one of the important functions of the Electoral and Administrative Review Commission contemplated in the Electoral and Administrative Review Act 1989-90, the principal part of which was, of course, passed in the term of the previous Government.

Section 2.10 (1) (b) of that Act authorises the Electoral and Administrative Review Commission to investigate and report from time to time in relation to the whole or part of the local authority electoral system, or the whole or part of the local authority administration, that power being subject to a certain qualification in subsection (4) of that section. That qualification was that, in conducting any investigations of local authority electoral systems or administration, the EARC should not exercise certain powers unless authorised to do so by the Legislative Assembly or by the Governor in Council.

Those powers, which might properly be used in a review with the scope of one such as this, include the power to require the production of a statement of information from a public servant pursuant to section 2.15; the power to require the production of documents by public servants under section 2.16; the power to enter public premises under section 2.17; and the power to summon a public servant under section 2.18.

The capacity to refer a matter to the EARC relevant to the whole or part of the public administration of the State is set out in section 2.10 (1) (a) (iii) of the Act as a power residing in the parliamentary committee, the Legislative Assembly itself or the responsible Minister, who is in this case the Premier.

Because those matters clarify one important aspect of this debate, it is desirable that they be considered. I refer to a serious misconception which fell from the lips of the honourable member for Somerset, namely, the proposition that the method adopted by the Honourable the Minister for Housing and Local Government and Deputy Premier is somehow an improper method of going about the process.

An examination of the Act reveals that nothing could be further from the truth. There is power in the Act for this matter to be referred by the Premier, it being a matter relevant to part of the public administration of the State. Moreover, the necessary authorisation of investigative powers could have been given by the Governor in Council pursuant to section 2.10 (4). That is to say, a method could have been adopted easily by the Minister so that this matter would not have been agitated in public debate here in the Chamber. I commend the Minister for adopting an approach of openness and accountability.

Mr FitzGerald: He wanted to add more weight to his argument. That's what he did it for.

Mr FOLEY: As the honourable member for Lockyer correctly points out, adopting that method adds more weight to the argument, because the Minister has acted with the greatest propriety, openness and accountability.

By adopting an approach at all stages in this process of electoral and administrative review of being open and accountable, one will ultimately gain the confidence of the public. At the end of the day that will cause a reform not only to the letter of the law but also to the spirit of the law.

The procedure is done in the great traditions of parliamentary democracy, namely, the tradition of debating matters in the open in the Assembly. When one considers the future of electoral and administrative review in this State, it is important that honourable members on both sides of this House recall the words that were expressed by honourable members during the course of debate last year and this year, namely, the importance of retaining the sovereignty and centrality of Parliament to the debates of the day.

That method, which has been adopted by the Honourable the Minister, does just that. In that respect it is to be commended. The suggestion which perhaps fell by accident from the lips of the honourable member that this is somehow done in haste is difficult to reconcile with the date on the notice of motion of 7 March. Because it is now 22 days later, it is difficult to accept the proposition that this has been done with any indecent haste.

The local authority electoral system contains matters which warrant investigation and have been the subject of very animated discussion amongst the local authority community. They include a wide range of matters. In considering the wording of the

motion it is important to note that the reference is in broad terms which respect the independence of the Electoral and Administrative Review Commission and enable that commission to address such of those issues as it considers appropriate.

It is important to keep in mind that this is a two-stage process. The first stage is addressed to the entire local authority electoral system in Queensland. The second stage, which is much broader and more comprehensive, is addressed to local authority administration, including the issue of local authority boundaries.

The method adopted is of the utmost openness and accountability. It would have been open to the Honourable the Minister to exercise powers which exist in section 5 of the Local Government Act to effect changes to the local authority electoral system.

For example, section 5 (1) (ii) of that Act confers power on the Governor in Council to alter the boundaries of divisions by including in one division part of parts of another division and by excluding such part or parts from such other division. That is a power that can be exercised by the Governor in Council without any reference to the EARC and without any reference to this House.

Far from that being done, the process which has been adopted is a process not of Executive or ministerial action, but a process of referring the matter to an independent commission for it to report and for that report to be considered by the parliamentary committee to report in turn to this Parliament.

In that respect, it is important to remember that the anomalies and wide differences of representation have become the subject of notoriety. For example, in the Kingaroy Shire, the 160 electors in division 3 elect three representatives.

Mr Perrett: They do a good job, too.

Mr FOLEY: They may well do a very good job.

By contrast, three representatives are elected from 4 370 electors in division 4. That has been the subject of animated discussion. Again, it is a matter which the Minister, through the Governor in Council, could have addressed without openness and proper process through section 5 of the Local Government Act, but instead this very proper approach has been adopted.

Similarly, rule 21A of schedule III provides for the system of voting to be adopted by local authorities, that is, that preferential voting may be used where directed by the Governor in Council. On that matter, there are differences in different local authorities throughout the State. It is desirable that there be some opportunity for independent and objective review of that matter.

Similarly, the method of electing the mayor or chairman is provided for under section 7 (5) of the Act and continues to be a matter on which differences of opinion exist from time to time. Moreover, it is important to note that the electoral rolls of the electors in each local authority are compiled as at 31 December, a matter to which I shall return when dealing with the question of the timetable.

There is a problem about the method of filling extraordinary vacancies. Section 7 (10) of the Act provides for a certain procedure to be adopted. There is a continuing debate as to whether that should be by appointment or by way of by-election.

Those matters are matters which are very properly the subject of the EARC to consider, if it wishes to consider them, within its reference on the first stage of the process of review concerning the whole of the local authority electoral system.

The broader reference on the future of local authority administration has been overlooked somewhat in the debate, and yet that second stage of the process is a truly important exercise for the future of government in our State. The reference to the Electoral and Administrative Review Commission invites the commission to consider a number of matters for the proper economically viable and efficient discharge of the responsibilities of each local authority and what changes, including amalgamation, are

necessary or desirable. That is an important question for the future of local government and its relationship with the other tiers of government in this State.

I turn to some of the criticisms which have been advanced in the course of this debate and in the course of the public debate. The suggestion from the honourable member for Somerset, as I understood his remarks, that this matter is appropriately dealt with through the parliamentary committee rather than through the Parliament as a whole, reflects a misconception of the relationship between a principal and an agent. The parliamentary committee is a committee of the Parliament. As such, it derives its authority from the Parliament. It has no higher authority than the Parliament. It is said that a spring may rise no higher than its source. It is utterly fitting and proper that a reference of this importance should take place here in the font of the power, that is, the Parliament itself, rather than in a committee of the Parliament. It is for that reason that the misconception about impropriety must be put to rest, for that suggestion really reflects a failure to understand the proper processes which are available for the process of electoral and administrative review in the post-Fitzgerald era.

Queenslanders are used to the politics of suspicion, to the politics of searching for the ulterior motive and to the politics of searching for the hidden agenda.

Mr Hobbs: It hasn't changed. It's getting worse.

Mr FOLEY: There is but one agenda in this motion. It is the words of the motion itself. It is an open agenda. It is an agenda which will be referred to an independent commission. It is in rising to the challenge of making a constructive contribution to the genuine intellectual challenges of reforming the process of local government administration that the true challenge for politics in Queensland rests.

This House must consider then the criticism that this reference involves undue haste, that being the other ground advanced by the member for Somerset.

One criticism which may be advanced is that there should be no target date set at all by this Parliament. That proposition sits curiously with the supremacy of this Assembly, reconciled as it is with the independence of the EARC.

It is difficult to reconcile the suggestion that there should be no target dates at all with the wording of the motion which makes a request to an independent commission, sets certain dates and requests that reports of certain investigations be submitted to this Assembly, so far as is possible, by the dates set out. What that does is to return the debate to this Chamber, and to deal as between this Parliament and the Electoral and Administrative Review Commission in a proper, fair, open and accountable way.

Alternatively, a criticism may be advanced that the target dates set are too early. So far as the first step of the process is concerned, the target date of mid-August, one really simply has to work backwards from the proposition that, pursuant to section 7 (7) of the Local Government Act, the electors are due to go to the polls in local government elections in March of 1991.

It is important to note that the closing date for the rolls for that election is 31 December 1990. That is to say, any changes, if there be changes—I take the honourable member for Lockyer's earlier interjection to the Honourable the Minister in that respect—must necessarily be in place by December so that there can be a proper and orderly approach.

Moreover, it is necessary to recall that the process of electoral and administrative review requires that that commission report to this Parliament. It requires that the report be considered by the all-party parliamentary committee and for that committee to consider carefully any recommendations which may come; for there to be, if necessary, opportunity for the public to make submissions; for that parliamentary committee to collate and process those submissions; for the parliamentary committee to deliberate and make a report to this Parliament; moreover, for this Parliament to debate the matter; and then it is important to remember that within the Local Government Act itself there

are certain checks to be observed. For example, under the Act there is a 30-day period required in respect of the advertising of any change in internal boundaries.

I refer to the provisions of section 5 (1) (ii) H of the Local Government Act, which give power to the Governor in Council to alter the boundaries of divisions. If that power is to be exercised, there must be notice under section 5 (1) (iii). There must be 30 days given for objections, and if there be any change proposed, notice in the *Government Gazette* or in a newspaper. After that notice, there is a duty on the Governor in Council to consider any objections duly lodged pursuant to the duty imposed by section 5 (1) (iv). So that requirement builds a further month into the process.

If one accepts that it is a legitimate request for the electors in local authorities to see if there can be any reform before they next go to the polls, and one works back logically from that date, one comes to the date in August. If this Parliament's processes and the requirements of notice and advertising are to be met that which can be done should be done by approximately mid-August or thereabouts.

That in turn raises the question of, "Can anything be done in that time?" It is entirely proper in this motion that that question, too, is left to the Electoral and Administrative Review Commission to consider. It is asked to report, so far as is possible, by that date.

If it be that the commission comes to the conclusion, having attempted to do the spadework, that nothing is possible, then that no doubt will be its report. However, it is a legitimate request from the electors in local authorities to ask over a year ahead of the time, "Can there not be some review?" If the answer to that question is, "No, nothing can be done within a year. A year is too short a period to do anything.", then we find ourselves in a very paralysed state.

By contrast, after a long period of oppression the citizens of eastern Europe have moved with breathtaking speed to ensure free and fair elections. Here, with the benefit of our tradition of western democracy, a year away from the election are we to stand and say to the electors of local authorities in Queensland, "There is nothing that can properly be done to address your concern."? If there be something capable of being done, the proper way to do it is to refer the matter to the Electoral and Administrative Review Commission to prepare a report to be considered by the parliamentary processes, and that is what is being done.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr FOLEY: I am delighted that evidence and argument are actually persuading the honourable members of the Opposition.

In conclusion—so far as the first target date is concerned, the considerations which I have outlined produce a compelling reason as to why some date, or some date about that time, needs to be addressed if there is to be the proper consultation and the proper consideration by the Parliament and action taken, if indeed there be action by way of Order in Council or by way of legislation in this place.

So far as the second date is concerned—1 July 1991—that is some distance hence and has not, thus far, agitated the concern of the first date. But again, of course, the terms of the motion provide that it is a request for the Electoral and Administrative Review Commission to proceed so far as is possible.

I make this plea to honourable members. It is most important, when we address this task of electoral and administrative review, that honourable members remember that the spirit of the Fitzgerald report process requires that, when the proper processes are put in train, they be supported and given due support by persons from all political philosophies. There may be debate about the timetables and there may be debate about what matters should be in or out, or the purview of matters which can be considered in the first stage, but let us ensure that we accord the Electoral and Administrative Review Commission the respect that it should command.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!

Mr FOLEY: I am delighted at the unanimity upon that point.

The important task for all honourable members following the debate tonight, once this motion has been passed by this Chamber, is to ensure that public confidence is not eroded by a return to the shallow politics of shadow-boxing at ulterior motives and at suspicion, as if somehow the Executive could mysteriously control the commission, whereas this process which has been adopted must, of its nature, be open and accountable.

In short, I commend and support the motion. It reflects two triumphs of openness over Executive, or closed, action. Firstly, it is a referral to the Electoral and Administrative Review Commission rather than a mere administrative or ministerial action and, secondly, that, in the process of referral, the mechanism has been that it has been by this Assembly itself and not merely by the Premier, together with authorisation by the Governor in Council, which would have been permitted pursuant to the provisions of the Act.

I support the motion moved by the Honourable the Minister and urge its support by all honourable members of this House.

Mr BEANLAND (Toowong—Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party) (8.28 p.m.): It is with great pleasure that I hear, from the Australian Labor Party, the arguments this evening in relation to amending the timetable because, largely, the debate this evening is about just that. We have heard a lot of rhetoric and there have been many red herrings. We have had a smoke-screen from the honourable member for Yeronga. It is all about trying to get over the problem which the Government and the Minister now face in having to rush this through the Chamber and get it down the road to the EARC, which will have a very tight timetable indeed. As the Minister well knows, this is an attempt to bully the EARC into getting this processed and back here on the double.

Of course, it will not work. I hope that we will show some respect for the EARC. The honourable member for Yeronga said that we should show some respect for the EARC. If the Government had any respect for the EARC, it would not be proposing this particular timetable. Shortly, I will go through what the commissioner and the part-time commissioners have said. It is quite clear from their comments that they are not at all impressed by this timetable. They see it as a bullying exercise by the Minister and the honourable member for Yeronga, who have shown a great deal of hostility this evening towards local government. No amount of rhetoric will get away from that fact.

This is a further attempt to manipulate EARC in the same way in which the Government manipulated EARC through the appointment of the part-time commissioners. The Government did not trust the parliamentary committee overseeing EARC to appoint the part-time commissioners. The Government delayed the appointment of the committee so that it could appoint the part-time commissioners itself. Only time will tell how successful the Government has been. I call upon the commissioners to stand up to the Government on this issue and not be rushed in this manner.

A great deal has been said by the honourable member for Yeronga about the fact that the Government has not put this proposal through the Governor in Council, but that in fact it has come before this Parliament for consideration. Somehow that makes up for the fact that the Government has given the commission less than five months to carry out this review. It will take time for the machinery to work, that is, getting the matter from here to the commission, and for the commission itself to take some action and look at the various aspects of this proposal. Whether it goes through the Governor in Council or the Parliament, the Minister knows full well that if he puts it through the Parliament he can wander around the State—because that is what he has been doing—and say that the Parliament has approved it and not the Goss ALP Government at all. This all adds weight to the bullying of the commissioners.

The Minister knows that in recent times other Governments have tried this proposal, and the Victorian and New South Wales Governments got their fingers nicely burnt in the exercise. No doubt this Government is concerned that it might also get its fingers burnt. The honourable member for Yeronga pointed out that this motion has remained

on the notice paper for 22 days, which makes the position worse. This gives the commissioners 22 fewer days to consider and deliberate on this proposal and to meet the deadline of 17 August. It is all designed to give the EARC the least amount of time possible to look at the review.

The honourable member raised the matter of accountability and implied that, because the proposal would go through Parliament and because Parliament would approve it on the numbers, this was something to do with greater accountability. That was great rhetoric, but it falls totally flat in substance and does not stand up to logic. The honourable member and the whole community know that. People understand what the ALP is trying to do to local authorities.

The honourable member talked a great deal about the system of voting mentioned in the motion. Because situations change throughout the State, local authorities have a number of systems of voting. What is suitable for one local authority in one area is totally unsuitable for another. I trust that the Government is not proposing—and I fear that it is—that there should be one system of voting in local government elections throughout the State. The honourable member for Yeronga mentioned Eastern Europe. The system thrown out by the Eastern European countries is the same type of system I am talking about, and the same system that the ALP talks about when it refers to bringing in one system of voting for all local authorities throughout the State.

Not one word was mentioned about people in the community and how they feel or what might best suit those involved in local authorities. If there is to be open, honest and accountable Government on this very important issue, the Government should be giving EARC a couple of years to consider all aspects of this matter properly. It is a very difficult and tricky matter. It is not straight up and down and it is far more difficult than a review of the State electoral boundaries. I will cover that point more fully in a moment.

The honourable member for Yeronga referred to honest and accountable Government. This has got nothing at all to do with being open, honest and accountable; in fact, the reverse is the case. Anyone looking at the matter will appreciate that. There was talk about the fact that there would be plenty of time for a proper and orderly approach because the local government electoral rolls close on 31 December 1990. If the honourable member for Yeronga knows anything about local government at all—and this evening members in this House have been shown that he does not—there will be one mad scramble to get the recommendations from the commission to the parliamentary committee, to report the recommendations to Parliament, and then to implement those recommendations in the form of changes to be made by the Government. There will be one mad scramble to meet those deadlines and for the whole operation to be finished by 31 December this year. The honourable member for Yeronga said that the Local Government Act allows 30 days for advertising. This will take up more time and make more difficult the task of meeting the deadlines for the rolls.

There has been a great deal of rhetoric and hype on the issue, but no substance, and a total lack of sincerity for local government and the people of this State. Mr Burns played on a number of points. He raised again the matter of the electoral rolls and stated that there was some five months in which to carry out this review, as if it could be done with the snap of one's fingers. There is in fact less than five months. It will be four months at the very most by the time the machinery cranks into action. That period is totally inadequate, and the commissioner and his part-time commissioners have indicated that that is the case.

I was interested to hear the Minister's hostility towards local authorities. He made it perfectly clear that he believes that there are far too many local authorities in the community. He says that, even though the people have the ability to petition the Minister to change the boundaries or amalgamate local government areas if they feel that a particular local government area should be combined with an adjoining local authority area. Some local authority areas contain only 300 or 400 electors. The required 10 per cent of names on a petition amounts to only 30 or 40 signatures. Although the Minister

could have commenced to take action in relation to that matter, nothing has happened. Instead, since January, members of the ALP and their cronies have indulged in a cranking-up operation to change local government divisions.

It must be remembered that the Government is again breaking one of the promises it made during the State election campaign. During that time, I attended a number of meetings and heard frontbench members of the Labor Party say that they would not be interfering in local government matters. Of course, everyone knew that it would not be very long before a Labor Government would get stuck into local government, and that is exactly what is taking place now. By giving the commission the minimum amount of time in which to report—and I am sure that the Australian Labor Party will be making a big submission and will be endeavouring to influence the commission's thinking as much as possible—the Government will be putting pressure on the commission. For a long time, the ALP has been well known for wanting Queensland to be divided into a number of regional councils instead of the present local government divisions. I do not believe that that proposal is in the best interests of the people of Queensland.

In common with State Government administration, local authorities have some shortcomings. However, since January, members of the ALP and their cronies have engaged in a concerted attack on local government. The Federal member for Bowman, Mr Sciacca, made a determined attack on all local government authorities—no doubt on behalf of the ALP's administrative committee, the Socialist Left and the AWU. He put his oar in and criticised the Albert Shire Council, and said how dreadful the divisions are.

Of course disparity exists among the Albert Shire divisions, and the Albert Shire Council would be the first to acknowledge that. I know that, because it realises that the disparities have been caused by rapid development in the area—which is the fastest-growing part of the State. That council has moved to rectify some of the disparities. I am sure that the council will take the necessary action; but, in any case, the matter could be referred to the EARC and a suitable timetable could be set down to have the matter fully examined. That process lies in stark contrast to the timetable that has been designed, by virtue of this motion, to manipulate and politicise local government.

The Chairman of the Electoral and Administrative Review Commission indicated very clearly that he was very conscious of the tightness of the timetable that specified 17 August as the date for the commission's report. He stated that, although he did not want to criticise Parliament, the longer the notice of motion was before the Parliament, the greater would be the pressure upon the commission. As I suggested earlier, the reason that the motion has laid on the table for 22 days is that the Government wants to put more pressure on the commission. My contention is supported by what the chairman, Mr Sherman, has clearly indicated. His comments were backed up by Mrs Watson Blake, who is a part-time commissioner. Mrs Watson Blake stated—

"I strongly endorse what Mr Hunter has said. I think it would be just so wrong to expect this commission to meet deadlines that are totally impractical. It is the long-term result that is important for Queensland and not meeting a deadline for political expediency."

Another part-time commissioner, Mr Hunter, has had a great deal of local government experience. He also expressed a grave concern when invited to comment on any problems that he perceived might confront the commission. He stated—

"Maybe I could make one comment—it has already been raised—and that is the difficulties that you will impose upon this commission, or the Parliament will impose on the commission, by citing deadlines. Could I say—and I hope my fellow commissioners agree—that, if the intent of Fitzgerald is truly to be realised, there must be a realistic appreciation of the workload that is involved; otherwise the results will be inferior, to say the least. We have only one case that I can cite—and I am not being critical of the Parliament—but it is difficult to understand how the commission can meet the first deadline cited in that reference."

Mr Speaker, when the grave concerns expressed by the commissioners are taken into account, the concerns felt by a number of members of this Parliament—even if they are not concerns felt by members of the ALP Government—can be understood. Of course, that deadline calls into question the sincerity of the Minister and the genuineness of the Government on the issue of the deadline.

Mr Sherman also pointed out that, merely to cope with the fact that the EARC is being called upon to rush its consideration of local government electoral boundaries, he has had to appoint additional staff. No mention has been made by the Government of the additional costs that the commission will incur. I understand that an additional five or six staff members are required, which will involve considerable cost.

I notice that the honourable member for Yeronga and the Minister are silent in respect of the fact that not once in the 24 recommendations made by Mr Fitzgerald does local government get a mention as a matter of priority.

Mr Beattie: It is in the Act.

Mr BEANLAND: I am sure that that matter is covered by the Act, but the point is that Mr Fitzgerald set out a list of priorities. Those 24 matters are set out at pages 370 and 371 of the report. Not once did local government get a mention. When it suits them, Government members are fond of citing Mr Fitzgerald; when it does not suit their particular cause, they are not so fond.

Mr Innes: You have to remember, they are the sons and descendants of Ned Hanlon.

Mr BEANLAND: That is quite so. Mr Beattie has a trade union background and represents the same basic area as Mr Hanlon represented. The point is that Government members know all about rorting, because a former Labor Premier started off the rorting of parliamentary electoral boundaries. Honourable members know that, because it is in the record.

Mr FOLEY: I rise to a point of order. The honourable member referred to the honourable member for Brisbane Central and me as knowing all about rorting. I find the remark offensive and I ask that it be withdrawn.

Mr BEANLAND: I withdraw the remark in respect of the honourable member for Yeronga.

Mr BEATTIE: I rise to a point of order. I ought to repeat previous words used in this House which may have been appropriate.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I suggest that the honourable member for Toowong withdraw the remark for the honourable member for Brisbane Central as well.

Mr BEANLAND: I withdraw the remark.

Recently, the honourable member for Brisbane Central did not mind standing in this place and being "Mr Foul Mouth". Of course, we all read in *Hansard* about that matter.

Mr BEATTIE: I rise to a point of order. I find that remark offensive and it has affected my sensitivities. I ask that it be withdrawn.

Mr BEANLAND: I certainly will. I was not the one who used the term "sleazebag" in this Chamber.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I warn the honourable member that quoting a term is the same as using it himself. It is unparliamentary. It is not permissible in this House for a member to use an unparliamentary term simply because it is quoted.

Mr BEANLAND: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

In his report to the Electoral and Administrative Review Committee, when referring to the State electoral boundaries and the procedure that he would adopt—and keeping in mind that the procedure for local authority boundaries is even more detailed and complex than the procedure for the State electoral boundaries—Mr Sherman pointed out that he would expect the EARC to be able to furnish its zonal report by the end of September this year and that, following parliamentary consideration of that report and the passage of any legislation, he would expect the EARC to proceed early next year with the conduct of a redistribution and hope for a further report with the complete redistribution by August or September 1991.

Mr Sherman highlighted that that timetable was necessary so that the commission could consider properly the review in relation to local authorities. I hoped that the Minister would have amended the motion and postponed the date until approximately June 1992. If he did that, it would be fair and reasonable. What is more, it would show that the Minister was reasonable and genuine; and it would show the Government's sincerity on the issue.

I assure the Government that it is not fooling the community or local authorities. They know exactly what the Minister and the Government are up to. Mr Sherman indicated that, in order to review the electoral boundaries, at the same time he would also probably look generally at the local government boundaries. That is understandable. The procedure would be similar for both exercises.

It is of little purpose for the Minister to point out that the motion provides that the report on the review of the electoral system is to be submitted by 17 August 1990 and that the report on the review of local authority boundaries is to be submitted by 1 July 1991. The chairman of the commission is correct when he points out that it will be easier to do both reviews at the one time, because they are not separate exercises.

When examining the timetable, the Government should keep in mind that Queensland has 134 local authorities, 1 327 elected councillors and 519 council divisions, compared with 89 State electoral districts. That gives one an idea of the magnitude of the exercise that the commission will undertake. As well, it will examine the various types of electoral systems.

The honourable member for Yeronga mentioned first-past-the-post voting. That system provides for the election of the chairman, the Mayor or, in the case of Brisbane, the Lord Mayor, and the election of councillors and aldermen. A variety of systems are at present in place. The reason why they are different is that people in different places have different needs. I can understand that. I hope that the Government is not attempting to thrust upon local authorities one particular system. I am sure that the commissioners will appreciate the difference in local authority requirements.

On a number of occasions I have indicated on behalf of the Liberal Party, and I do so again, that a need exists to examine local authority boundaries and to review them. However, that review should be carried out away from tension and imminent timetables. A timetable which sets 17 August as the date that the report be submitted cannot be met. I suggest that the report cannot be submitted before the end of the year.

If the Government were sincere about this issue, it would allow a couple of years so that the system could be examined properly. That would allow time for the report to be presented to the parliamentary committee, to be considered by the Parliament and then for the Parliament to make any legislative changes that are required. I believe that that would be fair and proper. Local government would then appreciate that the Government is sincere in what it is trying to do and is not trying to bully local government and the commissioners by ramming something through Parliament this evening which is, I believe, foreign to local government.

A number of local authorities have already expressed apprehension about this investigation, and understandably so when a four-month time limit is set for the EARC to investigate and recommend principles for the internal boundaries. They see it as a rush job and they believe that a number of problems will arise. I have spoken to a

number of very influential people within local government circles, and those are the sorts of things that they are saying.

I appeal to the Minister to reconsider this matter. Earlier this year we saw a number of members—and I see the name of the member for Brisbane Central on a press release—attempt to get stuck into local government. The member for Brisbane Central got stuck into the Gold Coast City Council and the Albert Shire in relation to a few different matters. He talked about corruption within local authorities. People in local authorities see this as part of a concerted attack.

If the Government is sincere and genuine, I appeal to the Minister to alter the dates and to allow sufficient time for adequate consideration by the EARC and also by the community at large. In the first place, submissions will have to be sought not only from local government but also from the community at large. Have you any idea, Mr Speaker, how long it will take to get around the whole of a State as large as Queensland? The mail services in some far-flung parts of Queensland are such that it takes a month for a letter to reach its destination. Is the Government going to deny the people who live in those areas a say in this matter? These are the sorts of issues that will have to be confronted.

I remind the Government of some of the smaller shires in the outback areas. I cite the example of the Shire of Diamantina which has a resident population of 206. It is 94 690 square kilometres in area and has 119 voters. Those 119 voters are going to want the opportunity to have a say in whether or not their local authority remains. It is all very well for members of this Parliament to say, "That shire has too few people. These small councils are inefficient and we should not have them." Those 119 electors presently have the ability to take some action in relation to that local authority. I have not noticed them doing so, and I believe that they will want to have a major say in this review.

The Boulia Shire is another example. It has a resident population of 560 and an enrolment of 265 and comprises an area of 61 176 square kilometres. All of those people have to be reached. They have to be afforded an opportunity to have a say. All this has to be done in four months. By the time EARC writes to those local authorities and makes the people in those areas aware of what is going on and they then have an opportunity to write back to EARC and voice their views, two to three months will have elapsed. The whole procedure is to be handled in four months. Once EARC receives submissions and considers them it may—and I hope that it would—write back to local authorities and publish in local newspapers exactly what course of action it proposes. If that is the case, a further time-frame is involved.

By any stretch of the imagination, four months is just not sufficient time. It is going to disfranchise thousands of people in these far-flung areas of Queensland, in these smaller local authorities. I believe that they will want to have a say, and I believe that they ought to be able to have a say. Even though some members of this Parliament might believe that those local authorities are very inefficient and that they ought to be amalgamated into one big regional council, that is not the view of the people in those areas. Because the Government is rushing this proposal through, those people just will not have an opportunity to have an input into what is going to take place and the type of recommendations that the EARC will make to this Parliament via the parliamentary committee.

I trust that for those reasons also this Government will feel an obligation to show the sincerity and genuineness of its argument by amending this motion. Even though it is not mandatory upon the EARC, it is nevertheless a clear indication to the EARC that the Government wants it to hurry up this whole procedure, and certainly to have it completed before the next local authority elections. Of course, local authority elections will come and go, and there will be more local authority elections after the one next year.

I believe that a number of changes are required to the electoral boundaries in particular. Nevertheless, sufficient time must be allowed for those people to have some say in this matter, and the Government is not doing that this evening.

Mr McGRADY (Mount Isa) (8.58 p.m.): I rise this evening with some sadness. Honourable members are debating a subject that is very close to my heart. I have been a member of the Mount Isa City Council for the last 17 years. In fact, on Saturday I celebrate my seventeenth anniversary as a member of that council, and on Sunday I will resign as the Mayor of that city. I become somewhat concerned when some members of the Opposition—and I emphasise "some"—try to use scare tactics and in fact treat this whole subject as a joke.

At the outset, I congratulate the Minister for the work that he has done in the short space of time that he has been the Minister for Local Government and for getting around the outback and discussing with the outback councils some of their concerns. I also congratulate the Minister on his initiative in setting up workshops so that the councils out in the bush can discuss some of their concerns and problems.

I appeal to the Opposition to forget about trying to score petty political points in relation to a movement that is so important to the State of Queensland. Local government is a movement and, as the Minister has said, there has not been an inquiry or a review into it since 1928. I can assure you, Mr Speaker, that all of those people who are genuinely interested in local government welcome this review with open arms. In fact, if some members of the Opposition only realised, there are many councils in Queensland today that are organising special council meetings to discuss the future of local government. I can assure the Opposition that they welcome the initiative of the Minister.

Local government has some fine men and women who spend many hours of dedicated service to their community for little reward and little pay. However, some people enter local government for the wrong reasons. I have great faith in the public of Queensland, because such people usually do not stay for too long.

It is pleasing to note that many members of this Parliament have come from and still are in local government. I am delighted that the Government side of the House has Councillor Margaret Woodgate, Councillor Lorraine Bird, Councillor Don Livingstone, Councillor Robert Schwarten, the former Mayor of Gladstone, Bill Prest, the former Deputy Mayor of Mackay, Ed Casey, the former Belyando councillor, Ken Smyth, and Bill Nunn, Nev Warburton and Dr Lesley Clark. I believe that this Government can speak with some authority on local government issues and problems.

Seventeen years ago I took my place in local government. I quickly came to the view that, because a review of local government had not been undertaken since 1928, changes were required. After 17 years in local government and two days before I resign as the Mayor of Mount Isa, I rise to support a motion relating to issues that I have been discussing for the past 17 years with my colleagues in the local government movement.

Mr FitzGerald: Did you ever move a motion at the annual conference?

Mr McGRADY: For the honourable member's information, I point out that, for many years, I have been a member of the executive of the Queensland Local Government Association. I am still a member of the executive of the Cities and Towns Association and the executive of the North Queensland Local Government Association. I believe that my credentials are as good as any held by members opposite.

Mr FitzGerald interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Lockyer! I remind the honourable member for Mount Isa that we are debating local government boundaries. The honourable member will return to the motion and other honourable members will cease making extraneous interjections that are irrelevant to this debate.

Mr McGRADY: As the honourable member would well know, I have moved many motions at Local Government Association conferences.

Mr FitzGerald: On that?

Mr McGRADY: If the honourable member wants to test me—last year I moved a motion on exactly this subject.

The Fitzgerald inquiry examined the State Government. There is no reason in the world why the local government movement should not be examined. That is exactly what is being set up tonight. Nobody who is genuinely interested in local government could possibly object to any of the provisions of this motion.

Local government is big business. It handles billions of dollars each year, purchases millions of dollars worth of heavy machinery and computer equipment and employs thousands of staff. In this day and age local government must be accountable. There is nothing wrong with examining the external boundaries of local authorities.

In Queensland a silly situation exists in which the offices of the Townsville City Council and the Thuringowa City Council are almost in the same street. Those councils employ thousands of people. The Cairns City Council and the Mulgrave Shire Council are situated almost in the same area. Similar situations exist with Mackay and Pioneer, Charters Towers and Dalrymple and many other councils around the Brisbane area. Each year those councils invest millions of dollars in plant and equipment and computerisation. There is nothing wrong with investigating the possibility of amalgamating some shires in order to save ratepayers' dollars.

I cite as an excellent example how the Mount Isa City Council has been negotiating for the past 15 years to try to secure from the Cloncurry Shire Council a small area of land. Former Ministers took the view that, unless the two councils could come to some agreement, they were not prepared to make a decision. That has delayed the development of the city of Mount Isa. Similar circumstances exist throughout the State. Therefore, I welcome this motion which will allow for an investigation into the external boundaries of local authorities in this State.

I turn now to regionalisation, which has already been mentioned. I do not envisage the amalgamation of 10 or 15 shires, but I believe that there is room for councils to work on a regional basis. In recent times, many councils have received grants from the Federal Government to do that and to investigate ways in which groups of councils can save money. That initiative should be welcomed.

Turning to internal boundaries—councillors will never vote themselves out of office. A system should be devised under which an investigation can be conducted into whether or not the people who live in shires and cities are getting a fair deal. The city of Mount Isa, with a population of 7 000, used to elect seven aldermen, yet the township of Camooweal, with 60 people, elected three aldermen.

Before I came onto the scene, the council was split down the middle. In fact, those three people who could secure 60 votes controlled the Mount Isa City Council. Surely, nobody on the opposite side of this House will suggest to me that that is fair, proper and democratic.

Mr Littleproud: Are there rural holdings in that shire?

Mr McGRADY: Is the member for Condamine suggesting to me that 90 people should elect three members of the council and 7 000 people elect seven? In fact, one person who secured 42 votes has the control of that city. Is that fair? Is that democratic?

In the west and in the remote areas, under the present system there are instances in which councils such as the Burke Shire Council simply cannot afford to continue to operate. In fact, the previous Government sacked the Burke Shire Council and appointed an administrator. I supported that move. But I am saying that there are problems with local authorities in this State today. Somebody somewhere has to start to address those problems.

There are special cases. I am not suggesting that all the councils in the west will be amalgamated. That is not on; it cannot be on. In many of those shires there is no community of interest. However, I am saying that along the coastal strip and in the

Brisbane area there is scope for the amalgamation of some councils. This is what this motion is talking about.

As I said before, I urge this House to forget the petty, parochial politics and for once to speak with one voice. The local government movement is crying out for assistance from this Parliament.

As I mentioned before, I am a member of the executive of the Local Government Association. I can assure honourable members opposite that the Local Government Association executive is not against this motion under discussion. The members of the executive have some reservations, but they see nothing wrong with this inquiry taking place, because on the whole they are genuine people committed to the local government movement.

Let me refer to some of the systems that operate in Queensland. This has been mentioned before by the Minister and it has been ignored by some of the previous speakers. Can anybody on the opposite side tell me in all honesty why the previous Government had one set of rules for one council and a different set of rules for another? Can anybody tell me why that Government abolished first-past-the-post voting in the city of Townsville and introduced a ward system? Can members opposite tell me why? Can they give me one good reason why that happened?

I will tell them why. The previous Government tried to do to Alderman Mike Reynolds what it could not do to Clem Jones. Time after time after time, the Government changed the Act to try to rid Brisbane city of one of its greatest Lord Mayors, and it failed. Then it tried to do the same thing to Mike Reynolds, and it failed. It tried to do the same thing to Jim Webber in Rockhampton, and it failed.

Mr Stephan: Are you saying there shouldn't be any wards at all?

Mr McGRADY: I am saying that what this inquiry is talking about is being consistent. If wards are to be introduced into Townsville, Rockhampton, Maryborough and Cairns, they should be introduced into every one of the 137 local authorities in the State of Queensland. There should be consistency.

This Government is proposing an independent inquiry into these aspects. The inquiry may say that the present system is correct. Because over the years many people on the opposite side of this House have rigged the boundaries, I have the strange view that they are petrified of change. They have rigged the State boundaries; they have rigged the local government boundaries.

I smiled before when I heard the potential Leader of the Liberal Party in this place talk about those western shires. Time after time after time, at Local Government Association conferences I have heard representatives of the Brisbane City Council decry the fact that the councillor from the Shire of Croydon, which has 130 ratepayers, can put his hand up, and that hand has the same value as that of Graham Quirk, who usually represents the Brisbane City Council. Graham Quirk is responsible for half a million electors, yet the Shire of Croydon has only 130 electors. I have heard representatives from the Brisbane City Council decry that in private. Tonight, the former Deputy Mayor paid lip service to the ideals of one vote, one value in local government. There has to be consistency.

I remind the House that this is probably my swan song on this local government issue. I am watching the clock. I did vow before I rose to my feet tonight that I would not take my full 30 minutes because, quite honestly, I have listened to some members opposite who have waffled on for 30 minutes and said precious little about local government, an industry which I have close to my heart and to which I have dedicated 17 years of my life. I feel most saddened that tonight some people should treat this movement as a joke.

I wish to return to the ward system. In the coastal cities some years ago public meetings were held and thousands and thousands of people signed petition and petition objecting to the Minister for Local Government's decision to bring in the ward system,

yet members opposite are talking about democracy and asking this House to tread slowly and not rush the whole process.

The previous Government did not allow the views of the people of Townsville, Mackay and other centres to be heard. In the 17 years that I was involved in local government, I can count on the fingers of one hand the times a Minister for Local Government came into my city—very, very seldom indeed. It was quite apparent to me that the previous Government had little respect for the views of local government and certainly did not wish to discuss any aspect of it with the people.

In conclusion, I again appeal to the members of this Chamber to forget petty, parochial politics. They have been elected by the people of Queensland to come to this place and make a constructive contribution to the affairs of this State. I regret that in the short space of time that I have been in this House I have witnessed examples of members simply trying to score petty political points. This issue is important.

I commend the Minister and the Government on this motion. I am proud to have been able to make a few comments tonight on some of the issues that for many years I have felt needed addressing. There is nothing for anybody at all to be afraid of with this motion because all it does is refer some of these issues to the umpire—that is all.

Mr Beattie: The independent umpire.

Mr McGRADY: Yes, to the independent umpire. If my friends on the opposite side of this Chamber are afraid of the umpire's decision—fine. They will probably vote against this motion, but if they believe in democracy for local government and if they believe in allowing the umpire to have the final say, they should support this motion.

Mr Speaker, I commend this motion to the House and I ask all members to give it their 100 per cent support.

Mr STEPHAN (Gympie) (9.19 p.m.): It gives me pleasure to join in this debate this evening on the Electoral and Administrative Review Commission's undertaking a review of local authority boundaries.

Having listened to the comments so far, I could be excused for thinking that using the EARC for this particular purpose is of no great moment. However, this review had not been mentioned before the election. It came to my notice earlier in the year when the member for Bundaberg was heard on television espousing the need for changes to the electoral boundaries of local authorities. It was quite obvious to me then that such a review was on the agenda of the Labor Party, and that it was aiming for it to be undertaken by EARC.

However, I ask, as others have tonight, "Why the urgency? Why is it that the Labor Party has decided at this particular stage that the review must go through in a very short space of time and that the whole of the 138 local authorities in this State are going to be subject to change whether they like it or not?" Basically that is what this motion amounts to.

Comment has been made about changes that were made to two or three local authorities previously. There is a difference between making a change to a small number of local authority areas and trying to review the whole system of local authorities throughout the State. It is in that context that I urge caution. I again ask: why the urgency to push it through at this point? Why the urgency to have it in place before the next local authority elections?

Members have heard a lot about fair and equitable representation. What is classified as fair and equitable? What is in the minds of members when they make that statement? Do they mean that all local authorities have the same number of electors? Is that the only reason for calling for fair and equitable representation?

What about the ability of the electors to be able quickly to contact their representative, as is necessary in many instances? What about the differences in property valuations

between one local authority area and another? What about the difference in rates between one area and another? What about the difference in the population?

All of those aspects come into consideration and are argued about on many occasions. One needs only to read through some of the minutes of local authority meetings to realise that there is a concern about areas that have a very high rateable valuation and in which the level of rates that residents are paying is much higher on a percentage basis than that of residents of adjoining areas. In many instances, the rates are out of proportion to the services they receive. The rates payable in one area when compared to another are out of kilter. When members are considering the question of fair and equitable representation and a review of local authority boundaries, those factors must be considered.

From time to time one hears complaints about the system of setting rates, just as we are now hearing complaints about the determination of boundaries. Rates are set at a certain level in the dollar, but at the moment the rate in the dollar set in certain areas is causing more concern than one can poke a stick at.

Whenever changes occur, one finds that someone is disadvantaged. There is always a lot of dissension in the ranks. That is only natural. That is what we will be looking at if this motion is passed. I admit that there are problems in local government, but the Government will find that, if the proposed changes are made, there will be a great deal of heartache and concern caused to those people who are adversely affected. One problem people face is an inability to contact their local representative when they want to voice their concern about the valuation placed on their property and the amount of rates they have to pay when compared with residents of other areas in close proximity.

The Minister referred to interior boundaries. When this matter goes through Parliament and the final result is handed to the local authorities, they will have the responsibility of deciding the boundaries within the local authority areas. I can see this causing problems, because it has previously caused problems in local authorities which have the ward system or divisions. Any mention of altering the divisions or the internal boundaries causes concern. We have only to read the newspapers or talk to councillors to know that it is not an easy task. It is easy to say that councillors should behave like ladies and gentlemen but it is not always easy to get agreement. It is always the fault of the other person that agreement cannot be reached.

I urge consultation all the way through this exercise. The local authority representatives on State bodies and divisional bodies, as well as the local representatives themselves, strive to work the whole system out to the benefit of their areas. If we go along the right path, we will all be working together to bring respectability and benefit to the local authority areas; it is not that they do not have respectability at the moment, of course, but their work is not always recognised and appreciated.

Local authority representatives are the first contact for the people when they have problems. Of course, if other electorates are like mine, many constituents contact the local State member with problems concerning potholes and gardens, for instance. Members of local authorities are really representative of the people.

It has been claimed that changes like this have been used in an endeavour to get rid of a particular Lord Mayor or local authority representatives. It was pointed out to the Minister that this could rightly be classified as an attempt to get rid of the Lord Mayor of Brisbane. The Minister himself accused the previous Government of doing something that he is doing now in a far larger way.

Mr Beattie: What proof have you got that we are trying to get rid of the Lord Mayor?

Mr STEPHAN: Am I led to believe that the honourable member supports the Lord Mayor of Brisbane? I could be excused for thinking that that is the case. I know that he puts his hand up whenever the Lord Mayor does anything and that he is always complimentary of her decisions and actions. If he is that way inclined, that is okay by me.

A Government member interjected.

Mr STEPHAN: I realise that I am not always correct in what I say and I realise that the judgment of honourable members on the other side of the Chamber is not always correct. I also acknowledge that sometimes Government members are correct. If Government members are not taking this action to get rid of the Lord Mayor of Brisbane, I will acknowledge that point. I realise also that they will be quite pleased and satisfied if the Lord Mayor is re-elected at the next election.

The honourable member for Mount Isa said that many councils welcome this review, but he was unable to mention any particular one of them. If there is such a demand for change in the local authorities, it is strange to me that he did not have, at his fingertips, the names of a couple of them that had contacted him and told him that they went along with the review.

I do not wish to do as others have done and take up the time of the House. I urge caution in this review and I urge that there be a great deal of consultation to ensure that the wishes of the local authorities are foremost in the minds of the decision-makers.

Mr CAMPBELL (Bundaberg) (8.28 p.m.): I would like to tell the honourable member for Gympie why I am here and pushing for changes to be made before 31 March 1991, which is 12 months away, so that we can have the first democratic local authority elections in Queensland. Does he know what I want to do away with? I want to do away with the patronage, the abuse of power and the sleazy deals that the influential people are making in local government. That is what is happening all the time.

I can give the honourable member for Gympie one example. In Division 1 of Woocoo Shire, 336 people elect four representatives whereas, in Division 2, 1 659 people elect three representatives. The representatives from Division 1, who represent less than one third of the number of voters in Division 2, impose higher and differential rates on all citizens in Division 2. I am here to make certain that we look after those people who have been discriminated against in Woocoo and are being discriminated against by the imposition of higher rates. It is also happening in Woodgate. I am here to look after those pensioners and unemployed people who are being ripped off by officials put there by the former Government who have abused their power for the last 34 years.

That is what this is all about. It is not about rushing anything through; it is about making certain that all people get a fair go. This will happen. The honourable member for Somerset took this House back to the horse and buggy days. That was the kind of logic and argument that he used. He said that the system should be left as it is because many of the boundaries go back to that time. These boundaries have resulted in voting imbalances and people are not getting a fair go.

In the past Mr Gunn went to Executive Council and forced the Governor to sign changes that were not wanted. In the space of two months the former Government imposed undemocratic changes on people. The members of the Liberal Party cannot talk because they were in it with the former Government. This Government is giving 12 months for the review and the members of the public will be asked what they think should be done. The former National Party Government did not do that, which was the grubbiest thing it ever did. The former National Party Government asked the Governor to impose those unjust boundaries against the democratic rights of the people.

When he was Premier, Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen said that he made a mistake when he appointed the present Governor because the Governor would not sack some of his previous Ministers. It was all about the abuse of power. Opposition members cannot get into their minds that it is time that justice and democracy played a part in the affairs of this State. If any mention was made of political expediency it was made back in 1982 by members of the National Party and Liberal Party. In only two months they changed the boundaries and imposed the new boundaries on the people. This Government will not do that; it is giving the commission time.

The honourable member for Somerset put up a red herring when he compared the Burke Shire with the Kingaroy Shire. I will not compare the number of voters in the

Burke and Kingaroy Shires, but I ask: why is the voting imbalance in the Kingaroy Shire 27.3 to 1, whereas in the Burke Shire—which is the most northern and western shire in Queensland—the imbalance is 2.2 to 1? It is all about fairness within the present boundaries. How can Opposition members possibly justify one person who lives outside the town of Kingaroy having 27 times more voting power than a person who lives in the town of Kingaroy itself? If Opposition members try to justify that, they are back in the horse and buggy days. They may have had some chance when there was no electricity, roads, telephones and other forms of communication, but they cannot say today that there should be a voting imbalance of 27 to 1 between people who are living only five kilometres apart.

The member for Somerset said that this voting imbalance has come about because of population movements. I ask: why did the National Party not do something about it for the last 34 years and ensure that it did not happen? The voting imbalance is not occurring only out west where the tyranny of distance could be argued; it is happening all over Queensland. The worst voting imbalance is to be found in Kingaroy, which is 27 to 1. Broadsound is next with a voting imbalance of 23 to 1.

The reason for this voting imbalance is to provide power to influential people. That has happened time and time again. People have used their power to get things for themselves and they deny the provision of services to people in country towns. The National Party has discriminated against people in country towns. The imbalance in the voting has given people living in the regions outside the country towns unjust and discriminatory power. Therefore people in the country towns are not being provided with services. The Woocoo Shire is just one example, but later in my speech I will mention other shires to illustrate that people in country towns are not getting a fair go.

Mr Littleproud: Will you take an interjection?

Mr CAMPBELL: Yes, I will take an interjection.

Mr Littleproud: Would you concede that lots of rural divisions in these shires that you are attacking subsidise services in the town because they appreciate that they all share those services?

Mr CAMPBELL: The honourable member has stated that some people in these divisions with very few voters are subsidising people in country towns. In the Woocoo Shire the opposite has happened, because higher rates are being charged. What is happening at Woodgate in the Isis Shire? Because of the high values placed on their properties, the people in Woodgate are subsidising people in the rural areas. The honourable member for Condamine should not mention that matter. It is an illogical argument and can be shot down in flames very easily.

The member for Toowong said that this Government was trying to bully the commission into making changes in local government. It is 12 months before a local government election will be held. The Government does not want the commission to change external boundaries, but it wants the commission simply to establish fair voting systems within each shire. The Government is saying that people who live in the Shires of Burke and Barcaldine should be treated equally. The National Party is not concerned with the investigation and says that it should not be done. It wants to put it off for another four years. I believe in democracy. People who live in Longreach have the same rights as people who live five kilometres out of Longreach. The National Party has not treated people in country towns equally.

The member for Toowong also tried to say that the review would be rushed and would not be fair. What possible justification can there be for one town having wards imposed on it within two months and the next town not having wards, but holding elections by popular vote? When a comparison is made among cities, why does the National Party not say that the people who live in a country town should have the same vote value as people who live in a city on the coast? The imbalance that exists among local government electorates has to be rectified.

I want to ensure that, in 1991, the people of Queensland will be given their proper rights. In 1991, I will be proud to say that I was able to influence a change in the system so that the people of Queensland can enjoy their democratic rights and the local government system can operate effectively. If members of the National Party want to deny that to the people of Queensland, they can go right ahead. They have been doing it for years. I am proud to stand up in this Chamber and say that I want justice for all the people of Queensland, and that I want it by 1991 because I want to do away with patronage, abuses of power and sleazy deals.

I wonder whether honourable members have seen the "big joke"? Perhaps they do not talk to people who live in country towns such as Longreach and Barcaldine. If honourable members were to visit those towns, the people who live there would tell them to drive along a dirt track until they come to a stretch of bitumen that is 800 metres long, and then drive another kilometre before turning off. If the local people were asked, "How come the bitumen is on the road?", they would reply, "Oh, that stretch of road is in front of the Shire Chairman's place." That type of discrimination happens time and time again in local authority areas.

Mr J. N. Goss: That one is 30 years old.

Mr CAMPBELL: Yes, but it has happened. I have lived in those areas, and I know that it has happened.

In the early 1980s, the National Party changed the shire boundaries of Duaringa. That was done in a very sneaky fashion because instead of a property known as the Ten Mile being part of one shire, it was desired to include it as part of another shire. That occurred so that former Premier Bjelke-Petersen's family farm could be saved two-thirds of the cost of local authority rates. That is why members of the National Party change boundaries—to enable people to save money on rates, and not on the basis of electoral justice or because of the desire to give everyone a fair deal. The member for Condamine should remember that incident because he was a member of the National Party Government at that time when the sleazy deal was put into effect. Each member of the National Party Government at that time sat back and enjoyed himself. The Government even took the proposal to the Governor. That was a shocking thing to do.

The people of Queensland simply must have changes made to the local government electoral boundaries. I say that not principally because of a desire to see fairness become part of the voting system or because of a desire to strengthen democratic rights, but because presently there are shires in Queensland that are going broke. Unless the State Government does something about ensuring that local government electorates are efficient in terms of size, there will not be any people left in country areas. The Government has to examine the economic viability and establish the minimum size of shires so that a reasonable level of services can be provided. If something is not done, it will not be necessary to provide services for people who live in country towns such as Charleville and Quilpie because the people will not be living there. They will move to coastal areas and to shires that can offer an acceptable standard of services. The reason that those services are not being provided in country shires is that the established powers have been abused and funds have not been spent efficiently or effectively in meeting the needs of the people. There is a desperate need to determine the optimum size of shires to ensure the economic viability of local authority areas.

People say to me, "You are always trying to belt down people who live in the country but you do not know what they want." I cannot see any reason why Queensland should not have a uniform voting system. Can any honourable member tell me why the shire of Bulloo does not have divisions but is still able to give local government electors a fair go? In that shire, an average of 75 people vote for each candidate. In contrast to that, Quilpie, which is located to the north of Bulloo, has four divisions. Why is that the case? I can inform the House that it is not because divisions were the choice of the majority of the people; it was the choice of the people who exercised the relevant powers. Electoral justice was denied to the majority of people in that area.

It is interesting that the Diamantina Shire Council does not contain any divisions. The council believes that a popular vote is the right system.

Mr Hobbs: It is their choice.

Mr CAMPBELL: It was their choice? Is it not interesting that people say that far-western areas should not have divisions because there are insufficient numbers of people? How is it, then, that the neighbouring Barcoo Shire Council has an average of 34 people voting for each candidate, whereas the Diamantina Shire Council has an average of 20 people to each candidate? It is even more curious that, although the Bulloo Shire Council has an average of 25 people to each candidate, it does not have any divisions.

The point I am making is that local government areas in Queensland are inconsistent throughout the State. It is about time that local government authorities returned to a uniform voting system. It is no use saying that, if a uniform system is introduced, the people who live in western districts will be disadvantaged or people in metropolitan local authorities areas will be disadvantaged. The problem is that so many inconsistencies exist in Queensland that a review simply must be undertaken. The Government intends to ensure that such a review is undertaken.

The Murgon Shire Council is another interesting local authority area. Its rural division contains fewer people than the town division, and voters in the rural division have a greater number of representatives. Because of that imbalance, the electors who live in the rural division are able to influence the council's decision on the level of rates. Whenever consideration of the economical size of shires arises, the suggestion is often made that western areas can have larger electorates. The Perry Shire Council is located west of Bundaberg and contains four divisions. One division contains 22 voters, which means that each councillor is elected by 11 people.

Mr Mackenroth: That is probably his family.

Mr CAMPBELL: It probably is. He would only need two families to gather 11 votes—perhaps his brother, his sister and a couple of children.

That person is a councillor on the Perry Shire Council. I can understand why people try to justify an average of 20 voters in western shires, but how can an average of 11 voters for one candidate be justified for a shire located just west of Bundaberg? There is a drastic need for change so that the electoral system will be fair. I am proud to say that by 1991 the Government will change the voting system so that it will be fair for all Queenslanders.

Mr FITZGERALD (Lockyer) (9.45 p.m.): I will try not to repeat the arguments raised by other members. I will attempt to counter some of the arguments put forward by the Government and to make some pertinent points. The argument is not whether there should be a redistribution or whether the boundaries of local authorities in Queensland should be examined. The argument is about the time that the House is allowing the commission to report back to it.

The commission already has the responsibility to examine local authority boundaries. An Act of Parliament charges the commission with that responsibility. This motion is about a request by the Parliament to the commission to furnish a report to it within the required timetable.

After passing the Act last year, it is highly improper of this House suddenly to present to the commission a request that it meet a deadline in reporting back to the Parliament. The original legislation charges the commission with the responsibility to examine forthwith the State's electoral system, and then the electoral boundaries. If the Government had any faith in the commissioners who have been appointed, it would ask them to investigate the areas of responsibility and deal with them as they saw fit.

In order to strengthen his argument, the honourable member for Bundaberg spoke about visiting a country shire and asking why a strip of bitumen had been laid on a

particular road. He stated that he was told that the road had been bituminised because it went past the shire chairman's residence.

Mr Sullivan: Remember that one?

Mr FITZGERALD: The honourable member for Glass House asked, "Remember that one?" The argument was that, because of the unfair electoral system in that shire, the chairman was able to use his influence to have the road in front of his house bituminised. Unfortunately, Government members forget that the shire chairman is not elected by country people; he is elected by the whole shire. If he is so stupid as to betray the confidence placed in him by the electors of the shire, at the next election he is thrown out. If that is the strength of the argument of the member for Bundaberg, that argument needs looking at. I advise him to leave that argument out of his press release, because somebody will cut him to pieces.

The honourable member for Yeronga stated that the matter is referred by the Parliament, which has the right to refer matters to the commission. He was correct when he stated that, under section 2.10 (4) of the Electoral and Administrative Review Act, the Governor in Council can refer matters to the commission. However, I note with some glee in my heart that he said that it would be only proper that this House should have the responsibility for doing so.

Recently, when we debated the appointment of the members of the Parliamentary Committee for Electoral and Administrative Review, he will remember that I was most upset that this House could not nominate who appointed those part-time commissioners. I said that it was proper that this House should elect a committee that had that responsibility. I am glad to see that he now shares my view.

When the Electoral and Administrative Review Act was passed by this House last year, the present Minister for Housing and Local Government, Mr Burns, did not argue that a review should be carried out to this timetable. In that debate, mention was made that the electoral system needed review, because it was included in the Act. However, he made no mention of any timetable. Fortunately, when they were appointed, the commissioners knew the job that they had to carry out.

It is proper that we all support a review of the local authority boundaries and the method of election of councillors, aldermen and chairmen. I support that totally. If any Government members attempt to say that Opposition members—particularly me—are not in favour of a complete review of all the issues that have been raised, they are completely misleading the general public. I want it placed on record that I believe it is high time that a review was carried out. I acknowledge that a great imbalance in the voting strength exists. Everything should be taken into consideration. When there are large country areas that contribute a lot of rates and smaller urban areas that make a contribution in a different way, careful examination should be made of the voting system. It would not be proper to say that every electorate should have a one vote, one value system or that every shire should have wards.

Local authorities are sensitive to changes in the electoral system. Earlier, the honourable member for Mount Isa stated that the people of Townsville were disgusted and upset when a ward system was introduced in that city. I represent part of the city of Toowoomba. In 1982, the local authority elections took place on a ward system for the first time, with one member for each ward. Prior to that, there was one division for the total area of the city of Toowoomba.

Mr Beattie: Was it a good system?

Mr FITZGERALD: The honourable member for Brisbane Central asks, "Was it a good system?" Both systems have merits. As another honourable member said, councillors or aldermen who were elected under a particular system do not want any change to that system. That is only natural. The member for Brisbane Central was elected to this place on certain boundaries. Most of his colleagues would not like to have their boundaries changed very much. They would like to go to the people again on the same boundaries.

That is only natural. I think that most councillors would also be quite happy to go to the people again on the same wards. They have confidence in the people who elected them.

I just make the point about how sensitive the people of Townsville and Toowoomba were to the last changes. If they were sensitive then, they are going to be equally sensitive now. If the Government is going to ask the commission to travel widely throughout the State to consult and to come back and give a report to the Minister responsible and also to the parliamentary committee, and then expect to have a debate and to introduce legislation containing the recommendations passed by this Parliament, I believe that it is highly improper for it to expect the commissioners to comply with the time limit.

I know that the Government is backing off and that Government members are using words like "request" and underlining the fact that the time limit is not mandatory. However, I want it on record—and I believe all members of the Opposition want it on record—that the Opposition wants the review to be carried out. I would say to the commissioners, "You will only get one really good go at it. Please do it properly and do not consider yourselves under any pressure whatsoever to meet that deadline if you cannot do the job properly in that time. We have appointed you and we have confidence in you and your ability."

I do not want it recorded that the Government used its numbers in this Parliament to give a little bit more weight to its argument for having the review done quickly. I want the commissioners to have a record of the views of all members of this Parliament. Members of the Opposition—particularly me—want the commissioners to examine the boundaries and do all of the things that they have been requested to do. Of course, the present Act provides for all those things to be done, anyway. The Opposition simply asks that they do the job properly and correctly, because if they do not get it right, and if they make bad mistakes, the local authorities will never forgive them.

It is very difficult to adjust internal local authority boundaries. I say to the commissioners, "If you are going to go through the whole process of readjusting all the hundreds and hundreds of boundaries in all the local authority areas throughout the State of Queensland, please give it your best shot and try to get it right the first time because it will be very, very difficult to get it right in the long term if you do not."

It is with pleasure that I tell the House that I am going to vote against this motion. I wish the commissioners all the best in their deliberations in regard to this very serious matter. I am sure that they will complete the job as quickly as they can. I simply ask that they be mindful of the fact that they have to review the State electoral boundaries first. As far as I am concerned, that is the top priority. The other matters should then be considered in due course.

Mr HOBBS (Warrego) (9.56 p.m.): It is my pleasure to support this motion. There has been spirited debate from both sides. That is always healthy. It is part of the democratic process, and I am very pleased to see it—

Mr Beattie: Just as fair boundaries are.

Mr HOBBS: I will come to that in due course.

I accept that the review is going to happen. I do not doubt that the rush to have the review completed was politically motivated. However, the review is going to take place, and we have to make it work. I want to comment on the remarks made by the member for Yeronga, who said that it was not politically motivated and that the Minister had the right under the Local Government Act to instigate his own review of local authority boundaries and voting systems. That is quite correct; he does have that right. However, it is the motive behind it that members of the Opposition are concerned about.

I believe that the expectations of members of the Government for a one vote, one value system in the local government voting system are wrong. Perhaps the debate has gone wrong in that respect. Honourable members must face facts. I can understand that

in areas of closer settlement some problems might arise. That is one thing. However, the local government scene throughout Queensland is certainly another.

Mention has been made of the fact that quite a few Government members are local government representatives. That is very good. However, Labor does not have many representatives on the councils of the large and remote shires. Although such shire councils may have one or two Labor members, they do not represent the majority on any of the bigger, more remote shires. Members of the National Party control many of the 134 local authorities throughout Queensland that I want to talk about tonight.

I do not see all that many problems with the present system. The chairman of a shire is elected by popular vote and, of course, the Mayor of a city or town is also elected by popular vote. The councillors, in their wards and divisions, can be elected as a whole by the people of the shire. The system varies between shires. Therefore, checks and balances are already in place. If one looks on the political side, local authorities may have a Labor council but they may also have a Liberal Mayor, or vice versa, because there are different systems for the election of the Mayor and the council. The Mayor is elected by popular vote and the alderman are elected to individual wards.

Mr Littleproud: A lot of them are non-party political.

Mr HOBBS: That is right. That is the point that I want to make.

I have spent a lot of time in local government. My colleagues and I prided ourselves on the fact that we tried not to be political.

Mr Beattie interjected.

Mr HOBBS: What I have said is quite right. We took a very, very strong view on that point. It was only in the larger centres such as Brisbane, Townsville and Mount Isa that politics entered into local authorities, and it ruined it. That is where the problem lay. Now there are checks and balances.

The honourable member for Bundaberg mentioned how some shire councillors are elected by a whole shire and others are elected by wards. Local authorities have a choice. If they wish to change the system, they should contact the Minister and he will change it.

Mr Ardill: They have an advantage. Why change it?

Mr HOBBS: Because some shires are happy with the system, they do not want to change it. Some shires in my electorate vote for councillors as a whole and others vote in divisions. That is their choice.

Mr Nunn: It was rammed down the throat of the Maryborough people.

Mr HOBBS: I am talking about the local government system whereby councillors can be elected by shires or wards. That system has existed for donkey's years.

Some people say that the preferential or Senate system might be better. In due course we will find out. The present system has worked quite well. For example, Brisbane has had popular mayors such as Clem Jones, Frank Sleeman and Alderman Harvey.

Mr Beattie: Frank Sleeman was not a popular mayor. He was elected by caucus.

Mr HOBBS: Perhaps he was not popular. I might have made an error there.

No matter how much the Labor Party tries to fiddle the system, it will not get rid of Sallyanne Atkinson. I suspect that the main thrust of this move is to defeat the Lord Mayor. I support what the honourable member for Gympie said about that matter.

The Minister mentioned some very interesting points about all the sins of the past. He spoke about the terrible things that the Liberal/National Party coalition did years

ago. When will this Labor Government understand that it is here to govern? On 2 December it won Government on the basis of accountability and purity. It claims that it will not do what it accuses previous Governments of doing. Why is this Government using the past as the basis for an investigation now?

Mr Littleproud: Serious allegations about the Townsville City Council were mentioned last year in this House.

Mr HOBBS: That is quite true.

The main reason why the local authority system in Queensland and other parts of Australia is not favoured is that most local authorities have a conservative base, even though in most areas they do not practise politics in local government.

I turn now to the types of people who might be elected as councillors. What would make somebody want to join a shire council? Whenever a councillor goes out, somebody chews his ear. Councillors are usually community-minded people who have the ability to devote time to local government.

Mr FitzGerald: Most of the country fellows get no salary, compared with some of the Labor towns and cities that have very high salaries.

Mr HOBBS: That is quite correct.

Many people who are elected to local governments are self-employed and tend to be conservative. There is no doubt in my mind that the Labor Government is trying to undermine the conservative base throughout Queensland.

Mr Dollin: One vote, one value.

Mr HOBBS: I will mention one vote, one value in a minute.

The Labor Government really wants to make the town vote higher than the country vote.

Mr Foley: What we want to do is reform the system so it is fair.

Mr HOBBS: I will come to that.

For instance, Charleville, which is where Mr Beattie's in-laws live, had a town council and a country council which operated independently of each other. When the town council went broke, an agreement was reached and the country council paid all the bills for the town council. That is what tends to happen in rural areas away from closer-settled areas. I am not sure how the system works in this part of the State. All I know is that it is different in other areas of the State. Uniformity across the spectrum does not work.

In most shires 96 to 98 per cent of rate revenue comes from the rural areas. However, I estimate that approximately 70 per cent of that revenue is spent in the towns.

Mr FitzGerald: No taxation without representation.

Mr HOBBS: That is not bad. That is very good.

Some honourable members are really asking for the authority to spend the money of the rural fellows. That is exactly what they are doing. If the Government really wants to solve that problem, it can impose a poll tax. That might not go over too well, though. I do not see a lot of members on the other side of the Chamber grasping that great thought.

Mr Elder: Look at the last conservative who tried that—she is struggling now.

Mr HOBBS: I do not think that the Government is likely to try it, either.

The Federal member for Bowman and the member for Bundaberg, Mr Clem Campbell, were also very, very vocal about this matter. I see members opposite nodding.

When this inquiry was first mentioned, the Minister said that it would not eventuate. Suddenly, there was a Cabinet meeting and out it came again. It is obvious that Mr Campbell was very persuasive of the members of Cabinet. If anyone has problems, he should take them to Mr Campbell, who is obviously a very forceful speaker.

Mr Beattie: He is, too.

Mr HOBBS: Very forceful indeed; that is quite correct.

I refer now to boundary changes. I have had a bit of experience in this field. Boundary changes in local authorities are very difficult to carry out. Before boundaries can be changed, the changes have to be acceptable to both the shires. That is not unreasonable. A while ago the member for Mount Isa said that he wanted a part of the Cloncurry Shire in his electorate. He has a vested interest in that. I think he said that he has been trying for 17 years to get a part of that shire.

I think it is only fair and reasonable that the shires should agree on any change that is likely to be made to the boundaries. The member for Yeronga said that a period of 30 days was allowed in which objections could be made to the Minister. Then, of course, the matter goes to the Governor in Council. Provided that the shires agree on the changes, there is then some chance of changing the boundaries. That system has worked quite well where the shires have agreed. But if the shires do not agree, it is back to the drawing board. That is only to be expected. Obviously, the shire that disagrees with the change believes that its ratepayers will be disadvantaged by the deal.

Mention was made of Kingaroy and the fact that on the outskirts of the town three representatives are elected by 160 voters, whereas in the town itself three representatives are elected by 4 370 voters. The Kingaroy Shire has an area of 2 422 square kilometres. Many of the other shires that people have spoken about tonight, such as the Shires of Barcoo, Boulia, and Diamantina, have areas of 95 000 square kilometres. Barcoo Shire has an area of 62 000 square kilometres. What happens in those areas is different from what happens in the rest of Queensland.

Mr McGrady referred in great detail to local government matters. I thank him for the service that he has given to local government over a long period. He obviously is a dedicated man in that respect.

Mr Littleproud: A reasonable approach, too.

Mr HOBBS: Yes. I felt that in some respects his contribution was quite good, but in others it was a bit misguided. I will try to straighten out those matters on which he went wrong.

He said that the councils welcome the review. Has anybody seen the Local Government Association, the body that represents councils in Queensland, stand up and say, "We want these boundaries changed. We want the review."? I have not seen it do that; nor, to my knowledge, has anybody else. Suddenly, all these councils are welcoming the review. I do not believe that that is correct. Mr McGrady said that no-one could object to the review.

What happened in New South Wales is very, very clear in people's minds. Shires were amalgamated and they were completely decimated. Some areas of that State have no local authority representation. That is what happened in New South Wales under a Labor Government. I can assure honourable members that many people in Queensland are very concerned about what any Labor Government would do to the local authorities.

Mr McGrady said that the local government boundaries were rigged. It is very, very difficult to blame the National Party Government for that. I do not know when the boundaries were drawn, but I guess it was back in about 1928. I suspect that in those days a Labor Government might have been in power.

The other point mentioned by the honourable member was that Croydon, which has a population of 230, elects one representative to the Local Government Association's annual conference. In Brisbane, 513 000 people elect one representative. With 1.7 million

people in Queensland, if a one vote, one value system were to be introduced, Brisbane would have one vote and two votes would be left for the rest of the State. To which of the 134 shires that remain would those two votes be given?

Perhaps the one vote, one value system could be applied to CHOGM. If Australia, which has a population of 17 million, is used as the base and is given one vote, India, with 300 million people, would receive 18 votes. Perhaps New Zealand, which has a much smaller population, would receive a quarter of a vote. Do honourable members think New Zealand would like that? Is that fair? I believe that there would be problems in trying to sell that system to all those nations in the Commonwealth.

Mr Campbell made a couple of points. He asked why the National Party had not done something earlier about local government. Although the Local Government Association has made run of the mill requests in the past, it has not made representations for anything like the major review referred to in this motion. There needs to be a bit of rationale in the Government's thinking about local government.

I feel confident in saying that this review will go ahead, anyway. The main thing to do is to make sure that it works. There has to be fair and rational debate. Opposition members have heard a lot from the members of the Labor Party about fair and equitable representation. We need a fair and equitable approach to the whole matter of local government in Queensland.

Mr LESTER (Peak Downs) (10.16 p.m.): As the hour is getting late I will make only a few brief comments. Firstly, I wish the commissioners well. I suggest that they should not be set a timetable that they cannot meet. Theirs will be a difficult and time-consuming job.

As I represent country people, I have had many representations from country people who are concerned that the number of country members in Parliament is not as strong numerically as they would like. I am continually being called upon to fight for more members to represent country areas.

The reason for that request is that country people provide a great deal of financial support to city people. They do that with wool, grain, beef, cotton, gems, gold and coal.

Mr Dollin: City people own a bit of that, too.

Mr LESTER: Country people are saying that we should be a team. I take the point that the honourable member made. However, because of the job that they do in helping to support the economy of this State, country people should not be denied adequate representation. There is no doubt in my mind that, per head of population, country people do more to support this nation than do city people. I am not having a go at city people about that, it is just a fact of life. Therefore, country people should be given consideration as far as an increase in representation is concerned.

Not too long ago, a referendum was held in Queensland. The people of Queensland voted for the retention of the existing Federal electoral boundaries. I am not suggesting that those boundaries should remain as they are. I do suggest, though, that fair consideration must be given to the concerns of country people.

A country member of Parliament cannot possibly attend on his constituents as often and as easily as a city member.

Mr Sullivan interjected.

Mr LESTER: There are some people in the Labor Party who do not understand the feelings of the country people. I am putting forward their point of view, one that has been put to me on many occasions. They have said, "Vince, we need more members representing us in the country. We get annoyed when we see so much money being spent in Brisbane and on the Gold Coast and other places in the south-east corner." Country people feel that they are being denied money. That has not happened in the Peak Downs electorate because I have been a super representative there.

Mr Sullivan interjected.

Mr LESTER: The people have voted that way over a long period. At the last election, the Labor Party was reduced to 39 per cent of the vote in the electorate of Peak Downs with what would be considered to be a reasonably sound ALP candidate. That is what the people think of my representation.

Because of the late hour, I am trying to shorten my speech. The section of the motion that refers to shires concerns me. I have heard from ALP circles that it would be more convenient if there were fewer shires in Queensland. That might sound okay on paper, but when one considers the way things are in the country, paper and fact are two different things.

I have also heard that one target could be the Shire of Peak Downs, which is sited between the Belyando Shire and the Emerald Shire. I simply say that it would be a terrible tragedy if the Shire of Peak Downs was eliminated.

The performance of the Shire of Peak Downs has been outstanding over a long period. It boasts the town of Capella, a rich grazing area and the very up-market mining town of Tieri.

If Queensland does have a straight-out one vote, one value system of voting in our shires, there will be some interesting results. The Shire of Belyando contains the towns of Moranbah and Clermont, which have a large population of miners. One could end up with eight of the 11 councillors on the Belyando Shire Council being from the mining fraternity. Many of those councillors would not be paying rates. The other three councillors would represent the country areas but support the shire by paying some 70 per cent of the rates. Given that scenario, this whole situation could be viewed as extremely unfair.

I say to the commissioner that I am simply putting forward some of the representations that have been made to me. They are some of the very real problems that exist in the country. I know that the commissioners will go about the State and learn these things for themselves. All we in the country ask for is that we get a fair hearing and a fair go, and I am quite sure that that will happen.

Mr BEATTIE (Brisbane Central) (10.23 p.m.): One of the disappointments about this evening is that we really have not had a lot of consideration of the motion. There has been some suggestion that there is no authority for such a motion, so it is appropriate that we go back to the Electoral and Administrative Review Act, which was debated and passed prior to the election last year and was supported by all members of the National Party and the Liberal Party. Section 2.10 (1) (b) reads—

"The functions of the commission are . . . to investigate and report from time to time in relation to—

. . .

(ii) the whole or part of the Local Authority administration."

So let us put aside the nonsense and the political rhetoric and let us examine the facts. The Act clearly gives the authority to do what this motion is doing tonight, and any suggestions to the contrary are complete nonsense.

Let me make the most fundamental point that has been ignored by those honourable members who have spoken in the debate. This review will be carried out, not by the National Party, the Liberal Party or the Labor Party, but by the independent EARC—by Tom Sherman and his independent commissioners. They are totally independent and any assumptions made by any honourable members who have spoken in this debate about what the outcome will be are a complete nonsense, because what they put forward may or may not be the outcome of the independent consideration. Let us be absolutely clear. We are asking a totally independent group of people to look at a range of matters, and I stress that that has not happened since 1928 and is long overdue. So let us do away with the nonsense that we have heard tonight about what will come out, because no-one knows what the independent commissioners will come back with.

The motion refers to equity and fairness, and about getting a system in local government which is not a rort, and that is what we have. What we have had tonight from a number of honourable members is justification for the rort that has existed across the State. It is about time we had fair boundaries, and equity and fairness, so that, when people vote in local authority elections, they get representation in accordance with their voting strength. That is long overdue.

For the first time in my life I intend to be brief.

Mr Burns: Hear, hear!

Mr BEATTIE: I accept the interjection from the Minister, who is pleased that I will be.

Let me say a couple of things. The first is that we need to examine very carefully exactly what is going on in local authorities. We cannot pretend to be ostriches and ignore the financial realities. In a number of local authorities in this State, the rates received do not cover the interest payments that are going out. If it were not that they hire out equipment to the Main Roads Department and have labour contracts with the State Government, they would go broke. A State Government that is concerned about financial responsibilities cannot ignore those considerations.

I draw the attention of the House to *Local Government Grants Commission, Queensland, Thirteenth Report, 1989*. The special grants under the heading "Distribution of Grants to Local Governing Bodies" are as follows: Kilkivan received \$350,427 in 1988-89. It is anticipated that, in 1989-90, that will go up to \$399,317. In 1988-89, Kingaroy received \$635,750 and it is anticipated that, this year, it will receive \$660,445.

Mr Randell: What branch are you talking about?

Mr BEATTIE: I take the honourable member's interjection. He is embarrassed, and so are we.

Last year, Wondai received \$387,611 and it is anticipated it will receive \$434,624 this year. The figures for Nanango are \$404,651 and \$444,823. Finally, Murgon, a shire in which we all have a particular interest, received \$329,609 last year and, this year, it is anticipated it will receive \$360,902. Any Government worried about financial accountability cannot ignore the difficulties confronting local authorities.

In conclusion, let me make two other points. It is not only the people in the Labor Party who are concerned about equity and fairness. Barry Gomersall, a gentleman whom honourable members may have heard of, was the Liberal Party candidate for Whitsunday in the 1989 State election. He was put up against the present honourable member for Whitsunday, and it was a waste of time. He promised that, if he was successful and there was a coalition Government, he would be arguing for additional representatives for Airlie Beach in the Whitsunday Shire. That shire pays the largest amount of rates anywhere in Queensland. He was promising extra representation. The Whitsunday Shire has written to the Minister for Local Government, Tom Burns, seeking changes so that there will be additional representatives from Airlie Beach, which is in fact subsidising the country areas in that shire.

Mr Ardill interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: I accept that interjection. That is the exact opposite of what we have heard from the other side tonight.

The point I am making very clearly is that there needs to be a review. The State is crying out for a review. It could hardly be claimed that the Whitsunday Shire is a Labor shire, because it is not.

They are the sorts of changes that need to be made by an independent group of people—the EARC—looking for fairness and equity. It is about time we had an end to the nonsense from the other side of the House and looked to the best interests of the

people of this State and not the narrow-minded, sectional interests of people who are simply interested in protecting rorts.

Mr COOMBER (Currumbin) (10.30 p.m.): This evening I rise to put the Liberal Party's point of view to this House. It is great to still be working at 10.30 at night. The members of the Liberal Party will speak against this motion.

The matter of the electoral system and boundaries at both State and local government level will be handled by the EARC. We in the Liberal Party acknowledge that this body will carry out that review. This is the first review for 62 years and it is badly needed. However, the matter of electoral boundaries is very sensitive and must be approached with caution. The question of the size, structure and configuration of local authorities is complex. To the best of my knowledge, the Local Government Association supports the EARC legislation but it does have major concerns about the timetable set down by the Minister for Local Government.

I accept that the motion before the House only suggests and requests that, if at all possible, reports be received by 17 August 1990 and 1 July 1991. However, why the Minister sees some urgency in pursuing an independent commission leads one to assume that, because of the forthcoming local government elections, some political motivation is involved. The number of local authorities and the size and shape of the boundaries of those local authorities should be, and is being, left to EARC. This Government is morally obliged to do so. We should not prejudice or pre-empt the EARC's recommendations. Local government is community government that is built around a community. The larger the local authority, the less local is the government, which has been illustrated here this evening with the problems faced by shires out in the west.

One can only assume that the Minister is trying to interfere with the forthcoming local government elections. The member for Yeronga said that the electoral rolls and the numbers on those rolls can be left until as late as 31 December. I hope that the Minister is aware that some local authorities have already submitted to his department their boundaries, elector numbers and the number of divisions, in preparation for those elections in 12 months' time. That allows the local authority rolls and the election records to be prepared. If they are changed after 17 August, the process will have to be repeated. The advice that I have received from the Town Clerk of the Gold Coast City Council is that this is an impossible task.

The Minister should be asking EARC to set guidelines for local authorities, such as whether to use natural boundaries, whether to divide the electorate into equal elector districts, or whether to divide the authority on areas of community interest, to allow them to set their own internal divisional boundaries. The review of the Local Government Act would have addressed some of these matters, but that review will now be superseded by the motion that the House is debating this evening.

Recently, the member for Brisbane Central's photograph was published with an article in the *Gold Coast Bulletin*. I am pleased that the member for Toowong had a copy of that article with him tonight, because I had forgotten the gentleman who was in the photograph with Mr Beattie. The man is Mr Phil Gray, the president of one of the local branches of the Labor Party on the Gold Coast. The article is headed "City, shire are the next battleground". It is obvious that this is what tonight's debate is all about. The Government is trying to do something about local government boundaries in time for the 1992 elections. I ask the member for Brisbane Central to come down to the Gold Coast because even his own Labor Party faithfuls on the Gold Coast will not stand on a Labor ticket. It is not that they do not support the Labor Party; it is that they believe—as I do—that there is no room in local government for party politics.

Mr J. N. Goss interjected.

Mr COOMBER: No.

When I entered local government in 1982, four aldermen on the Gold Coast City Council were card-carrying members of the ALP. A few Government members will

remember one of the Labor Party's favourite sons, Sir John Egerton. Jack is not well and I feel sure that Government members would like me to pass their regards on to him and wish him good health. On many occasions, Jack told the council of the riots and ballot-rigging that occurred in the trade union movement, which is something that the EARC should have a look at. The Brisbane Rugby League is something else that could be looked at. In fact, one night at a public reception, Jack told a story of how it was arranged that all the ballot papers would have pinholes in them so that they could tell who voted for whom. Poor Ron McAuliffe wanted the earth to open up and swallow him.

I have served under both systems that will be considered by this review, that is, the election of a mayor by popular vote and the selection of a mayor from amongst the elected members. The Mayor of the Gold Coast City Council, Alderman Keith Hunt, died in office and had to be replaced under the existing system. From my experience, the election of a mayor by popular vote is far better than the selection of a mayor from amongst the elected members. When he is elected by popular vote, the mayor is then able to devote his or her energies to the city without having the responsibility of representing a ward or division. At the last Cities and Towns Association conference the Gold Coast City Council put forward a motion on first-past-the-post voting. That motion was supported by the conference and is something that the review will also consider.

In addition, the review will consider the filling of vacancies on councils. This matter was raised during the Local Government Act review but will now be encompassed in the review put forward by the Minister for Local Government. If a member of a council retires or dies, the review will decide whether or not the council appoints someone from the community or holds a by-election in the community during the term of office of that council. I hope that the review considers the position of an elected representative. The Local Government Act review suggests that the control of decision-making be handed over to the administrative staff, which is of concern.

The member for Toowong mentioned the urgency of the local government boundary review, as recommended by Mr Tony Fitzgerald, QC. This matter was not amongst his top 20 priorities; but some review may be necessary after 60 years.

The Gold Coast City Council has already received petitions lodged by residents of part of the Albert shire who are objecting to the amalgamations.

Dr Watson: Given their new member, it is no wonder.

Mr COOMBER: Yes. Any change to the boundaries must be carefully evaluated, especially when it is remembered that the Local Government Act already provides for changes to be made to the boundaries by the Minister for Local Government. I accept that amalgamations or changes in local government areas are necessary. However, the member for Albert has deserted the southern part of his electorate and appears to believe that Beenleigh should be attached to the urban sprawl of Logan city. EARC will address these matters as part of the proper processes engaged in by that independent commission. I also accept that fewer local authorities would reduce administrative overheads and that ratepayers would be better off if that were allowed to happen.

The member for Yeronga referred only to boundaries and numbers, but the issues involved are much wider than that. I point out to the House that if the time scale is restricted to 17 August, many other issues will affect the way in which boundaries are drawn and the impact of those changes upon local authorities. Any change to boundaries will affect town plans and any strategic plans that are in place. Problems will occur in the delivery of services such as water supplies. There will also be problems associated with the separation and division of community interests and the reduction in community facilities.

Mr Heath: But those issues are not the ones that are restricted to 17 August.

Mr COOMBER: Nevertheless, the changes will have a major impact on the local authorities and those services will be affected. The changes will also bring about an alteration in the identity of the local authority in terms of rural or urban character.

At present, the Gold Coast City Council is reviewing its town plan. The document cost the council in excess of \$100,000 in professional fees. It is of paramount importance to the future development of the Gold Coast, but its effectiveness will be reduced if the boundaries are changed in any way.

I suggest also that the review will affect the rating structure of local authorities. A council's rating structure and its ability to raise funds through rates revenue will be affected by any change in the boundaries. For example, the Gold Coast City Council recently spent \$42m on the construction of a new dam. That debt is now being repaid by approximately 70 000 ratepayers. If the boundaries are changed and bring about an increase in the number of ratepayers who will service that debt, everyone will be better off; however, if a change in the boundaries brings about a reduction in the number of ratepayers, that will result in an increase in rates paid by the shire's residents. Although some local authorities may benefit from a change in the boundaries, in many cases the State Government is saying to local authorities, "We are directly causing an increase in rates for those who live in the affected local authority areas because of an existing debt." Surely local authorities will have the right to make submissions to EARC to highlight any indirect or direct advantages. I ask the Minister to give local authorities a say because, if major disadvantages are created by a change in the boundaries, EARC will at least have an opportunity to mitigate those adverse effects.

As far as I am concerned, the member for Bundaberg can have electoral justice in 1991. However, if this Parliament were to allow EARC a little more time in which to present its report, I am sure that, in addition to the other reasons mentioned by previous speakers, no financial injustice would be suffered by any local authorities by an extension of time.

Mr JOHNSON (Gregory) (10.41 p.m.): Madam Deputy Speaker, during the course of my remarks on EARC's program, I wish to mention the issue of local authority boundaries. As previous speakers have said, the motion currently being debated is designed to give credibility and a sense of priority to this very important issue. For God's sake, let common sense prevail.

I believe that the issue that is being debated tonight can be broken up into three categories—city, provincial and rural. I wish to refer to my electorate of Gregory, which has an area of 425 000 square kilometres and which is located in the far west of the State. Earlier, the member for Bundaberg mentioned certain areas of my electorate and local authority boundaries. He referred to the number of people who are eligible to vote in far-western local authority areas. It is apparent to me that some honourable members do not understand the vastness and the problems associated with a change of local government boundaries in those areas. I wish to refer in particular to the shires of Aramac, Ilfracombe and Isisford to point out that those small shires are very viable. Without those individual shires, the local community would not have a town because they are the life-blood of the people who live and work in the district.

The people who live in those areas have been residents of the district all their lives. I remind Government members that many of them vote for the Labor Party. The people to whom I refer have all of the assets they own in the world invested in the viability of those small shires. If they are amalgamated and joined to one of the larger shires, the assets and property owned by these people will be virtually worthless. I emphasise that their homes and assets would be virtually worthless, and I ask members of the Labor Party to take heed of what I am saying.

At this point, I am sure that the debate could go on all night. Other members of the Opposition have already referred to the principle of one vote, one value, and I believe it is of paramount importance that I, too, should address that issue. Many people would be unaware of the way in which that system works. The honourable member for

Bundaberg thinks that the present system of local government in Queensland is a rort, but I say that it is not. I am sure honourable members realise that I am fair dinkum about this issue. I think that the honourable member for Bundaberg has his priorities wrong. I would like to have a yarn to him later on. We might be able to sort out a few differences.

Honourable members: Oh!

Mr JOHNSON: I did not mean it that way.

The amalgamation of some of the smaller shires would be an act of premeditated economic ruin to many small towns. As I said, they are the life-blood of the local communities. In small towns, business houses are suffering. Those small-businesspeople have lived in the small towns all their lives, so, for God's sake, please give them support.

The honourable member for Brisbane Central and the honourable member for Yeronga are intelligent men. Mr Foley is Chairman of the Electoral and Administrative Review Committee. I know that he will advise the Parliament of the problems that small towns and shires face.

As I said earlier, all the shires in this vast State are different.

The honourable member for Brisbane Central, Mr Beattie, has been out in the west. I invite both him and Mr Foley, when they visit the west, to undertake a tour of the western shires with me so that I can show them some of their problems. We must recognise the economic viability of small towns. The people in the small towns rely on the country people, and the country people rely on the people in the towns. Honourable members should not forget for half a minute that the people in those vast western areas also support the people on the coast. Many people do not realise where revenue generated in western shires is spent.

When EARC addresses the electoral system, I hope that common sense prevails. The commissioners are men and women who are capable of upholding the qualities that country people have. I trust that the people in the country shires will receive the recognition that they deserve.

It is important that small shires be not disadvantaged by the redistribution of boundaries. Some shires have ridings and some do not. The honourable member for Bundaberg mentioned that the shire of Bulloo does not have ridings. It is a progressive and successful shire council. A leaf should be taken out of its book. Western shires face great hardships. All the shires in my electorate should be maintained in their current shape and form.

I am pleased to see that the honourable member for Mount Isa has returned to the Chamber. I believe that for a moment he lost sight of the issue. He is lucky in that he represents a provincial city with a large population. Perhaps his argument could stand up there. However, he stated that Camooweal occupied a vast section of his electorate. If Mount Isa did not have minerals, that city would be in the same position as other western towns. The people of Camooweal should not be penalised because of their isolation.

Mr McGRADY: I rise to a point of order. I remind the House that at no stage of my address did I suggest that the people of Camooweal would be disadvantaged.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mrs Woodgate): Order! There is no point of order.

Mr JOHNSON: I do not believe that what I said was wrong. The honourable member for Mount Isa's point was that Camooweal had two or three councillors representing a small proportion of the population. I know that the honourable member for Mount Isa realises the amount of revenue that the people of that small community generate.

I join with the honourable member for Lockyer in asking that the EARC commissioners not rush their report. I trust that a man of the Deputy Premier's ability will

ensure that the EARC's review will be carried out in a fair manner. I trust that common sense will prevail.

Mr SPRINGBORG (Carnarvon) (10.51 p.m.): I commence with a quotation from an article in the February/March edition of the *Locgov Digest*. I will not be selective, because the editorial has a dig at the National Party as well. It states—

"Prior to the Parliamentary motion, the Association's Executive had resolved to support 'in principle' a Statewide review of the Local Government electoral system; that the review be undertaken by EARC; and that the credibility and success of the review not be prejudiced by undue haste to rectify what may be regarded as internal boundary anomalies."

I realise that the honourable member for Somerset touched upon some of the points in this article, but it is important that I read the whole paragraph. It continued—

"LGAQ President, Cr. Jim Pennell, CBE, has indicated Association co-operation with a properly-based examination by EARC but stressed that it should not be assumed every local authority had an imbalance in its external or internal boundaries or that imbalances were politically motivated and constituted a so-called gerrymander. Cr. Pennell said imbalances occurred for a variety of reasons including population drift from rural areas to towns and cities, spillover from cities into neighbouring shires, rapid tourist development and the creation of new towns in mining areas. This situation was exacerbated by the policy of the former State Government to take no action on boundaries unless the Councils involved agreed to the changes. This was not easy to achieve."

That particular paragraph in that editorial goes to show the intricacies of what honourable members are dealing with tonight. This problem is not a simple one. The National Party Government might have been slow to move on this issue, but I suggest that the present Government is moving a little bit too fast. Along with many of my parliamentary colleagues, I support a review of local government boundaries. However, it is a matter of some importance, and I suggest that it cannot be done by 17 August. This process has to proceed extremely slowly. There has to be a lot of consultation with the various shires.

I face the amalgamation or the abolition of two shires in my electorate, namely Rosenthal, which may be amalgamated with Inglewood, and Glengallan and perhaps even Warwick. It appears that, if a review goes ahead, the Goondiwindi Town Council could even be amalgamated with Waggamba, or vice versa. As I have said, I do not see any harm in a review. However, things have to proceed slowly. It is the haste with which matters are proceeding that is concerning the Opposition.

I believe that Queensland is the only State in Australia which gives constitutional recognition to local government. That is very important. Local government has always been held in high esteem in this State, and that will continue to be the case in the future. What happens after this review? Will we have a town-planning commission? Will town-planning be taken away from local government and given to some academically based commission in the city? I say again that we must proceed slowly.

Honourable members have already spoken about the disproportion in some of the divisions within local shire councils. I want to mention my own local shire, Inglewood Shire. Division 1 of that shire has three shire councillors and 1 004 voters; Division 2 has three shire councillors and 916 voters; and Division 3 has two shire councillors and 139 voters—

Mr Milliner: Rotten boroughs—that is what they call them.

Mr SPRINGBORG: I invite the Honourable the Minister for Justice to accompany me on a visit to that area so that he can see the situation for himself.

I am not saying that there is not a need to assess some of the divisions within the local government boundaries in this State. However, where there is this great imbalance in the number of electors that it takes to elect one shire councillor or two shire councillors,

a number of problems are experienced. One generally finds that such an area has bad roads, that it is the most isolated part of the shire, and that it has problems with causeways, bridges and so on. I believe that it is wrong to say that the boundaries are rorted just because there is some sort of imbalance in the number of voters that it takes in that particular area to elect one representative.

I believe that, because of the isolation factor, there is a stronger case for a zonal system or an equivalent system in the case of local shire boundaries than there is for State boundaries. As the honourable member for Gregory pointed out, there are towns here and there are towns there, and in between there may be very few people, but there is a vast distance to cover. I do not wish to speak for a long time because I know that many other members wish to speak to this motion. However, I want to comment on the story that the honourable member for Bundaberg told about bitumen.

If the honourable member's bitumen story is taken to its logical conclusion, there must be a lot of shire chairmen in my electorate. Sometimes one finds 500 metres or so of bitumen outside a house that was once on a dusty gravel road. The bitumen is put there in an endeavour to reduce the inconvenience caused to a lot of people. It would be great if——

Mr Sullivan: They've not been doing it on the Stanley River Road, where two people live five yards from a dusty road. For years, they wouldn't touch it.

Mr SPRINGBORG: I point out to the honourable member for Glass House that I am citing an example in my own electorate. It is a pretty good case study. The particular local authority does not have 25 shire chairmen. There is a reason for it. It would be great to have bitumen all the way along all our roads, but in many cases it is just not possible.

Mr Elliott: At least it keeps the dust out of people's houses.

Mr SPRINGBORG: Yes, and off their clothes and goodness knows what else.

In conclusion, I urge a little bit of patience and a little bit of caution in regard to this issue because it is very important. There may need to be some reviews; there may need to be some changes. However, that is something that should happen very, very slowly, and four months is not long enough for proper consultation to take place. A much longer period of time is needed. I do not believe that the review needs to be completed in time for next year's local government elections. We should be aiming at having it completed for the local government elections in three years' time.

Mr Ardill interjected.

Mr SPRINGBORG: The honourable member for Salisbury will probably be around in two years' time, when he will have an opportunity to implement the boundary changes, so I cannot see any reason for the rush.

Mr KATTER (Flinders) (10.59 p.m.): I have had the privilege of having the power to make a few decisions concerning local government and the local government boundaries. I can remember vividly the situation at Bamaga. The people of Torres Strait get irate when people use the term "Bamaga", because there are two little townships up there in which all of the people are of Aboriginal descent. They feel that everyone thinks that there is a place called Bamaga in which the people are all of Torres Strait Islander descent and that there are no other places there at all and no people of Aboriginal descent living in the area. I sound a note of warning to anyone who goes up there that one is treading on very dangerous ground when one even uses the word "Bamaga".

The public servants very strongly recommended to me that there be a single council and one shire clerk, one dozer and one grader. It was supposed to be terribly efficient. There is no doubt that it would have been terribly efficient. However, I thought to myself, "If we impose upon the people of Seisia and the people of Cowal Creek and the various other places up there the sort of government which they do not want and which

would make them unhappy, we would be doing something that Governments should not be doing. We should be optimising and giving people the sort of government that they desire, not what we think is good for them.

There is no doubt that the Bamaga Shire Council had no great desire to be a powerful group that gave orders to the smaller communities, and those small communities felt very strongly that they would be swamped by the vast voting power of the considerably larger central town. That is the sort of principle that I am talking about. Smaller communities have a right to exist independently. I suspect that we are discussing the rationalisation of a large number of councils.

I cite the example of two towns, namely, Croydon, which has a local authority based there, and the small township of Pentland, which does not have its own local authority base. Its local authority is based in Charters Towers, some 60 miles away. The net result of that is that, the last time I checked on the situation, only one grader is working in Pentland and no other grading equipment is available in the district. There is only one employee and one decision-maker—the driver of the grader.

The community of Pentland has no services based in it and no central base, whereas the township of Croydon is quite well set up with gear and equipment. This may not mean a great deal to members of this House.

I make the point that the biggest employer of secondary industry in this State is the meat-processing industry. It is a secondary industry. It is not the beef industry, which is a primary industry. Earth-moving equipment is necessary to enable cattle to be moved in and out of those towns. If the necessary gear is not available from a local council, that work cannot be undertaken.

A Government member interjected.

Mr KATTER: The honourable member asks what I am talking about. I am talking about a person's ability simply to drive to a doctor when somebody gets sick. If the necessary gear is not handy, somebody could die. In fact, my wife's cousin gave birth to her last baby in a mud hole at the side of a road. That is an example of the type of government that will be imposed upon the people of Queensland by this centralist Government in Brisbane.

I am surprised that this debate has not concentrated more on one vote, one value. For a number of years I served on the University of Queensland Students Union, which moved a motion to devote an awful lot of money to fighting for a fair system of justice—a one vote, one value system—in the State of Queensland. That motion having been moved, a number of members of the union moved immediately for the abolition of the position of the mover of the motion, namely, the vice-president of the dentistry faculty, because only 100 people had elected him as vice-president whereas the other vice-president received 14 000 votes. That was done not because we were in love with the dentistry faculty or because we were against the one vote, one value system, but because many faculties that did not have representation would have ceased to be part of the union. As a result, the union would have had 9 000 members instead of 15 000.

History reveals a principle of no taxation without representation. If a particular system makes decisions for others and does not allow them to participate in the decision-making process, honourable members can rest assured that, one day, they will cease to be part of that system. If ever there is a truism of history, that is most certainly it.

For 30 years I have had the privilege of representing close to one-tenth of the surface area of the State of Queensland which contains five—and arguably seven—local authorities. During that time I am aware of only one change to the boundaries of any of those shires and only two requests have been made for changes in boundaries. Changes of that nature start setting neighbour against neighbour and community against community. They introduce hatreds and passions that this State can do without. If the Government releases those sorts of things on the people of Queensland and that makes them unhappy, I hope that it makes the members of the Government feel good. However,

when the National Party was in Government, it left many people in the Bamaga area extremely happy. It could have left them extremely unhappy and with a large fund of hatred that they would have unleashed further down the track.

Mr GILMORE (Tablelands) (11.06 p.m.): I do not intend to take up a lot of the time of the House. However, I intend to canvass a couple of important matters.

When moving the motion, the Minister said that he hoped that some of the things that were said tonight in this House would give a message to the members of the EARC so that they would consider them. It is imperative that the members of the EARC consider the *Hansard* report of this debate because, if anything has come out of this debate loud and clear, it has been the difference between country and city. It is a terrible shame that at this time in this century divisions and misunderstandings between country and city still exist.

I draw the attention of honourable members to a couple of things that were said by the honourable member for Brisbane Central. He mentioned fairness and equity and quoted a number of figures from a document. I am not sure what he was trying to demonstrate, but he quoted special grants to various shires of \$300,000, \$400,000 or whatever. When all things are considered, they were relatively small figures. If they were to be equated to the cost of a length of bitumen road, they really would not amount to much. In that particular area of the State to which he was referring, it might amount to 4 kilometres of road. If that is related to the South East Freeway, it would not adequately pay for the resumptions for half a kilometre of road.

As people who stand together in this place, as Queenslanders from the whole of the State, we have to understand that there must be fairness and equity; that we must indeed develop an understanding of each other and each other's needs. There is a corporate responsibility that each of us must learn to accept.

Mr Beattie spoke about fairness and equity. Let us have a look at that. In shires such as Barcoo, which contains only 400 or 500 people and has a total area of some 61 000 square kilometres, the number of persons per kilometre of constructed road is very small. If that was equated to the south side of Brisbane, the number of persons per kilometre of constructed freeway or urban street would be particularly high. Corporately, the people in South Brisbane are far more able to pay for the construction of those streets than are the people in Barcoo. That is the reason why the people in Barcoo do not have bitumen roads. In many cases, they do not have properly constructed roads with a gravel surface. In fact, in many cases, in the far-distant areas of Queensland, the people have nothing more than bush tracks.

The honourable member for Carnarvon was jested, I suppose, by a Government member in respect of patches of bitumen 500 metres long outside some people's homes. That happens in the bush, and people in this place must learn to understand it. Before I came to this place, I also was a shire councillor. It was a period of time that I look back on with some nostalgia. A council is a great training ground, a great place in which to gain an understanding of the people whom one learns to represent.

In the final year that I was a councillor, a set of circumstances arose wherein two tobacco farmers, who were growing crops very close to the Mareeba-Chillagoe road, were suffering a considerable financial loss because of dust—dare I say it, bulldust. However, that is the truth. The Mareeba Shire Council had to enter into some protracted negotiations with the Main Roads Department to achieve a simple sealing of a section of the road to save those people's livelihoods. Their livelihoods were placed seriously at risk through dust.

Further out in the western regions, little towns may have half a kilometre of bitumen, along the sides of which are little homes, a store, a petrol pump and not much else. There may be a hotel.

Mr Perrett: A school.

Mr GILMORE: There may be a school. The disadvantage suffered by those people individually is out of proportion to the cost of laying that little piece of bitumen to overcome that little difficulty. However, if they were asked individually to pay for it, it would not be within their capability. That is where I get back to what I said before: there is a corporate responsibility for all of the people in the State to pay for roads which people cannot be expected to pay for themselves. I do not think that that is too much to ask.

For a few moments I want to touch on the matter of the boundaries of local government areas. I have some serious concerns. I hope that the members of the EARC take these concerns into consideration. My concerns deal with whether the terms of reference are that the EARC looks at all the boundaries, internal as well as external. I presume that that is the case.

Let me for a few moments talk about the Mareeba Shire, which I know something about. It is just over 52 000 square kilometres in area. It is indeed a large shire and has an extremely long length of road within its boundaries. It is divided into four divisions. One of those divisions covers 82 per cent of that shire area, and there are 125 electors in that area. However, the division contains some 900 kilometres of dirt road. Money has to be spent on the development of that road to make it a worthwhile proposition for people to have their businesses at the end of it.

As the honourable member for Flinders mentioned a while ago, our largest rural industry is held tremendously at risk simply because the roads are inadequate in dry times, much less in the wet. Indeed, in the last calendar year, the major arterial road between Mareeba and the Gulf of Carpentaria was closed for seven months. People were sent bankrupt owing to their inability, because of that road, to shift their cattle off their properties, and because of the BTEC program.

Mr Katter: Which closed four meatworks and put 2 000 men out of work.

Mr GILMORE: That is the truth. It closed the Mareeba meatworks. It will never open again. That is not the entire reason why that meatworks closed, but it certainly contributed to its closure.

The few things that I have touched on tonight are important. I support what a number of members on this side of the House have said to the EARC and to the Government, "Please hasten slowly. Go out there and have a look. Learn to understand what is out there in Queensland." It is a vast area. It is a difficult place. It is not the southern suburbs of Brisbane. It is an extraordinarily large piece of the tropical world.

Individually, the residents of that part of Queensland outside of Brisbane, wherever they may be, are as important as any individual in the Brisbane city area. One little family is as important as any other little family, and in a corporate sense, all families should be treated equally. It is important that members understand their needs.

I leave it to the House to decide the fate of this motion.

Mr ARDILL (Salisbury) (11.16 p.m.): The number of speakers in this debate is an indication of the importance of the subject. One could say that, because it wants to protect its home base, the National Party has a vested interest in this review.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr ARDILL: It is a fact. Opposition members cannot deny it. They are protecting their home base in local government. That is the area in which it trains its members and gives them public exposure.

I freely admit that there is more to it than that. Local government is extremely important to the people. It is the level of Government that is closest to the people because it deals with their homes and with the services that affect those homes. So local government vitally affects them.

The quality of services provided varies from one local authority to another. Whether residents of a particular local authority receive proper attention depends on the fairness of their representatives. As you pointed out, Mr Deputy Speaker, local authorities can force people out of their homes by loading the rates onto an area that cannot afford it. If there is an inequality in voting strength, that is exactly what can and does happen.

I was involved in local government for 12 years. I did not represent 22 people, as is the case of the representative of Mount Perry. In my area I started off with 27 000 people and ended up with 54 000 people, which is the equivalent of the population of the city of Rockhampton. I represented those people on my own. It was a very demanding job. It was also a very satisfying job because one could do things for people. Nobody at all can take away from me what I achieved for my particular area, so no-one should try to do so. It was only a National Party redistribution that was able to remove me. That redistribution carved up my area into two and a-half wards. I know a little bit about local government.

I worked in local government in very exciting times. I saw Brisbane develop from a hick town into one of the great cities of the world. A large part of that success was due to Clem Jones. The Minister knows as well as I do that as Lord Mayor Clem Jones was an egotistical, overbearing, very demanding, slave-driving hero of the people of Brisbane. He was also a genius. Without Clem Jones, Brisbane would not be what it is today—a great city. It is true that in full measure the people of Brisbane owe it all to Clem Jones.

Since then we have consolidated what Clem built. Eventually the city was taken over by a Lord Mayor who has one great claim to fame. She put fairy lights on the Story Bridge. That will be her memorial. There is little else for which she can claim the credit.

Now that Brisbane has grown from a hick town to a great city it no longer needs the system of popularly electing a Lord Mayor that was foisted on the city. I have always supported the idea of the Lord Mayor being elected from amongst the aldermen because they know the capability of the candidates for Lord Mayor. They know that the Lord Mayor can perform. Under the system which applies in this House and in every other Westminster Parliament, it is not just a popularity contest; it is not a presidential system.

A city the size of Brisbane should have a Lord Mayor who is elected from amongst her or his peers. That is my opinion, but it may not be the opinion——

Mr Veivers: Why?

Mr ARDILL: I have just explained it to the honourable member. Instead of a popularity contest in the media, the Lord Mayor should be elected from amongst her or his peers who know his or her capacity for doing the job. That is why the members of the Labor Party elected the best member to lead us in the House.

That is my opinion. It may not be the opinion of the Electoral and Administrative Review Commission. That is the point that should be made tonight. The EARC will decide those issues. This debate is about the EARC investigating those matters and putting a recommendation to this Parliament. Nobody can deny that that is the correct way to go about it.

I believe that areas such as the Gold Coast are in the same position as Brisbane. Members will well remember the problems down on the Gold Coast when the Mayor of the city was at odds with all of his aldermen. In the end, the previous Government sacked the council just because it represented the people. The Mayor of the city represented the National Party and, of course, the National Party got rid of the council. I do not want to see such a thing happen again.

This motion is asking the EARC to do the job for which it has been established. It is very important that it goes ahead and does the first part of the review before the next council elections. The first part refers to the internal boundaries, not the external

boundaries. May I suggest to the honourable member for Gregory that his submissions tonight would be better made to the EARC—I suggest that he do so.

The next duty of the EARC is even more important. It is to alleviate the anomalies that exist, for instance in Townsville, which without any justification is divided into two separate local authority areas. Another example is the Gold Coast local authority area. The majority of development is occurring in the adjoining shire and the two councils are fighting over shopping centres. Nobody could say that that is a good idea.

Mr Borbidge: Are you saying that Albert Shire should be abolished?

Mr ARDILL: I am not saying that at all. I am saying that the boundaries should be adjusted to reflect the existing situation. The Gold Coast City Council should not have the other shire destroying its town plan by setting up shopping centres to service the Gold Coast area and by collecting the rates. It is absolutely essential that these matters be addressed quickly. As the Minister pointed out, the most urgent consideration is the internal boundaries. That is what we are really talking about tonight. They have to be adjusted so that the next councils can be elected along democratic lines. It is very important that we vote for this motion tonight.

Mr SLACK (Burnett) (11.24 p.m): I have only a couple of matters to raise with the Minister and I wish to reply to a couple of allegations that have been made by honourable members opposite, including you, Mr Deputy Speaker, when you spoke as the honourable member for Bundaberg.

We say that five months is too short a period but, by the same token, it is essential to have this done reasonably quickly or the shire councils will not know where they are going with their budgeting.

In my opinion, the shire boundaries should be set before any consideration is given to the State boundaries, because I assume that, in a redistribution the commissioners would look to adopting some of the new shire boundaries.

I endorse the remarks of the honourable member for Tablelands. Some problems have arisen and the time has come to take an in-depth look at local authority boundaries and local authority population distribution. Country people are very worried about the shift in the emphasis between population and the raising of local authority revenue. Therein lies the problem. As an example, I refer to my own town of Gayndah, which has in excess of 1 000 people. The outlying area has 676 people. The town of Gayndah raises \$95,000 in rates, whereas the combined country area raises \$315,000, so obviously there is concern when the Labor Party talks of equal numbers of electors.

The honourable member for Bundaberg referred to Mount Perry, which is in my electorate. It has 327 residents, 270 of whom are voters. It elects nine councillors, and that is a lot. It is claimed that these small towns and the people in them are disadvantaged. However, I point out that, in Mount Perry, the sewerage charge is \$136 and the general rate is \$80, a total of \$216.

Mr Burns: A year?

Mr SLACK: Yes, a year. In Bundaberg, sewerage charges are \$816 and general rates are \$392, a total of \$1,208. The total rates in Gayndah amount to \$587, despite the claimed imbalance in population.

If the financing of local authorities is sorted out, there will be no problem with numerically equal areas. That is the problem. If that can be sorted out, well and good. Will the Government be like Mrs Thatcher and introduce a poll tax? Will it increase income tax? In Gayndah, the biggest earner, the doctor, would pay very little in rates. So there is an imbalance that needs to be addressed.

For the information of Government members, who talk about amalgamating small areas, such as Mount Perry, I point out that that township nestles in the hills, has a community of its own and has a character of its own. If the council folded up, the whole

town would fold up and there would be virtually nothing left. These are aspects of our community life that must be addressed, and the time has arrived for them to be addressed. I inform the honourable member for Mount Isa that we do not treat local authorities and this debate as a joke.

Mrs McCAULEY (Callide) (11.30 p.m.): Tonight the message has gone out loud and clear that the Opposition has a great many concerns. I rise to speak as a country councillor to express the concerns of all the country councillors whom I represent and the country people whom they represent. We are not afraid of change, but we are afraid of manipulation and being disfranchised. We have already seen our rights eroded by such things as the Grants Commission guidelines imposed on us by the Federal Government which now favour population over roads. This is most important to people in a country electorate such as Callide.

A royal commission on local government in England found that there was no such thing as a single right size for any local government service. It is not simply a matter of drawing lines on a map. It is particularly important not to fall into that trap with this short four-month time-frame. Economic and social factors must be taken into consideration as well as physical boundaries. Examples that come to mind are in South Burnett in the small shires of Wondai, Murgon and Kingaroy. If someone suggested that the Wondai and Murgon shires should amalgamate, civil war would break out. It would be a very interesting situation, but certainly not workable.

In his text book on local government, M. A. Jones states that once shires go beyond a certain size they are no longer economic. They become excessively large and bureaucratic. He favours making them smaller and more flexible. If the shires become too large, they become top heavy with bureaucrats and are not much use to anyone.

Previous inquiries into local government boundaries were conducted in New South Wales in 1971, in Victoria in 1959, 1962 and 1969, and in Western Australia in 1966. The recommendations of those inquiries were mainly ignored because of the great uproar which broke out as a result of them. This is a brave Government if it is considering doing the same thing in this State. Over the past 20 years in Victoria, most changes in boundaries have resulted from local initiatives by councils and ratepayers. The people who live in the region know what they want and what best suits them. They are the ones who instigated the changes, and the system works well. If inefficient small councils are forced upon larger well-managed councils, the problem may be created whereby there is not one inefficient council, but two.

The member for Brisbane Central made an interesting but not very truthful point. He said that he believed that Airlie Beach should not have to subsidise rural areas. This morning, the Minister for Local Government said that he will not allow the Brisbane City Council to change its system of rating so that the richer people do not subsidise the poorer people. Government members should compare notes and get their stories right on the subject.

The honourable member for Bundaberg, who spoke from a seat in the rear of the Chamber, gave what could only be described as a wildly inaccurate speech. He followed the rule that if one says anything with enough huff and puff, one might get some applause, which is what happened.

I strongly object to the time-frame laid down for these changes. I have no fear that, if the review is done properly and without prejudice, the commission will find that local government in Queensland is in a reasonably good condition.

Hon. T. J. BURNS (Lytton—Deputy Premier, Minister for Housing and Local Government) (11.35 p.m.), in reply: Tonight, 20 members have spoken to this motion. Obviously, the members of the EARC will read these submissions, many of which would have been better if they had been made to the EARC itself.

Tonight we are discussing a trigger to ask the Electoral and Administrative Review Commission to review local government boundaries. The biggest question that has been

raised is why the Government has set down the date of 17 August and why it is in such a hurry. When I took over the Department of Local Government I discovered that on most days the department receives 50 or 60 letters and they are all complaints about councils. In most cases the letters of complaint state that the council should be sacked or brought before the Criminal Justice Commission, the Fraud Squad should be brought in or the election date extended for another 12 months so that there can be a review of the boundaries or the system can be altered.

I have been talking to the councils. Those honourable members who live in the bush will know that, during the 120 days that this Government has been in existence, I have spent many of those days in the bush, travelling around the country areas and talking to councils. Doug Slack made the point that he was at a conference that I attended in Bundaberg with 17 local authorities. He is right when he said that councillors want many of these decisions made and out of the way. They are keen to know what their future is. That is one of the things that I have discovered as I have moved around the State more and more. I have visited places right throughout the west, including Longreach, where I met representatives from all of those councils. They came on a Sunday morning and spent two or three hours with me whilst we went through the whole of the ramifications of the EARC and my proposals to this Parliament. I did the same in Miles, Warwick, Barcaldine, Mount Isa, Normanton, Mornington Island, Croydon, Cooktown, Charters Towers and Wondai, and I will be doing the same this weekend with the honourable member for Carnarvon in Goondiwindi. I believe in the process of consultation and listening to them.

As the Local Government Association said in its editorial today, I started by simply saying that the boundaries ought to be looked at and that I would send a trigger down to the EARC.

As I travelled around the State, I decided that I should speed up the process because, as Mr Slack said, there is some concern felt by the people and fear is being spread by some people who, for some reason or another, have the mischievous idea that, in spite of an independent commission being set up, they are able to predict what the Government will make the commission do. That is not what it is all about. The commission is independent.

Members of this Parliament comprise the parliamentary select committee that will receive the report and place it before this Parliament. Even the hint of a suggestion that the commissioners are going to sort the system or that there is something wrong and that I will manipulate the commissioners is unfair to them. Moreover, it is unjust criticism of the National Party Government that introduced this legislation and that set out the provisions in that legislation which would enable two things to happen: the resolution could be dealt with secretly and passed by the Governor in Council or, as Minister, I could have brought the matter before Parliament to have it debated publicly and give all honourable members the opportunity to express a view.

People have complained that these steps are being taken in too much of a hurry. I have been in this Chamber when a former honourable member for Stafford said that the entire set of local government boundaries in this State could be reviewed in five days. He said that last year during a debate about redistributions. In 1982, members of the National/Liberal Party coalition Government voted to change the local government system which affected the Townsville City Council and the Maryborough City Council. If honourable members do not believe me, I can cite the passage in *Hansard* that records the debate on the legislation. That change was brought about to suit the political purposes of the National/Liberal Party Government. By virtue of the legislation passed by that Government, I could do that now. Section 5 of the Local Government Act gives power to the Local Government Minister to initiate changes to the method of voting and to the system of electoral boundaries.

I inform the House that representatives from 10 councils have already been to see me, because these matters are being widely discussed. They have told me that they want to change their boundaries. In each of those 10 cases I have said, "I think I had better

speed up the process of obtaining a decision from the EARC because, if councils want to spend money, the rules state that they have to get permission from me first and they will have to advertise the proposed change to the boundaries. They will have to have the maps prepared and advertise them in the local paper. Over a period of 30 days, they will also have to hear objections. After that, the boundaries have to be brought back to me and then I will make a recommendation to the Governor in Council on those boundaries." As I said earlier, 10 councils lined up and there have been a number of others that have telephoned my office and said that they would also like to have their boundaries changed. The best thing that I could do was ask the EARC to give me some idea when the recommendations might be made so that I could suggest to those councils that they should wait for that to happen.

The first council that slipped past my guard in relation to this matter was the Pine Rivers Shire Council. They were able to reach general agreement and already had the maps drawn up. The delegation that saw me said that approximately nine out of the 11 councillors were satisfied with the changes, and I was prepared to let the council go ahead. As I said before, I began to think to myself, "Am I wasting their time? Am I wasting the ratepayers' money?"

When Mr Sherman asked to meet me—as he did with all Ministers whose departments would be involved in his investigations—I asked how he was going to carry out the review of State electoral boundaries that he had to undertake forthwith. He said to me, "I will be calling for public submissions from people throughout the State, which will probably take a month. I will publish the submissions and allow people to carve them up and have another chance at making submissions in relation to them. I will then conduct a series of meetings throughout the State—but not a circus—especially in areas where something important has to be either said or done. At the end of that period, my commission will meet and I will prepare recommendations that will be forwarded to the parliamentary select committee." I said to him, "By when could you possibly have that done?" He replied, "Around about September."

For a number of reasons, when I started to prepare these submissions I said, "Quite clearly, the best thing that I could do is pick a date. Generally, Parliament resumes in about the middle of August after the Brisbane Exhibition holiday, so I will put down 17 August." There was nothing peculiar about that. I simply picked the date of 17 August. I chose August because I thought that if I could bring forward the date of the report a month or two so that the parliamentary select committee could make its decisions, the matter could then be debated in Parliament and the Parliament may then make some resolutions.

Section 5 of the Local Government Act provides that councils can ask my permission to change their boundaries. My intention was to authorise all the councils to change their own boundaries—not have them altered by the State Government. I was going to allow 134 local authorities to alter their own boundaries. I was going to get a trigger out to them to say, "This is the set of principles that has been laid down by an independent commission. I am authorised to give you permission under the Act to draw up your internal boundaries based on the recommendations made by the independent commission." In my opinion, that is a far better method than letting the councils brawl over each local government area, and it is much better than having the suggestion that I am manipulating the system as though I am some sort of political mafia don. In that way, each and every council is given the opportunity to face the electors on internal boundaries that have been drawn up on the basis of recommendations made by an independent commission that was established by legislation introduced by the former National Party Government. That is the way I saw it, and they are the reasons I took those steps. There is nothing foul or sinister about it.

I can inform the people who have been roaring around the countryside trying to cause mischief that their plan is not working. The member for Flinders would know that I visited his electorate and spoke with the Charters Towers City Council and shire councillors. I have done that throughout Queensland. I have always invited the members

of this Parliament who represent those towns to accompany me to the meetings. It was up to them whether they joined in or not. There has been no secrecy attached to this process at all. It has been done openly, fairly and honestly. That is the way it will be done. It is true to say that, if political parties had set out to manipulate the system, people involved in the process would be scared and worried that they could be hurt by it.

Fitzgerald and the EARC legislation allows an independent body to take control of a redistribution and make recommendations on the questions of financial viability of the shires, economic issues and internal and external boundaries—in fact, on the whole local government system in general. Members of this Parliament have an opportunity that no other Parliament or Government has previously been given. When the recommendations are made by that independent body, this Parliament should not be blamed for them. The report that is presented to Parliament should be seen very clearly to be the end result of the process I have described. Because the legislation originated from the former National Party Government—I have not tried to amend it or alter it to make it a piece of Labor legislation—it should be seen to be an all-party piece of legislation.

I ask each and every honourable member to vote in favour of the motion. It is in the interests of local authorities. Queensland has a good local government system. This proposal can only make it better.

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

DIVISION

Resolved in the affirmative.

POLICE COMPLAINTS TRIBUNAL ACTS REPEAL BILL

Hon. G. R. MILLINER (Everton—Minister for Justice and Corrective Services) (11.53 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

"That leave be granted to bring in a Bill to repeal the Police Complaints Tribunal Act 1982-1989 and the Police Complaints Tribunal Act Amendment Act 1987 and to provide for the assumption of responsibility by the Criminal Justice Commission."

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

Bill and Explanatory Notes presented and Bill, on motion of Mr Milliner, read a first time.

Second Reading

Hon. G. R. MILLINER (Everton—Minister for Justice and Corrective Services) (11.53 p.m.): I move—

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

As is well known throughout the community, Mr G. E. Fitzgerald, QC, in his report, offered scathing criticism of the way in which the Police Complaints Tribunal was established in 1982 and of the manner in which it operated. He described its concept, structure and systems as misconceived. It was, in his view, a sophisticated example of a device whereby an unsuspecting community was deceived into believing that the Government of the day had established a genuine investigative body. The reality was that it was a facade for Government power, possessing only the superficial trappings of quasi-judicial impartiality and independence.

Mr Fitzgerald criticised the tribunal's reliance on the police force to carry out investigations on its behalf. Because of that and other factors, it was never truly independent of the police force it was established to act as a check upon.

Mr Fitzgerald's report is full of critical references to the deficiencies in the tribunal, and those to which I have referred give a clear indication of the low esteem in which Mr Fitzgerald held the tribunal.

During the hearings of the Parliamentary Judges Commission of Inquiry last year, aspects of the tribunal's processes also came in for close scrutiny. The second report of that commission of inquiry, for example, branded the handling and outcome of the Tapim complaint in 1984 by the tribunal as "unsatisfactory" and stated that the course the tribunal followed in dealing with that particular matter was "difficult to justify".

Therefore, the Goss Labor Government has decided to move quickly to implement another of the Fitzgerald recommendations, namely, that the Police Complaints Tribunal be abolished—pages 292 and 385 of the Fitzgerald report—and that dealing with complaints of misconduct by police become the responsibility of the complaints section of the Official Misconduct Division within the Criminal Justice Commission—page 374 of the report. That is precisely what this Bill aims to put in place.

Having said all that, it must be pointed out that this measure by the Government is in no way to be taken as a criticism of the present chairman of the tribunal, Judge McGuire, who has carried out his duties in a thoroughly professional, competent and effective manner, despite working under very difficult circumstances, particularly given the substance of Mr Fitzgerald's findings. I would also like to pay a tribute to the staff, who have worked in a stressful atmosphere in an organisation that was chronically underfunded and underresourced by the previous National Party Government.

Complaints of police misconduct will now be handled by an organisation far removed from potential influence from within the Police Department. This legislation will add to the structures of effective checks and balances being progressively put in place by the Goss Labor Government to ensure that widespread corruption will not taint Queensland society and that the ordinary law-abiding citizen has nothing to fear from institutions which wield power in our democratic community.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Gilmore, adjourned.

EXPLOSIVES ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Hon. K. H. VAUGHAN (Nudgee—Minister for Resource Industries) (11.57 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

"That leave be granted to bring in a Bill to amend the Explosives Act 1952-1988 in certain particulars."

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

Bill and Explanatory Notes presented and Bill, on motion of Mr Vaughan, read a first time.

Second Reading

Hon. K. H. VAUGHAN (Nudgee—Minister for Resource Industries) (11.58 p.m.): I move—

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

The Explosives Act Amendment Bill provides for the amendment of the Explosives Act. Honourable members will be aware that this Act is a comprehensive piece of legislation which aims to minimise risk to the community from a particular class of dangerous materials.

Explosives are an essential part of the Queensland economy, providing one of the necessary tools for our mining and construction industries. However, by their very nature, explosives possess both an inherent potential for disaster and an attractiveness to undesirable elements in our community. As such, it is essential that appropriate standards of safety and control are developed, and employed, for all stages of the handling and use of these materials, and that the Government legislate to ensure compliance with those standards. Both industry and the community would accept no less.

In more recent times there has been significant growth in the use of explosives in Queensland to approximately 200 000 tonnes per annum, while the technological changes in both explosive products and processes have indeed been rapid. To ensure that the legislation remains up to date, to encourage uniform requirements both nationally and internationally and to make operations and administration more efficient, it was found necessary to amend the existing legislation.

Following broad consultation, a Green Paper was issued in September 1989 proposing certain changes to the Explosives Act and inviting comment from industry and the community on these and any other matters considered relevant. The comments received supported both the need for changes and the proposals contained within the Green Paper. As a consequence, this Bill is now being introduced to effect these necessary changes.

The Explosives Act Amendment Bill provides for the Act to bind the Crown while allowing the necessary exemption for the armed forces. It further provides for inspectors of explosives, who exercise powers under the Act, to be issued with certificates of appointment, which they will be required to use for identification purposes.

Both the Minister and the Chief Inspector of Explosives have powers under the Act. The Bill provides a delegating authority to both positions so that in particular situations these powers may be exercised by the appropriate officers to overcome impracticalities or to achieve efficiencies in administration. Of course, there are powers that should never be delegated, and the Bill provides the necessary protection in that regard.

The Bill provides for the handling of grievances against decisions made under the Act. Grievances may, in the first instance, be referred to the chief inspector and thence, if necessary, to the Minister. The Minister's decision will be final and binding on all parties concerned.

The unnecessary, complex and time-consuming administrative arrangements to approve explosives via Order in Council are to be amended to enable the chief inspector to approve explosives and maintain a register of those explosives. The requirement to properly define the composition, quality and character of any explosive prior to classification and approval remains.

The Bill further provides for the removal of all obstacles to the adoption of the United Nations system of classification of explosives. That system is used by all other States and Territories in Australia and is widely used throughout the world. Hence, its adoption in Queensland will hasten the move towards uniformity of requirements.

Amendments to the manufacture and storage provisions of the legislation have been made to reflect and properly cater for the technological changes within the industry while restrictions on the possession of explosives have been properly tightened.

In the area of offences the Bill provides for—

- significant increases in pecuniary penalties to ensure an effective deterrent value—\$5,000 for individuals and \$50,000 for others—and invoking the penalty unit system to maintain that deterrent value; and
- clarification of the responsibilities and accountabilities in relation to offences involving corporations, employers and employees.

The Bill provides for amendments which will allow the chief inspector to seek and obtain from the Commissioner of Police information relating to persons having access to explosives as to their suitability for such access. Such information is essential if proper control of the availability of explosives is to be exercised for public safety. A provision restricting disclosure of any information obtained under the Act has also been included.

This Bill provides for necessary amendments to the Explosives Act 1952-1988 to ensure that the legislation remains up to date and continues to provide the proper framework for minimising risk to the community from that vital but inherently dangerous class of materials.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr FitzGerald, adjourned.

RECREATION AREAS MANAGEMENT ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Hon. P. COMBEN (Windsor—Minister for Environment and Heritage) (12.03 a.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

"That leave be granted to bring in a Bill to amend the Recreation Areas Management Act 1988 in certain particulars."

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

Bill and Explanatory Notes presented and Bill, on motion of Mr Comben, read a first time.

Second Reading

Hon. P. COMBEN (Windsor—Minister for Environment and Heritage) (12.04 a.m.): I move—

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

I seek leave to have my second-reading speech incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

Honourable members will no doubt be aware that the Recreation Areas Management Act attracted a substantial amount of public criticism and debate both before and after its passage through Parliament in 1988.

While public reaction to the overall concept of coordinated management of nature-based recreation has been generally favourable, there has been strong criticism directed at parts of the Act itself.

The major problems we have with the Recreation Areas Management Act today can be directly related to the scurrilous manner in which the original Bill was prepared and passed through the House—without any prior consultation or any acceptance of the many criticisms from the various conservation and recreation groups.

Prior to the 1989 election I guaranteed that we would repeal the Recreation Areas Management Act. I stand by this promise today.

It is necessary to undertake this repeal process in two stages. The passing of this amendment Bill will complete the first stage which is an interim measure designed to address the most pressing problems with the Act.

The second stage of the process will involve repealing the Act and replacing it with acceptable legislation that facilitates the management of recreation in natural areas without taking away landholders' proprietary rights.

The interim amendments which I now introduce:

- provide for the continuing operation of the Fraser Island recreation area;
- facilitate the completion of Brisbane forest park's transition to recreation areas status and;
- address pressing recreation management problems in other areas of the state, such as Moreton Island and Green Island.

The second stage is currently under way under the guidance of my colleague Mr Casey, the Minister for Primary Industries and will address fundamental issues such as:

- identifying the most suitable direction for the co-ordination of nature-based recreation planning and management on public lands in Queensland;
- maximising landholders' control of recreation management on recreation areas;
- investigating possible strategies for relieving the current high levels of recreational pressure experienced on many of our national parks and;
- developing the most suitable administrative structure to effectively drive the new legislation.

We will not throw out the entire Act but will retain the positive aspects of the original Act. The goals of increased coordination in the planning and management of nature-based recreation across different land tenures, and the raising of standards in recreation management are desirable and they will be retained.

I do not want to see the benefits of managing recreation areas lost. Accordingly, this legislation encourages cooperation between landholders, encourages professional standards of management, encourages the raising of public awareness of the environment and, above all, protects those environments that have been set aside for conservation and recreation.

On the other hand, gone will be the opportunity for developers to turn our national parks into a kaleidoscope of five-storey, five-star hotels.

It is through my concern for two existing national parks and adjacent areas that I am keen to declare two new recreation areas prior to the second stage review. Recreation pressures mean that there is a need to proceed quickly with the declaration of Green Island and Moreton Island under the Act.

Both these islands are suffering the classic symptoms of confusion and chaos from being controlled by several agencies, being popular destinations for tourists and local visitors and being special areas that need sensitive and proper environmental protection.

The planning, coordination and people management provisions of the amended Act will offer park rangers a very useful management tool to protect these unique areas. I don't want to leave these problem areas any longer. We must do something positive and do it quickly.

In relation to Moreton Island I am keen to talk with the Lord Mayor of Brisbane to seek her cooperation in allowing the inclusion of esplanade areas under her council's control within the declared area. While the Queensland National Parks and Wildlife Service officers can control camping on the national park, it cannot control camping or motor vehicle use, rubbish disposal, sand removal or other activities on the beach below the high water mark or on vacant crown land or on the Brisbane City Council esplanade.

To properly manage Moreton Island we will need the Recreation Areas Management Act in its amended form. Without management, Moreton Island's beauty will be destroyed by visitors.

In relation to Green Island, I already have the concurrence of all public landholders to declare the island a recreation area. We will then be able to control the present uncontrolled visitation which could cause massive long-term damage.

This Bill addresses the more consistent and serious public concerns regarding the present legislation, all of which were ignored by the previous National Party Government. These concerns relate primarily to the existing lack of qualification applying to the powers of the Recreation Areas Management Board and the authority.

Changes made to subsection (a) of section 3 ensure that the Act now only has relevance to recreational issues and that recreational management is carried out in a manner consistent with the interests and responsibilities of proprietors.

Similar changes made to sections 18(1) (b) and 20 (1), which deal with the functions and powers of the board and the production of management plans respectively further strengthens these points.

Subsection (b) of section 3 has been amended and now stipulates that the joint management of any recreation area must be undertaken without derogating from the rights of either the Director of National Parks and Wildlife, the Conservator of Forests or any other proprietor in regard to their responsibilities.

This is in contrast to the existing clause which stipulates that the Act cannot derogate from the rights of proprietors (being the Ministers of the Crown administering the departments). This has the clear implication that the authority of the Director of the Queensland National Parks and Wildlife Service, the Conservator of Forests or any other landholder could be usurped in any decision-making process.

The unnecessary and problematic words "subject to this Act" have been removed from the beginning of section 6. Their inclusion has been a serious point of contention since the inception of the original Bill and they indicate that specific provisions of this Act may override provisions contained in earlier Acts, particularly if these earlier provisions are generally phrased.

Section 15 has been amended so that the Director of the National Parks and Wildlife is now a member of the Recreation Areas Management Board in lieu of the Chief Executive of the Department responsible for the administration of the National Parks and Wildlife Act.

In section 18 (4) (b) which deals with the powers of the Board, the open-ended term "do any specified thing" has been replaced by the more qualified phrase "carry on any recreation related activities".

In section 20 (1) the word "commerce" has been removed from the list of values to be taken into account by the management plan. This value is considered inappropriate in the management context of national parks.

The two new subsections (6) and (7) inserted at the end of section 20 respectively provide for the management plans to be sanctioned by Governor in Council and ensure that management plans are made available to the public. These new subsections give increased authority to the plans and addresses the previous concerns that such documents may not be open for public scrutiny.

The new section 20A ensures that the same conditions applying to the original management plan also apply to any later amendments.

The new subsection 21 (2) ensures that public comment is sought whenever management plans are reviewed.

These amendments are straight forward and address fundamental problems that should never have been passed as part of the original Recreation Areas Management Act. This Bill, as an interim measure, removes that grossly offensive aspect of the original Act, and I commend it to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Elliott, adjourned.

The House adjourned at 12.04 a.m. (Friday).