

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

TUESDAY, 15 MAY 1990

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

ADDRESS IN REPLY

Presentation

Mr SPEAKER: On 8 May, I announced that the presentation of the Address in Reply to His Excellency the Governor would be made on Wednesday, 23 May, at 9.15 a.m. I am now able to announce that His Excellency will be pleased to receive the Address from the House on Wednesday, 16 May, at 9.15 a.m. The mover, seconder and such other members who may wish to attend are requested to accompany me on this occasion. Honourable members will be asked today to confirm their attendance at the presentation of the Address.

ELECTORAL DISTRICT OF SHERWOOD

Resignation of Member

Mr SPEAKER: I have to advise the House that I have received the following letter from Mr John Angus Mackenzie Innes, member for the electoral district of Sherwood—

"Parliament House

George Street

Brisbane Qld 4000

13 May 1990

The Hon J Fouras MLA

Speaker of the Legislative Assembly

Parliament House

George Street

Brisbane Qld 4000

Dear Mr Speaker

I hereby tender my resignation as the Member for Sherwood, effective from 11.59 pm today, Sunday 13 May 1990.

Yours faithfully

Angus Innes MLA

Member for Sherwood"

Seat Declared Vacant

Hon. T. J. BURNS (Lytton—Deputy Premier, Minister for Housing and Local Government) (10.03 a.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

"That the seat in this House for the electoral district of Sherwood hath become and is now vacant by reason of the resignation of Mr John Angus Mackenzie Innes."

Motion agreed to.

LIBERAL PARTY APPOINTMENTS

Mr BEANLAND (Toowong—Leader of the Liberal Party) (10.04 a.m.): I desire to inform the House that, following the resignation of Mr Angus Innes, I have been elected Leader of the parliamentary Liberal Party. Dr David Watson, MLA, member for Moggill, has been elected Deputy Leader of the parliamentary Liberal Party.

PETITIONS

The Clerk announced the receipt of the following petitions—

Permanent Police Booth, Cavill Mall, Surfers Paradise

From **Mr Borbidge** (1 064 signatories) praying for the urgent establishment of a permanent police booth in Cavill Mall at Surfers Paradise.

Daylight-saving

From **Mr McGrady** (680 signatories) praying that daylight-saving be not reintroduced in future years.

Petitions received.

PAPERS

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

Reports---

Public Accountants Registration Board of Queensland for the year ended 31 December 1989

Films Board of Review for the year ended 30 June 1989

Literature Board of Review for the year ended 30 June 1989

Queensland Corrective Services Commission for the year 1989

Report upon action taken or proposed with respect to recommendations of the Parliamentary Committee of Public Accounts in regard to the Queensland Industry Development Corporation and Other Statutory Bodies.

The following papers were laid in the table---

Orders in Council under---

Revenue Laws (Reciprocal Powers) Act 1988

State Service Superannuation Act 1972-1989

Financial Administration and Audit Act 1977-1988

Pay-roll Tax Act 1971-1988

Superannuation (Public Employees Portability and Acts Amendment) Act 1985

Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Act 1982-1989

Land Act 1962-1988

National Parks and Wildlife Act 1975-1989

Queensland Recreation Areas Management Act 1988

Proclamation under the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1975-1989

Regulations under the Stamp Act 1894-1989.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT
Deputy Premier's Visit to China

Hon. T. J. BURNS (Lytton—Deputy Premier, Minister for Housing and Local Government) (10.06 a.m.), by leave: Mr Speaker—

Mr Lingard: No wonder you couldn't get a pocket hanky to match that tie.

Mr BURNS: I have. I ask the honourable member to look at this. I will collect my money later.

I wish to report to the Parliament on my recently concluded visit to the People's Republic of China. Between 25 April and 3 May 1990, I was privileged to lead a Queensland delegation, comprised of representatives of the Queensland Government and the Queensland business community, on a visit to the People's Republic of China.

The objectives of the visit were threefold: firstly, to identify a practical means by which the sister State relationship between Queensland and China's premier industrial city, Shanghai, could be further developed in the 12-month period ahead; secondly, to provide official support for the various commercial initiatives being undertaken by the Queensland business community in Shanghai and elsewhere in China; and thirdly, to register with the central Government in Beijing the Government's concern at the state of human rights in China and, in particular, the central Government's handling of the student demonstrations in Tiananmen Square in June 1989.

In May of 1989, Queensland began a sister State relationship with Shanghai. At that time the then Leader of the Opposition, Mr Goss, extended full bipartisan support on behalf of the Queensland parliamentary Labor Party to the development of this relationship. Late last month in Shanghai, as a member of the party in Government in Queensland, I was able to reiterate the parliamentary Labor Party's support for this relationship.

However, in the 12 months since the initiation of this relationship, as a direct result of events in Tiananmen Square in June of 1989, little has been done to add substance to it. It should be noted, however, that, in stark contrast to the extraordinary measures adopted by the central Government in Beijing, the municipal Government of Shanghai demonstrated a remarkable degree of self-restraint in its management of the human rights situation within the area of its jurisdiction.

The Shanghai administration has also been critical of the intervention by the armed forces in Beijing last June and the violence which subsequently ensued. It would therefore, from the perspective of this Government, be pointless and counterproductive to leave the Queensland/Shanghai relationship in some sort of suspended animation for the future. Rather, we should use the relationship as a modest means of maintaining contact with the forces within China which are supportive of reform and the open policy.

I am pleased to confirm three significant developments which have occurred in the context of my visit to Shanghai and which have direct relevance to the future of the sister State relationship.

First, as a result of my discussions with the Mayor of Shanghai, His Excellency Mr Zhu Rongji, the Shanghai Government announced that it would establish a representative office in Brisbane for the purpose of further developing trade and investment links between Shanghai and Queensland.

Second, as an initiative of the Queensland Government, I was able to sign a joint memorandum of understanding with Vice-mayor Liu, representing the Shanghai Government on the exchange of secondary school level language teachers. Under this proposal, teachers of Chinese language will be sent to Queensland on an exchange basis with teachers of English language from the Queensland education system. The object of this exchange program in the long term is to complement the Goss Government's determination to rapidly expand the teaching of foreign and, in particular, Asian languages

in Queensland schools while using the in-country opportunities afforded by the program to develop within the Queensland education system a solid cadre of Chinese-speaking/teaching expertise. It is hoped that this program will commence in the 1991 school year.

Third, while in Shanghai, I extended to the mayor and an appropriate vice-mayor an invitation to visit Queensland later this year for the purpose of opening the proposed Shanghai office in Brisbane as well as participating in opening ceremonies for the exhibition of Shanghai bronzes scheduled to commence at the Queensland Art Gallery in September of this year. The exhibition of Shanghai bronzes represents a significant investment on the part of the Goss Government in expanding the cultural relationship between Shanghai and Queensland. This is a major exhibition and it is the first occasion on which these artefacts will travel to Australia. They will be seen in Brisbane before going on to Sydney.

At the outset, I said that the second of our objectives in travelling to China was to provide official support for the activities of Queensland businessmen seeking to develop trade and investment links with Chinese corporations. Businesses represented in the delegation came from a wide cross-section of the Queensland business community, ranging from the mining sector through to animal husbandry, food-processing, consultancy services as well as freight-forwarding services.

I have been advised that, during the course of our visit, each of the companies represented in my delegation was able to considerably advance its negotiations with its Chinese counterparts. There appears to be considerable potential for the expansion of cooperation between Shanghai and the Queensland sugar industry—potential which I propose to raise with relevant Queensland companies.

The visit gave me the opportunity to witness first hand the extensive nature of Mount Isa Mines' commercial interests in China. It was indeed heartening to see Queensland's foremost company demonstrate such an enthusiastic approach to the development of its international market opportunities in this most dynamic region.

I wish to inform Parliament that the Goss Government has decided to appoint the managing director of MIM's trading arm—Mintrade Pty Ltd—Mr David Woodall, as chairman of the Queensland China Council. The Government is confident that through this appointment the economic dimensions of the Queensland/China relationship will be put to the forefront in our efforts at the official level to develop the overall relationship. The Government is particularly pleased to have attracted Mr Woodall's services.

While travelling in China, I also regarded it as being of great importance to raise with relevant Chinese officials Australian and Queensland concerns about the state of human rights in that country—particularly since the events of last June. I wish to report that I did so in the fullest and frankest of fashions with appropriate representatives of the central Government.

This was my fifth visit to the People's Republic of China over nearly 20 years. I first travelled to China in the party led by the then Federal Opposition Leader, Gough Whitlam, when he travelled to China in 1971 prior to the Labor Party's historic Federal election win in 1972 and the subsequent normalisation of diplomatic relations with Beijing. Over that 20-year period, I have seen China in its good times and its bad times. Whatever we may think of the domestic policies adopted by the Chinese authorities at any particular time in its history, the fundamental geopolitical and economic reality for a country such as Australia is that we simply cannot afford to ignore China, given its enormous significance to regional stability and regional economic development.

We cannot afford to return to the period when successive Australian and State conservative Governments for a total of 23 years entertained the diplomatic absurdity that a quarter of humanity simply did not exist.

China today is going through an extremely difficult period, but it would be unwise in the extreme for the West to embark upon a campaign of sustained isolationism. The future of the open policy and reform in China is to a large extent contingent upon the West maintaining open dialogue with Beijing so as not to isolate reformist elements

within the Chinese leadership. The Queensland Government proposes to play its part in this overall process.

I table for the information of members a list of the people who were in the delegation, the meetings, the people whom we met and all of the details that I think will be helpful for members to read.

Whereupon the honourable member laid the document on the table.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Derailment of Freight Train at Chinaman Creek

Hon. D. J. HAMILL (Ipswich—Minister for Transport and Minister Assisting the Premier on Economic and Trade Development) (10.13 a.m.), by leave: At approximately 1.40 p.m. yesterday, Monday, 14 May, a Queensland Railways 6250 express freight train travelling from Cairns to Townsville was derailed at Chinaman Creek on the outskirts of Cairns.

The diesel haul general freight train comprising three diesel engines and 10 wagons had departed from Cairns approximately five minutes earlier. The lead diesel engine containing the train's crew was not affected in the derailment. The bogeys of the second engine were derailed and the third engine plunged off a low bridge into Chinaman Creek. Neither the second nor third engines was under power at the time of the incident. Altogether, six wagons were derailed, with the first wagon also crashing into the creek.

By 8 a.m. this morning, two container wagons were still to be rerailed, with the diesel engine and the lead wagon still in the creek. The bridge was demolished in the incident and Queensland Railways staff estimate that it will take six to eight weeks to rebuild it. In the mean time, Queensland Railways will take temporary measures to ensure a service to Cairns is restored as soon as possible. A temporary deviation will be built around the derailment site and it is hoped that services will resume by late tomorrow.

The cause of the derailment has not yet been established. However, Railway Department investigating officers have been on the scene since shortly after the incident and they will compile a detailed report.

Yesterday afternoon, 117 passengers on the northbound Queenslander were bussed from Innisfail to Cairns. Similar arrangements have applied this morning to bus southbound passengers from Cairns to Innisfail to join the Queenslander.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Cairns emergency service organisations, including the Police Department and the local fire brigade, on their speedy and professional response to the accident. Fortunately, no-one was injured in the derailment and Queensland Railways staff are working around the clock to resume normal safe services as quickly as possible.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Tuberculosis Quarantine Herds

Hon. E. D. CASEY (Mackay—Minister for Primary Industries) (10.15 a.m.), by leave: This statement relates to the entry of cattle from tuberculosis quarantined properties in the Northern Territory.

Recently, there has been much publicity regarding the request from the Northern Territory Government for access to slaughter at Queensland meatworks cattle from tuberculosis quarantined herds from the tuberculosis eradication area of the Northern Territory. This request resulted from a review of the tuberculosis eradication program in the Northern Territory as part of the national brucellosis and tuberculosis eradication campaign, known as BTEC.

Because of the failure of a number of tuberculin testing programs, it was found that up to 150 000 head may have to be destocked if the Northern Territory is going to meet the national deadline for Australia to become a tuberculosis impending free area by 31 December 1992. The slaughtering of these numbers over and above normal turn-off will be beyond the abattoir capacity of the Northern Territory. Access to Queensland meatworks will not only assist with the handling of the surplus, but also the additional competition provided will reduce the net cost of the BTEC program through improved returns on these animals.

I have been assured by the Livestock and Meat Authority of Queensland that the slaughtering of these additional cattle will have little effect on the local market price. I sought the opinion of industry on this matter. The request was supported by most sections of the industry, including the Cattle Council of Australia and the meat-processors. However, the Cattlemen's Union has some genuine concerns relating to the risk from transport accidents to the owners whose properties are adjacent to either the highway or the railway line which will be used to transport the stock to the meatworks.

Some of those owners have already eradicated tuberculosis at considerable personal expense and have understandable concerns that an accident allowing cattle to escape onto their property would put their herds at risk. Having considered all the arguments, in the near future I intend to put before Cabinet the necessary amendments to the Stock Regulations 1988 to allow those movements to take place.

The major advantage is the potential to save up to \$7.5m on the national BTEC program, which will be reflected in better returns on cattle destocked. This will have an indirect effect on this State's ability to maintain a high level of BTEC financial assistance to those in need. The increased number of cattle slaughtered at the northern Queensland meatworks should assist the viability of those works and their employees. Queensland producers and the meatworks' employees should both benefit from a potentially longer killing season.

I am unable to support Australian Meat Holdings' request for preferential treatment by having those cattle restricted to slaughter at Cape River Meatworks only. I cannot justify such a move on disease control grounds and feel that all eligible northern meatworks should have the benefit of access to those cattle. Further, given the type of cattle and the high freight differential, Queensland may receive no more than 20,000 head a year from this source. I doubt that, even with a monopoly, those numbers would be sufficient to keep Cape River Meatworks open.

I have not discounted the concerns of the Cattlemen's Union and have required strict conditions of security to be applied to those movements to minimise the risk in the event of an escape of those cattle. Each consignment is to enter Queensland only with prior notice and approval of my staff. Each consignment may enter only at Camooweal and each will travel in a convoy to Cloncurry trucking yards where they may be spelled. The entire movement from Camooweal to Cloncurry must begin and be completed within the hours of daylight and the convoy must have radio communication with my staff. All stock must be identified by tail tag and each animal will carry a distinctive yellow painted stripe along its backline to make it easily recognisable from the ground or the air. This will allow a rapid response in the event of an escape following any potential accident.

Those animals will be allowed to travel without further spelling by rail only from Cloncurry to certain approved meatworks in north Queensland. These meatworks are Tancreds, Queensland Meat Exports and F.J. Walker at Townsville, Borthwicks at Merinda, and Australian Meat Holdings at Pentland, if open.

I have taken this decision, I believe, in the best interests of the cattle industry. I reassure those people who consider themselves at risk that my staff will deal with any roll-over quickly and efficiently and the recovery or destruction of any escaped cattle will not be a cost to the affected property-owner. I will keep this situation under review and, if any problems occur, I will move to modify further or discontinue this movement concession.

MOTION OF CONDOLENCE
North Queensland Air Crash Victims

Hon. T. J. BURNS (Lytton—Deputy Premier, Minister for Housing and Local Government) (10.21 a.m.): On behalf of the Premier, the Government, this Parliament and the people of Queensland, I move—

"That this House desires to express its deepest sympathy to the relatives and friends of those who lost their lives in the tragic air crash in north Queensland last weekend."

Last weekend, Queenslanders, no matter where they live, were shocked as they read about this air crash in Queensland's far north and the irreplaceable loss of life and talent that it has caused.

I often think that too few people appreciate the unselfish sacrifice of so many of their fellow citizens in the grassroots administration of local government in this State. Beyond very basic allowances most of Queensland's aldermen and councillors are unpaid but devote countless hours looking after the problems of their friends and neighbours. Generally, most receive precious little in return for being disturbed at night or, in many cases, at their normal work about matters such as potholes, long grass, barking dogs and dozens of other community annoyances. However, year in and year out, they make those sacrifices willingly because of their community spirit and their burning desire to make things better for themselves, for others, for their district, for their State and for their nation.

Mr Speaker, this is an occasion when this House should also express respect for the role of councillors, shire clerks and council employees in what is truly the most decentralised government administrative network in not just Queensland but, more broadly, in Australia.

Today, the members of this Parliament mourn a fearful loss in personal ability and experience in local government within this State and nation. This House pays tribute to those Queenslanders who were popular public figures—in some instances, local legends and characters— within the populations whom they served so conscientiously.

Keith Goodwin was Mayor of Cairns, a young man, a fighter in the interests of our most northern city. Because he showed he had not forgotten the voters and the little people who had made him Mayor of Cairns, he was fast becoming one of the north's most popular personalities.

Rose Blank was first elected 8 years ago to the Cairns City Council. She was chairperson of the Cairns City Council's works and services committee and was a woman with great character and heart.

Harry Rankine was a legend within local government in the far north as chairman of the Herberton Shire for 13 years and a councillor with 25 years' experience. His commitment to the north was 25 years of hard work and community service.

Graham Luxton was also a Herberton Shire councillor and a former Chairman of the Tablelands Promotion Bureau and President of the Mount Garnett Ambulance Service—years of service to the community.

Elwyn Phillips was the shire clerk of Herberton—one of those many public servants so often forgotten within a local government system that serves 1.8 million voters.

Another terrible waste in experience was Ivan Wilkinson, the longest-serving councillor in Atherton Shire, with 30 years in local government. Thirty years of service lost in minutes! How can such knowledge and experience within a country community ever be replaced?

Hec Wallace was in his first term as a councillor in Eacham Shire and Joe Newman was in his second term—two councillors who were at this conference as part of a learning experience so that they would be better equipped to help their constituents.

Douglas Shire lost a highly respected councillor in Bruno Riedwig.

The loss from this tragedy is scattered throughout our far north.

The pilot, Stan Lindgren, owned the aircraft and was almost a household name within aviation circles in this region.

Sister Nadia Del Popola, of Cairns, was at the North Queensland Local Government Association meeting trying to help disabled people within our society. She perished when she accepted a vacant seat to fly home from such a worthy assignment. It happens so often that those who care for others are taken so quickly that we never have a real chance to say, "Thanks".

What can I say on behalf of this Parliament and the Government except to pay our most sincere tributes to those killed, express our deepest sympathies to their loved ones and mourn a loss of knowledge and dedication that this State cannot afford?

I was invited to what has now proved such a tragic local government meeting at Airlie Beach but could not attend because of earlier commitments. As Minister responsible for local government I knew most of the victims of this shocking disaster and no doubt I would have met the others if I had been in Airlie Beach last Friday.

It is occasions such as this that make us pause and think belatedly about the countless contributions of so many people in all walks of life to the betterment of local government in Queensland. As I said earlier, in most cases they are inadequately rewarded. They cannot look ahead to superannuation and many finish the day out of pocket and, too frequently, unthanked for their efforts. Queensland is far, far the poorer for this dreadful crash. So many families have lost their loved ones and local government in a number of areas must now look sadly towards replacing people who still had so much to contribute.

On behalf of the Premier, the Parliament, the Government and the people of Queensland, I express our most extreme sorrow at what has happened and offer what comfort and sympathy we possibly can to those closest to the victims.

Hon. K. E. De LACY (Cairns—Treasurer and Minister for Regional Development): I second the motion of condolence moved by the Deputy Premier and Minister for Local Government. It gives me no great joy to do so.

As the Deputy Premier said, last Friday local government in north Queensland had its heart ripped out. Cairns lost three very great workers for the community and, worst of all, I lost two very dear friends and another person with whom I had a close working relationship and for whom I had a great deal of respect.

It seems only yesterday that I stood on the other side of the Chamber and spoke to a condolence motion following the tragic death of eight Cairns State High School students in the Gillies Highway bus crash. I do not know what this all means. The more I try to find a meaning, the more it eludes me.

Honourable members may know that I was returning from overseas last Saturday. In Bangkok, I changed to a Qantas flight that touched down in Singapore. After taking off from Singapore, the pilot came to see me. I do not know how he found me among the 300 people on the plane. He said that there had been a tragic air crash. I wish that he had not found me because I spent the following seven hours trying to work out who would be on the aeroplane. The only advice I was given was that the Mayor of Cairns had been killed, along with 10 others. I was told that many local government people had lost their lives. I spent some time with the pilot. We received intermittent news reports, none of which were conclusive. It was not until I arrived in Cairns that I could get the whole truth and that did not make me feel any better.

As I said, Keith Goodwin was a close friend. Some people suggest that I was largely responsible for his being Mayor of Cairns. If that were so, I would count it among my greatest achievements. Historically, he was there for only a short period—just over two years—but he left his mark on the Cairns scene.

He will be remembered as the mayor under whose leadership the people of Cairns regained control of their own destiny. I think it is fair to say that the people of Cairns were losing that control because decisions were being made by developers, not the people or their elected representatives. That has all changed. In Cairns we still welcome development but it comes on our terms, and that is a great and significant achievement. Many people could spend a life-time in local government and not be able to claim anything like that record.

Keith Goodwin had a simple creed. He signed his letters, "Keith Goodwin, Cairns, where people make the difference." That should be his epitaph.

I believe that Keith Goodwin was the greatest practitioner of the art of public speaking whom I have ever met or had the pleasure to hear. I mean that. There are many in this Chamber who are great practitioners of that art. I have met all the good speakers in Australia over the last decade or so and Keith Goodwin had the gift of the gab to a greater extent than any person I met or heard. It was a pleasure to sit back and listen to him. He spoke without notes and could readily sum up a debate. If he were making this sort of speech today about somebody else, he would do it much better than I am doing.

He practised that craft in the Jaycees, of which he was a prominent member. He was national president and also a special adviser to the world president of Jaycees and an Australian senator to Jaycees International. His wife, Sonja, also achieved distinction in the Jaycees, being the first Queensland-appointed female senator of Jaycees International, and she was also involved in the administration of the Australian Jaycees.

If there was one other person who could take equal credit with me for helping Keith Goodwin to become Mayor of Cairns and who could take equal credit with Keith Goodwin for preserving that unique life-style and environment for the people of Cairns, it was Rose Blank. Rose was the archetypal little battler. She was a person who was prepared to fight her fights. She had a lot of Irish in her. She had three passions in life: one was concern for the little people, the second was for the environment and the third was for the rights of women. They were the three causes that as a businesswoman attracted her to the Labor Party and they remained with her right throughout her life.

Rose and Keith had the same strengths and, to a certain extent, the same weaknesses. I used to tell them that, as politicians, they engaged the enemy too often, but that demonstrates the commitment that they had to the things that they believed in. They were the most dynamic of the Cairns councillors. They really were the heart and soul of the Cairns City Council and, personally, I do not know how they will be replaced.

I wish to say a few words about Sister Nadia. Out of all the people in the Cairns Catholic diocese I knew Sister Nadia best of all, because she was the person who was responsible for social welfare in the Cairns Catholic church. She was Director of Family Care and Skillshare. She was involved in a range of organisations, such as the Cairns Regional Community Council and the Migrant Resource Centre, and I crossed paths with her on many occasions. Physically she was a very small person, but in every other way—her commitment, intellect and spiritual strength—she was very large. She had so much energy and dedication to the cause that at times I found it almost scary. Her death will leave a hole in both the Catholic church and the welfare effort in Cairns that will also be very difficult to fill.

As the Deputy Premier said, Stan Lindgren was a well known personality and identity in Cairns. He had been flying for most of his life and had not always had it easy. Only six weeks ago I travelled with him in that ill-fated plane to Thursday Island to inspect the Queensland Government patrol craft with a group of potential purchasers from the Hong Kong police. I note that some comments have been made in the press about his attitude to flying. I do not believe this serves any purpose. A person does not fly for as long as he did if he is not responsible and competent.

On behalf of my wife, this Parliament and the citizens of Cairns, I extend our condolences and deepest sympathies to the families and friends of all those who died.

I do not mean to take the extent of the whole tragedy lightly by not mentioning the other people who were involved. It is simply that I knew better the people from Cairns. I met or knew most of the people involved; some I knew better than others. I wish to extend my sympathies to all their families. I can conclude only by saying that life goes on, even though it is a great deal poorer.

Mr COOPER (Roma—Leader of the Opposition) (10.35 a.m.): I and all Opposition members endorse the remarks made by the Deputy Premier and the Treasurer, the member for Cairns, in this most tragic of condolence motions.

I recognise that the member for Cairns has had a very close association with many of the people involved and would like him to know that the Opposition understands how he must be feeling at this time and the great personal loss that he has suffered. In the same breath I mention the member for Tablelands, and no doubt other members in this Chamber, who are involved to the same extent. The Opposition joins with the Government and the members of the Liberal Party in conveying its deepest sympathy and condolences to all of those who have suffered so deeply as a result of this tragedy.

The member for Cairns said that he wondered what it all meant. He is not alone in that feeling because, when tragedies such as this occur, we all wonder what it all means and what it is all for. Because we are mere mortals, we will never know. Great personal tragedy has been suffered by the family members of those involved and this will flow through into their various communities. These people, who were so deeply involved in local government, by definition were also deeply involved in their local communities and the people. Many members in this place have been involved in local government and have given service to the people of Queensland in areas outside this Chamber. They know how deeply involved one gets, and, as a result, how deeply committed one becomes. No-one plays a part in local government unless one is deeply committed and has total dedication. Because one's involvement is so deep and committed, one's circle of friends, acquaintances and colleagues widens dramatically. As a result, more people are touched by a tragedy of this dimension.

The two previous speakers made mention of the other people involved in the accident, such as Sister Nadia and the pilot. I endorse their words, without necessarily singling anyone out. I, too, say that nothing is achieved by casting aspersions on the ability of a pilot at a time like this. I am sure that all honourable members' thoughts now are with the friends and loved ones of the pilot. Whatever action has to be taken, irrespective of the degree of seriousness, has nothing to do with this motion, and I sincerely hope that it remains that way.

Earlier, reference was made to the great depth in experience and dedication to the whole arena of local government, and we must recognise the dimension of that loss. Local government will most certainly be the poorer for this tragic accident. We all know that the accident was futile and unnecessary; we also realise that it has happened, and that accidents will occur again. As I said before, accidents happen for a reason, but that reason will remain unknown to us. A great reservoir of commitment and skill has been lost and it will be frightfully difficult to replace it.

As the member for Cairns said, life is for the living. Somehow, those people will be replaced by other dedicated people. They, too, will come to know what it means to be involved in community service. As time goes by and as those people take their places to fill the deep void that has been created, I am sure that all honourable members would wish them well.

Above all, it must be recognised that this accident has been a great personal tragedy for the families involved. Members of the Opposition join with the Government in expressing sincere condolences to those family members who are so deeply and closely involved. Nothing will ever take the place of those they have lost. At this difficult time, they are in our thoughts and, most certainly, in our prayers.

Mr BEANLAND (Toowong—Leader of the Liberal Party) (10.40 a.m.): It is with deep regret and sadness that I join with the Deputy Premier, the member for Cairns

and the Leader of the Opposition in supporting this condolence motion. Nothing so clearly points to the transient nature of human life than the killing of 11 of our fellow Queenslanders in so brutal a fashion. That their deaths occurred while returning from carrying out their official duties magnifies the extent of this tragedy.

Last Friday, I farewelled delegates to the north Queensland local government conference at Airlie Beach. It was some four hours later that I learned, to my horror, that the aircraft in which 10 of them were travelling home was missing. It was several hours later that I learned that 10 of those people and the pilot had been killed. Through local government, I had known several of these people for many, many years. These Queenslanders died in the service of local government, and of north Queensland, in particular.

The death of Councillor Harry Rankine, the Chairman of the Local Government Association of North Queensland, leaves a void in the official life of the north that will be difficult to fill. Harry had approximately 25 years' involvement in local government. In common with all his colleagues, he dedicated himself to serving the interests of local government and the interests of local communities throughout the area. However, while entire communities experience a sense of loss in these instances, there can be no comparison with the loss suffered by the families of those who died. Nothing we can say today will return their loved ones to them.

I must pay tribute to the volunteers who laboured so hard to locate and recover the crashed plane and the bodies of its pilot and passengers. Struggling against rugged terrain and bad weather, they did not relent until they had discovered the bodies of their colleagues and friends. On behalf of the Liberal Party, I extend sympathy and condolences to the families of the deceased and to the entire north Queensland community.

Mr GILMORE (Tablelands) (10.43 a.m.): In the period of one's life, one expects to feel several emotions—joy and sadness, laughter and disappointment. One does not necessarily expect horror and despair, but these latter emotions are the lot of all north Queenslanders, especially the families and loved ones of those whom we mourn.

Today all honourable members will stand together in this place to record the passing of friends and colleagues—people whom we all knew and respected, people who were true servants of the community and of this country. Truly, had they not been dedicated to such service and had they not been deeply involved in their communities, even now they would have been sitting comfortably at home and contemplating this day. Of course, that was not the nature of those far-north Queenslanders; not for them was the easy road. No, they chose—and quite deliberately so—the difficult course of public service. They perished while pursuing that course.

There were 11 people on the aircraft. Although other honourable members have mentioned them, I would like to enshrine their names and some of their personal details—just some of them—in the historical records of this Parliament and the history of this State.

Sister Nadia del Popolo—or Sister Nadia, as she was so affectionately known—was a remarkable person. She was vibrant, vigorous and energetic. All those words are appropriate descriptions of the lady, but are not nearly as appropriate as the term "loving, kind, gentle and caring". Recently she was also described as a visionary, but she was a visionary with a grit who could get the job done. Her all-too-short life began in Sicily but, from a very early age, Australia was her home. She grew up to be a scholar and a teacher. Later, after joining the Sisters of Mercy, she became, among other things, a marriage-counsellor and a friend to the disadvantaged. She served her community, God and her church with everything she possessed, and now God has called her home to perform a higher service.

The legacy of family care, migrant care and youth care programs which we have inherited from her are testimony to a dedicated and unselfish life. We are the poorer for her passing, but infinitely richer for her having passed our way.

Councillor Jack Ivan Thomas Wilkinson, OAM, DFC, used the unassuming title "blacksmith", which was typical of the man. His service to his country in a time of war and his subsequent service to his community speak of valour, dedication and hard work. His community was his life. Consider for a moment what kind of man would serve as a shire councillor for 28 years, for 12 of those years as deputy chairman of his shire.

For 17 years, he was local controller of the Atherton State Emergency Service. He was an auxiliary fireman who rose to be deputy fire chief and a board member of the Atherton Fire Brigade, and, subsequently, of the Tableland Fire Brigade Board. Over the years, he was chairman of both the Atherton Centenary and Atherton Bicentennial Committees, chairman of the Atherton High School p. and c. association for a time, and president of the Atherton Swimming Club. He had been the drum major of the Mareeba and District Brass Band and patron of at least six youth organisations. In his spare time, he was a State councillor of the Royal Automobile Club of Queensland, and had been vice-president and remained trustee of the Atherton branch of the RSL.

This has not been an exhaustive list of his life's work, and neither is it meant to be. This list seeks only to remind us forever that this man, Ivan Wilkinson, was a great Queensland, and a great Australian. His wife, Marcie, and his children and grandchildren can remember him with pride as well as sorrow, and can look to a better future because of the work that he has done.

Councillor Harry Rankine, OAM, JP, was a doer—an achiever—if ever there was one. If there was something to be said, Harry said it; if there was something to be done, Harry did it. He treated all people equally, dealt with all men without fear or favour, and was not to be compromised. He was born to lead, and so, simply, he led in everything that his busy life encompassed. As a youth of 16 years, he joined the Royal Australian Navy, in time to serve with the occupation forces in Japan. After he was discharged, he commenced dairy farming near Ravenshoe.

In 1961, he became a divisional councillor in the Herberton Shire and, since then, has been on that council for 24 years, including 15 years as chairman. As a leader in local government, he spent 10 years on the executive of the North Queensland Local Government Association. For five of those years, he was president of that organisation. His service to the greater community did not end with local government. He spent 23 years on the Tableland Fire Brigade Board, being chairman since 1981. He also sat on the Atherton Hospital Board for 17 years, and was for a number of years a respected member of the Cairns Port Authority.

Not satisfied with those credits to his name, Harry had a long and distinguished career of service to the dairy industry, spending more than 31 years as a director of the Ravenshoe Cooperative Dairy Association Ltd, which subsequently became the Atherton Tableland Cooperative Dairy Association Ltd. He was 10 years as deputy chairman of that organisation, and he served 10 years as chairman of directors.

His services to local government and the dairy industry were recognised in 1984, when he was awarded the Order of Australia medal. Community service through the Ravenshoe Lions Club, the RSL and the Rural Fire Brigade in his local area add to an impressive and remarkable life. Harry Rankine is survived by his wife, Doreen, six daughters and 24 grandchildren. Our sympathy and support are extended to them; they can rest assured that Harry will not be forgotten.

Councillor Graham Gilbert Luxton had been a councillor for seven years, during which time he was Herberton Shire representative on the Tablelands Promotion Bureau, including a term as president of that organisation. He began his working career near Cunnamulla, driving a camel team and cleaning bore drains. From those humble beginnings, he pursued various vocations from ships steward to dairy farmer and sawmill-worker. In later life, he purchased a small business in Mount Garnet, which he operated until he retired in 1988.

Graham was a tireless worker in his community through the Lions Club and as chairman of the Mount Garnet Ambulance Committee. His small community will find

his ample shoes hard to fill, and his wife, Patricia, his five children and seven grandchildren will long mourn his loss.

Elwyn Alexander Phillips was shire clerk of the Herberton Shire. He was young, extremely intelligent and dedicated to his family and his work. He had everything before him. He was cut off in his prime. His record of achievement at the Atherton State High School is almost without parallel, having excelled in academic and sporting fields, as well as citizenship. In 1960, he was prefect and student of the year.

Elwyn had a long history in local government, having commenced work with the Atherton Shire in 1961. He studied for his shire clerks' ticket. After being awarded that certificate in 1970, he moved, in 1971, to Caloundra to fill the position of deputy shire clerk of the Landsborough Shire Council. While in Caloundra, he joined and ultimately was awarded life membership of the Apex Club.

In 1984, he moved with his wife and children to Herberton, where he took up the post of shire clerk. He served with distinction in that position, and was the serving secretary of the North Queensland Local Government Association. Elwyn was a fine man—a professional—and a loving husband and father. His wife, Ann, and his two children, Marnie and Tamara, must now live with the memory. We all, I am sure, extend our deepest sympathy.

I turn now to Councillor Hector Frederick George Wallace. Hec Wallace was a long-term resident and businessman on the tablelands. A master builder by trade, he also, until a couple of years ago, ran the Malanda newsagency. He was serving his first term as councillor on the Eacham Shire, but had already made a significant contribution to council affairs, including being council representative on the Tablelands Promotion Bureau. His long service to the Malanda Rotary Club included terms as president, a post he held with distinction. Hec Wallace is mourned by his wife, Rae, and their three sons. He was a true Tablelander and a worthy councillor.

I turn to Councillor Joseph Frederick Newman. Joe had been a councillor since 1985. An intense man who offered his total effort to the task of representing his division, he was popular and well respected throughout the whole region. Joe and his wife, Sophia, ran the post office in Yungaburra and operated the rural mail service in that region. Joe served on the Atherton Hospital Board and the Committee for the Carinya Home for the Aged and was a pillar of strength on the Tableland Garden Festival and Expo Committee. He was a keen indoor bowler. Joe was always community minded and was always ready to assist, regardless of his personal circumstances at the time. He will be terribly missed by his family, his friends and the local community.

Alderman Keith Goodwin, Alderman Rose Blank and Councillor Bruno Reidweg were not well known to me. However, they have been spoken well of in this Chamber today. Their contribution to local government and north Queensland are adequate testimony to their dedication and determination. Both Cairns City and Douglas Shire will have great difficulty in replacing these fine citizens and the depth of experience that has been lost with them.

That leaves only one person, Stan Lindgren, the pilot of that ill-fated aircraft. I have deliberately left my tribute to him until last. I did not know him but my sympathy goes to his family, who have been treated appallingly by the media in the last few days. Surely it is not for members of Parliament or for members of the press corps to judge. Surely this is a time for calm, for compassion and love of our fellow man. The unprincipled and unwarranted attack by certain newspapers on this man and his bereaved family have saddened us all. I trust that now Stan Lindgren's family can be left in peace to mourn the loss of their husband and father.

This condolence motion cannot be complete without mention of those men and women of the Police Service, the State Emergency Service, the ambulance service, the armed forces, the clergy and all those others, both professionals and volunteers, who worked in appalling conditions and in difficult terrain without a moment of thought for themselves and without rest to search for survivors and, ultimately, to recover the dead.

Their service simply epitomises everything that those unfortunate victims had stood for and fought for for the whole of their lives. I am pleased to record our gratitude.

This has been an unprecedented calamity. In a single blow the heart has been torn from our local communities. Nothing can change it and only time can heal the hurt and the pain.

Hon. A. G. EATON (Mourilyan—Minister for Land Management) (10.56 a.m.): It is with sadness that I join this motion of condolence and add my words of sympathy to the families who are left behind.

I was a personal friend of the majority of the people who had their lives taken away so tragically at the weekend. On many occasions I enjoyed the hospitality and welcome of those people and their families in their own homes. Despite a good effort on Sunday to try to visit all the relatives, I was unable to do so. However, I saw at first hand the tragedy of the families who have been left behind. I certainly extend my sincerest sympathy and offer my help to those families should they wish to call on me in the future.

Honourable members have today acknowledged the effort that was put in over the years by those councillors. I do not wish to be a parrot and repeat a lot of the things that have been said. However, I endorse fully the remarks of the previous speaker on the ability of those councillors and the sacrifices that they made. I think that the Deputy Premier and Minister for Local Government said a great deal in a short statement when he said that the councillors put a lot of service into the community in the area of local government that was unrecognised and unpaid. That has been acknowledged today.

I want to mention people individually because, as I have said, I knew them personally. Three of those killed were constituents of mine. I mention first Councillor Harry Rankine, chairman of the shire, who had acted in that capacity for many years. He was not involved only in shire work. Harry and I often used to meet at official functions. Because of the various positions that he held throughout north Queensland, frequently Harry would have to leave early to attend another official function in another town. As has been mentioned, he was a member of the harbour board, he was president of the North Queensland Local Government Association and he was involved in many of the service clubs throughout the area. He worked for all the festival committees that operate in the community. He played a very important role in those organisations. In fact, on one occasion Harry told me that he belonged to 28 different organisations, and he held an executive position on each and every one of those. He spent a lot of his time serving the needs of the community of north Queensland in many and varied areas. As the member for Tablelands has said, in recognition of this he was awarded the OAM. That was well earned and well deserved.

Councillor Graham Luxton was again a personal friend of mine. Before becoming a councillor he had vast experience working in various parts of Queensland. I think that at one stage he spent some time in the Northern Territory. I do not know whether that was for a lengthy period or whether he was just passing through. In my travels around the electorate I would regularly call on Harry Rankine and Graham Luxton, as well as the shire clerk, Elwyn Phillips, who also tragically lost his life in that disaster. They made me aware of the needs of the local authority area. In addition, they would make me aware of many other shortcomings in the electorate and direct me to people in need. They had not only local government issues at heart but also the people of the community.

Ivan Wilkinson was also a friend of mine for many years. He was very highly respected in his own local township as well as throughout north Queensland.

When speaking to a condolence motion it is difficult to describe adequately the people concerned and to list their achievements, as well as the role they played in the community. Quite often we look to the highlights of their lives when we should be looking at what they have left behind. I refer to the friendship, the trust and the compassion that they showed to the people of their areas throughout their life-times.

The people who were killed so tragically in this disaster will long be remembered as human beings rather than for what they did as officials of a local authority organisation—because they were compassionate, they were understanding, they were fair and, when the occasion demanded it, they were firm. That is something that has to be respected. We all like to be good people and give all the time to make ourselves popular.

Those people carried out their responsible jobs with fairness and firmness but still maintained the respect of the community. As politicians, we know that that is not always easy to do. While we acknowledge their loss as councillors and in various other roles within the community, they were true human beings who showed compassion, charity and understanding for their fellow men and carried out their tasks to the best of their ability.

As I said, I had a long association with the majority of those people. The Eacham Shire lost two councillors, namely, Councillor Hec Wallace and Councillor Joe Newman. I knew those two gentlemen for a long time. In fact, Hector Wallace was well known throughout north Queensland as a tradesman and businessman. Over many years he undertook Government work by constructing Government buildings in the Cape York region. Hec Wallace was a carpenter by trade. He later opened a newsagency business in Malanda.

Hec Wallace was a resident of the Eacham Shire region all his life. He was a very talented sportsman. I had the pleasure of playing with and against Hector in sport, particularly cricket and football. In club games we were opponents, but in representative sport we played side by side. One would have to go a long way to find a finer young person on or off the field than Hector Wallace. Our friendship went back well over 35 years. For many years to come, I am sure that people will remember him for his achievements outside as well as inside local government.

Cairns suffered the sad loss of Alderman Keith Goodwin, the Mayor of Cairns, and Alderman Rose Blank. I knew those two people personally and had quite a lot of contact with them both officially and unofficially. I cannot speak highly enough of the way in which they carried out the administration of the council and serviced the needs of the Cairns community. They were both hard fighters. However, they were always fair and firm in their decisions. They took into consideration the needs of both sides, not only those of local government but also personal and community needs. I am sure that they will be sadly missed in Cairns.

I knew Councillor Reidweg from the Port Douglas Shire for only a short time. However, because I know most of the other councillors in that district and the way in which they spoke of Councillor Reidweg, I am sure that he will be sadly missed in the Port Douglas Shire. Councillor Reidweg was a member of the council at a controversial time when a great deal of development occurred and many hard decisions had to be made. Councillor Reidweg served that area as best he could.

I turn now to another personal friend of mine who was, unfortunately, on that plane. I refer to Sister Nadia del Popolo who, before she became the chief administrator of welfare in north Queensland, spent quite some years in Innisfail, during which time I got to know her personally. Although Sister del Popolo was very small in stature, her heart was worn on her sleeve. She was everybody's friend. In fact, in recent times she had acquired the nickname of the Mother Teresa of north Queensland. Irrespective of where the need was or which organisation needed help in the area of welfare or family services, Sister del Pololo was there. She had the type of personality and the way of penetrating areas in order to seek help that many people are unable to achieve. She had the happy knack of obtaining support. I am sure that all honourable members would wish to have that ability, because quite often in our job we have trouble finding the necessary support.

Knowing Sister del Pololo as well as I did, and knowing the work in which she was involved, I am sure that she will be sadly missed. Only about six days before the tragedy, I rang her and left a message about a problem that she had asked me to

investigate. Unfortunately, because she was away, probably preparing for that trip, I had to leave that message on her telephone answering machine.

Sister del Pololo worked very closely with local authorities in north Queensland. Because of her untiring efforts to service those in need, particularly handicapped people, Sister del Popolo gained the respect of every council in north Queensland.

Many families have relatives who need constant care. Sister del Popolo set up houses for such people so that relatives who had to go away or who wished to take family members elsewhere could leave their handicapped relatives in proper care during that time. Knowing that handicapped people are properly cared for in those houses has been a great relief to many people in north Queensland.

People do not often see that side of life. We take it for granted that handicapped people are always well cared for and that the people who care for them are able to move about as freely as we do. However, that is not the case. Sister del Popolo really shone in the field of the care of handicapped people and those others who are a lot less fortunate than we are. She always had the happy knack of helping the many people to whom she was trying to give relief, compassion and comfort, although perhaps I should not use the word "happy".

I add my sincerest sympathy to the families who are left behind. I am sure that the respect that the victims gained from the community in their positions of trust will continue. Although their families may look on the loss in sadness, they should have a certain amount of pride in the knowledge that their wives and husbands left behind a respect that can only be earned and not bought.

Mr RANDELL (Mirani) (11.08 a.m.): As a former Minister for Local Government it gives me no pleasure to join with other members in offering my condolences to the friends and relatives of the victims of that tragic air crash in north Queensland.

In my role as Minister for Local Government it was my privilege to work with and liaise with all members of the councils in north Queensland who have been affected. In particular, I came to know very well, and was on friendly terms with, Harry Rankine and Keith Goodwin. It is with no disrespect that I will speak about those two only and not about the others, because I believe that other members have covered them fairly well.

I regarded Harry Rankine as a particular friend. Everyone who knew him knew that he was a happy-go-lucky sort of a man. He was a man's man, totally dedicated to his family. He had a great loving care for them and, whenever one spoke to him, that shone through. He was very warm and friendly. I can remember having a quiet drink with Harry after attending functions. On those occasions his hearty belly laugh would come through to the fore. When I say that, I mean no disrespect. If I close my eyes now I can visualise Harry Rankine standing with a drink in his hand, telling a quiet joke and being quite friendly and affable to everybody.

Underneath that exterior he was a very shrewd and knowledgeable man on local government affairs. I came to know that and I had a high regard for him. He had the strength of his convictions. He worked for the betterment of his area and the people in it.

As Keith De Lacy would know, Keith Goodwin was a comparative newcomer to local government, but he quickly made his mark in that area. Keith De Lacy also said that Keith Goodwin had a great vision in his own mind of what he wanted, and what he believed the people wanted, for Cairns in the future. It is a pity for everyone concerned that he did not live to see that vision become a reality not only for Cairns but also for north Queensland.

I last saw Keith Goodwin in Mackay at a reception for the North Queensland Games athletes. The member for Mackay was also in attendance. Keith had come all the way down from Cairns just to be there. He walked across the room, shook my hand and greeted me in a friendly manner. I think that Keith and I would have become great

friends if we had liaised with each other more and been a lot closer to each other geographically.

I think other speakers have outlined the specific details of the contributions made by all persons who perished in that dreadful crash, so I will not repeat them. The tributes that have been paid in this House today certainly show the high regard in which each and every one of those people was held in his own area. But life will go on. People will come forward and fill the positions that those people held, and that is how it should be. However, we must never forget the valuable contribution made by each and every one of those people, not only in local government but also in every facet of community and social life in north Queensland. I think no greater tribute can be paid to them than to say there is no doubt that the area in which they were involved is a better place because they lived there.

To all the friends and relatives of the deceased, I offer my sincere condolences and sympathy.

Dr CLARK (Barron River) (11.11 a.m.): On behalf of the women in this House, I wish to pay tribute today to Alderman Rose Blank and Sister Nadia del Popolo who lost their lives in the plane crash on Mount Emerald near Mareeba in far-north Queensland.

These two outstanding women were among the 12 people who lost their lives in this tragic accident. As we heard today, the other passengers killed consisted of the pilot and local government representatives and officers, including the Mayor of Cairns, Alderman Keith Goodwin.

The member for Cairns and others have already spoken of the achievements of this exceptional community-leader, whom I feel privileged to have had as a friend. I have no doubt that history will record that the election of Keith Goodwin and his Alliance team to the Cairns City Council in 1988 was the turning point for that city. Thus the policy of the Alliance administration to ensure that the growth and development of the city was in harmony with the environment and the life-style of its people represented a sharp contrast to that of the previous Civic Association administration.

I would like to extend my deepest sympathy to Keith's wife, Sonya, and children Lisa and Dean who shared his vision for the City of Cairns—a city where, in Keith's words, "people make the difference".

Rose Blank, of whom I speak today, was a dynamic architect of the Cairns Alliance team, having entered local government in 1982 as an ALP candidate. She was the first Cairns woman to be re-elected for a third term. Following the 1988 election, Alderman Blank became chairperson of the council's works and services committee. She was very active on the council and was the council's representative on the Cairns/Mulgrave water supply board, the Cairns/Mulgrave planning advisory committee, the Friends of Cominos House committee, the Cairns youth housing committee, the environment advisory committee and the traffic and parking advisory committee.

Alderman Blank's special achievements were in the areas of social welfare, particularly housing, women's affairs and the protection of the environment. She initiated the first low-cost housing projects in Cairns under the local government and community housing program, providing housing for the disadvantaged. It was Alderman Blank who established a public housing support group and, among other things, assisted tenants to improve local recreational facilities.

In her role as alderman, she forged links with the women in Lae, Cairns' sister city, when she visited Papua New Guinea. Just last month, those women from Lae visited Cairns and Alderman Blank provided them with a wide range of experiences and information that will enable them to play a more active role in their own communities back in New Guinea.

The Cairns City Council has a number of public advisory committees. In fact, yesterday was to have been the first meeting of the women's advisory committee to be

chaired by Alderman Blank, its convenor. She recognised only too well the importance of the council's receiving input from women themselves about their needs in the community and was ready as always to be their advocate in council. I have no doubt, though, that the remaining women on council, Alderman Boyle and Alderman Nash, will ensure that this advisory council will play the role that Alderman Blank intended.

The other issue on which Alderman Blank waged war was the environment. For example, it was Alderman Blank who, together with community groups, revealed publicly the serious mismanagement of the council's refuse disposal site under the previous council administration. Her determination to inform the public about council activities took considerable courage, a quality that Rose had in plenty. In fact, Alderman Rose Blank was no stranger to conflict and controversy. Indeed, some would say that she relished it.

A formidable opponent, she always spoke her mind and fought hard for the things in which she believed, such as social justice and protection for the environment.

As an alderman, the role that she cherished was campaigning for the underdog—a battler against the odds—a role that I and the people of Cairns respected, admired and valued. Having similar values and goals, Alderman Blank and I frequently worked together. Indeed, a high level of cooperation exists between the Cairns City Council and the Mulgrave Shire Council, of which, until recently, I was a member.

I would like to share with honourable members my most vivid memory of Rose in action. To me, this one incident amongst many captures the essence of this formidable woman. In 1988, there was growing alarm at the number of development proposals for the Cairns wetlands. It is a matter of history now how Keith Goodwin and his Alliance team played a key role in the massive public protest that put a stop to plans to reclaim the Cairns mudflats for the multimillion-dollar proposal known as Trinity Point.

The battle for Admiralty Island, however, is less well known, and it is that I wish to speak of. This pristine mangrove island lies in the heart of Trinity Inlet adjacent to Cairns and is an essential part of the inlet estuarine system.

In May 1988, with no prior warning, bulldozers and a drilling rig were moved to the island. Tracks were bulldozed and a core sample was obtained before local residents were alerted to the work.

In a show of strength, conservationists and local government representatives, including Rose and myself, complete with a media contingent, landed on the island. I believe that the member for Cairns, Mr Keith De Lacy, was among that landing party, so honourable members can see how high powered it was.

As the members of that group were bravely traversing the island to reach the drilling site, a bulldozer trundled towards us. This was just the kind of situation that was made for Rose and, as the assembled group stood to one side, it was Rose who rallied us to action with the cry, "Well, are we going to stand in front of this thing or not?" Needless to say, it was Rose who was the first to block the bulldozer's path. This action was symbolic of Rose's philosophy—if one believed that something was wrong, one took action to remedy it, and the sooner the better. The outcome of the battle for Admiralty Island was that the company retired gracefully.

I know that both Rose Blank and Keith Goodwin would have continued to fight for Admiralty Island. I hope that, as chairperson of the steering committee to formulate a management plan for Trinity Inlet—a committee of which the mayor, Keith Goodwin, was a member—I can hopefully ensure a successful outcome of that battle to protect Admiralty Island. I believe that I owe that much at least to them both.

Alderman Blank leaves behind her husband Greville and daughters Cherie and Darlene. To them, I offer my profound sympathy. To them, Rose is, of course, irreplaceable—she was that very special person.

The other special person of whom I wish to speak today is Sister Nadia Giovanna del Popolo, of whom this House has already heard. I would like to offer my thoughts on Sister Nadia, who contributed so much to Cairns.

As honourable members have heard, Sister Nadia was the Director of Family Care in Cairns and a member of the Order of the Sisters of Mercy.

Sister Nadia, a diminutive, dynamic woman, was totally committed to improving the lives of the poor, the disabled, the homeless, the unemployed and the troubled. Her compassion and energy were boundless.

The growth of Family Care is a testament to that energy and commitment. That organisation began life nine years ago on an adapted veranda with a budget of a mere \$4,000. Today, it comprises an administration and counselling centre and an employment training centre operating a service to communities from Thursday Island in the north to Cardwell in the south. Its annual budget today which is close to \$1m, reflects that level of activity.

The wide range of services and programs offered by Family Care reflects the needs in the community that were recognised by Sister Nadia. In addition to personal counselling services, she developed a family life program which is now offered in all Catholic schools. The centre also provides a personal safety program for schools to alert and educate young children regarding physical and sexual abuse, which appears to be on the increase in Cairns.

Sister Nadia's response to the problem of the long-term unemployed, particularly youth, was to establish her own employment training centre, which has been successful in offering courses, particularly in the hospitality field. A migrant support program aimed especially at Philippino women, and an attendant care program to assist people with disabilities to live independently, are two other services introduced by this remarkable woman.

Today, honourable members have also heard from the member for Mourilyan, the Honourable Bill Eaton, about the respite care centre that Sister Nadia established at Innisfail which has been so welcomed and used by the people in that town.

My personal contact with Sister Nadia was through those projects that she initiated and which addressed the concerns we shared for the Cairns community. As honourable members heard from Keith De Lacy, she was on many committees, some of which I shared with her. This contact over the years has only served to increase my deep admiration and respect for Sister Nadia's determination and organisational ability.

I agree wholeheartedly with Sister Margaret Rush, the Supervisor of the Sisters of Mercy Convent where Sister Nadia lived, when she said of her—

"She was a visionary, and though some visionaries can't get down to practicalities, she could organise and carry through and make her visions work."

However, Sister Nadia had one vision that has not yet come to fruition, and I sincerely hope that her untimely death will not mean an end to that project. I am referring to her goal of providing a house in a residential suburban area for intellectually disabled adults. She believed that a family house was needed where the disabled could, with support, become integrated into the community rather than be isolated in an institution.

Before I left the Mulgrave Shire Council, I had been involved in those discussions and it had been decided that the project be supported and a block of land purchased. Funds for construction were available from the Federal Government. I believe that the completion of this project would be a fitting memorial to Sister Nadia, who gave so much of herself to the community.

I was discussing the tragedy with the Catholic Bishop of Cairns, John Bathersby, at the weekend and he summed up my feelings and, I believe, those of the Cairns community and those honourable members who have spoken in this place today when he said of Sister Nadia, "She was as close as you can get to irreplaceable."

To Sister Nadia's family I offer my sincere sympathy. I hope that they can gain some comfort from knowing of the great debt of gratitude that the people of Cairns owe to Sister Nadia.

There can be no doubt that the loss of Alderman Rose Blank and Sister Nadia is a dreadful blow for women in far-north Queensland and for the community generally. The talents of those exceptional women have contributed significantly to the quality of life enjoyed by the people of Cairns, but in particular for those people who lack a voice in today's world—the disadvantaged, the homeless and the poor.

Those women provided an inspiration to others like me who seek to serve the community. It is their example of strength and courage, compassion and caring that will show us the way to a better future.

I would also appreciate the opportunity to speak today of Councillor Bruno Riedweg from my electorate, who lost his life in the service of his community. Of all honourable members present today, I would probably know Bruno the most, having had contact with him both before my election to Parliament and since. Born in Zurich, he came to Australia 20 years ago and, at the time of his death, he owned and operated a small marine electronics business in Port Douglas.

He was elected to the Douglas Shire Council only in 1988 when, for the first time, in recognition of its rapid growth and significance in the shire, divisional arrangements allowed for two representatives from the Port Douglas area. In those two short years, he earned a reputation as a dedicated person who would speak his mind and stand up for the rights of residents in his area. He was very much aware of their needs. As honourable members know, Port Douglas is a rapidly growing community and has many needs in the social welfare area. As an example, Councillor Riedweg provided great support to the Port Douglas Community Services Network to establish a neighbourhood centre in Port Douglas.

He was also commodore of the Port Douglas Yacht Club and, in previous years, was instrumental in acquiring cleared waterfront blocks on Dickson Inlet and in initiating the construction of a building which is to become the Port Douglas clubhouse. Councillor Riedweg was also aware of the feelings of the Port Douglas community towards the environment. He joined residents in their efforts to preserve the remaining wetlands of Dickson Inlet when the Qintex company wanted to extend its golf course and build condominiums on those wetlands.

As the member for Barron River, I have really appreciated being able to work closely with a like-minded councillor. I know that Councillor Riedweg's commitment to the people of Port Douglas was highly valued. He will be remembered by the people of Port Douglas for his strong advocacy. I am sure that, had Councillor Riedweg had the opportunity to continue his service in local government, he would have made his mark to an even greater extent on the Douglas Shire Council.

Councillor Riedweg leaves behind his wife, Bonnie, a son, Bruno junior, step daughters, Danielle and Dale, and step son Rhett. I extend to them my sympathy in their tragic loss.

Hon. R. C. KATTER (Flinders) (11.24 a.m.): I join with other honourable members in this motion. I knew Stan Lindgren reasonably well. I thought that he was an excellent pilot. Like Mr De Lacy, I say that anyone who can survive in a very cut-throat, competitive game, such as the one he was in and for as long as he did, needs to have considerable ability. He took financial risks, as everybody does in entering a new business. His very important business was a great asset to north Queensland. Far from condemning him as, unfortunately, some have, I pay a great tribute to Stan. The people who knew him would not question his ability.

Both the Wallace and Rankine families are very old families in north Queensland. Those families, of course, have to pay the price of the tyranny of distance. Two prominent members of those families did so at the end of last week. The tributes that have been paid typify those men, their families and the people whom they have represented in such an exemplary manner.

I had a considerable amount to do with Keith Goodwin. I found him to be one of those very bright, imaginative thinkers who had 100 good ideas in 100 minutes, all of them worthy of consideration. They made him an exciting person to be with. His passing

was a very great loss to north Queensland because he would have done wonderful things for Cairns and the Cairns region.

I probably knew Graham Luxton best of all. He lived, I suppose, in obscurity. He lived in obscure parts of Queensland, the names of which many people found difficult to pronounce. He worked very hard and the very existence of those small communities is the result of the work done by people such as Graham Luxton. They are able to bear the isolation and continue to do their job well. The great industries in all of our cities exist only because of the Graham Luxtons of this world. He was in every sense a pioneer. The remarks of the honourable member for Barron River were very pertinent in describing Graham. His passing was a very great loss. Albeit that his community was small, the people there treasured him greatly.

These people were working for what they believed had to be done to benefit the State of Queensland. It seems that, in north Queensland, that is always a dangerous occupation. It is not very long ago, as Mr McElligott would remember only too vividly, that a number of aldermen died in an aeroplane crash in Townsville. So it is twice in the last decade that we have suffered a terrible tragedy.

It is the fourth aeroplane in which I have flown that has subsequently crashed killing all occupants. However, like them, we still go about our business doing our job for the improvement of our communities. They knew the intrinsic danger. Nothing can be done about it. They gave their lives for the betterment of the community in north Queensland.

Mr PITT (Mulgrave) (11.28 a.m.): It is with a sad heart that I add my voice to those who have expressed sorrow at the loss of life associated with last Friday's tragic crash near Mareeba.

As a community, we have every right to feel cheated because those who were killed had done so much for the people in the far north. Each had made a valuable contribution and, in particular, each offered so much more for the future. Although I knew most of those who lost their lives, I will limit my few brief remarks to the two Eacham Shire councillors who were constituents and friends of mine.

Hector Frederick George Wallace was born on 7 December 1930. He was elected to the Eacham Shire Council on 7 April 1988 to represent Division 1. He topped the poll at the elections held on 19 March 1988. Hec is survived by his wife Rae and three sons, Ian, Lauri and Glenn. As a well-known and respected businessman and builder, Hec and I first met some 13 years ago when he built my home. Hec Wallace was a very active member of the Malanda Rotary Club. He was Eacham Shire Council's representative to the Tablelands Promotion Bureau and, as such, was a tireless worker who was always looking for ways to enhance the area as a tourist destination and a suitable location for business activity.

Joseph Frederick Newman was born on 5 September 1938. On 16 April 1985, he was elected to the Eacham Shire Council for Division 2, and he topped the poll for that division at the elections held on 19 March 1988. Joe is survived by his wife, Sophia. He leaves a son, Thomas, from his current marriage and from his and Sophia's previous marriages he leaves a son, Wayne, and three daughters, Paulina, Joanne and Donna. Joe Newman was a popular postmaster in Yungaburra. He belonged to the Malanda Rotary Club and was Eacham Shire Council's representative on the Atherton Hospitals Board, the Carinya Home for the Aged Committee and the Tablelands Garden Festival and Expo Committee. Throughout his public life Joe displayed a deep sense of compassion for his fellow man. He was an extremely accessible representative. He was recognised by all who knew him as a caring person. I had the pleasure of working with Joe on several projects concerning the township of Yungaburra, some of which remain unfinished. It is my intention to endeavour to carry these projects through to the conclusion that Joe would have wanted.

Hec Wallace and Joe Newman will be remembered fondly by those who knew them. I extend to their respective families and many friends my heartfelt sympathy.

Mr BREDHAUER (Cook) (11.33 a.m.): I rise briefly to participate in this debate as a member of the far-north Queensland community and as a mark of respect to those who gave freely of themselves in the service of their community and fellow north Queenslanders.

I will not repeat the sentiments that have been expressed for all those who perished in last Friday's accident. However, I wish to speak about three people whom I am proud to have regarded as personal friends, Keith Goodwin, Rose Blank and Councillor Harry Rankine. Like many members in this place I, too, will have a lasting image of the people who were lost in this tragedy and with whom I was personally associated. My lasting memory of Keith Goodwin will be one of a fine Sunday late last year when I saw him plunge off the end of the Esplanade in Cairns into knee-deep mud and struggle across 100 metres of mud to raise the council flag as a mark of protest on behalf of the 6 000 or 7 000 people who had gathered there to support Keith and the council in what was a landmark protest in the history of Cairns. It epitomised the fact that, despite his brief time as mayor, Keith was a mayor of the people and for the people.

My lasting memory of Rose Blank will be one of an occasion a couple of weeks ago at the Einasleigh races, which we both attended. Rose was attending in a social capacity and it was the first time she had ever been to the area. It was typical of Rose, who was unknown to anyone there, that, when one of the community groups that was running a stall at the races was overrun by the number of people trying to get service, she immediately moved behind the counter and started to serve people. Wherever she was she committed herself, and she was committed to the people of Cairns. I am proud and privileged to have known and worked with her.

Councillor Harry Rankine was first introduced to me by my parents-in-law, Ron and Audrey McLucas of Ravenshoe. I have known Harry for some considerable time. Like many others on the tableland, Ron and Audrey will deeply miss Harry and all of those other tableland councillors and civic leaders who were lost in this accident.

Finally, on behalf of my wife and myself, I wish to express my heartfelt sympathies to the families, relatives and friends of those who died in these tragic circumstances. May it comfort them to know that their loss is shared by all members of the far-north Queensland community and, indeed, by all Queenslanders.

Motion agreed to, honourable members standing in silence.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Matters of Public Interest debate will now be held for a full hour.

MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Hon. M. J. Ahern

Mr COOPER (Roma—Leader of the Opposition) (11.37 a.m.): On behalf of the Opposition—and no doubt a number of other members in this House—I wish to take this opportunity to pay a tribute to the former member for Landsborough and former Premier, the Honourable Michael John Ahern, for the contribution that he made to this Parliament. The Opposition would be failing in its duty if it did not pay a tribute to him and have properly recorded his many achievements in this place over a long period of time.

The former member for Landsborough made a tremendous contribution in many areas and he certainly deserves the thanks and acknowledgment of all Queenslanders. He had one of the longest careers in this Parliament, spanning some 22 years. He entered this House at a very early age, and therefore leaves this place still a relatively young person and in a position to take his place in the business community and continue with a long career. I have no doubt that while pursuing his new career, he will make a tremendous contribution to the State of Queensland.

Mike Ahern was Premier from 1 December 1987 to 25 September 1989 and was involved in making some of the toughest decisions that have ever had to be made by

a State leader. On at least two occasions, the terms of reference for the Fitzgerald inquiry had to be expanded and Mr Ahern, by the provision of adequate resources, worked in close cooperation with that inquiry. It was certainly a very costly exercise, but I believe that it was money well spent. Mr Ahern made a landmark decision, which was unprecedented in history, to waive Cabinet secrecy. I am of the opinion that that was done with one goal in mind, and that was accountability. I believe that Mr Ahern deserves recognition for that.

His achievements spanned an extensive period, and those I have already mentioned were certainly not his only achievements. He was first elected at a by-election in 1968, having succeeded Sir Frank Nicklin. Of course, Sir Frank was highly respected and had a very strong character. He was certainly not by any stretch of the imagination an arrogant person, but was totally decent and is also missed very much in this place.

The many parliamentary positions held by Mike Ahern included membership of the Library Committee from 1972 to 1980. Although parliamentary committees sometimes do not appear to meet very often or achieve a great deal, they are certainly necessary and, when improvements are required or problems have to be sorted out, it is comforting to know that those committees are operating and that competent people serve on them. Between 1972 and 1980, he was Government Whip and performed that onerous task well. Great experience can be gained in that position, and Mr Ahern had a long stint in that job. The position has many interesting facets and allows the Whip to get to know his fellow member extremely well.

In 1974, Mr Ahern was a member of the Select Committee on Punishment of Crimes of Violence and played an important role on that committee. All honourable members would be aware that crimes of violence still exist, and I do not think that anyone in this world or in our time will be able to prevent them from occurring. Nevertheless, it is by committees such as that and by the efforts of people such as Mike Ahern that steps are taken to come to grips with the problems.

Between 1976 and 1978, Mr Ahern was Chairman of the Select Committee of Privileges and made contributions that have been recorded either in *Hansard* or in the statute book. The Select Committee of Privileges is considered to be one of the most prominent and important committees of this Parliament. Between 1978 and 1979, Mr Ahern was also Chairman of the Parliamentary Select Committee on Education and made a tremendous contribution to the education scene in this State. The committee operated for quite some time and was responsible for bringing forward education legislation which is, even today, relied upon very heavily.

In 1968, Mr Ahern was State President of what was known as the Young Australian Country Party and, prior to that, had served for a considerable period as a junior vice-president. Between 1967 and 1969, he was Federal President of the Young Australian Country Party and, in 1972, he was secretary of the parliamentary Country Party.

It can be demonstrated from those facts that Mr Ahern was involved from a very early age in the politics of this State. Irrespective of which side of politics young people are on, I believe it is of vital importance to encourage them to take an interest in politics so that they can understand politics and make relevant criticisms. I am pleased to state that the young people who are involved in politics are extremely responsible. I am sure that this State will always be better for that.

Between July 1980 and November 1983, Mr Ahern was Minister for Primary Industries and was probably the first person to hold that portfolio who also held a Bachelor of Agricultural Science degree. He made a significant contribution in carrying out his role as Minister for Primary Industries. At one stage, that appointment was regarded as a plum job, but that is certainly no longer the case. I believe it is probably one of the most difficult tasks that could ever befall a Minister. It is an intricate and complex portfolio, and Mr Ahern brought a great deal of expertise to it. Between November 1983 and December 1986, he was Minister for Industry, Small Business and Technology and brought innovative ideas to the administration of that portfolio. From 1986 to 1987, he was Minister for Health.

As all honourable members would know, Mr Ahern was Premier from December 1987 to 1989. I am sure he would like to be remembered for his approach to accountability and reform. As I said earlier, he made a total commitment to Fitzgerald reforms and to the establishment of the Parliamentary Committee of Public Accounts, the Parliamentary Committee of Public Works and also the new legislation governing the public service which instigated merit and accountability procedures. He was also responsible for initiating tertiary education for nurses, introducing a course in human relationships in schools, striking a new deal for teachers and increasing tertiary places in Queensland—all goals that have been achieved. He will certainly be remembered not only for his stand on accountability but also for his contribution to education. This State's commitment to education must be ongoing. An enormous amount of work remains to be done. It has to be started somewhere, and someone must act as the circuit-breaker. I believe that, when he was chairman of the education committee, he acted as that circuit-breaker.

When he was asked what was his greatest achievement, he nominated the increased number of tertiary places. The number of tertiary places has increased; but much more needs to be done in that area.

He has resigned to spend more time with his family and to take on a career in business. As I said earlier, he is young enough to make a tremendous contribution in the business field in this State. I believe that he will make just as important a contribution in that sphere as he has in this Parliament.

On behalf of all members of the Opposition—and I believe on behalf of a number of other members who had respect for the man—I wish him and his wife and family well in the future.

Pedestrian Crossing, Scarborough State School; Appointment of Mr B. J. Dobinson as Chairman of Redcliffe Hospitals Board

Mr HOLLIS (Redcliffe) (11.47 a.m.): It gives me great pleasure to speak in this debate and to mention two matters that affect my electorate of Redcliffe. When I see an issue in my electorate that the local council is not addressing and I fear for the safety of the children, the parents and the other citizens who use pedestrian crossings, I believe that it is important that I raise it in this Chamber.

I make special mention of the situation pertaining to the school pedestrian crossing at the corner of Eversleigh and Scarborough Roads at Scarborough. Every school day of the year, that crossing is used by approximately 300 students. In addition, each lunch-time 75 pre-school children and their parents use that crossing without the benefit of crossing supervisors being on duty. However, I point out that crossing supervisors are on duty in the morning. The crossing is used by a staggering number of approximately 110 000 people a year. It is used by children, by their parents and, in many cases, by their grandparents. In spite of continued pleas over at least a decade for a safer crossing, the Redcliffe City Council has turned a deaf ear to the request for the erection of pedestrian-controlled lights at the crossing. It prefers to ignore the possibility of injury or death to the pupils of the Scarborough State School.

On 26 April this year, whilst using the crossing, three children and one adult were struck by a car. Fortunately, none was seriously injured. However, that accident increased the fear that is already abundant in those who have used the crossing in recent years. The latest accident is only one of a series of accidents and near misses over those years. Concerned parents have voiced their fears for the safety of their children to the extent that 111 parents have signed a petition addressed to the Redcliffe City Council asking for pedestrian-activated lights to be installed.

Not only have the parents instigated a petition, but also the Year 6 children at the school are so fearful for their own safety and that of their fellow students that they have, on their own initiative, also circulated a petition on which, I was informed on Monday, they already have 109 signatures.

This is not the first time that parents and children have sought assistance to ensure the safety of the children of that school. In 1980, they wrote to the superintendent in charge of the Redcliffe police seeking a police presence on the crossing. Then, as now, the police replied that they had insufficient staff to man all danger areas. In that letter, the police acknowledged that the school crossing was dangerous. Of course, the parents at the school at that time would have been further heartened by a letter dated 12 August 1980 received from my predecessor, Terry White, which stated—

"A suggestion has been made that a school patrol could be used and I understand police will provide the necessary training."

He continued with a further gem—

"History and statistics show that there has never been a child killed on a crossing manned by a school patrol."

When the accident occurred on 26 April this year, that crossing was manned by supervisors, and I consider it fortunate that no-one was killed. I ask now, as parents were asking 10 years ago: do we have to have a child killed before this crossing is made safe?

The Mayor of Redcliffe, Alderman Alf Charlish, has come forward with a couple of gems. I rang him to inform him of the recent accident and to give him the opportunity to accompany me on an inspection of the crossing when the children were leaving the schoolgrounds. His reply was, "I drive through that crossing daily. I see no problems."

He went on with another little gem, "In the event of an accident, people inevitably blame the council or the State Government, but they never blame the driver of the car." He did not say anything about improving the safety of the crossing. That is a typical negative response from the Redcliffe City Council.

Now that I have brought the matter before the House, I hope that, eventually, a response is received from the Redcliffe City Council so that the young students and the parents, the teachers and the P. and C. no longer live in fear of one of their number being killed or injured.

I now want to talk about the appointment of Mr Brian John Dobinson to the Redcliffe Hospitals Board. Recently, the member for Currumbin asked a question about that appointment. I am pleased to say that he was able, through the Health Minister, to find out the qualities of the man whom the Government appointed to the Redcliffe Hospitals Board.

Mr Coomber: He doesn't live at Redcliffe.

Mr HOLLIS: He does live in Redcliffe. For the honourable member's information, Mr Brian Dobinson lives at 28 Rogers Road, Clontarf.

Mr Coomber: How long?

Mr HOLLIS: Does that really matter?

Mr Coomber: Yes.

Mr HOLLIS: I will come to that in a minute. Firstly, I will point out what another person of the honourable member's ilk had to say about Mr Dobinson.

Mr Littleproud: Keep it before the public.

Mr HOLLIS: I will keep it before the public.

Mr Dobinson was educated at the University of Queensland. He has a Bachelor of Economics degree, with a double major in public finance and financial institutions. He obtained a Diploma of Teaching in mathematics at the Townsville College of Advanced Education.

Mr Coomber: What about the local magistrate?

Mr HOLLIS: If the honourable member will wait, I will refer to that shortly.

He has been an alderman of a local authority. He served on committees such as the Finance Committee, the Community and Cultural Development Committee—

Mr Quinn: Which town?

Mr HOLLIS: In Townsville.

He served on the Works and Town Planning Committee, the Water and Street Lighting Committee, the Traffic Committee, the Coordinating and Planning Committee, the Flinders Mall Management Committee, the Bicycle Committee and many more.

Mr Coomber: What qualifications?

Mr HOLLIS: The Liberal member on the other side asks, "What qualifications?" What qualifications did the brother-in-law of Jim Houghton have? He was a real estate agent. He has served on that board for the last 10 years. He has no qualifications.

Then there is a gem from the Deputy Mayor of the Redcliffe City Council, Alderman Barry Bolton. In the *Courier-Mail* of Saturday, 28 April, he says that the Government is creating jobs for the boys in appointing a teacher and former Labor alderman as chairman of the Redcliffe Hospitals Board. The article states—

"The Redcliffe Deputy Mayor, Alderman Bolton, said yesterday Mr Brian Dobinson had lived at Redcliffe only three months before being appointed chairman.

Alderman Bolton said the appointment, announced on April 11, had filled a vacancy left by former local magistrate Mr Phil Rodgers and hospital board chairmen were traditionally appointed from magistrates."

In the latter part of the article, Alderman Bolton is quoted as saying that people should live in the local area for many years before they are eligible to be appointed to the board. In the same article he is quoted as saying that the appointment should go to the local magistrate, who has been a resident for only three months himself. He also talks about qualifications, and so on. He says—

"We have a magistrate who heads the Townsville Hospital Board."

Look what happened in Ward 10B in Townsville! So what can a magistrate do that is better than what anyone else can do?

Mr Coomber: It's normal practice.

Mr HOLLIS: It does not have to be normal practice. He is probably a Liberal.

Mrs Woodgate: Times have changed.

Mr HOLLIS: I thank the honourable member. Times have changed.

When these appointments are being considered, account must be taken of qualifications and the type of person being appointed.

Mr Coomber: Not as chairman.

Mr HOLLIS: Yes, the appointment of the chairman as well.

I am quite willing to stand by this appointment. It is a very fine appointment.

Mr Santoro: Is he going to be running for Mayor of Redcliffe next year?

Mr HOLLIS: I would not know, Santo. You can ask him that question yourself.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Campbell): Order! The honourable member will speak through the Chair.

Mr HOLLIS: I am sorry, Mr Deputy Speaker.

The in-depth question from the member for Merthyr was: will Mr Dobinson be running for Mayor of the City of Redcliffe at the next election? The answer is: I do not know. However, if he does, I, as the member for Redcliffe, would be wholeheartedly

behind Mr Dobinson and the team, as I intend to ensure that after the next election the Redcliffe City Council becomes a well-run council, just like this well-run State Government.

Mr J. A. M. Innes; Sale of Ensham Coalmine

Mr BEANLAND (Toowong—Leader of the Liberal Party) (11.56 a.m.): Today, I want to pay tribute to Angus Innes, the parliamentary Leader of the Liberal Party for the past two years and member for Sherwood from 1978.

Angus Innes led the Liberal Party through two of its most difficult years—years in which the guns of both the then Government and the then Opposition were trained upon it. However, none would deny the fact that throughout this period—indeed, throughout his entire eleven and a half years in Parliament—Angus Innes remained true to those things in which he believed.

Prior to coming to Parliament, Angus was very active within the Liberal Party itself and the community generally, particularly the community in the Sherwood area. Of course, following his entrance to Parliament, he continued those community activities and his Liberal Party activities. Although he never held ministerial office, he served as Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party on two occasions and also as Leader of the Liberal Party. He has left a significant mark on Queensland politics which will be of everlasting importance. Angus also served on a number of parliamentary committees.

Angus Innes entered this Parliament with a passionate desire to see the reform of its procedures. Only two months ago he renewed his call for the reform of question-time to allow more members to ask questions, for greater opportunities for the introduction of private members' Bills, for urgency debates and for greater access by the media to parliamentary proceedings.

Angus Innes was instrumental in maintaining the focus of public opinion upon the need to proceed with the reforms arising from the Fitzgerald inquiry. There would be few greater advocates of the work of that inquiry. Angus Innes committed the Liberal Party absolutely to the pioneering work of Mr Fitzgerald. It was through the cooperation of Angus Innes that the inquiry was able to present a report that received bipartisan support. Had the Liberal Party not added its wholehearted support to the inquiry, there is no guarantee that the inquiry would have had the success that it did have. Angus Innes refused to deviate from this course. Just as he hounded the previous Government at every turn to proceed with the Fitzgerald inquiry, he applied himself with equal vigour and passion to ensuring that the present Government stand by its commitment to implement those reforms.

The issue of electoral reform is one with which Angus Innes is closely identified. Only last Friday he presented to the Electoral and Administrative Review Commission the Liberal Party's submission on electoral reform. That submission reaffirmed the party's continuing commitment to a single zonal system with a maximum 10 per cent deviation from the quota. Angus Innes took the lead on that issue. Again, he was not prepared to compromise. He was not prepared to back down simply because some elements of society refused to accept the need for fair electoral boundaries. Because of Angus Innes' personal integrity, he held the view that the integrity of this Parliament cannot be preserved if the very electoral system lacks legitimacy.

As Leader of the parliamentary Liberal Party, I give notice that it is my intention to continue the work that Angus Innes commenced. There will be no turning back; there will be no backing down.

Firstly, under my leadership, the Liberal Party remains committed to the implementation of the Fitzgerald reform process. Most importantly, it remains committed to genuine electoral reform. One can imagine our surprise when last Sunday I discovered that the ALP had made a submission to the commission asking for an increase of 10 in the number of State members, taking the number from 89 to 99. That compares with the Liberal Party's submission that requires a return to 82 members—a policy for which

the Liberal Party has stood as a matter of principle. We voted against the last increase in the number of members of this Parliament and have been against it ever since.

The Liberal Party believes that no good can come from an increase in the number of members of this Parliament, because it would cost well in excess of an additional \$1.5m. There could be no legitimate justification for that increase. Electorates in other States such as Victoria and New South Wales contain approximately 30 000 voters. The Labor Party's submission would reduce to approximately 18 000 the number of voters in each Queensland electorate, or about half the number in Victoria and New South Wales.

Secondly, I propose to tackle head on the issue of environmental protection. Australians can no longer afford to treat this issue as another pawn in the States' rights conflict. It is time to develop and embrace an environmentalism that is tailored to the needs and values of middle Australia. The values of conservation should not be regarded as being in conflict with sound, economic management; they must operate in harmony.

Thirdly, the Liberal Party will continue to fight in the interests of the thousands of small businesses in this State. Since the ALP came to Government in this State, no leadership or direction has been given to small business in this State. The Liberal Party rejects the dithering and indecision of the Government as it seeks to hide behind the skirts of a myriad of committees and reviews. The Liberal Party rejects also this Government's hostility towards enterprise, agreement and essential deregulation of industry.

Financial mismanagement of this State will prove to be the Achilles heel of this ALP Government in the same way as it has proved to be the Achilles heel of State Governments of ALP persuasion in Victoria and Western Australia.

Angus Innes committed himself to these objectives. In last Saturday's *Courier-Mail*, Peter Morley said that, irrespective of which party holds the Premiership, if a new electoral system can be achieved Mr Innes will probably be recorded in history as one of those who fought for democracy.

I wish Angus and his wife, Cathy, who assisted and supported him throughout his many years of dedication as a member of Parliament, a very long and happy retirement. Angus resigned from this Parliament because of his dedication to his family. For his eleven and a half years of service to the parliamentary Liberal Party, I say "Thank you" to Angus and assure him of the Liberal Party's continued support and dedication to his agenda for reform.

One other matter which I wish to mention is the disgraceful and shameful selling-out by the Goss ALP Government of Queensland's new Ensham coalmine to Japanese and Korean interests. How many Australian companies are now at risk following that course of action? I understand that CRA Ltd has spent a substantial sum on preliminary development costs. I understand also that CRA is questioning where that new Japanese/Korean consortium will find markets. It is clear that great advantages could accrue to the consortium through vertical integration and by selling the coal itself.

This raises the issue that the price of Queensland coal could be depressed by such action. What course of action will this Government take to remedy that situation? What action will the Goss Government take to ensure that profits from the development of the mine are not moved off shore through transfer pricing? Why is Mr Goss allowing strategic mineral deposits of this nation to fall under foreign control?

The mines and energy policy of the ALP quite clearly states—

"Labor will ensure a minimum of 50% Australian equity in all new mineral and energy resource projects, and will encourage a minimum of 50% Australian equity in existing projects. Where appropriate, the State Government will be a partner in resource development projects."

This course of action is a sell-out of the ALP's own policy. Honourable members are aware that, prior to 2 December of last year, Mr Goss and his ALP front bench campaigned throughout the length and breadth of this State building up a storm over

foreign investment. But who was the first to sell out wholly to almost 100 per cent Korean and Japanese investment the interests in a Queensland coalmine in which CRA Ltd, which is a major Australian company, had a major interest? The Goss ALP Government!

The Liberal Party wants the Government to put on the table of the House the details of that deal with the Japanese and Korean interests. It wants the Government to come clean today and to say how it arrived at that decision and what answers it has come up with to justify that course of action.

Time expired.

Western Queensland Floods

Mr PALASZCZUK (Archerfield) (12.06 p.m.): Last week in this House, the Labor Party moved a motion relating to the floods in western Queensland. Today I take up a point made by the member for Warrego. He said—

"Taxpayers' money is going to the people who did not have insurance."

Many of those people affected by the floods believe that they should be entitled to assistance. It is a case of the good Lord helping those who help themselves. Governments often tend to help those who do not help themselves and who do not want to help themselves.

That sort of a statement, which came from an old-fashioned conservative, namely, the member for Warrego, is all good stuff. However, it does not sit with claims by the Leader of the National Party to give virtually unlimited grants to businesspeople who made—and I repeat "made"—the commercial decision not to take out insurance cover against floods. That is the great dilemma facing any Government and anybody in a crisis as large as that in Charleville at present.

I tend to adopt a far more sympathetic line than the one that was adopted by the member for Warrego. Many people in Charleville do not have the financial resources to help themselves by taking on what they regard as the quite unnecessary expense of insuring either their businesses or their houses against the prospect of flood. After all, that region has only recently recovered from the ravages of a drought.

When conservatives want to pass judgment on people who are in a less fortunate circumstance than themselves, they like to evoke the good Lord. But I ask this House to consider this: to what extent could some of those pensioners living in Alpha, Jericho and Charleville be condemned for not having flood insurance? In a sense, they are helping themselves. They are saving this Government money by living in private accommodation, when elsewhere they would have been eligible for either Housing Commission pensioner units or, in some instances, hostel-style accommodation.

Instead, they chose to live in Charleville, Alpha or Jericho, next to their families and also next to their loved ones. At this time they do not seek to be a burden on society. From the many visits that I have made to the west, it is my impression that the overwhelming majority of those people live there because they like their life-style and because they like living close to their friends and loved ones. They have already lost a lot. Seeing their valued possessions and mementoes washed away in a flood, they could probably do without the pontificating of people who say that the Lord helps those who help themselves.

Let me turn now to some specific cases of people who, under the definition, wanted to help themselves. I refer to those people who took out flood insurance. I have had brought to my attention the instance of the members of a family in the Alpha district who were sold an insurance policy by Suncorp and who believed that they were insured against loss of earnings.

After the recent floods in that area, they contacted their agent, who assured them that the policy would stand. Just three hours later they were rung back and told that no such conditions applied to their policy. I do not mean this in a demeaning way, but

people in Alpha do not really have great access to financial advisers or insurance advisers who can find the loopholes in insurance policies. They tend to be people who are straight up and down and who expect that people with whom they do business are likewise. As the member for Warrego would appreciate, out west a handshake is a handshake. A deal is done on a handshake. In every sense, this couple have tried to help themselves but have been smashed down by a sharp loophole in their insurance contract.

Another case that was brought to my attention concerned a lady in Barcaldine who had an insurance policy also with Suncorp. Although Barcaldine was not as ravaged as some of the other towns were, some of its businesses suffered as a result of floodwaters. Honourable members can imagine this businessperson's consternation when she discovered that Suncorp Insurance would not cover her for her damage, whereas another insurance company covered a neighbouring businessman for identical damage. One can almost sense the frustration that these people must feel when Suncorp make a big deal out of donating \$20,000 to the flood appeal when it cannot even satisfactorily look after its own customers.

Another example of a Charleville person who was struck down financially by not helping himself but by helping others involves an employee with the Department of Administrative Services, Mr Vince McGaw. Mr McGaw and his wife had just finished paying off their fibro house in Charleville. On the night of the flood, Mr McGaw was out helping others and in the process was separated from his home when the floodwaters went through. While he was out helping others, not only did he lose his family vehicle, which was parked at his home, but his house was lifted from its stumps and deposited half-way across a Charleville street.

When I visited Charleville the week after the flood and went to the Department of Administrative Services depot, Mr McGaw was still there working and helping others. What about the definition, "The Lord looks after those who help themselves"? It looks a bit shabby when one considers Mr McGaw's case. Unlike the conservatives who would probably abandon people such as Mr McGaw and his family, if the Lord will not look after them, then at worst the society will.

I praise the Government's efforts in ensuring that Mr McGaw and his wife and family will be quickly reinstated into another home in Charleville. There is no way that even with this gesture anyone can return those countless memorabilia that families collect along the way. Stored along the footpaths of Charleville, they may appear to passers-by to be junk. In actual fact, they are not junk; they are possessions that will never be replaced. To the individuals in those families, they may be a family heirloom, a wedding memento or a child's toy. As a society, we can never give back—and never hope to give back—to families such as that of Vince McGaw the types of things they have lost. Nor can we as a society stand idly by and say that a battler who finished paying off his family home should be treated like a piece of social flotsam simply because he could not take out flood insurance.

But the greatest rort of all is the crocodile tears that are now coming from insurance companies that are claiming that they are millions of dollars out of pocket because of the floods and that as a result they will have to increase everyone's insurance premiums. The reality is that most people in low-lying areas never qualify, and never will qualify, for flood insurance. This is the situation now faced by most people in the flood-affected towns in Queensland. I can well accept that insurance companies make such determinations based on commercial decisions that they would not be financially viable if they insured people in flood-prone areas against a flood. However, it is a little too rich when those same companies line up again like some hand-wrenching figure out of a Dickens novel and say that those premiums have to be raised because of all the people whom those companies have helped in flood-affected areas. In other words, there are thousands of people who had no hope of commercially helping themselves because the insurance policies that they need to help themselves are denied to them.

Appropriately, in those circumstances, we as a society must take it upon ourselves to help those people out. In a State as vast as Queensland, the whole community relies

on the people living in those great western towns that service western Queensland. This State's economy has not matured sufficiently to be able to shake off an overwhelming reliance on primary industries to generate Australia's export dollars. The people who for generations serviced those western regions have been making a gigantic contribution to the export-earning capacity of this nation. Without them, Australia's standard of living would be the poorer and its status in the region would be diminished.

I believe that, quite rightly, Governments should now stand squarely behind the people of Western Queensland to assist them to rebuild their fractured lives. Those people do not need any great sermons on the mount from the conservatives, nor do they need any belly-aching insincerity from the insurance companies. In my opinion, the insurance companies have a case to answer for putting up their premiums and, in effect, trying to cash in on other people's misery.

Western Queensland Floods, Deputation to Premier

Mr HOBBS (Warrego) (12.17 p.m.): Now I know why the electorate of Archerfield had the highest donkey vote of any electorate at the last State election. I ask Mr Palaszczuk to read my speech properly next time in order to ascertain the true meaning.

I wish to bring to the attention of the House an incident during which I was deliberately and blatantly prevented from carrying out my duties as the elected member for Warrego. The fact that this occurred during my efforts to help victims of the recent disastrous flooding in Charleville in my view only compounds the problem .

Honourable members will be aware that businesspeople in Charleville have had their future livelihoods placed right on the line by major flood losses. As the member for the area affected, I had first-hand knowledge of the true position. While others flew in and out of the region at various times, I was there for the whole period.

At this stage, I acknowledge the efforts of those Ministers who did visit the flood-affected areas for some periods of time. To a certain degree, those visits did help the flood victims. However, certain things do not happen on a continuing basis. What one sees one day, one might not see the next.

I was also able to visit Blackall, Augathella and other centres in the flood-affected areas. I obtained an appreciation of the trauma experienced by the average person and the apprehension of business owners and a realisation of the losses suffered by those businesses. In response to their urgent need for information on possible avenues of assistance from both the State and Federal Governments, at their request I undertook to arrange a meeting between representatives of the business community and the Premier. This was done through the Premier's office and a date and time for the meeting—5.30 p.m. on 10 May—were confirmed.

Mr Mackenroth: Confirmed to you?

Mr HOBBS: Yes, confirmed to me.

Five businesspeople were in that deputation, including four from the Charleville Chamber of Commerce, the shire chairman and me. As arranged with the Premier's private secretary, the members of the deputation arrived at the Premier's office at 5.30 p.m.

Mr Mackenroth: He arranged that with you?

Mr HOBBS: Yes.

After the members of the deputation had entered the room, the Premier informed me that I could not attend the meeting. I asked the Premier why and he indicated that he did not regard me as what he termed "an honest broker" and that he had been upset about some of my comments concerning flood relief.

I stated that I, as the member for Warrego, should attend the meeting to assist my constituents in putting their case to the Premier. I had been requested by them to arrange the meeting and I felt duty bound to follow the matter through.

Mr Speaker, I believe that I was denied my basic democratic right as an elected member of this Parliament by the Premier, who obviously was intent on playing politics on this issue.

In my view, this State has reached a new low when an elected member of Parliament is refused permission to sit in on a meeting with his constituents, a meeting which the member organised to enable the people's voice to be heard.

The Premier was playing politics with this issue. Not once did any member of the Government either try to contact me or send a message to advise me of the arrival of any Minister in the flood-affected areas. When communications did improve, I endeavoured, on behalf of my constituents, to contact certain members of the Government and in most cases those calls were not returned or the information requested was not supplied.

During the chaos at that time, I elected not to adopt a political line but to follow a responsible line. My only public criticism of the Government was restricted to the small amount of \$250,000 contributed on behalf of the State Government to the Western Queensland Flood Appeal. That criticism has been justified in light of the recent developments which show beyond doubt the low priority accorded to the business community by this State Labor Government.

This State Government had no hesitation in allocating \$10m to the sacked electricity workers who held the people of this State, particularly the business sector, to ransom. It is giving taxpayers' money to thugs who starved the businesspeople in order to gain political mileage from a Labour Day celebration held in the midst of a calamity.

Mr Stephan interjected.

Mr HOBBS: No, there has been no assistance at this stage to those businesspeople. This Government also provided \$380,000 to the ALP Workers Heritage Centre in Barcaldine, yet the Government could only manage \$250,000 for people in genuine need.

Mr BEATTIE: I rise to a point of order. The honourable member is misleading the House. He knows that that is not the full Government contribution.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. I ask the member for Warrego to continue.

Mr HOBBS: The unfortunate fact is that the businesspeople in Charleville still have no clear indication from this Government about what flood-damage assistance is available. I ask: does it take three weeks to write a letter to Canberra requesting taxation assistance such as waiving the penalty on provisional tax for the 1989-90 year, which would allow some businesses to use their own money to help themselves; the provision of special allowances to carry back taxation losses that may provide additional assistance, and which is provided in many other countries throughout the world; or relief from sales tax, which is another Federal Government levy. Even if the Queensland Government does write eventually to Canberra requesting such assistance measures, it will take a long time for the Federal Government to decide whether it can in fact offer assistance. So, again there is a delaying factor. A desperate need exists to speed up this process and, as a member of Parliament, I have been denied the opportunity to assist in that process.

It appears that the Premier was embarrassed because his promises made during flood-damage inspections have not been backed up by action. I understand that the promised submission to Canberra has still not been sent, and it is nearly four weeks since the disaster.

Mr Stephan: Do you say it has not been sent yet?

Mr HOBBS: As far as I am aware, it has not been sent.

The Premier's press statement was issued on 10 May, which was only last week and which was three weeks after the event, reads in part—

"Mr Goss said Queensland would raise with the Federal Government the availability of grants and concessional loans under natural disaster relief arrangements and also the question of tax concessions to further ease the financial burden on businesses."

That was three weeks after the disaster. How long do we have to wait? Sure as hell a carrier pigeon could get a message to Canberra faster than the Premier can.

I emphasise that, during the western Queensland flood disaster, there were numerous occasions on which I, as an Opposition member, could have made political capital out of the situation, but I declined to do so. The magnitude of the disaster totally overwhelmed political considerations. Unfortunately, political considerations soon came to the fore from the Government's viewpoint and I was excluded from an important meeting. I place on record my attempts to help the flood-ravaged people of the Charleville district, and the blatant politicking of the Premier who tried to stop me from doing my elected duty.

Mr Elliott: This should be referred to the Privileges Committee. It is the most disgraceful thing I have heard since I first came to this place.

Mr HOBBS: Yes, that might be a good idea.

I now wish to refer to the economy as a whole in that region. Basically, it is the whole district that stops, and not simply the towns. From the 24th parallel virtually to the New South Wales border, nothing near a channel has been able to move. Even the kangaroo-shooters cannot get out to work and therefore they have no income. The shearers cannot work. Generally, the whole area has been brought to a standstill. There is a desperate need for financial assistance to be given to all businesses. That, in turn, will help all the workers and everyone else in the community. The engine-room of the economy must be kept going and the engine-room of the economy is small business. When the Premier was in the flooded area, he said it was a war effort. There is no doubt in my mind that, in a war effort, we need decisions. Never have so many required decisions from so few.

Nurses

Mr FENLON (Greenslopes) (12.25 p.m.): I raise a matter of major public interest concerning Queensland nurses. It is a role in which I feel very comfortable because I have represented Queensland nurses for the five years prior to my entering this place.

The problem is not restricted to the Princess Alexandra Hospital; it relates also to the Royal Brisbane Hospital and the Mater Misericordiae Hospital and, in fact, although it pertains to nurses throughout Queensland, it is not confined to them. Many other categories of workers leave hospital premises at peculiar hours related to the nature of their work, and I cite clerks as a particular example. Various other health industry workers fall into that category.

I very much welcome the announcement that a task force has been established to report on this matter within the next two weeks. That task force is constituted by the Queensland Nurses Union, representatives of the Princess Alexandra Hospital Board and the Queensland Police Service. It is our responsibility in this State to provide a safety net for the security of nurses.

I understand that the task force is looking at a range of options. Surveillance cameras at railway stations has been mentioned as one option. Further consideration is being given to upgrading security in hospital grounds, reallocating car-park spaces, removing shrubs and trees that might impede security, providing escorts to and from car parks and public transport, and increasing police patrols in these areas. It is also

significant that the task force, and the Government, must, in the long run, adopt uniform policies for the security of nurses working at all hospitals throughout the State. This is a big issue. It is not simply another industrial condition; it relates to the welfare and even the lives of many individuals.

I was privileged to represent the nurses in 1985 in a matter that was heard by the full bench of the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Commission. It was an application—

" . . . for an order defining and declaring the relative rights and mutual duties of employers and employees according to what should be the standard of fair dealing with regard to the allocation of vehicle parking and safety conditions thereto for nursing employees who are employed at the Princess Alexandra Hospital."

I find it ironic to be speaking in this debate today because at that time we were taking up a pre-empted measure as a result of an awareness that we developed whilst representing the nurses that there was a security problem at the Princess Alexandra Hospital.

In the course of those hearings, on 18 December 1985 it was revealed that safe car-parking spaces were available for nurses but were not being allocated to afternoon and night shift staff. It was also revealed that nurses were as a result of this phenomenon walking up to several blocks at a time to reach their cars, that the environment surrounding the hospital was unsafe for nurses walking to their cars and that there was discrimination in the way in which permits were being allocated to nurses vis-a-vis other staff.

At the time this was not a new issue and it is not a new issue today. Disputes concerning nurse safety go back to 1982, when there was a dispute at Townsville General Hospital; 1984, when there was a dispute at the Royal Brisbane Hospital; 1985, the dispute I have just mentioned, and even last year at the Royal Womens Hospital. Honourable members may remember the famous gun licence application dispute when as an absolute last resort nurses tried to obtain gun licences to protect themselves. I would add that nurses are not people who take things lightly. They are not easily pushed to take action, but they took some fairly radical action on this occasion in order to look after themselves.

At a meeting of nurses at the Princess Alexandra Hospital on 10 May, they arrived at a number of resolutions. Because nurses simply do not get the opportunity to illustrate their position to the public in sufficient detail, it is important that I read into the record some detail from those resolutions. At the meeting the following resolution was passed—

"That this meeting request that the PA management upgrade security procedures by the introduction of awareness programs on personal security and the dangers of nursing staff being unaccompanied in dangerous areas;

This program should provide:—

- (a) personal defence instruction methods;
- (b) seminars by the state Police;
- (c) the nomination of a '24 hour' safe areas in and around the hospital precincts;
- (d) the availability of security alert systems and personal alarms for nursing staff at the Princess Alexandra Hospital."

The resolution also concerned the development of these matters in conjunction with award restructuring provisions aimed at the continuation of that security.

The most important aspect in the future is vigilance. It is a fundamental right of individuals when in employment that security be provided. One only has to refer to International Labour Organisation conventions to find the source of this right. My action in 1985 was pre-empted. We must not be caught in this position again. We must be vigilant and provide nurses with all the protection that they require. They do an excellent job—a very tough job—and this is the least we can do to assist them.

Mr STEPHAN: Mr Speaker—

Mr SPEAKER: I call the Minister for Police and Emergency Services.

Western Queensland Floods, Deputation to Premier

Hon. T. M. MACKENROTH (Chatsworth—Minister for Police and Emergency Services) (12.35 p.m.): I would like to briefly reply to the—

Mr LINGARD: I rise to a point of order. Quite obviously last week when there was special time left over, Mr Speaker, you—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. The honourable member will resume his seat whilst I am on my feet. I call the Minister for Police and Emergency Services.

Mr Lingard interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I warn the honourable member for Fassifern. I heard his comment and I warn the honourable member under Standing Order 124. I will not countenance such statements. I am heartily sick and tired of the honourable member's sneering allegations. I firmly warn the honourable member under Standing Order 124. I call the Minister for Police and Emergency Services.

Mr Stephan interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I warn the honourable member for Gympie to cease interjecting immediately.

Hon. T. M. MACKENROTH (Chatsworth—Leader of the House) (12.36 p.m.): As the time for the Matters of Public Interest debate has expired, I seek leave of the House to make a ministerial statement.

Leave granted.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**Western Queensland Floods, Deputation to Premier**

Hon. T. M. MACKENROTH (Chatsworth—Minister for Police and Emergency Services) (12.36 p.m.): During the Matters of Public Interest debate the member for Warrego referred to a meeting held last Thursday night between the Premier, members of the Charleville business community and me. In his statement the member for Warrego referred to the fact that the Premier had told him that he would not allow him to attend that meeting because he was not an honest broker. The statements Mr Hobbs made to the House today show that the Premier's statement was correct.

Once again the member for Warrego stated to this House and to the people of Queensland that the Queensland Government had given only \$250,000 in aid. That \$250,000 was a direct contribution to start a public appeal and has nothing to do with the Government's contribution to outback Queensland in the form of flood relief. Mr Hobbs referred to this Government's negotiations with Canberra. He would be totally unaware of what is going on. I understand that he telephoned Senator Button's office, which is not dealing with this matter.

Mr HOBBS: I rise to a point of order. I did not telephone Senator Button's office. A question was asked in the Senate and Senator Button volunteered the answer.

Mr MACKENROTH: The Premier and the Premier's office are dealing with the Treasurer and the Treasurer's office in relation to aid for businesspeople in western Queensland.

Mr Hobbs: Is Senator Button on the outer with you, too?

Mr MACKENROTH: I will tell the honourable member the simple facts. He is the person who has politicised this Government's relief measures to western Queensland. The easiest thing that this Government could have done would have been to simply say

that the measures it would adopt would be the measures that were put in place by the National Party Government and that that would be as far as it would go. That would have been the easiest thing for this Government to do. It is incorrect for the honourable member to say that there are no measures available now. In fact, businesspeople in Charleville and right throughout western Queensland can apply now for concessional loans of \$80,000 at an interest rate of 6 per cent, which is the maximum that the National Party Government only ever made available to business that were affected by natural disasters.

Mr Hobbs: That is ridiculous. You know that's not true.

Mr MACKENROTH: No. Natural disasters occur irrespective of which party is in Government. When the National Party was in Government, that is the assistance that it made available. This Labor Government is attempting to give a better deal to people in western Queensland. By politicising this matter, the honourable member will muddy the waters.

Mr Elliott: You politicised it. You people politicised it by throwing him out of the meeting.

Mr MACKENROTH: I did not.

Mr Elliott: That is unprecedented.

Mr MACKENROTH: That is not unprecedented. The former National Party Premier, Bjelke-Petersen, would not see members of the Labor Party—ever! The honourable member cannot say that it is unprecedented.

Mr Lingard: This is not a ministerial statement.

Mr MACKENROTH: It is a ministerial statement.

Mr Hobbs did not tell the Parliament that the Premier had asked him to meet with me last Thursday.

Mr BOOTH: I rise to a point of order. It is quite obvious that the Minister is debating this matter. I wish to obtain a ruling from you, Mr Speaker, on whether a member from this side of the House can reply. It is quite obvious that the Minister is not making a ministerial statement. He is taking interjections and he is obviously debating the matter.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. Upon making a ministerial statement, a Minister can seek to have the statement noted. On that basis, an opportunity is then given for a reply. Unless that happens, there is no provision in Standing Orders to allow that to happen.

Mr MACKENROTH: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Last Thursday, at the request of the Premier, I met Mr Hobbs to discuss the points that he wanted to raise. Those points have been passed on to Premier's Department officers, who are the people dealing with this matter.

I point out that, in relation to the meeting, the facts are that the Premier's private secretary phoned Graham Andrews on the previous Sunday and arranged the meeting. It was not arranged through Mr Hobbs. Mr Hobbs may have requested a meeting through the Premier's Department—

Mr HOBBS: I rise to a point of order. The Premier's private secretary did contact my home. There was no indication that I was not invited to that meeting, and I attended on that basis.

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

Mr MACKENROTH: I accept that, but certainly it could be said that when Mr Hobbs arrived at the meeting, he knew that he had not been invited.

SUGAR EXPERIMENT STATIONS ACT AMENDMENT BILL**Second Reading**

Debate resumed from 10 May (see p. 1403).

Mr ROWELL (Hinchinbrook) (12.42 p.m.): I rise to speak in this debate to say that, in general, the people involved in the sugar industry—the sugar-millers and cane-growers—accept the need for additional representation on the Sugar Experiment Stations Board. However, concern has been expressed about provisions spelt out in the legislation governing selection of organisations and representation of cane-growers and sugar-millers. I ask the Minister to take on board those very important matters. I point out that the Queensland Cane Growers Council and the Australian Sugar Milling Council are well-recognised organisations in the sugar industry.

In the event that a delegate is unable to attend meetings, provision is made for the delegate to appoint a person to deputise for him. I think it is appropriate that, in those circumstances, the person replacing the delegate should be a person from a like organisation. This is also a matter of concern in relation to this legislation.

I wish to outline some of the activities undertaken by experiment stations throughout regions in Queensland. Sugar is the life-blood of many northern coastal towns such as Mackay, Proserpine, Ayr, Ingham and Innisfail. Those towns are very dependent on the sugar industry. Therefore, the BSES plays a significant role and makes a significant contribution in terms of extension procedures, technological advances and general matters of concern to the industry.

One of the main roles of the organisation is cane-breeding. Of major importance in this process is the collection of genetic material from New Guinea, Asia, India and Africa. That material is used specifically at Meringa in a controlled photoperiod facility that enables researchers to collect pollen from varieties of cane that are of benefit to the industry. I wish to cite an article that explains the role of the BSES. It states—

"Future goals for the Queensland Sugar Industry in respect of increase in productivity and profitability are substantially dependant on the BSES cane improvement program. This program, through plant breeding, is clearly focused on the production of new varieties with characteristics which will assist these industry goals to be reached.

The importance of the BSES cane improvement program to the Sugar Industry is clearly illustrated by the priority given to it in the allocation of BSES funds."

The industry is well aware of the plant-breeding program that the BSES has in train.

Cane-harvesters play a significant role in the industry. Over a long period, they have been part of the progress that has been made in gathering the crop and getting it to the mills. In the 1930s and 1940s, when the industry was in the very early stages, cane-cutters were the people employed in the industry to carry out the task of harvesting.

In the early 1950s, many people from mediterranean countries migrated to Australia and settled in the northern region. They were very effective cane-cutters. Their contribution to the sugar industry has been tremendous.

In the early 1960s, it became apparent that there were insufficient numbers of people to perform tasks and that mechanisation might have to take over. In 1964, when a major expansion occurred in the industry, problems were encountered in developing cane-harvesters. As a result of that development, improvements were made right along the line. At that time, people such as the Toft brothers from Bundaberg emerged and developed a harvester which is the major—perhaps the only—harvester at present on the Australian sugar scene. The Mizzi family from Ingham were also involved in the development of harvesting technology and have made a major contribution to the sugar industry.

The advancement of harvesting technology relied very much on farmers, farmer-operators and harvester contractors, who, over a long period, increased the productivity

of harvesters. At present, harvesters are capable of harvesting green cane, which is a major asset to the whole industry. Later, I will explain why that is so.

The development of the new harvesters, which had many imperfections, was assisted greatly by bureau personnel, who made improvements in feeder systems, chopping systems, billet quality and the extraction of trash through the extractors. The loss of billets sometimes caused a loss of cane in the system.

It was important to have not only a good harvesting system but also a system of transport out of the fields to match the harvesters. In wet weather, it was absolutely essential to have high flotation equipment. The Bureau of Sugar Experiment Stations played a major role in the development of that equipment. Today, matching equipment can be used alongside track harvester equipment that is capable of getting cane out in very wet conditions. With transport, the bureau also worked on big bins, which are presently being developed to enhance the removal of the crop along that system in a fast mode to the mill.

Chemical application is another important aspect that is addressed by the BSES. Growers realised that, by spraying the cane, they could avoid having to cultivate their crops to effectively manage them. It was important that development was carried out in that field. Some very sophisticated equipment was devised to control droplet applications and reduce drift. With the introduction of trash blanketing, growers reached the stage at which there was little need for them to cultivate the ground at all.

Crop water requirements was another important area investigated by the BSES. I understand that, in the Burdekin area, at Bundaberg and in other areas, it is imperative that irrigation provides a supplementary form of moisture for crops. In the wet tropics, drainage is also important. At times, cane farms receive more water than they can cope with. The bureau has assisted greatly in devising good drainage systems.

A major breakthrough has occurred with trash blanket zero cultivation. In some localities, the trash blanket system is used in 95 per cent of the area harvested, which means that there is no cultivation of cane whatsoever. Because it reduces capital investment and the need to cultivate on ratooned areas, that is a major break-through.

The bureau has played a significant role in identifying fertiliser requirements. At present, the loss of nitrogen is being investigated closely. In conjunction with trash blanket zero cultivation, farmers are spreading fertiliser on top of the trash, which causes the loss of nitrogen. By experimenting with minor elements, the bureau has identified deficiencies in crops. That type of research is as important as research into major elements.

Soil blanketing has provided major benefits in the eradication of soil degradation and erosion. With a blanket on top of the soil, there is very little break-down of the soil, which is of immense importance.

By research into rodents and other field pests, the BSES, in conjunction with the Queensland University of Technology, has identified methods to reduce the rat habitat. As a result, it has reduced the number of baits that are set in fields.

In the past, sugar-milling technology has been a part of the bureau's activities. However, I understand that the Minister is looking closely at moving that into the sugar research institute. The BSES has made a major contribution in that field.

I have great praise for the extension of that work that is being carried out in my region by the BSES. The industry has virtually funded the BSES, with approximately 8 per cent of its funds coming from the taxpayer. It is quite easy to see that the industry is very responsible and being very responsive to the needs of experimentation and further extension work to keep the industry viable.

In the last 20 years, Queensland cane-growers, in association with the Bureau of Sugar Experiment Stations, have provided Australians with sugar at a price that has been subjected to one of the lowest increases for the 15 staple grocery items. Loss of the embargo will affect that. No longer will the domestic price of sugar be

reasonably static. It will fluctuate with world markets. However, it has happened, and Australians will have to accept it.

The Cubans have a very high regard for the Queensland sugar industry. An article in the *Australian Canegrower* dated 29 January 1990 states—

"An international study of sugarcane production has shown that Australian canegrowers are the world's most efficient low-cost producers of sugarcane.

Australian growers have come out on top in an assessment by senior staff of the Cuban Ministry for Sugar of the standard of sugar technology employed by the major sugar industries around the world.

Details of the Cuban study were given by the returning director, Australia's Bureau of Sugar Experiment Stations, Owen Sturgess, in the January issue of 'BSES Bulletin'.

The Cubans concluded that the Queensland industry led the world in respect of its cost-effective yield, sugar content and efficient mechanical harvesting of crops.

The Cubans rated Brazil the world's best in sugar milling, processing and by-product utilisation because of the economies of scale it achieved in converting a massive cane supply into sugar and alcohol."

Cane-growers are presently in the process of making effective another 9 per cent additional area, which will earn Queensland some \$1.5 billion. In its submission to the Sugar Industry Working Party, the Queensland Cane Growers Council has indicated ways in which it considers the BSES could be made more effective at local level.

The Queensland Cane Growers Organisation is an active organisation which provides a number of services for cane-growers. These include representation in regard to returns, submissions, appeals against decisions of the Valuer-General and legal assistance. In regard to industry control, it provides advice to the local board and assists with appeals and documentation. It assists with pay sheets, the making up of wages and paying harvesters. It also assists with general finance, superannuation, investment advice, contract preparation and debt reconstruction. In the mid-1980s, debt reconstruction was very important to cane-growers and the industry, through its organisation, was very effective in reconstructing a number of debts that were causing growers major problems. The organisation provides advice and representation in regard to industrial relations matters. It also assists growers by providing low-premium crop insurance to cover harvesting problems caused by burn-outs and wet weather conditions. Information on technical services is provided by way of newsletters and radio broadcasts.

Amendments were sought from the industry by the Queensland Cane Growers Council and the Australian Sugar Milling Council to allow for increased representation on the Sugar Experiment Stations Board. The Act provided for one grower representative and one representative of the mill-owners, whereas it was desired that there be two representatives of growers and two representatives of mill-owners, nominated by the Queensland Cane Growers Council and the Australian Sugar Milling Council respectively. The amendment sought would provide for the representatives of cane-growers to be nominated by the Queensland Cane Growers Council specifically, as that organisation alone has all cane-growers as its members and is statutorily constituted to represent cane-growers.

The Queensland Cane Growers Council is the voice for some 5 700 cane-growing families throughout the State. It is the official body representing all cane-growers. It is believed that the Minister supports the concept of primary producer unity and would prefer to deal with a single body rather than several fragmented groups claiming to be representative of farmers. The Queensland Cane Growers Council is comprised of members from all mill areas, elected by controlled ballots every three years. This process ensures that the council is representative of all the industry's growers. Election of office bearers is controlled by the Primary Producers' Organisation and Marketing Act.

Since the Queensland Cane Growers Organisation has all growers in its membership, the council is the only organisation capable of nominating representatives to the Sugar

Experiment Stations Board on behalf of all cane-growers who contribute to Bureau of Sugar Experiment Stations funding.

From time to time members of the Sugar Experiment Stations Board report back to the industry. Unless the board representatives were nominated by the Queensland Cane Growers Council from Queensland Cane Growers Organisation members, there would be no structured system for reporting back to the industry, nor for the board members to be briefed on industry concerns on a regular basis. The proposed section dealing with the nomination of deputies also causes concern, as it leaves it open for a member to nominate someone from within the organisation or otherwise to deputise for him. The Minister himself has more restrictions imposed on him than that.

Sittings suspended from 1 to 2.30 p.m.

Mr ROWELL: The clause dealing with the nomination of deputies also causes concern, because it leaves a member open to nominate someone from within the organisation or to deputise for him.

Mr Casey: How long do you think they would last in their organisation if they didn't nominate somebody from their own organisation?

Mr ROWELL: The thing about it is that it leaves it open. That must be borne in mind.

Mr Casey: Only the National Party would be silly enough not to.

Mr ROWELL: I do not think so. The National Party did not introduce legislation like that.

Mr Casey: Some of it is a darned sight sillier.

Mr ROWELL: I do not think it is in this case. Let me be specific about what I am saying.

Mr Palaszczuk: Aren't you supporting the legislation?

Mr ROWELL: In principle, yes. However, I want to raise some points about the inadequacies of the legislation.

Mr Casey: They have already been canvassed by the member for Burdekin.

Mr ROWELL: Is there any point in my reiterating them? I believe that this issue is important.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Campbell): Order! The honourable member will continue with his speech.

Mr ROWELL: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker.

The Minister himself has more restrictions than that placed upon him. It is strongly recommended that a deputy be appointed from within the industry and, indeed, from within the organisation that first nominated the successful board appointee. The framing of this legislation throws doubt on the organisation that will have the approved members representing either millers or growers. The legislation contains nothing specific about who will represent the millers and the growers, which leaves the Minister open to pressure from factional groups.

Mr Casey interjected.

Mr ROWELL: The Minister might laugh, but other organisations within the industry could apply pressure. For example, 50 per cent of growers belong to the Australian Cane Farmers Association. Others belong to the Australian Cane Farmers Union.

I understand that, some time ago, in about 1985, the cane-growers reform group was very active. If one of its members had gained membership on the sugar board,

that now-defunct organisation would have had on that board a representative who would not necessarily have represented cane-growers in the true sense.

The legislation should define clearly the approved organisation that is totally representative of sugar industry interests and should not be controversial but be in the plural form as contained in the draft form of the legislation.

The provision for deputies, as spelt out in the existing legislation, causes no confusion as to its intention. The legislation is crystal clear and there is no need for further change to it.

Mr KING (Nicklin) (2.34 p.m.): I intend to speak briefly and to address only the real crux of the matter, namely, the appointment of board members.

Since this Bill was introduced into the House, I have had contact with various members of the industry, including millers and growers. Basically, they are happy that the Bill is finally coming to fruition because they feel that it has been delayed for long enough. Whereas they intimated some initial fears and worries about the manner in which members will be appointed, because of the Minister's assurances that he will do the right thing and appoint members from within the industry, they now feel reasonably relaxed about it.

I have a few reservations about the similarities between this Bill, the grain-handling legislation and the Bread Industry Authority Bill. It appears that, in all three pieces of legislation, the majority of board members will be appointed by the Minister. One could assume that the Minister might exercise undue weight and authority over those boards by appointing the majority of their members. Nevertheless, the members of the sugar industry to whom I have spoken acknowledge that, based on the Minister's assurances that he will do the right thing and will choose board members from within the sugar industry, they are prepared to support this Bill in its current form.

Members of the sugar industry also envisage some benefit from this legislation. Under the existing system, quite often a person who has been a member of a board for a long time can rise to represent that board simply because he has been there for so long. That person does not necessarily have the most talent. Members within the industry believe that, if the Minister does the right thing, people who have the proper talents and who are more fitting to represent the best interests of the industry as a whole will be appointed. However, it has been indicated to me that the Minister should express very clearly within the industry the fairly tough and stringent criteria regarding the proposed board members that he wishes to be appointed.

The Liberal Party will support this Bill. The millers and growers trust the Minister to do the right thing in accordance with his assurances. There is no doubt that, if the Minister does not do the right thing, representatives of the industry will in the future be chasing his blood.

With those few reservations regarding the similarities between this legislation, the grain-handling legislation and the Bread Industry Authority Bill, the Liberal Party supports the legislation.

Mr RANDELL (Mirani) (2.38 p.m.): I do not intend to speak to this Bill at great length.

Mr Beattie: Hear, hear! Good!

Mr RANDELL: The honourable member does not know the least thing about sugar. In fact, I do not believe that any member of the Labor back bench knows anything about it. It is fortunate that the Premier, Mr Goss, has chosen Mr Casey as the Minister for Primary Industries. At least he has some practical knowledge of the sugar industry. I am very pleased that Mr Casey is liaising with the industry, and I hope that he takes notice of it. However, as for the rest of the members of the Labor back bench—I do not believe that one of them understands anything about the sugar industry.

Mr Beattie: I grew up in the sugar area; it is more than can be said for you.

Mr RANDELL: The honourable member puts sugar in his tea.

The Opposition spokesman, Mr Stoneman, and other speakers have clearly outlined the Opposition's position on this Bill.

Mr Beattie interjected.

Mr RANDELL: It is marvellous how the backbenchers opposite can be stirred up.

Although there is widespread concern about certain aspects of this legislation, I believe that, by and large, this Bill has been accepted by the cane-growers and millers of Queensland. However, it would be remiss of me if I did not outline some of that concern. The Minister must be aware that there is some concern.

Mr Casey: No concern.

Mr RANDELL: Yes, there is.

As we all know—or at least those of us on this side of the House know—the former Minister, Mr Harper, agreed to two members, Mr John King and Mr Joe Bugeja, of the industry to sit on the board in an advisory capacity. After making a previous commitment, Mr Casey has taken steps to give official status to those members and, by bringing this legislation before the House, that commitment is now being honoured. But the Minister has not stopped at that. He will also appoint to the board one more member, to be appointed by the Minister, such person to have special qualifications. Perhaps the Minister may care to explain what he will be looking for in order to find someone with special qualifications and what those special qualifications are.

What intrigues me is the fact that this legislation states that two members who are representatives of cane-growers have to be recommended by the Minister from persons nominated by the approved organisations in respect of cane-growers. This is a change from previous legislation and I am a little suspicious about the reason for such a change. This means the Minister will have total power to appoint members from any approved organisation that purports to represent cane-growers—any organisation at all—not necessarily the Queensland Cane Growers Council or the Australian Sugar Milling Council.

I believe—and all industry people I have spoken to also believe—that this legislation should spell out clearly and concisely where those members will come from. This applies also to the millers' representative. After all, the funding, except for a nominal amount from the Government, comes from the industry. The Bureau of Sugar Experiment Stations is part of that industry and should be clearly represented by those organisations officially recognised by the sugar industry as their lawful and bona fide representatives.

My concern is that Queensland has a statutory body called the Queensland Cane Growers Council, of which every cane-grower in Queensland is a member. The QCGC is recognised by most farmers as the official organisation of the cane-growers. I think the Minister believes that, too. I do not in any way belittle other organisations such as the Australian Cane Farmers Association, which has been formed voluntarily by a group of cane-farmers and has its own regulations, terms and conditions. The Opposition's spokesman has clearly outlined that.

I know personally some of the grower members of that organisation. There is no doubt that they are men of integrity who work very hard for the well-being of cane-growers and the future of the cane-growing industry in Queensland. I echo the words of the Opposition's Primary Industries spokesman, Mr Stoneman, who said that an amalgamation between the QCGC and the ACFA would be a step for the better. I understand that talks have taken place between the two bodies but that a suitable agreement on amalgamation could not be reached. I believe that at some stage in the future it will happen—it has to happen—and that the industry will be the better for it. Too often in other industries—and I do not think we need look too far—we see bodies that could effectively and more economically do the work by being amalgamated into one organisation but instead, on many occasions, duplicate each other's work. In these hard economic times, no industry can afford that luxury.

The other provision of the Bill about which the Opposition is unhappy is the manner in which a member of the board, including the chairman, can nominate a person to deputise for him and will have the powers, functions and duties of the member for whom he is to deputise. Unless this part of the legislation has been hastily drawn up without proper thought—and that is probably the kindest thing I can say—it certainly looks a little sinister. No doubt the Minister will explain it. In his summing-up, he may be able to respond to the concern that has been expressed by every speaker on this side of the House. Many people in the industry have rung me and have also expressed that concern.

This clause of the Bill will allow someone not connected with the industry to take a member's place on the board and not only lawfully influence decisions but also make decisions. I know that the Minister will say that he will ensure that that does not happen. But he will not always be responsible for this matter; it could be someone else. I do not know that that power should be written into the legislation. It was never intended in the Act. Anyone nominated to fill a position on the board as a substitute for a member must come from the original nominating body and must have the expertise and knowledge to do ably the job that the industry expects and is entitled to. As I said, I will await with interest the Minister's reply. However, I remind him that the Queensland Cane Growers Council and other sugar representatives are watching these changes with interest and concern—and why shouldn't they? This is their board; largely they fund it. They are entitled to be assured that control of the board and the benefits of the board remain entirely with the industry.

Before I conclude, I must pay tribute to the Bureau of Sugar Experiment Stations and its staff. The work they have done over the years has resulted in savings and benefits to the industry of millions and millions of dollars. I do not say that lightly. Their research into disease and pest control, in cooperation with pest boards, has been of enormous benefit to cane-growers and millers. In the 1970s, Fiji disease spread to all mill areas in southern Queensland. No doubt, Mr Deputy Speaker, you have some knowledge of that and you understand the ramifications of it. Later on, that disease spread to the central districts such as my area of Mackay. As a matter of fact, Fiji disease was first detected just north of where I live. Some cane on my farm was affected by it, but it was weeded out.

Mr Casey: It came from Bundaberg.

Mr RANDELL: I know. As I said, Mr Deputy Speaker would have some little knowledge of it; he may even have some great knowledge of it.

The measures taken by the board, in cooperation with the growers, comprised field inspections, destruction of diseased stools, the abolition of the planting of disease-prone varieties of cane—and this is one of the major steps—and replacing it with resistant varieties. Coupled with an ongoing program of breeding new resistant varieties, all of these actions headed off a major catastrophe that had the potential to wipe out our industry as we know it. The research that was carried out in the Bundaberg area certainly helped us when that disease hit farms in my area. The disease has been contained in that area. As the Minister would know, as the N.Co 310 variety of cane was very popular, a lot of it was planted in the Mackay area. In fact, it made the Mackay district a successful cane-growing area. But because it was prone to Fiji disease, the farmers had to discontinue planting it and in its place plant varieties that were resistant to that disease. The BSES certainly contributed to overcoming that problem. There are so many areas of research that the BSES is involved in that it is almost impossible to name them all, but a few are—

- the drainage of canefields;
- levelling;
- irrigation scheduling;
- trickle irrigation;
- soil salinity; and

- extraneous matter in cane supplied from cane-harvesters.

Research has shown that extraneous matter and dirt in cane can cost the sugar industry up to \$30m annually. That is something which is taken for granted. The machine is harvesting the cane, but the dirt goes in as well and if it is not extracted efficiently it can cost the sugar industry up to \$30m annually.

One of the most vital pieces of research being undertaken at present is the work on nitrogen fertiliser, much of which is at present being carried out at the Mackay BSES station in cooperation with Griffith University, CSR and CSIRO researchers. It has been estimated that the sugar industry spends approximately \$50m annually on nitrogenous fertilisers. I do not have the exact figures, but one concern is that as much as 60 per cent of the nitrogen that goes into the soil is not used by the plant. It evaporates into the air and is wasted. Trials are currently being conducted to measure the loss of ammonia gas into the air particularly following the application of urea, which is a very popular fertiliser. The sugar industry is losing a large amount of fertiliser through evaporation.

I believe that even the placement of nitrogen into the soil at various distances from the stool can have an effect on the efficiency of the fertiliser. Some growers even put the nitrogen on top of the soil. From my personal experience and long association with the sugar industry, I believe that that is the most wasteful method of all. It is throwing dollars into the air. As the nitrogen goes into the air, one is literally throwing dollars into the air. However, I am hopeful that the trials that I have mentioned that are being conducted by the BSES will come up with the answers to this very real problem.

Before concluding, I pay tribute—

Mr Beattie: Hear, hear!

Mr RANDELL: I hear a voice from the deep over there.

An Opposition member: An old cane-farmer.

Mr RANDELL: Someone told me that when the honourable member went to get on a train at Sarina to go up to Coppabella he tripped over a stick of cane and said to someone, "What's this? A bit of bamboo! I will take it home and use it for a fishing rod." That is the extent of his knowledge of the sugar industry.

Mr Beattie: The honourable member is in this place reading a written speech. He cannot even speak about this.

Mr RANDELL: But at least I am speaking on something that people can understand. The honourable member talks about things that he does not understand, let alone the people he is talking to.

The great thing is the understanding, cooperation and confidence that exists between the bureau staff and the cane-growers. A lot of the work being done at Te Kowai is practical work that growers can relate to. One only has to go to the BSES field day that is conducted annually to see the great interest shown by growers, who turn up in their hundreds. This year, Mr Casey, the Minister for Primary Industries, conducted the official opening. I know that he, like myself, has always endeavoured to be present at all the field days that have been conducted at Mackay. He recognises the value of the work carried out at that station, as well as the cooperation between the bureau and the growers. I am very proud of the station and the personnel—

Mr Beattie interjected.

Mr RANDELL: I am pleased that the Minister has the job and not the honourable member for Brisbane Central. At least the Minister can understand what I am talking about.

I am very proud of the station and the personnel who work there and, on behalf of the industry, I offer them congratulations on a job well done and best wishes for the future.

Finally, I offer my congratulations to Jim Pedersen who was recently elected to the board to replace Mr Neville Churchward as the grower member. Mr Churchward carried out the job with great enthusiasm and the thanks of the industry go to him.

Jim Pedersen is a practical cane-farmer, living quite close to me at a little place called Koumala. He is chairman of the Mackay district executive and brings a wealth of knowledge to his new job. I have no doubt that he will be a very able member of that board.

My congratulations also go to Mr John King, who manages the Marian mill in my electorate which will be a super mill following the merger in the Pioneer Valley. Previously he was at North Eton. After this Bill passes into law, John King will go from acting in an advisory capacity to being an official member. John King and Jim Pedersen have been and will continue to be assets to the Queensland sugar industry.

Hon. R. C. KATTER (Flinders) (2.50 p.m.): I acknowledge the concern of my colleague about this Bill. I wish to speak in high praise of the ACF, which has from time to time adopted a very up-front attitude. The hallmark of the sugar industry has been orderliness, certainly in the field of marketing. It has been one of the great success stories in Australian primary industry. I well remember the Minister on many occasions voicing those sentiments in this House, and I request that, before any changes are made, they be looked at very carefully because one does not fool around with a winning team.

As the Minister for Northern Development, I was very appreciative of the assistance I received from the officers of the experiment stations, particularly regarding the potential uses of bagasse. Even though all the endeavours of the previous Government came to a dead end, there is tremendous potential in the use of bagasse, and in the future it will be realised. I believe that, in an energy-rich State such as Queensland, a far better use can be found for a valuable product such as bagasse than simply providing energy. It seems to me wrong to throw that product away.

Today, I wish to say a few words about ethanol, a product that I dismissed on numerous occasions. I was very surprised to find that someone had got past my minders to talk to me about ethanol, but I was very pleased when he did, because I had not realised that a fundamental change had occurred in the ethanol ball game now that lead is being removed from petrol.

Ethanol has never been even remotely competitive with petrol for use in motorcars. However, with the removal of lead from petrol, it suddenly became of value not as a replacement for lead, but as a performance enhancer, and therefore had a value far in excess of lead.

The second item that changed the equation was the doubling by the Federal Government of fuel excise. Effectively, now when one buys a litre of fuel, by far and away the greater proportion of the money one pays to the bowser attendant goes to the Federal Government than to the oil companies.

If the Federal Government agrees not to impose the excise duty, then there will be a tremendous head start when ethanol is competing with petrol. A combination of those two factors will enable one to look at hard figures, and I ask that the Minister and his departmental officers suggest to the experiment stations that the ethanol question should again be looked at very seriously. If a litre of fuel, as it was when these figures were taken out, cost 47c, then nine-tenths of a litre cost 42.3c. If an additive is used to make up the full litre—that is, if one can add one-tenth of a litre of something that will take the octane rating from 92 to 96—then, according to the Prices Surveillance Authority, one has an extra 4.6c of value in a litre of fuel.

By adding one-tenth ethanol, the octane rating can be lifted from 92 to 96. That adds 4.6c to the cost of a litre of the product. Therefore, a litre is worth 51.6c. As nine-tenths of the product costs 42.3c a litre, the difference is the value of the ethanol, which is 9.3c for one-tenth of a litre or 93c per litre. I am oversimplifying because there are some complications such as butane back-out problems. However, it is reasonable to state that the price range is in excess of 70c a litre.

I speak with some considerable authority. I refer to the report of the leading engineering firm in the world in this field, Fluor Daniels, which prepared a brief report for the Queensland Government; the brief report by Wright Killen and Co., another American specialist in this field; and the figures that Touche Ross compiled for us. Those reports are available to the Government. Lastly, I refer to the energy authority of New South Wales which prepared a substantial report on alternative energy. Part of that report reads—

"Determining the break even price of ethanol to any particular refinery requires the aid of the linear program model for that refinery. Based on a 1981 Ampol Australia study of the energy authority updated to current prices it was estimated that ethanol could have a break even value of between 50 and 58c per litre if the ethanol portion of a blend is exempt from the Commonwealth excise and the State franchise of 18.4 and 3.5c per litre respectively at March 1986."

If I update that 1986 report in terms of today's prices, the price range is in excess of 60c. All of the other price ranges are above 70c, with the exception of those put forward by Fluor Daniels, which are between 48c and 110c or 120c per litre. The bulk of the price ranges are in excess of 60c that was quoted by Transfield, which is one of the groups interested in this field and which spoke to the Government last year.

The Prime Minister wrote to the then Premier, Michael Ahern, and said that he was not imposing the excise duty. When that letter was received by the State Government—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Campbell): Order! I have allowed the honourable member to speak on this matter for about six minutes. I would like him now to come back to the Bill or to raise new matters relevant to the Bureau of Sugar Experiment Stations.

Mr KATTER: This is the third time I have been pulled up in midflight during a debate at the second-reading stage, and I would like to point out to the House—

Mr Mackenroth interjected.

Mr KATTER: The Minister is not running the House; the Deputy Speaker is. When first-reading speeches were abolished, an undertaking was given to all honourable members that wide-ranging latitude, similar to that given in a first-reading speech, would be allowed at the second-reading stage. Having already been gagged—I know, Mr Deputy Speaker, you have not done that and I thank you for not having gone that far—if I am gagged again, it will be the third time, and it is obvious that we have moved away from that agreement and undertaking which was given to the House. I think that this matter needs to be clarified.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I have just asked the honourable member for Flinders to wind up on this matter. If he wants to deal with other aspects of the BSES, he may. I am merely pointing out that, by remaining on this one subject, he is becoming repetitive.

Mr KATTER: Mr Deputy Speaker, you are not addressing the problem of how we should handle speeches at the second-reading stage and whether we are given the same latitude that we have historically—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! If the honourable member wishes to continue, I will allow him another couple of minutes on this matter.

Mr KATTER: This is the third time it has occurred. However, I will take advantage of whatever time I have left.

Mr Mackenroth interjected.

Mr KATTER: The Minister can laugh. I am trying to make a contribution to the better running of Queensland. I expect that he would find that funny. His Federal

counterparts have run the State and nation into a situation in which we are not trading—where a \$3 billion surplus has been turned into a \$4 billion deficit.

The sugar experiment stations—this is the point that is vital and relevant to the Bill—have the ability to do something. First, they have a product that has a low level of usage—"economic rent", if honourable members want me to use the technical term—that is, bagasse. The experiment stations must become involved in the second product. There is no way we can walk down this road successfully without the experiment stations being involved in the production of ethanol.

I have made my points and I have made them as forcefully as I dare under the limited latitude that is now being allowed in this House. I hope that what is taking place will not be used as a precedent. However, I state clearly that I think a precedent is being created.

Hon. E. D. CASEY (Mackay—Minister for Primary Industries) (2.58 p.m.), in reply: I shall reverse the order of those who have spoken to the Bill. I thank the honourable member who has just resumed his seat, the honourable member for Flinders, for his reference to ethanol. I remind him that he has little knowledge of the sugar industry. If he investigated, he would find out that the work on ethanol is being conducted not by the sugar experiment stations but by the Sugar Research Institute. That institute is keeping and will continue to keep an eye on it. It is a different body altogether and is not covered by this legislation.

The honourable members for Hinchinbrook, Nicklin and Mirani made sound contributions that centred mainly on the same point. The objections they seem to have concern appointments to the board, deputies and similar matters. I can do no more in this House than to reiterate what I have said publicly on two occasions. On one occasion I made the statement in your presence, Mr Deputy Speaker, in your home city of Bundaberg to the annual meeting of the Queensland Cane Growers Council. The two people who will be appointed to the board from the growers and millers organisations under these amendments will be Joe Bugeja and John King. As the member for Mirani well knows, I repeated that same commitment in my speech at the Bureau of Sugar Experiment Stations field day at Mackay earlier this month. I made the same point; these two people will be the ones who will be appointed to the job. This commitment is well known to the industry, because on the very day I was sworn in as Minister I made the same commitment to the sugar industry. I was disturbed by the fact that these people had been attending board meetings for some 18 months without their jobs having been ratified through legislation in this House. This legislation is simple amending legislation which will allow this to happen.

Mr Randell: We don't doubt your word.

Mr Stoneman: We don't doubt it.

Mr CASEY: I accept what the member for Mirani is saying, but the member for Burdekin, who was one of the three Ministers for Primary Industries when the National Party was in Government in this House, certainly doubted it. If honourable members wait a moment, I will explain the matter further.

The other point raised by the three speakers in this debate concerned deputies. As I said by way of interjection to the member for Hinchinbrook, it is most unlikely that any person who is a representative of the Queensland Cane Growers Council on the Bureau of Sugar Experiment Stations Board would last long as a representative of that group if he were to nominate someone outside that group as his deputy. Through these amendments the Government is endeavouring to introduce legislation that will become one of the hallmarks of the Goss Labor Government in Queensland. This Government wants to simplify legislation to the point that it does not have to be brought back into this House every month or every second month for amendment simply because a name has been changed somewhere along the line.

I remind honourable members in this House who know the sugar industry well that, if they peruse the Act, they will find that section 3A states that the member representing the manufacturers of cane sugar who is to be appointed to the Sugar Experiment Stations Board shall be a nominee of the Australian Sugar Producers Association Limited. Everyone in the industry well knows that the Australian Sugar Producers Association has gone and is finished with as an organisation in the industry. I consult regularly with the president of the Queensland Cane Growers Council, Mr Harry Bonano and recently I asked him, "Who is to know that in 12 months' time you are not going to be calling yourselves Cane Growers Incorporated or some other name?" He said that that was very true.

Mr Stoneman: You didn't go and show him the Bill before it was introduced.

Mr CASEY: This bloke from Burdekin on the other side, who is waving his papers about and saying that I did not go and see Mr Bonano before the Bill was introduced, would not know that I spoke to all the people in all of the industry organisations long before the Bill was even designed, drafted and printed. Right from the word go they were well aware of my intention, as was the Queensland Cane Farmers Association which, as has been stated, is a breakaway organisation within the sugar industry today.

I do not want to come back to this House next week to amend this legislation, which is the reason why the Government has included the plural in the legislation and deliberately deleted names from it. Everybody in the industry knows the organisations involved and that I have given a commitment as to who will be on the board. Those are the facts in simple, plain English. This type of legislation will be one of the hallmarks of the Goss Labor Government. The Goss Government wants to ensure that we do not come back to this House every five minutes amending legislation because some organisation changes its name or an additional organisation comes on the scene which seeks representation.

From day one of my time as a Minister I have counselled both the Queensland Cane Farmers Association and the Queensland Cane Growers Association. Long before the Labor Party came to Government—when it was still in Opposition—both Mr Goss and I stated that we would like to speak to all growers' organisations within the industry with one voice. There must not be a fragmentation of growers or two, three or four different groups of cane-growers' organisations in Queensland. However, the Labor Government is determined to make sure that it has in effect simple legislation that does not have to be changed every five minutes.

I turn now to the comments made by one of the three former Primary Industries Ministers in the former National Party Government. When the member for Burdekin led the Opposition's debate in this House he made many personal insults and accusations against me. I have been around a while and he can throw as much comment at me as he likes. It seemed to me that his main criticism is that I am the first person in 40-odd years to hold the portfolio of Minister for Primary Industries who has not actually been a primary producer himself. I ask the honourable member to have a look along the line at some of his colleagues. He will note that a former Minister for Primary Industries, Mr Harper, was Attorney-General for a number of years. Mr Harper was never a lawyer or solicitor. In fact his own leader was Minister responsible for prisons for a certain period of time. He has not been a prisoner and does not have the experience. However, some of his former colleagues may soon share that experience. His arguments did not match up, and neither did his other major argument that during the five or six weeks that he was Minister he would fix the sugar industry and introduce bureaucratic control.

When I addressed the meeting of the Queensland Cane Growers Council in Brisbane on the day that I was sworn in as Minister, those present jumped up, clapped and cheered when I said that this Government would not be proceeding with the commitment made by the previous Government to set up a bureaucratic organisation in the Department of Primary Industries to run the sugar industry. They jumped and cheered. When the word got back to the officers of the Department of Primary Industries at 80 Ann Street, they did likewise. They did not want that bureaucratic structure imposed on them,

either; yet the member for Burdekin talks about consultation with the sugar industry. There was no consultation in relation to the incident I have referred to. Nobody in the industry wanted it, and everybody was very pleased that I got rid of it and put it out of the road.

This Bill is simple legislation. I commend it to the House.

Committee

Hon. E. D. Casey (Mackay Minister for Primary Industries) in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 and 2, as read, agreed to.

Clause 3—

Mr STONEMAN (3.09 p.m.): I rise to reiterate the points I have already made in relation to this clause. I draw honourable members' attention to line 25, which refers to the amendment of section 3A. The clause states—

" 'approved organisation' means an organisation that is designated in writing by the Minister as an approved organisation for the purposes of this section."

As I indicated in my earlier comments, that clause is as wide as it is possible for a clause to be. Quite frankly, it is ludicrous to define an organisation as an organisation that the Minister approves in writing, because it could be any organisation whatsoever.

I remind honourable members that the subject matter presently before the Committee is the making of a law to govern the operation of the Sugar Experiment Stations Act. How would people, who contribute \$10m or more by virtue of a statutory requirement towards the running of sugar experiment stations, know what an approved organisation is? How would they know what the basic approval structures are? As I read the legislation, it provides that, unless the Minister has a brief flight of realism, the law of the land will state that an approved organisation is defined as follows—

". . . an organisation that is designated in writing by the Minister as an approved organisation for the purposes of this section."

Frankly, that is just not good enough.

In these difficult economic times, I understand that farmers are very busy trying to produce sugarcane. Contrary to what the Minister has stated, because the people involved realise that the wording of these provisions is as wide as it is possible for legislation to be, there is widespread disquiet not only in the cane-growing sector but also in the sugar-milling sector.

I reiterate that I do not like the inference drawn by Mr Casey, who says that I accused him of saying that he would not put forward, as nominees for the purpose of this subclause, those two very fine men, Joe Bugeja and John King. I point out to the Minister that nominating representatives of the board is what this legislation is all about.

The Opposition has not sought to divide the Chamber on these issues. It believes that this Bill must be passed through the Parliament. For very good reasons that I will not outline again, this legislation was not brought forward by the previous administration. Let me simply say that members of the Opposition approve entirely the passage of the Bill, but that our support is undermined by the fact that the legislation is sloppy. My comment should not be taken to be a reflection on officers of the department who are obviously acting in accordance with their riding instructions. However, I cannot believe that any person with legal training would accept that an "approved organisation" would be interpreted to mean an organisation chosen by the Minister as whim takes him.

As the legislation presently stands, the law states that the Minister can select any organisation he wishes. The Opposition would have no objection to this clause if the Minister were to designate an organisation that is appropriate. It may be a very creditable organisation and, if the Minister believed, prior to the amalgamation that has been

referred to earlier, that he may need to give approval to a nominee of, for example, the Australian Cane Farmers Association, the Opposition would support the clause. However, the Minister has not nominated anyone in particular and, even worse, he has taken out reference to statutory organisations that represent thousands of cane-growers throughout this State. I remind the Minister that those growers contribute to the costs of the experiment stations on a ratio of 12 to 1.

I acknowledge that organisations change their names from time to time and that, when that happens, legislation has to be amended. However, that is not the real problem being faced by the Opposition. The concern of the National Party is that within a short time this Bill will become the law of this State.

I am even prepared to acknowledge that the Minister will for ever honour his commitment and that the Minister has given his word. The point I make is that when this legislation is being interpreted by a court, the judgment must be based on these words; this legislation must apply. Judges and juries will have to abide by the terms of this legislation, and so will the Minister's successors.

When I look around the Chamber at the Government's front and back benches, I realise that the comment made by the honourable member for Mirani is correct. There is no-one on the Government side who has a knowledge of the industry and it is probable that the members of the Labor Party will be guided by the terms of this legislation. I concede that the Minister, more than anyone else in the Labor Party, has a knowledge of the industry—I would never doubt his expertise—but the fact of the matter is that he could become ill and be forced to retire, thereby necessitating the appointment of some other Labor member to the position of Minister for Primary Industries. The point is that the undertaking given by the Minister is nowhere expressed in this Bill and is in no way acknowledged. Even if the Minister's undertaking were acknowledged, there is no guidance as to what an approved organisation is.

I ask the Minister, in his reply, to explain to the 5 000 growers and the mills along Queensland's coast, which serve the industry so well, how they will be acknowledged by the loose and sloppy term "approved organisation". I refer particularly to clause 3 (2A) and to paragraphs (c) and (d) that refer to cane-growers and mill-owners. That is a reasonable question. Growers in Queensland will be interested in his reply. I am being genuine when I ask him how he will prescribe an "approved organisation". The definition in the Bill does not refer to it. No mechanism is provided for the approval process. There is no need for me to expand on the position. However, I will be keen to hear the Minister's reply to my question.

The National Party must be the industry watchdog. In this State and in other parts of the nation the watchdog for the sugar industry must be the National Party. Members of the National Party are the only people who have day-to-day contact with and an understanding of the industry. More particularly, the National Party is the only party that has a deep philosophical commitment to that industry.

I have circulated the Opposition's proposed amendments to the Bill. I would be delighted to acknowledge that Mr Casey, because he included in the Bill his recognition of the practicalities about which I am speaking, was a statesman. He said that he does not want to have the legislation coming back before the Assembly for amendment; but he has also acknowledged publicly that, after the working party has made its report, a whole range of things might need to be brought back. Until that report comes forward, it is ridiculous to do any more than simply emphasise that the Government is expanding the nominations of those two organisations by one member and adding a person with special qualifications. The National Party supports that second appointment; in fact, it was initiated by the Honourable Neville Harper.

I implore the Minister to explain how he will define an "approved organisation" and how, if it comes to a point of law, any judge or any future Minister will be able to interpret those words without detriment to the industry.

Earlier, the Minister stated that he did not want to see the legislation back before the Parliament in the near future. The industry contributes financially on a ratio of 12 to 1, yet the Minister is the chairman of the board, there is a deputy chairman and there is also a member with special qualifications. Already, the representation on the board is 4 to 3 in favour of the industry. Of course, the Minister serves in the position of chairman and also oversees the legislation. However, the people in the minority are the people who contribute financially on a ratio of 12 to 1. The Commonwealth Government contributes \$1 for every \$1 that the industry contributes. Even the Commonwealth Labor Government avoided the type of controls that the Queensland Government is imposing on the day-to-day operations of this board.

During this debate, I will be extremely interested to hear the Minister give not only to this Chamber but also to the industry as a whole the rationale behind his solution to the problem. Obviously, the Minister is not going to place anything on the record. That speaks volumes for his attitude.

Mr Randell: Not one speaker.

Mr STONEMAN: Not one speaker has come forward from the Government side to support the ridiculous structure that is embedded in the Bill. Therefore, I have no option other than to move an amendment. I had hoped that that move could have been avoided. The Chamber should be able to pass Bills through a consensus process. However, the Minister will not answer my question. The cane-growers of Queensland will know that, when the question was put to the Minister, he was not able to retort to support his Bill. He obviously does not understand it. He has probably received his riding instructions from Cabinet, which contains 17 other people who have no knowledge of the sugar industry. He will not under any circumstances give the cane-growers and the millers of this State the rationale behind his refusal to acknowledge them in the Bill. In fact, he is writing them out of the legislation.

Mr Randell: Not one Labor member from a sugar-producing area has spoken on this Bill or has taken part in the Committee debate to reply to your demands.

Mr STONEMAN: That will be noted in *Hansard*. It will also be noted by people along the coast of Queensland that not one Opposition member supported the Minister. At least the Liberal spokesman acknowledged the need for the Bill. He largely went down the line that the National Party has taken. However, no Government member has any interest in or even the slightest knowledge of the sugar industry.

Leaving aside whether or not members of the Government know anything about farming, the fact of the matter is that they should all understand the implications of this provision. That is really the crux of the matter. The Minister has introduced a Bill that writes out of the law an acknowledgment of the people who are contributing on a ratio of 12 to 1. That is being written out. The implications of that to impending legislation of which Government members may have some knowledge is going to be quite unbelievable. It is like writing the word "schools" out of the education legislation. It is just the same. It is like writing the word "taxpayer" out of the tax laws.

How can the Minister do it? He is just saying, "We will collect the money. We will spend it. Trust us to be wise." Mr Casey says, "Trust me". My colleagues Mr Randell and Mr Rowell, and Mr King from the Liberal Party, have acknowledged that we trust Mr Casey to proceed along the path that he has gone down, that we trust him to nominate Mr Bugeja and Mr King. However, above all, the Minister has not told us how he is going to rationalise this in legal terms. He has just said, "Trust me. I will do it. I have talked to the people in Bundaberg." I can tell the Minister that there are people in Bundaberg who have said that they take no comfort whatsoever from the "Trust me" line.

I am not denigrating the Minister. I have indicated that all honourable members are appreciative of the assurance that he has given. However, he has not indicated, and he refuses to indicate, how he will apply this provision.

I move the following amendments—

"At page 3, line 1, delete—

'approved organisations'

and substitute—

'Queensland Cane Growers Council'";

At page 3, line 5, delete—

'approved organisations'

and substitute—

'Australian Sugar Milling Council'."

Mr ARDILL: The remarks of the honourable member for Burdekin cannot go unanswered. He has not raised any matters of farming expertise. What he has raised are matters concerning the English language. The most specious arguments that I have ever heard in this Chamber are the ones that he put forward last Thursday night and again today. He is talking absolute nonsense. What he is trying to tell the Committee—

An Opposition member interjected.

Mr ARDILL: It is not a legal matter. This has got nothing to do with a legal matter.

What the member for Burdekin is talking about is a matter of semantics. He is talking pure nonsense when he says that the Minister is failing to address the arguments that the honourable member is putting forward. In point of fact, he has put forward no arguments against the Bill. What he has put forward is his own point of view as to who should be represented on this particular board.

For the information of the member for Burdekin, who last week criticised members of the Government for having no knowledge of the Bureau of Sugar Experiment Stations, I point out that the Bureau of Sugar Experiment Stations happened to be situated in my electorate until very recently.

I also point out to the member for Burdekin that the sugar industry did not start in the electorate of Burdekin; it started in the electorate of Archerfield. That shows how much he knows about the history of his own industry. It started in a very minor way with the first rudimentary farming and conversion into sugar in the electorate of Albert at the mouth of the Coomera River. It then developed along Oxley Creek in the electorate of Archerfield until the time of the blackbirders when it was transferred to the electorates of Mirani and Burdekin. It was quite a large industry in the Brisbane area.

The point is that the Minister knows what he is doing and the Opposition speaker very obviously does not know what he is talking about. On Thursday night, he held up the business of the House by repeating the same argument over and over again for a period of about 50 minutes and now he is going through the same exercise again, first of all in speaking against clause 3 and now in speaking to the amendment. It was self-evident that the honourable member was going to move the amendment. There was absolutely no need for him to speak on this occasion. I do not think that any other Government member is going to speak on this clause, for the simple reason that absolutely no argument has been put forward by the Opposition which needs to be answered.

Mr KING: I was not intending to speak to this amendment. However, I just could not let the honourable member for Burdekin get away with saying that his party is the only one that has day-to-day contact with the sugar industry and that his party is the only one that is the watchdog of the sugar industry. I remind him that the Liberal Party has day-to-day contact with the sugar industry in the Sunshine Coast area.

Nevertheless, I indicate that the Liberal Party will be supporting the honourable member's amendment because it is important to the associations to which he referred. Even though they are prepared, if need be, to go along with the Bill in its present form,

they have certainly always expressed the view that they would like to nominate specific organisation representatives.

I think it is important that the Bill specifically spell out who are to be members of this board. Therefore the Liberal Party will support this amendment. It probably will not be carried because the Government has the numbers. However, the Liberal Party will certainly then support the Bill in its current form.

Mr STONEMAN: I say to the honourable member for Salisbury that in no way did I indicate that members who did not represent sugar industry electorates had no interest in the industry. They should have an interest in it.

This legislation is not solely about millers and growers. It deals with the whole gamut of the sugar industry, including the little fellows, the mill-workers and the manufacturers who create farming implements, which is a huge industry in this State. While I acknowledge that a large number of mill-workers would never vote for me, I still represent their interests with honesty and integrity. This legislation is about the people who work in the coastal towns of this State and the support processes right across the board. It does not relate solely to the cane-farmers, millers and sugar experiment stations.

I say to the honourable member for Salisbury that I am delighted that, finally, someone has been flushed out. In fact, I suspect that if we keep going we may even flush out the Minister. I am not too sure if we have gone far enough yet. I think that the Minister will once again lie doggo. The member for Salisbury spoke so eloquently on this legislation that it could well be that in him we have found a future Minister. With all sincerity I say to the Minister that under no circumstances does the Opposition seek to disrupt the smooth flow of the passage of this Bill through the House. Powerful and fundamental arguments exist in its favour.

I apologise to the honourable member for Nicklin and acknowledge my failure to mention his work and his representation. He will recall that I acknowledged that he followed largely the same processes. I am delighted that he acknowledged the fundamental principle of law in this legislation. That is what this is all about.

No member of this Assembly has disagreed with the need for the passage of this Bill in terms of expanding the board. Honourable members on both sides of the House should be worried about the implications of the principles that are encompassed in the drafting of this clause, which contains no mechanism by which an organisation can be approved. The Minister could simply go to work one day and say, "I have got an idea. I think I might approve XYZ organisation." That is what this clause allows. That is what the judge will say and that is what the jury will have to work on. When it comes to a point of law, there is no definition of an approved organisation and no mechanism for the approving of an organisation. Even worse, until that happens the industry, which in real terms broadly owns the sugar experiment station process and subscribes to it tremendously in financial terms, has no reference. The word "farmer" seems to be disappearing from the Government's vocabulary.

Mr Veivers: I am a farmer.

Mr STONEMAN: I am aware of that.

Honourable members would recall that, during the Whitlam days, the words "farmer", "business" and "production" were written out of the statute books of this nation. As a result, there was a revolt. People recognised that, although they might not work directly for a primary production industry—mining or whatever—nevertheless they are all part of the one, big picture. Unless the Government recognises that, this State will go quickly down the drain.

I acknowledge that, at long last, we have flushed out a speaker. We may even have forced the Minister into acknowledging the crucial importance of this issue and the extreme concerns that have been raised by honourable members.

Mr CASEY: This matter is neither fundamental nor of great principle, as claimed by the member for Burdekin. It is just a matter of grandstanding and posturing. If any flushing is to be done, the honourable member will be well and truly flushed, but I will not say where.

I waited deliberately until the honourable member had exhausted his time because I do not believe that anyone could have stood any more of it. As I clearly pointed out, the legislation represents the style of the new Government. The names of the organisations are not spelt out. The legislation contains the plural form so that it can be changed at any time. No opportunity will be given to Mickey Mouse organisations, as alleged by the honourable member for Burdekin. The Bill clearly refers to approved organisations in respect of mill-owners and cane-growers. I have named those who will be appointed to the boards. They should have been there 18 months ago. That is how long members of the Opposition have been posturing and grandstanding on this matter. The Government is now fixing up the matter.

Question—That the words proposed to be omitted (Mr Stoneman's first amendment) stand part of the clause—put; and the Committee divided—

AYES, 46

NOES, 29

DIVISION

Resolved in the affirmative.

Question—That the words proposed to be omitted (Mr Stoneman's second amendment) stand part of the clause—agreed to.

Clause 3, as read, agreed to.

Clause 4—

Mr STONEMAN (3.46 p.m.): The Opposition's concerns in respect of this clause have been fairly well canvassed. As a result, I do not propose to take up much of the Committee's time.

I believe it is necessary to record what really is the intent of this clause. Section 3D (6) of the Act states—

"If a member is granted by the Board leave of absence from meetings of the Board for six months or longer for cause deemed by the Minister to be sufficient, the Governor in Council may appoint a deputy to act for that member during his absence on that leave.

That deputy shall have and exercise the powers, functions and duties of the member whose deputy he is while that member is absent on leave."

Now comes the important part. It states—

"In the case of a member specified in paragraph (c) or paragraph (d) of subsection two of section 3A of this Act the Minister shall call for a like nomination for a deputy as aforesaid and if a person is duly nominated the Governor in Council shall appoint him."

The fundamental and inherent part of the Act that we in the Opposition totally support and believe should not be omitted from it is that the organisation, whether it be one of the approved organisations—

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr Hollis): Order! There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber. I ask honourable members to allow the member on his feet to be heard.

Mr STONEMAN: This clause highlights the fundamental lack of concern that members of the Government have for the great sugar industry of this State and for all of the people who make up that great industry. The problem is that the Minister proposes to give to the person seeking leave of absence the right to nominate as his deputy whoever he wishes. I noted in the Minister's second-reading speech that this person could be someone unconnected with the industry. Again I say to all honourable members that this Parliament is making a law that will say that the deputy of a person who seeks leave of absence may be someone who has fallen out of favour with the approved organisation. This clause allows the nominee of the approved organisation to nominate anyone whom that person favours. That nominee need not come from the Queensland Cane Growers Council, the millers' council or any other council. The clause says that the deputy may nominate anyone. He could nominate a grazier. As I said the other night, all graziers are very wise.

Is it appropriate that the organisation that is approved by whatever means the Minister decides, and which has contributed millions of dollars—and again I reiterate that the industry will contribute on a ratio of 12 to 1 to the \$12m or more that the BSES will require for its operations in this forthcoming year—will be represented by someone who has no connection whatsoever with the industry? In fact, the Minister could select Mr Palaszczuk who, as was noted, is the member for the area in which the sugar industry started. That would be quite reasonable. Now that the honourable member for Salisbury, Mr Ardill, has risen to prominence in the sugar-growing industry in this State, it may be that he is a more appropriate nominee. This is not a reflection on either of those two gentlemen, but they have no connection with the sugar industry.

I return to the wording of the section of the Act that the members of the Opposition support and believe should not be interfered with, which is, "shall call for a like nomination". In that way, the component of the industry that is putting up the dollars and paying the piper—the one that is holding the Bureau of Sugar Experiment Stations together—continues to be represented by the person by whom it desires to be represented. However, the law of the State will state that Mickey Mouse may be nominated to deputise for someone of whom the Minister might approve.

I reiterate that John King, Graham Patch and Jim Pedersen are absolutely reliable people. I do not cast aspersions on their integrity or the organisations that they represent. The fact of the matter is, though, that any one of them could have a falling out and say, "To hell with these guys." He could nominate his own appointee. He could nominate his wife or he could nominate a son-in-law, who happens to be working in the Department of Housing in Brisbane.

There is no reason why the Minister should have overridden what I am sure was the sound advice of his departmental officers and pushed through this quite dramatic change to the principle relating to the governing body of this very important Act and an important component of the sugar industry.

Again I ask the Minister to explain to the members of the Opposition and the members of the Liberal Party, who have just indicated their concern, his justification for this change? I ask him to tell the cane-growers and millers of this State, the people

throughout this State who directly and indirectly generate billions of dollars how he can justify the inclusion of this quite unbelievable process in this very important Act? Not only is the amendment not necessary, but the Act did not require any amendment.

To my mind, there must be an ulterior motive. The clause alluding to what is an approved organisation has already been agreed to and we will have to live with the fact that organisations will be chosen at the whim of the Minister. However, the Minister should tell us why there is a need to go this further step. It seems to me that there must be an ulterior motive—some other reason—because logic plays no part in omitting the present legislation covering this area and substituting this waffly proposal. I again ask the Minister to do what he did not do, that is, to give reasons to this Committee and to the growers and millers of this State.

Mr CASEY: As a favour to the honourable member, I refer him to the replies I have already given to the Committee.

Mr STONEMAN: Let the record show that the Minister has not given a satisfactory reply. Every member of both the National Party and the Liberal Party would agree that the Minister has not given a reply. I ask the people who read this debate to look at the answer that he has given. He has treated not only this Committee but also the growers and millers with contempt.

Mr Borbidge: Arrogant Ed!

Mr STONEMAN: That could be so. He will have a name for all occasions. In the west he will be known as "Blowfly" Ed and in the sugar industry and along the coastal strip he will be known as "Arrogant" Ed.

With all due respect, the Minister is the person who has to guide and support the great sugar industry of this State. Therefore it should be noted, and I am sure that the industry will note, that he has refused yet again to outline his reasons. He has treated us with contempt. I go back to his original statement that he had consulted about the legislation. So he did. He consulted about the members he would appoint. What he did not do—and this is what everybody is saying—is talk about the approved organisations; nor at any stage did he mention the change to the deputies. That was not done at any stage. Let the Committee remember that, and let the great sugar industry of this State and all of the people who are accommodated by the existence of this great industry take note that, on this day, the Minister refused to come clean.

Question—That clause 4, as read, stand part of the Bill—put; and the Committee divided—

AYES, 45

NOES, 30

DIVISION

Resolved in the affirmative.

Bill reported, without amendment.

Third Reading

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

COMMONWEALTH AND STATE HOUSING AGREEMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 1 March (see p. 83).

Mr GUNN (Somerset) (4.06 p.m.): In examining this Bill to ratify the new Commonwealth and State Housing Agreement, it is pertinent to look at the Labor Party's record in relation to housing. In a word, it is abysmal. The Hawke Labor Government has presided over the worst housing crisis that Australia has ever seen.

In 1983, when the Federal Labor Government took office, 19 per cent of weekly household income was required to purchase the average home. Thanks to Labor's record housing interest rates, today it takes a hefty 36 per cent. In New South Wales it takes a whopping 44.5 per cent of the average family's weekly budget. In his 1984 election policy speech the Prime Minister stated—

"We pledge ourselves to bring home ownership once again within the reach of ordinary Australian families."

By the end of last year that promise—and honourable members will remember when the Prime Minister said that this year no child in Australia would be living in poverty—like so many of the Labor Government's pledges, is as dead as a dodo.

The Hawke Government has failed to deliver its commitment to help the home-buyers of Australia, just as the Prime Minister has failed, despite his many predictions, to achieve downward movements in housing interest rates. Indeed, what he has attempted to pass off as informed economic comment really only amounted to wishful thinking. In only 13 months between May 1988 and June 1989, home loan interest rates increased from 13.5 per cent to 17 per cent and 18 per cent, shattering the hopes of thousands of first home buyers and forcing many more to sell because they could not maintain climbing mortgage commitments. Labor has given Australians the highest housing interest rates in the world. What a tragedy! What an impost for a Government, which purports to help the battler, to heap on the home-buyers of Australia.

Early in 1989, the situation reached crisis point, and in typical fashion Labor's answer was a talkfest called the housing summit. The previous Queensland Government commissioned a housing industry task force to investigate ways of increasing housing affordability, an initiative which stung the Hawke Government into action. One of my main recollections of this event was the haphazard antics of the Honourable Stewart West, Minister for Administrative Services, who attempted to make considerable mileage out of the land that the Commonwealth was prepared to offer the States for housing purposes. Barely had he finished outlining what land was available to the various States, and Queensland in particular, when one of his advisers tapped him on the shoulder and made a brief comment in his ear. A moment or two later the Minister had to inform the meeting that in fact a week earlier one of the blocks of land on offer to Queensland had been sold to Singapore interests. So much for supposedly being in touch with the portfolio! At the time the land offer made might have looked big in the headlines, but the reality is that it achieved little and it will take a few years to make any significant impact.

Labor tried to do a deal over the Belmont rifle range land, but once again its proposal was based more on wishful thinking than on any sound, researched argument. Not only could the Labor Government not come forward with an alternative site in order to relocate what is one of the best sport shooting complexes in the world, but also it could not grasp the fact that such land, if developed, would be priced well above what

first home buyers could afford. The land at Coopers Plains was more suitable, but only a part of it was immediately available, the rest being occupied by the army, which was not scheduled to relocate until the early 1990s. The former National Party Government came away from the housing summit with the offer of some land which was to be the subject of negotiation and a vague reference that the matter would be further addressed at the 1989 Premiers Conference.

The housing issues addressed at that conference bring me to the crux of the agreement to which this Bill before the House relates. At the Premiers Conference the Commonwealth undertook to increase funding under the Commonwealth and State Housing Agreement by nearly \$66m over the next three years. This was on the basis that States grants funding would also be increased to the tune of \$180m over the same period. A requirement of the new agreement was that 50 per cent of the States' funds were to be in the form of grants from consolidated revenue. In all honesty, I do not think that in the heat of the conference debate the implications of this arrangement were fully realised by Treasury officials. Nevertheless, at subsequent talks at officer level and frequent talks with the Commonwealth, Queensland accepted this funding arrangement because it was recognised that it would have resulted in significantly increased funding for the housing sector.

These arrangements were all put in place during the term of the previous State Government. Really, all that the new Labor administration had to do was take over the arrangements that had already been settled. Nevertheless, on 21 February 1990, the Premier, Mr Goss, saw fit to issue a press statement headed "\$175m boost for public housing in Queensland". The statement was followed up by the Premier announcing details of a new Commonwealth/State agreement to be signed with the Federal Government. Although the agreement may have been awaiting signature at that particular stage, the details had been finalised long before Mr Goss became Premier. However, in much the same way as he had claimed credit for special assistance grants made available to Commonwealth Games athletes by the previous State Government—Labor has tried to claim that as one of its initiatives—Mr Goss and his cronies could not resist recycling the housing agreement for another run. It was a cheap shot, and one that made Labor members look more than a little stupid, particularly in the eyes of Commonwealth and State Government officials who knew the true position.

Numerous other side issues were associated with the new agreement, not the least of which was the Federal proposal for portability of waiting-time for people seeking public rental accommodation. I understand that this issue is still being negotiated and that it is not part of the new agreement.

Queenslanders ought to be wary of this agreement because, under the original proposal, people who had been on a waitlist for 12 months and who subsequently decided to move to Queensland—and plenty of them do—would be able to jump the queue and get ahead of Queenslanders on the basis of the waiting-time they had accrued in other States. One can readily see that because of long waiting periods in New South Wales and Victoria and the northern population drift to which I have just referred, that proposal had—and still has—potential to adversely affect Queensland. I urge the new Labor Government to be vigilant and keep the interests of Queenslanders first, rather than accede to the suggestions made by their southern colleagues.

On the subject of waiting lists I point out that, at the time of the Premiers Conference, the national total exceeded 200 000 households. In 1989, the Queensland Labor Opposition bayed like hounds that Queensland's public housing waiting lists were the worst in Australia. The fact is that in June 1989, the waiting-time for public housing in Queensland was, on average, the lowest for any State in Australia. At that time, there were approximately 16 000 applications listed for public rental housing in Queensland compared with 86 000 in New South Wales. Regardless of Queensland's position compared with other States, the numbers were then, and still are now, too high. The basic fact remains that the Hawke Labor Government has overseen and implemented the worst housing crisis that Australia has ever endured.

The housing agreement did not need renewal until 1994 but, because the Federal Labor Government needed to give the appearance of doing something positive, it pounced on the need for a new agreement and then tried to bulldoze the other States into signing it so that it would apply from July 1989. However, when the States' representatives were able to study the proposed agreement in the relative calm of their own State offices, they found that strings, which had not been disclosed at the Premiers Conference, were attached to the additional funding. The hidden agenda was a centralist desire by the Hawke Government to take over housing policies and priorities from the States. If the States had accepted the Premiers Conference agreement without question, it is possible that the Federal Government would have been in a position to dictate what was to be built, where it was to be built, and for whom it would be built. Furthermore, the agreement contained a bias away from home-ownership towards rental housing, a capacity for a Federal Government veto of home-ownership schemes and the proposed portability of public waiting lists to which I referred earlier.

The unfortunate fact is that in the past the Honourable Minister who is responsible for this Bill has supported the hidden agenda of centralism. In Opposition, he was prepared to accept the Federal Government's total decision-making powers in the area of public housing. He supported a totally centralist concept that flew in the face of federalism and States' rights. It is just as well that the former National Party Government, together with other State Governments at that time, refused to accept the Federal Government's proposals at face value. After five months of negotiations at officer level and several meetings, the new agreement was thrashed out. Before agreement was reached at the end of last October, sometimes there were bitter wrangles; in some areas, the Commonwealth Government backed down and in others, compromise was reached. Because it continues to allow greater involvement on the part of the Commonwealth Government in assigning priorities in public housing policy, the agreement is still far from perfect. The National Party Opposition supports the Bill before the House and the new agreement which, thankfully, members of the National Party had a hand in negotiating following last year's Premiers Conference.

There is no doubt that the Federal Labor Government has a poor record. Let me examine its record in relation to housing since Labor was elected to power in 1983. The previous Government's tax rebates on home loan interest payments were abolished from 30 June 1983. Between July 1985 and July 1987 that, in itself, caused hardship for Australian families. Negative gearing on rental properties was banned. In 1985-86, funding to the first home buyers scheme was cut by \$25m and in 1988-89 the funding was cut by \$37m. These actions should not be forgotten.

Under the Hawke Labor Government, public housing waitlists have doubled. The qualifying income for the purchase of an average-price home has doubled since early 1985. It has gone from \$23,000 to \$46,000. Finally, Labor's policies have ensured that the median price for an existing home has risen 44.6 per cent from \$77,000 to almost \$112,000. During the run-up to the previous State election, the Goss Government's answer was as follows—

"The revitalisation and expansion of Queensland's secondary mortgage market."

It is strange that nothing has been said about the secondary mortgage market since the Goss Labor Government took office.

The next solution offered by Labor to Queensland's embarrassing housing problem was to offer home-owners, whose mortgage repayments had been forced up by increased interest rates, a rebate of \$60 a month. It is interesting to compare that with past agreements.

Since 1945, the Federal Government has provided funds for housing to the States under the provisions of a series of Commonwealth/States Housing Agreements. It is interesting to look at the background of previous Commonwealth/States Housing Agreements.

Between 1973 and 1981, as well as determining the allocation of Commonwealth/States Housing Agreement funds between States, the Commonwealth also determined the distribution of those funds between rental assistance and home purchase assistance. During that period, those distributions were biased strongly towards public rental housing. In fact, the 1973 agreement stated that, except in certain special circumstances, and with the agreement of a Commonwealth Minister, a mere minimum of 20 per cent and a maximum of 30 per cent of funds were to be used for home purchase assistance. The 1978 agreement aimed to increase that maximum to 40 per cent by its final year, 1980-81.

The 1981 agreement somewhat changed the situation. As well as addressing funds allocation, the agreement placed the determination of distribution between the rental assistance and home purchase assistance in the hands of each State. It also made provision for the granting of interest subsidy to low income borrowers and provided for public housing rents to progress to, and vary in line with, market rentals.

Rental rebates—subsidies—have been available to public housing tenants for many years, and continue to be available. The agreement was silent, of course, in regard to the recoupment of subsidy for home purchase or rental. That agreement represented a marked change in the federal attitude and provided the opportunity not only for inequitable treatment of both forms of tenure but also for each State to adopt tenure policies considered to be most effective in addressing housing problems.

Two years before the expiry of its intended term, the Hawke Government replaced it with the 1984 agreement, which had an intended term of 10 years and provided for triennial valuation and amendment. With that 1984 agreement came a strong return of bias towards rental assistance. It provided for cost rents, included a formula for their calculation and required rents charged to be at least equal to cost rents.

The 1984 agreement was evaluated in 1987 and, following that, the provisions relating to recruitment of interest subsidy were made less flexible. As well, at least part of all Commonwealth funds, State loan council funds and State matching funds were to be allocated for rental assistance—that was the provision of rental housing and payment of rates, maintenance and interest relating to rental operations.

Over the years, several specific purpose programs were introduced and funded and administered through the CSHA guidelines relating to those programs. They reflected the Commonwealth's policies and desires in those areas.

The Hawke Labor Government exhibited a strong leaning towards specific programs and has increased its funding at the expense of untied funds, which reduces the amount which could otherwise be available for other forms of assistance, including home purchase. I remind the House that, since 1981, Commonwealth funds under the CSHA have been divided into earmarked funds and untied funds. Earmarked funds are often referred to as tied funds and consist of several specific allocations for specific housing purposes, such as a crisis accommodation program. Between 1983-84, tied funds allocated to the States and the Northern Territory increased by 57 per cent, whilst untied funds increased by 27 per cent.

The Housing Assistance Act is the Commonwealth legislation which relates to the CSHA. That was amended in 1987 to empower the Commonwealth to deprive a State of specific purpose funding if the Commonwealth Minister was satisfied that the State had contravened any relevant provision of the agreement or any relevant guidelines.

I draw the attention of the House to the fact that the Commonwealth is the largest single contributor under the CSHA, therefore it exercises a very strong influence over the content of the agreement. Although for several years in combination, the States' contributions of funds have significantly exceeded the Commonwealth's, and the gap continues to widen.

As the Minister pointed out, this Bill provides for increased funding for Queensland, which I welcome wholeheartedly. It is, indeed, a change, as for many years Queensland

has been short-changed by the Commonwealth. Adequate and affordable housing is one of the community's most vital concerns.

On the economic front, housing comprises fully one-third of the nation's accumulated capital stock. The housing construction industry nationally accounts for 5 per cent of gross domestic product and employs 250 000 people. The significance of the housing industry to Queensland is proportionately even greater, with Queensland accounting for a large amount of the nation's housing commencements.

In 1988-89 in Queensland, the value of dwelling approvals was approximately \$3.3 billion, which is equivalent to 80.7 per cent of the gross State product. Of particular concern is the declining affordability of the first home buyer to enter the housing market. The prices of land and houses have continued to rise at a rapid rate, and it seems that record interest rates have only slightly dampened demand.

The demand for housing in Queensland is fuelled by record levels of interstate and overseas migration to Queensland. The tragedy is that the rapid price rises in land and houses and high interest rates have pushed many first home buyers out of the housing market. There is no doubt that the key influence on home affordability is the current high interest rate, which relates to the Federal Government's economic policy.

One of the key problems facing the nation's economy relates to the economic management of Australia's balance of payments and external debt problem. The Federal Government's current economic policy, which places heavy reliance on monetary policy, is keeping interest rates high, including housing interest rates. It is clear that other macro and micro-economic policies are needed to improve Australia's productivity. Measures to address the housing problem effectively, therefore, must be set within the broad context of economic policy generally.

The Queensland National Party Government recognised the impact of interest rates on home affordability and, in January 1989, commissioned a housing task force, which I mentioned earlier, to address the problem. As the House will recall, the task force made several recommendations—31 in all—addressing a wide range of issues and problems affecting the housing industry. These included—

- town-planning and building controls;
- education and training;
- adequacy of information on land and demand;
- uses of Crown land for housing;
- consumer awareness and education on financial and housing issues; and
- welfare housing.

A project team within Government was established to implement the recommendations of their report.

As I have said, in March 1989 the Commonwealth Government convened a special Premiers Conference on housing. At that conference the States and the Commonwealth agreed to work together to address problems confronting the housing industry, particularly those relating to land supply, servicing and development regulations. As a result of that special Premiers Conference, in the 1989-90 Commonwealth Budget it was announced that \$15m would be provided over the next three years for programs directed at overcoming problems regarding land supply, land and building regulations, the local government approval process—which had been a problem—and community acceptance of greater variety in housing. It was decided further that \$9m would be allocated over a three-year period for the package of supply side measures and a further \$6m over three years for a cooperative housing development program for the States and Territories.

The objective of the Housing Development Program is to achieve the more efficient provision of residential land and a choice of housing, which also increases community acceptance of greater variety in housing. Priority areas for the 1989 project funding were—

- expansion of the "Green Street" joint venture for more affordable housing;

- medium density residential demonstration projects, particularly in inner city areas;
- analysis of community housing patterns;
- tackling the problems of infrastructure provision and urban consolidation; and
- the development of improved planning and regulatory processes.

This housing agreement was a continuation of the policies emanating from that special Premiers Conference, but more accurately it reflects the economic situation of the day, which is a housing crisis. Over the last year, many mortgage repayments have varied upwards by well over \$200 a month. Many people have been well and truly caught in the middle. Families are making heroic financial sacrifices to stay in their homes. The crisis that we are hearing about is a crisis not only in the affordability of owner/occupied housing but also in accommodation.

For many people the great Australian dream of having a home and proper accommodation is turning into a nightmare. As I have said, the Labor Government's high interest rate policy is designed to lessen consumption, particularly in housing. If we follow Senator Button's advice, we should invest our savings in BHP shares rather than the family home.

High interest rates are supposed to do the following three things—

- by making credit expensive, dampen domestic consumption;
- because credit is dear, encourage local saving; and
- attract overseas money with a combination of a stable political system and extremely high interest rates.

How effective has this policy been? Despite living with high interest rates for the best part of 18 months, our overseas debt now stands at \$139 billion. Our domestic savings rate is negligible. Last year alone the consumption rate for those in the 17-to-25 age group was some \$4 billion.

The most important flaw in the Hawke Labor Government's policy is the effect that it is having on the family. While the housing debate is couched in economic jargon, it is fundamentally about the Australian family. The purchase of houses may be a form of consumption. It may divert economic resources away from mining and manufacturing. However, it is the most basic element affecting families and family life. There are several studies which show that the quality of family life is inextricably linked with housing—with the type of housing, the size of housing, the cost of housing, the location of housing and the tenure of housing. According to the Westpac Bank, two-thirds of borrowers rely on the income of both husband and wife to pay off a mortgage. In order to get a home, the second partner has to go out to work and contribute. In some cases, this means putting off a family for more than 10 years.

According to the most recent figures compiled by the Mortgage Guarantee Insurance Corporation of Australia and the Real Estate Institute of Australia, the ratio of home loan repayments to family income now exceeds 25 per cent. The 25 per cent benchmark is important because, traditionally, banks and lending institutions have recognised that families can generally afford to allocate approximately one-quarter of their gross income to meet their shelter needs while still meeting other family needs. However, on average, Australians are now paying 33.6 per cent of their family income to service their housing loans. This is before any other credit costs such as car loans and bankcard are included. Put in dollar terms—average monthly home loan repayments Australiawide have varied by \$200 and upwards a month. That is about \$50 a week extra.

This proves that families need two incomes to finance a home loan. In fact, in many States, to qualify for a housing loan an annual income in excess of \$50,000—double average weekly earnings—is required. It is not surprising, therefore, that the ratio of married women in the work force has more than doubled. In fact, it is now two and a half times what it was in 1978.

Mr Welford: You don't like that, do you?

Mr GUNN: I do not think the honourable member likes what I am saying much, either.

It is interesting to note that despite the increase in income, the savings ratio has fallen considerably—from 11.7 per cent in 1978 to 8 per cent in June 1988. That seems to indicate that these women are not necessarily returning to the work force through choice. Because of Labor policy, the extra income is needed to service increased housing costs.

Despite this agreement, which I understand was signed a week or so ago, the real housing crisis is not high interest rates or the lack of accommodation; it is that housing families and Australians generally is now a second priority for the Hawke Government. It is fair to say that families and home-ownership have become economic instruments or levers for the Treasurer to adjust at will to determine an economic and political result. This housing agreement is another lever which is being continually adjusted, and it is an indictment on a whole range of policy measures that have led us to the sad situation of having to prop up the first home buyer, families and people with housing accommodation problems.

It would seem that our egalitarian society is being destroyed by the economic policy of the Hawke Labor Government. Emerging in Australia today is the development of a landlord and tenant class and an increasing gap between the haves and the have-nots. What we need is a strong commitment from Government that housing will remain a national priority and that it will recognise the importance of home-ownership to the building of strong Australian families.

Today, families are putting their savings into accounts that earn high interest. More emphasis should be placed on savings. A national savings scheme for housing, which could be similar to the initiatives that are already in place for retirement savings through national superannuation schemes, should be introduced.

Governments have created the housing crisis by throwing housing into the pool as an economic problem. The social problems emanating from the financial aspect of the housing crisis and the lack of accommodation have ramifications for our future. All the agreements in the world will not create and maintain stable, secure family life. A new direction in economic policy is needed.

Mr D'ARCY (Woodridge) (4.32 p.m.): I shall outline some new initiatives that can be used in relation to housing. As has already been pointed out, housing is a tremendously complex issue. This nation is facing a massive annual net population increase, both generally and through immigration, of approximately 150 000, which represents a city the size of Geelong. All of those people will need housing.

Housing needs have been addressed as urgent. The previous speaker mentioned the Commonwealth housing agreement. The special Commonwealth conference formulated a number of very worthwhile initiatives, some of which have not been followed through to the extent that they should have been.

The cost of housing at the base level must include the cost of the land and the cost of the building. Some aspects of that total cost have not been addressed fully. The Commonwealth housing conference suggested that local authorities and State Governments take cognisance of the fact that it is necessary to ignore some of the more conventional ideas about house construction. People are now buying suburban blocks further and further away from the cities and are building houses on them.

I do not intend to denigrate any particular area because, for whatever reason, people choose to live in particular areas. At the lower end of the market, Government instrumentalities in this State, such as Suncorp, own many housing estates in the south-east corner of the State from which they make quite a profit for their share-holders. One of those estates is situated in my electorate at Loganholme. Another large estate, which I think is called Wimbledon Park, is situated at Caboolture near your electorate, Mr Deputy Speaker.

Many blocks of land are advertised in newspapers for approximately \$36,000 as a minimum or average price for a block of serviced land. I understand that it costs approximately \$18,000 per block to provide services, including council charges, engineers' charges, underground power and water, etc.

In real terms, the average person buys a very basic house. Often such houses are situated in areas that have very few services. Fortunately, some estates are situated on an electric train route and are close to reasonable shopping centres. However, they are still a long way from the centre of things. People tend to buy in those areas because the land is cheaper than it is elsewhere. However, the prices of house-and-land packages that are quoted in newspapers do not mean very much at all. Although such a package might be advertised for \$79,000, no mention is made of the fact that the price does not include a garage, a driveway and whatever.

Housing prices are out of all proportion. The Commonwealth housing conference formulated some great ideas, which I do not think have been implemented as well as they might have been. Local authorities and State Governments should be moving more quickly to implement them. Different types of tenure should be granted for land to be used for housing so that the land content cost can be made cheaper but the conditions under which people live in those areas are just as good as those elsewhere. To purchase a reasonable house-and-land package, the average person would need approximately \$90,000 to \$100,000, which represents a tremendous sum when compared with today's wages.

Unemployment has risen amongst people who live in areas of low-cost housing. As well, the costs of subcontractors have fallen. However, suppliers' costs never fall. CSR and Boral would rather stockpile materials than make price reductions or sell materials at reasonable rates.

When Lionel Bowen was the Attorney-General, I appealed to the Federal Government to consider the way in which such companies operated under the Trade Practices Act. During one week, a supplier will receive a note from one company that prices will rise on a particular date for a particular material, whether it be Hardiboard, Victorboard or gyprock. The next week, the supplier will increase his prices at exactly the same time. The very same thing occurs with the suppliers of glass, roofing materials, etc. That represents a huge increase in costs to the industry. It is important to consider the supply of materials in the long term.

I turn now to caravan parks, which once had a dirty name in Australia. In the past, people were not allowed to reside in caravans for any length of time. Caravans had to be mobile, and councils would not allow people to stay in caravan parks after a certain period. It was sad that State legislation stated that residents of caravan parks had to be moved on after the expiration of a certain period. Society then discovered that caravan parks had become a way of life. Unfortunately, in some areas caravan parks were not controlled properly and they became a disastrous way of life.

Since that time, the emphasis has been placed on mobile homes at the lower end of the market. In Australia generally a more acceptable level of mobile home has been developed than was the case in the past. Mobile homes are not covered by the Commonwealth housing agreement and cannot be financed as such.

Some time ago in Queensland legislation covering mobile homes was introduced. It contains several flaws that need to be sorted out. One of them relates to the financing of the purchase of mobile homes, which is quite a complex issue. Because he has no security of tenure, no bank or sensible financial institution would allow a borrower to purchase a mobile home.

Mr Hynd, who was the motivator in the National Party behind this legislation, attempted to secure some sort of tenure for people in mobile home parks. Because those parks have grown from being caravan parks and the area of land on which the park is sited is owned by one entrepreneur, it has reached the stage at which many people could be ejected from those parks. It is a possibility that, in south-east Queensland, if a caravan

park site became valuable enough, 200 to 300 mobile homes could be removed from it in one hit. If five or six such sites were sold together, in a very short time, housing would have to be found for the occupants of approximately 1 000 homes.

It is time that this matter was considered overall and with a great deal of foresight. Investigations need to be carried out so that the changing circumstances can be put to the Commonwealth. Those people at the lower end of the market who have a need for that type of housing will use the facilities that are available. That need will overtake the legislation and it will overtake the market. It concerns me no end that, again, they will not be protected.

A section in the *Australian Financial Review* refers to mobile homes and movable homes. In my opinion, Australia has not yet seriously addressed this problem. The article, which I presume is reasonably factual, states—

"In the US, 35 per cent of all people live in relocatable homes on permanent sites. Nearly 245,000 relocatable homes were sold for \$US5.48 billion by 130 companies at 320 factories in 1986."

That sort of thing is starting to happen here on a much smaller scale.

One proposal has been put to Mr Burns' committee by a rather avant-garde gentleman from the Caboolture area who is looking at some 260 acres. I think he might be a little bit premature. Properly run and properly organised, these parks would be a great adjunct to the housing market. I believe that there will be a need for more and more of these types of parks and that we should be ready to address that need.

I have already seen a couple of pitfalls in regard to mobile home parks. First, I do not think that rental is a viable proposition, because the amount of land that would be used is not massive. I believe that the Government should own the land on which mobile home parks are established so that the tenants have security of tenure, unlike those people in the case to which I referred. If the Government owned the land, a person who located his mobile home there could pay a reasonable amount off the land as well as off the building or the house in which he was living. At the same time, the land and the facilities would be well tended.

In many parks that have been established by councils, only the bare minimum of facilities is provided. For an acceptable quality and style of life, it is necessary that a wider range of facilities be provided. In some areas, particular attention should be given to the types of people who will be using the parks. For example, in parks which are occupied by people who have retired, surely a bowling green should be included. In parks in which younger families reside, obviously facilities such as a swimming pool, a lake and tennis courts should be provided. Those facilities should be maintained by the management of the park.

As I said, people should have an opportunity to purchase a mobile home. That is a matter that needs to be considered. Such a provision could be included in the overall guidelines. In areas such as mine, housing is not affordable. No matter what is done and no matter how it is subsidised, ownership of housing is reaching the stage at which it is getting out of control. People have become more mobile. Some people who have different concepts of life are quite happy to move into housing at the lower end of the market. As I pointed out earlier, at the moment some people are mortgaging their souls to buy a house. But that house is not as comfortable or as well controlled as a mobile home would be if caravan parks were properly organised.

I am not sure that we should be using terms such as "caravan parks", "mobile homes" and "relocatable homes". Today, they are not that; they are another facet of housing, and that is how they should be regarded. The terminology that I have been using and the terminology that has been used in the media in reference to that type of housing should be changed. That type of housing does have a place in society. I hope that, at future meetings of the Commonwealth and the State in relation to housing agreements, particularly when they relate to urban areas in which it is necessary for

State, local and Federal Governments to have an input, we do not allow the legislation to get away from us and allow unscrupulous operators in the field.

Those operators who have spoken to us to date have been legitimately concerned about the tremendous expansion that will take place in the nineties through to the turn of the century. Our Government is considering that matter. I hope that it is able to come up with the right answers. Nevertheless, it is a difficult situation and it is one that must be addressed with the foresight of statesmen.

Mr BEANLAND (Toowong—Leader of the Liberal Party) (4.45 p.m.): I must agree with the previous speaker. This Bill certainly does have a bias towards rental housing. From listening to him on this topic, it seems to me that at least we agree on one or two aspects, in any case. He indicated that, in many parts of this State, housing is no longer affordable. I certainly agree with him. The bottom line for that is interest rates. We can stand in this place and in other places and talk about the need for local authorities to change some of their procedures and we can talk about the need for the State Government to do this, that or the other. But the bottom line to enable people to afford housing is certainly interest rates. As I will explain more fully in a moment, over the last couple of years this nation has certainly copped a lacing from the ALP Government in Canberra in relation to interest rates.

It is disappointing that although Queensland is gaining a considerable amount of additional funds for housing through this Commonwealth and State Housing Agreement, nevertheless, there is a bias towards rental housing. Clearly, the great Australian dream is to own one's home. I had hoped that this Government would have been making an extra effort to help people to own their own home, because there has never been a time of greater concern in this nation than now over the ability of people, and of the community generally, to own their home.

Daily, one sees cases of people getting into financial trouble. People acquire a family home only to find out that the bread-winner becomes unemployed, that the salary structure of the bread-winner changes, or that the wife or the bread-winner—perhaps the two of them working—has been forced onto the unemployment list. Suddenly, with only one person in the family bringing in an income, they cannot make ends meet. Clearly that is a matter of grave concern. I had hoped that today this House would have received this legislation without its containing the bias towards rental housing.

In the *Courier-Mail* of Saturday, 31 March this year, the Minister advertised for a whole host of senior people to be appointed to his department. Clearly, this is a time when the Minister ought to be providing additional funds for home-buyers and trying to meet a need in the community; yet he is presently in the process of expanding or empire-building his department. Perhaps, with a new Government, the Minister can justify employing an additional person to assist with the development of the Government's housing policy, but to employ two or three additional people and to rearrange the local government side of the department, as the Minister has done, clearly shows that in this instance he is more concerned with building up a grand department rather than providing the additional funds and the policies to meet the needs of those people in the community who are financially hamstrung at present.

No doubt the Minister will proceed with that process of empire-building, but I do not believe that Queenslanders want to see that. To date, the Minister has not been able publicly to justify an increase in the number of senior officers within his department, and I am sure that over the coming months he will not be able to justify those appointments at a time when additional funds are needed for housing in the community.

This evening, this debate puts under the microscope the increased costs of housing brought about by the Federal Government's handling of the economy over recent times. In fact, 70 per cent of Australians either own their home or are in the process of purchasing their home. That fact illustrates the importance that Australians place on home-ownership.

At present, this nation's housing industry is under the greatest strain it has experienced since the 1930s. One cannot help but ask, "Why does the Government have a bias away from home-ownership and towards rental accommodation?" I say that advisedly, because, as one goes through the figures for the last couple of years, it is quite clear that there has been this bias, and this has exerted pressure on home-buyers.

One only has to look at what occurred some months ago when, for no reason connected with the housing industry but all to do with electoral fortunes, the Federal Government placed a cap on interest rates for housing. That happened at a time when interest rates for housing rose to 17 per cent. The Federal Government then decided that a subsidy had to be paid to the four major banks to put a cap on housing interest rates and to stop them from going above 17 per cent. Obviously, the Federal Treasurer and the Prime Minister were aware that Australians would no longer tolerate skyrocketing interest rates.

Only after the economy has gone into a recession is that strain or pressure starting to come off the housing industry. In recent weeks, a great deal of pressure has been placed on the Governor of the Reserve Bank. There has been outright interference with the Reserve Bank—interference the like of which has not been seen before, and which should not be exerted, because the Governor of the Reserve Bank is supposed to be independent of the Government of the day and is charged with several responsibilities, one of which is to keep down the inflation rate and to maintain the real value of the Australian dollar. Because of the pressure that has been applied by the Federal Treasurer, it is little wonder that interest rates have moved downwards only slightly, and it will be some months before one sees any further relief in that area.

Those comments do not apply only to the housing industry. The small-business sector has a direct relationship to the housing side of the economy, because many small-business people are also buying their own homes. Many of those people are paying interest rates of 19.5 per cent—some are paying up to 24 per cent—on their small-business overdrafts. Bankcard and other costs have risen recently. Consumers who purchase goods and services through Bankcard must meet an interest charge of between 23 per cent and 24.6 per cent. That in turn puts more pressure on the consumer, who, more than likely, has a home loan, and so the cycle goes right down the line. It reaches the stage at which Australians just simply cannot make ends meet. That fact is brought home, particularly when one considers that, because Australia has a inflation rate that is double that of its major trading partners, interest rates are again boosted to a high level. Australia's interest rates are between two and five times those of our major trading partners.

Unfortunately, in the coming months, because of the growing momentum in the rate of unemployment more and more pressure will be applied to many home-buyers in this State. We are all sincere in wanting to assist people into home-ownership. I am quite sure that even Government members, although they might have a different way of going about it, want to get people into home-ownership.

It is unfortunate that the Federal Government, through its policies, has been unable to control the Australian economy. While our major trading partners and the OECD countries have been going in one direction with good, strong economies, our economy has been allowed to run rampant in the other direction and we have all of the problems I have outlined.

In fact, 4 per cent of the gross domestic product is tied up in the housing market and 250 000 people are employed in the provision of housing and housing services in this country. From those figures, one can glean an idea of the size of the home-ownership market.

In considering the importance of the home-ownership market to both the community and the Government, one must remember that home-ownership reduces the need for Government support, particularly to those in retirement. If we can put people into their own homes rather than into rental housing, we increase the rate of personal saving, which is so essential for economic growth. A great deal has been said recently about the

need for economic growth. It provides the appropriate environment for family stability, which I know is of concern to all honourable members. It minimises rental accommodation demand, leading to less pressure on rent increases for those needing or desiring to live in rental accommodation. I had hoped that we might have seen a movement more towards home-ownership and greater movement away from rental accommodation than is provided for under this legislation.

I wish to give some of the figures on interest rates and the problems of affordability. Home-owners who bought a medium priced Gold Coast home on 15 per cent deposit during the 1988 property boom now require a minimum annual wage of \$62,000 to meet the mortgage repayments as a result of the escalating interest rates over the past two years. Recent figures show, city by city, the typical monthly repayments currently made by many home-owners around the State while sustained high interest rates of 17 per cent prevail. I will run through those figures in a moment. The analysis is based on properties bought between August and November 1988 when sales volumes peaked Australiawide. Calculations assumed that the purchaser had a 15 per cent deposit and that the property was purchased at the 1988 median price for each city. According to the research, however, people buying higher priced homes, such as those on the Gold Coast, usually paid a much higher deposit than 15 per cent.

The home affordability study also calculated the incomes required to sustain the mortgage assuming that 35 per cent of income was devoted to home loan repayments. Monthly repayments required to meet home loans around the State varied between \$1,811 per month on the Gold Coast for a home costing \$153,000 in 1988 to \$532 per month in Maryborough for a home that cost \$45,000 in 1988. The problems that the people on the Gold Coast are having is evident from the size of that repayment.

The research indicates that a repayment of \$1,140 would be required in the Brisbane region for a home purchased for the 1988 median price of \$96,300. Using the 1988 median price, a house in Ipswich cost \$56,000, the 1990 income required was \$22,700 and, in 1990 terms, the monthly repayments were \$662. In Townsville, the 1988 median price was \$69,000, the 1990 income required was \$28,000 and, in 1990 terms, the monthly repayments were \$816. That shows the position in two towns that could not be compared with the Gold Coast and the Sunshine Coast. The figures for those latter two areas are considerably higher. In fact, the 1988 median price for the Sunshine Coast was \$91,000, the 1990 income required was \$36,900 and the 1990 monthly repayments were \$1,077. So there is a significant difference in the figures.

Research indicates that an average family income of \$38,000 would be required today to meet loan repayments on a typical family home bought at the 1988 median price of \$94,400. Today a family income of \$38,000 is required simply to meet the home loan repayments without the other living costs. This shows the importance of and the crisis in the current home-ownership situation.

Other figures bring home dramatically the problems facing home-buyers. Various television current affair programs, radio talkback programs and newspapers tell us about people who are getting into trouble and cannot understand why. If one looks at these figures, one then appreciates and understands the significance of them and what funds are required by someone buying the average family home to meet today's commitments. The figures show that at the end of this decade annual average after-tax earnings were lower than they were at the start of the decade. A detailed research study shows that since the early 1980s annual average after-tax earnings have actually fallen. This is the first decade in the nation's history when this has happened. Annual average after-tax earnings have fallen from \$24,718 in 1982-1983 to \$22,812 in 1988-1989—a fall of nearly \$2,000. These figures are all expressed in 1988 dollars and thus allow for inflation. This contrasts strikingly with every other postwar decade when real after-tax earnings increased substantially. In 1944-1945 the figure was \$11,390 and had increased to \$13,407 by the year 1949-1950. In 1960-1961 the figure for annual average after-tax earnings was \$15,640 and had increased to \$19,617 by 1969-1970. Australians were some \$4,000 better off at the end of that decade than they were at the start. This brings home very strikingly

what is happening with the economy. Over recent times Australia has been squeezed into a recession which has brought about this alarming situation.

In the last quarter, the recession has brought about a plateau in home loan affordability ratios. As a result of major bank interest rates being effectively capped by the Government at 17 per cent in September, home loan affordability plateaued in Australia during the December quarter of 1989. The turnaround follows six successive quarters of deteriorating affordability. Australiawide, the ratio of average loan repayments to median family income fell marginally from 36.5 per cent to 36.4 per cent. This is in contrast to the September 1989 quarter when the ratio of home loan repayments to median family income rose to a record high of 36.5 per cent. That was the sixth successive quarter of deteriorating housing affordability. The figures plateaued during the December quarter. That had a dramatic effect and the ratio of average home loan repayments to median family income deteriorated rapidly. During the September quarter in Queensland, the home loan repayment to family income ratio rose 1.1 per cent to a record high of 31.5 per cent and the median weekly family income decreased by 0.8 per cent to \$576. The average monthly home loan repayment rose 2.5 per cent to \$785. That shows the position conclusively.

Recently, the Minister again increased public housing costs in this State by raising interest rates in some sectors of public housing. Included in that increase was a component of 0.2 per cent for administration costs. Because of the increase in the size of the department, over coming months there will be a need to increase even further the funds allocated for administration. The costs are growing, and I caution the Minister in that regard. It must be ensured that as much funding as possible is made available to home-buyers. When the Minister looks for additional properties, he must be careful to ensure that he gets value for his dollar. In recent weeks some properties have been purchased in inner city areas. Whilst the Minister might believe that there should be a spread of housing, there is no good reason for the Government to acquire properties in the near and inner city areas. He should be looking at areas in which the Government can get value for its dollar. If the properties that are purchased are located near major transport corridors in outer suburbs rather than in inner city suburbs, many more people can be housed. There is a vast difference in the costs of such properties. I trust that in the future the Government will move in the direction of acquiring outer suburban properties rather than inner city properties that are more costly.

Mr FOLEY (Yeronga) (5.08 p.m.): This new law will enhance the dignity and rights of Housing Commission clients in Queensland. In the Schedule of the Bill, clause 29 provides for rights of appeal and rights of participation on the part of applicants for, and recipients of, housing assistance in Queensland.

Under clause 29 (a) (ii), citizens will be given a right of appeal against decisions made by the Housing Commission that affect them. Significantly, people renting Housing Commission properties will have the opportunity to participate in the management of their dwellings and in the development of public housing policies. Under clause 29 (a) (i), Queensland Housing Commission clients will have access to information on available housing assistance, policies, tenancy conditions and appeal mechanisms.

The new law will require the Government to have particular regard to the special needs of people with limited abilities in relation to literacy, comprehension or command of English. Moreover, it should be said that clause 30 of the Bill provides that the Minister may make arrangements for specific housing assistance for certain groups, namely, pensioners and Aboriginal people, and for the provision of mortgage, rent relief and crisis accommodation. Local government, community housing and other programs also may be targeted for specific assistance.

This new law is part of a nationwide agreement between the Commonwealths and the States. The primary principle of this agreement is set out in Recital (D) to clause 3 of the Bill. This provides as follows—

"the primary principle of this agreement is to ensure that every person in Australia has access to secure adequate and appropriate housing at a price within his or her capacity to pay by seeking to:—

- alleviate housing-related poverty;

and

- ensure that housing assistance is, as far as possible, delivered equitably to persons resident in different forms of housing tenure."

This new, independent appeal mechanism will be welcomed. Tens of thousands of citizens depend upon Government and Housing Commission decisions for access to adequate housing and for security of tenure. In many cases, their rights are not protected by traditional property law. Their well-being depends upon the exercise of an administrative discretion. In this respect, people who live in public housing are in a disadvantaged position compared with those living in private housing.

Earlier this century, the jurist Charles Reich observed that the provision by the State of housing and welfare assistance gave rise to a form of "new property" on the part of welfare recipients. This "new property" is not protected by the traditional safeguards of contract, equity and land law; it depends for its force upon the development of a new system of administrative law.

If people who apply for Housing Commission accommodation are to have the dignity and rights that they deserve, there must be an opportunity for them to challenge the decisions of the Housing Commission or Government departments. Conventional administrative law remedies are completely inadequate to the task. When, for example, a supporting mother applies to the Housing Commission for rental accommodation and is rejected, there is a real need for a speedy, inexpensive way of having that decision reviewed. No-one would seriously suggest that the prerogative writs that are available through the Supreme Court provide any realistic opportunity to review such a decision, particularly when there is no duty on the part of the decision-maker to give reasons.

This new law will open the way for establishment of an independent appeal mechanism. A client—for example, the supporting mother mentioned in the previous example—will be able to apply for review of the initial decision. It is hoped that this independent appeal mechanism will be relatively informal and that decisions will be able to be reviewed speedily.

In this regard, it is relevant to note also the program of the Electoral and Administrative Review Commission which includes consideration of the opportunity for administrative appeals in accordance with section 14 of the Schedule to the Electoral and Administrative Review Act 1989-1990. Under section 2.10 (l) (c), one of the functions of EARC is to monitor implementation of reforms authorised by an Act in relation to matters pertinent to the commission's functions. This is one of those matters.

EARC has the opportunity to monitor this new development in administrative appeals in the housing area. It is timely to note that soon EARC will be embarking upon a review project concerned with freedom of information and administrative law, generally. The experience of the independent appeal mechanism in housing matters will no doubt be of assistance to EARC in its consideration of an appropriate administrative appeals system, generally, in Queensland.

I am very pleased to note that the Bill provides for people in receipt of rental housing assistance to be given maximum opportunity to participate in the management of their dwellings. Many Housing Commission tenants are long-term residents. It makes good sense to give such tenants the opportunity to have a say in the management of those dwellings because it helps to instil in them a sense of belonging and commitment that can only operate to improve the quality of life of the tenants and, in all probability, improve the management of the dwellings themselves.

In this regard, I am reminded of an example that occurred in November of last year in my own electorate of Yeronga. When local residents returned to their homes in a block of Queensland Housing Commission units in Sarah Street, Annerley, they were dismayed to find that a large shade tree had been chopped down in the back of the premises. Several families with young children lived in the block of units. The children played under the tree in the backyard. They had a swing tied to one of the branches of the tree. The sudden removal of the tree made the residents feel confused and intruded

upon. Inquiries of the Housing Commission revealed that the tree had been removed because the Housing Commission assessed that it was suffering from a disease.

Whatever be the correctness of that assessment, I can well recall the upset of those families who felt at the time that Big Brother had acted without any prior consultation with them. One supporting mother said that she had lived in the units for years and this incident made her feel for the first time somewhat stigmatised; a recipient of welfare housing with no say in the management of the premises.

This new law sets about remedying that problem. It will not be an easy task to adopt a participatory style of management, particularly as the Housing Commission has a large number of premises the length and breadth of the State. It is a task, however, well worth tackling.

The present preservation and enhancement of individuals' rights is not something abstract; it is a goal of good government that should permeate all aspects of the work of Government departments and agencies. In the provision of Government-funded housing assistance, it is most important that we strive to avoid any suggestion of stigma and to show proper respect for the rights of the users of that system.

In that respect, I challenge the wisdom and necessity of the practice of stencilling the doorways to Queensland Housing Commission properties with a code, for example "XY123", which identifies the units to the world at large as Queensland Housing Commission units. Surely that is superfluous. One can only assume that the stencilled numbers are there for the sake of identification. But why cannot the conventional means of identification by way of unit number and street number be used? The present practice sends a subtle message to Queensland Housing Commission tenants that they are somehow different, marked as different from the rest of the community. It is difficult to see any good reason why that practice should remain. I urge the Minister to review the practice urgently with a view to abolishing any number coding which marks out Queensland Housing Commission units from other dwellings within the community.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Mr RANDELL (Mirani) (5.18 p.m.): The previous speaker caught me by surprise. I thought that he would speak a little longer.

Mr Beattie: What would you know about it?

Mr RANDELL: The honourable member for Brisbane Central has just woken up and walked into the Chamber. He would not know about it.

It gives me great pleasure to support the Bill. I am pleased that the Government has moved quickly to pass the Bill through the House to put into effect the good work done by the previous Government.

I notice that the Housing Minister is not in the Chamber. I intended giving him a little bit of needle because he has been getting it pretty easy recently. It would have been nice to see him in the Chamber to hear the Opposition's comments on the Bill. So far, all the Minister for Housing has done is to take credit for the actions of the former Government; he has done nothing himself.

Everyone in Australia knows that the worst housing disaster in Australia's history has been caused by the disastrous policies of the Hawke Labor Government, which have had a devastating effect on the future happiness of many families, particularly young people. In my electorate, people have entered my office and have been practically crying because they cannot afford to buy a home. When the honourable member for Brisbane Central was the union delegate for the railways at Coppabella, I remember that the people there were living in caravans in appalling conditions, yet the union did not do anything for them. In desperation, they asked me to inspect their living conditions. They said, "Come and have a look, because the union will do nothing for us." As the member, I obtained money from the unions and the railways. Now they are housed in decent, comfortable surroundings and the caravan park no longer exists.

Mr Milliner: Mr Beattie did that.

Mr Beattie: I did a good job.

Mr RANDELL: The honourable member did nothing about it. He would do well if he sat and listened and copped it sweet.

There is no doubt that the high interest rates of the Hawke/Keating Government have perpetrated the worst housing crisis ever seen in the history of Australia.

I expect to see Mr Burns return to the Chamber shortly. I have obtained some cuttings from the newspapers. One article headed "Housing groups push for action", contained claims made by housing groups and stated—

"They claimed more than 200,000 people were on public housing waiting lists and 400,000 were living in caravan parks.

The National Shelter group called for a national housing strategy including better co-ordination of housing programs and a \$10 increase in rental assistance next financial year."

What has the Federal Government done? Exactly nothing! The article continued—

"The National Shelter said a national housing strategy was needed to alleviate housing-related poverty and reduce the isolation of low income families in poorly serviced urban and regional areas."

What has happened? Nothing! The article stated further—

"The group chairman, Mr Michael Lockwood, said public housing demand was at an all-time high with 200,941 people waiting for government housing last year."

That occurred under the Hawke/Keating Government, yet the State Government has the effrontery to defend the policies of the Federal Labor Government. Not one voice has been heard defending the low income earners whom Government members are supposed to represent.

Mr Beattie: You had a waiting-list of 15 000.

Mr RANDELL: The honourable member will have his chance to talk later. He should sit back and cop some of the pertinent facts.

Mr Beattie: I will deal with you in particular.

Mr RANDELL: I have been waiting for a long time for the honourable member to deal with me.

Another newspaper article stated—

"The Real Estate Institute of Queensland president, Mr Dave Allen, said last night there was an increasing trend towards mortgage defaults.

...

Mr Allen said some Queenslanders were surrendering their homes to banks and others were having their homes taken from them when they were unable to make payments.

...

He said Queensland was no different to other States, with the number of mortgage defaulters rising sharply after home loan interest rates jumped about 14 months ago."

Who was in charge of the country when the interest rates jumped? Mr Hawke, Mr Keating and the ACTU.

Mr Milliner: What would a millionaire like you know about it?

Mr Beattie: How many rented houses have you got?

Mr RANDELL: Any money I have got, I have earned with my bare hands. I am not like the honourable member with his union friends. He would not be here if it was not for the union pushing him along to make sure that he was elected. I will deal with the honourable member later. There is plenty of time. Government members will all have their opportunity to speak.

I noticed that, when the Sugar Experiment Stations Act Amendment Bill was debated, the member for Salisbury had to rescue the Labor Party. Apart from the Minister, he was the only Labor Party member who spoke to the Bill. He was ashamed of other Labor Party members. I could name some of the members from sugar electorates who sat back and, when mention was made that the Labor Party had no-one to speak to the Bill, their heads went down and they did not want to be seen or named.

Mr Beattie: When was the last time you took sugar in your coffee?

Mr RANDELL: I can see some of them now.

Mr Beattie: Saccharine-user.

Mr RANDELL: The honourable member would not know a stick of sugar from a lollipop.

In his policy speech of 13 November 1984, Mr Hawke pledged—one of his many pledges—to bring home-ownership within the reach of the ordinary Australian. What a joke! In 1983 it took 19 per cent of weekly household income to pay off the average home. Do honourable members know that today it takes 30 per cent? That is what Mr Hawke and Mr Keating have done to this country. That is what they have done to our young people. That is what they have done to young married couples trying to get ahead. Thirty per cent of their income has to go towards paying off an average home.

Home loan interest rates jumped from 13.5 per cent to 17 per cent and then to 18 per cent in just 13 months between May 1988 and June 1989. No wonder young people have no confidence in the Hawke Government. I notice that the Housing Minister is still not in the Chamber. I hope that he returns before I conclude.

Since the Hawke Government came to office in June 1983 it has abolished the previous Government's tax rebate for home loan interest payments. It cut funding for the First Home Owners Scheme by \$25m in 1985-86, by \$37m in 1988-89 and a further \$43m in 1989-90. If members of the Government are fair dinkum, as we are on this side of the House, they will admit that when young people come into their offices wanting to take advantage of the First Home Owners Scheme, they cannot be fitted into the criteria. I bet they cannot. It is not often that a young couple comes into my office and I am able to say, "Take these papers outside and fill them in." It has been made so difficult that I bet not a dollar is going out under that First Home Owners Scheme.

Mr Beattie interjected.

Mr RANDELL: I am correct. I will be listening to the honourable member later on this evening to see whether he contradicts me.

Mr Schwarten: They're all millionaires who come into your office, aren't they?

Mr RANDELL: The honourable member should get out of Brisbane and take a look at the workers of this country.

Up at Sarina the mill workers, the council workers and the railway workers come into my office time after time to try to get a little bit of money with which to get a house and I have to try to help them in the face of what Queensland is copping from Canberra. I would not mind if members of the Government tried to get something from Canberra, but they have not done a thing. Later on I might name a couple more members on the Government side.

Mr Beattie: You will hear from me, don't worry.

Mr RANDELL: I wait with great interest. The honourable member has not done much up till now.

Mr Beattie: You'll enjoy it. I'll tell you about Coppabella.

Mr RANDELL: The honourable member can talk about Coppabella. I am not ashamed of Coppabella. I did great things in Coppabella. If the honourable member was honest and compared what it was like before I was the member with what it is now, he would give me a bit of praise.

Mr Beattie: I'll come up with you in the next few months.

Mr RANDELL: I will go with the honourable member.

From April 1986, the Federal Government increased the 13.5 per cent housing interest rate ceiling to 15.5 per cent for new bank borrowers, despite promises to retain the lower ceiling. That was another promise down the drain. What did Hawke say? He said that no child would be living in poverty in 1990. That is another one down the drain. I bet there are 40 or 50 that I could drag out. However, not a word is heard from members on the Government side. There is not any mention of standing up for Queenslanders—the workers of this State. However, at election-time they will tell the people how great the Labor Government is.

Mr Schwarten: Fancy you being concerned about the workers of this State.

Mr RANDELL: The honourable member will have an opportunity to speak later and rebut some of the things that I have said. I have not plucked those figures out of the air. They are fair dinkum and they can be relied upon.

It is quite apparent to all—except those who refuse to listen and refuse to see, like members on the Government side—where the blame lies for the desperate situation our housing industry finds itself in, namely the Hawke/Keating/ACTU Federal Government. One only has to listen to what Senator Walsh and Senator Button are saying nowadays.

Mr Stephan: They don't want to know about them.

Mr RANDELL: They do not want to know. If they say anything, the whole ALP machine will come down on them.

At least they are people who have got a bit of guts and a bit of honesty and are prepared to speak out about what is happening to this great country of ours. For the sake of political expediency, members of the Government will keep quiet. They think that they will be around after the next election. I can tell honourable members that there are some oncers on the Government side.

Mr Stephan: It's a bit of a circus down in Canberra at the present time, isn't it?

Mr RANDELL: There is no doubt about that.

Mr Beattie: Denver Beanland is keeping an eye on you.

Mr RANDELL: It looks like Mr Beanland could be a good leader. Members of the Opposition are just hoping that he can see the light. He probably will.

We then saw the most blatant example of Federal Labor Government pork-barrelling. The Labor Government committed up to \$250m of taxpayers' money to try to bail itself out of electoral disaster. Do honourable members know what it did? It gave \$250m to four banks. It gave them \$250m of taxpayers' money that could have been used for roads and education. The Labor Government made a deal with four banks not to raise home loan interest rates. However, those rates went up all the same.

These politically inspired follies to try to keep Labor in power failed to address the real issue of economic disaster that this nation faces under Labor's farcical monetary policies. That move failed. Do honourable members recall what profits the banks announced shortly afterwards? Mr Beattie might remember that Mr Hawke gave the

banks \$250m of our money in order to keep interest rates down and shortly afterwards they announced a profit of \$800m. If that is economic sense, I cannot see it.

I was talking to some of my colleagues earlier and we were wondering whether any of those banks have ever donated to the flood appeal, the earthquake appeal or the cyclone appeal. Have any honourable members ever heard them say, "We will donate \$1m."?

Mr Schwarten: Didn't Westpac donate?

Mr RANDELL: I am just wondering whether any of them have made a donation. They will accept donations on behalf of the appeals. When one considers the profits that these banks are making, one wonders whether they could do a bit more.

The policies of the Federal Labor Government have increased weekly rents, crippled the building industry and left hundreds of thousands of home-buyers in the mortgage belt in financial misery. It is no wonder we are looking down the financial barrel of the greatest recession this country has ever seen. I do not have to tell members of the Government that; if they have any sense, they will realise it. That is when people will find out what this country is made of. I refer to the rural producers, the miners and those who work in the tourist industry—that is, the people Labor is neglecting.

Mr Beattie: How come you had a waiting list of 15 000 for the Housing Commission before we came in?

Mr RANDELL: Queensland has the lowest waiting list of any State in Australia.

Problems are created because Queensland is not getting back some of that money that Queenslanders pay in taxes. Queensland is entitled to a fair share of that money, but it has been discriminated against. Let us see how fair and square Mr Goss and Mr De Lacy are when they go to Canberra to bargain with the Federal Government. Mr Keating has already promised them a pretty hard time.

When members of the Labor Party were in Opposition, they made fun of what the National Party Government did with the money that it received from the Federal Government. It will be interesting to see what happens this year. If the Labor Party does not do something about its policies, Queensland will be so far down the drain that it will never recover and, for many years, our children and their children will be paying through the nose to foreign countries.

Mr Beattie: Why didn't you take all the money available from the Commonwealth under the various schemes?

Mr RANDELL: I will mention that shortly, because I was the Minister for Housing when those negotiations were undertaken.

In contrast, last year's State Budget, which was brought down by a Government of which I was a member, included a minimum of \$360m for low-interest Queensland Housing Commission home loans. That was to provide in excess of 7 000 home loans, compared with 4 900 during the previous year. Members of the Labor Party do not appreciate that. At that time, the Queensland Housing Commission was approving almost \$2m per day in home-ownership finance to low and moderate income earners at a rate of 13.75 per cent to try to get a roof over their heads. The National Party Government was desperately trying to get roofs over people's heads. This Government should be supporting that.

Mr Borbidge: They put it up to 15 per cent.

Mr RANDELL: Yes, 15 per cent.

Mr Borbidge: You can get a lower home loan from AV Jennings than from the Queensland Housing Commission.

Mr RANDELL: Those loans would help families that are seeking to become first home buyers. However, the National Party felt that something must be done to help

directly those existing home-buyers who are at risk of losing their family homes. On behalf of those families, the Queensland Housing Commission administered a mortgage relief scheme to provide emergency assistance to mortgagees in financial distress, something which was caused by the policies of the Federal Labor Government and its high interest rates. There is no doubt that, when people are paying a set amount each month and they budget for that amount, they suffer difficulties when interest rates are increased.

Mr Beattie: I hope you are in the House when I reply to this.

Mr RANDELL: If Mr Beattie is honest, he will know that that is what happens. If interest rates increase from 15 per cent to 20 per cent and people have not budgeted for that increase, they are in real trouble, because they still have to purchase food and other necessities. If Mr Beattie is honest, he will admit that Federal Government policies have caused those problems.

Hardships such as financial distress could force people to sell their homes. That mortgage relief scheme provided interest-free loans of up to \$4,000 to mortgagees to prevent the loss of their family homes. Many of those loans were provided during my short term as Housing Minister.

I notice that Mr Burns has returned to the Chamber. Those mortgage relief moneys were paid directly to a borrower's home loan account to cover any arrears and to subsidise monthly instalments.

Mr Milliner: He hasn't missed anything.

Mr RANDELL: Mr Milliner was a very poor substitute during Mr Burns' absence from the Chamber. He is not a bad bloke, but he was a poor substitute because he would not understand what I am talking about.

Mr Burns has at least some comprehension of the realities of life and housing problems. No doubt he will claim all the credit for what the National Party Government did, but before long he will have to start making some decisions. He has had a pretty easy ride up until now, but from now on it will be more difficult.

To enable home-owners to stabilise their finances, no repayments are required during the first year of that loan. That is what the National Party did for those people. The National Party in Government shouldered the burden that was created by the Federal Labor Government. I can only hope that this State Government does nothing to allow the good work of the past to fall away.

It was my privilege to have been the Housing Minister for part of the time during which negotiations were conducted between officials of the State and Federal Governments.

The member for Stafford stated previously that it must be remembered that the National Party Government's failure to sign the Commonwealth/State housing agreement led to its failure to take up the funds that had been provided to the Queensland Government for that purpose. The main stumbling block was that the Commonwealth was trying to coerce the States into signing a 10-year Commonwealth/State housing agreement without guaranteeing funding to the States beyond the first year. On how many occasions has that happened?

Mr Borbidge mentioned what occurred after another agreement was signed. The Federal Government gave the preschools \$6m and said, "Here you are. You are on your own." We had to find \$6m to cover it. The Labor Party walked away from every water resources scheme in Queensland except those in the Burdekin and in Bundaberg. We were left in a jam with the Kinchant Dam because no funds were provided after a particular date, even though it was understood that those funds would be provided.

Mrs Edmond interjected.

Mr RANDELL: The honourable member can mention this later on. I invite her to rebut some of the figures that I have supplied. What I am saying must be hurting,

because this is the first occasion on which I have heard the honourable member interject. If I could hear her, I would be able to give her a better reply.

Mr Beattie: We'll get your ears cleaned out for free.

Mr RANDELL: The honourable member is getting a bit personal.

Mr Beattie: Not at all.

Mr RANDELL: The honourable member is getting personal.

Mr Beattie: I want you to hear her. It is a very important interjection.

Mr RANDELL: I can hear the honourable member for Brisbane Central quite plainly. However, I cannot hear the lady at the back of the Chamber. I do not know what she said.

The National Party did not sign the 10-year housing agreement because it did not guarantee funding. At that time, the ALP in Opposition was prepared to go along with the Federal Government's attitude. Members of the Labor Party were constantly niggling me to sign that agreement. I would bet that Mr Burns is pleased that I did not sign the agreement. I add that every State Labor Government in Australia refused to sign the agreement. They refused to be tricked, because they knew as well as I did that, once they signed that 10-year agreement, they would receive funding for one year and would then be on their own for the following nine years.

I instructed my officers to take a hard line in negotiations. In no way were they to buckle and give in to the Commonwealth Government unless they obtained a firm guarantee of funding for 10 years. This is where the delay occurred. If the honourable member is honest and fair about it, he will applaud what I did at that time. I know that, if Mr Burns is honest, he will do the same.

When the States agreed to change financial arrangements for the Commonwealth/State Housing Agreement in May last year, the Federal Labor Government gave no indication that the provision for guaranteed base-level funding was to be removed from the agreement. However, in a typical about-face, it tried the oldest trick in the book—sign an agreement for 10 years, provide funding for one year and after that one-year period tell the States that they are on their own. I had had previous experience with the Federal Government. I knew what was likely to happen, and that is certainly what would have happened. However, the Federal Government did not get away with it. We held firm. I must congratulate the housing officers at that time who continued negotiations and came up with what we see here.

Mr Burns continued with the negotiations. Although he is not in the Chamber at present, I ask his advisers to ask him to inform the House whether that funding will be indexed year after year. If it will not, we will be in a lot of trouble. Everyone knows what a dollar is worth today, what it was worth five years ago and what it will be worth in five years' time. With Hawke and Keating in charge, we will be given a very hard time. As I said before, Senator Walsh and Senator Button are so alarmed about the economy of this nation that they are prepared to buck the party machine; they are prepared to buck Hawke; they are prepared to buck Keating, and they are prepared to go public and reveal the true figures on what is happening to this nation. They are alarmed. They are honest people. From now on, many other people will do that, too.

Mrs WOODGATE (Pine Rivers) (5.40 p.m.): We have before us today the Commonwealth and State Housing Agreement Bill, which is a most significant piece of legislation for Queensland and Queenslanders. What is most significant, thanks to the Hawke Labor Government in Canberra, is that Queensland, with a massive increase in funding, will benefit most of all the States and Territories.

We are looking at an additional \$65.9m in 1989-90 and 1991-92. After that, \$45.6m extra will be made available annually. This means that our funds will increase from \$135m to \$180m per annum. One of the best features of the legislation is that the

funding will be in the form of a non-repayable grant and there will be guaranteed minimum base-level funding for four years.

Honourable members would be aware that there are two key functions of the Queensland Department of Housing, whose primary role is to house needy, low-income residents of this State. This is achieved by, firstly, providing public rental dwellings at rents based on household income; and, secondly, through means-tested innovative lending schemes which encourage home-ownership and provide support, through subsidies, to those who could otherwise not afford to become home-owners. All rental dwellings are constructed on either commission-owned or contractors' land by private-enterprise contractors or purchased on the open market.

In 1990, the great Australian dream is still to own one's home, or at least to be working towards that end. The member for Toowong made that very statement in his speech. That is the only comment of his with which I agree. This has been the dream of Australians for many decades. I can remember—and possibly a few of the oldies can also remember this—that way back in the sixties, in a speech made by the late Sir Robert Menzies, some wag interjected, "What are you going to do about 'ousing?" Sir Robert Menzies promptly replied, "Put an aitch in front of it." At the time, it raised a few laughs. But that is all Sir Robert Menzies ever did about housing. He obviously set the agenda for future conservative Governments, not only in Canberra but also in this State.

Earlier in this debate the member for Somerset stated that he considers that the Federal Labor Government has a bad record in housing. Naturally, I disagree with this statement. In fact, during the reign of conservative Governments in this State, Queensland has had a most appalling record of public housing. Look at the housing legacy we on this side have inherited from those opposite.

I refer to rental waitlists. As at 1 July 1988, there were 11 984 applications on hand. The applications lodged during that year numbered 17 314. The tenancy placements totalled 6 355. Cancelled applications numbered 7 100, which resulted in applications on hand one year later, that is, at 30 June 1989, totalling 15 843. These waitlist figures have the following dissection: in the broad metropolitan area there are 7 894; in the non-metropolitan area, 7 949. These waiting-times vary considerably from area to area. For example, in the metropolitan area, applicants waiting for north-side placements have to wait considerably longer than persons willing to list in the outer southern suburbs.

For a three-bedroom house, the approximate waiting-times are: in Riverview, four months; Inala, five months; Mount Gravatt, 19 months; Chermside, two and a half years; Redcliffe, two years. In the country, it is even worse. The waiting-time on the Gold Coast is two to four years; Cairns, one to two years; Townsville, 12 months; and Toowoomba, between 10 months and two years.

It is welcome to see that the Goss Government is tackling this problem immediately. Also, it is pleasing to see that the agreement places a strong emphasis on public rental housing and shared equity and rental purchase arrangements. This is good news for the person at the lower end of the wages and salary scale. Tenants in public rental housing who have a desire to own their own home but who are finding it very difficult to do so will have the opportunity to buy a share of their house. The good news is that, in spite of the fact that they are buying only a share, they will have all the rights of home-owners.

I have already said that the Commonwealth/State Housing Agreement places a strong emphasis on public renting housing. I believe that for far too long there has been a shortage of public rental housing in this State. For many years, in my own electorate of Pine Rivers, there has been the disgrace of vacant Government-owned land at Albany Creek that has not been developed for public housing because of strong pressure placed upon the former National Party member by residents in the immediate vicinity who were of the opinion that public housing there would somehow lower the tone of the area. Letters have been published in the local press to the effect that the area could—these are the shock/horror tactics—develop into another Inala.

Honourable members would be aware that Inala can be very proud of its three sons on this side of the House. I refer to the Premier, Mr Goss, and the honourable members for Archerfield and Manly respectively, not forgetting that Queensland's newest Federal member, Dave Beddall, also comes from Inala. To my mind, such comments in the local press are the worst examples of snobbery. To apply pressure to a member or members of Parliament not to provide public housing so desperately needed by so many families is, at worst, criminal; at best, it is uncaring, un-Christian and unforgivable.

Last year, in company with my colleague the Honourable the Attorney-General, Mr Wells, whose electorate of Murrumba borders on mine, I had discussions with representatives of a large housing construction company that wanted to build low-cost homes on the land in question in Albany Creek. Their house designs did credit to them. That company was not talking about building street after street of cloned houses, but of building a variety of low-cost homes. Whilst not being in the same class as the ultimate life-style at Sanctuary Cove, they were most tastefully designed and would have done credit to any housing development. But, unfortunately, nothing happened with those ideas, although the company's officers did tell me that they were having discussions with the then Minister. Because of this legislation before the House and thanks to the Hawke Labor Government in Canberra, such schemes can and will get off the ground. I believe that the days of the stigma of public housing in a suburb should be left far behind.

One good feature of the many in this Bill is that there will be a high level of consultation with community organisations and tenants about the development of a State plan to cover programs provided for under this agreement. This is a first in that State housing commissions will have to consult the community and will be accountable for their policies and for their programs.

As I have said previously, I would welcome more public rental housing in my electorate. If land earmarked especially for this purpose was to be developed under this program, I would be asking that our local authority town-planners be allowed some input. Local shopping, buffer zones, provision of neighbourhood parks and community playing fields could all add up to a most attractive housing development at an affordable price. Perhaps consideration could be given to interspersing rental housing with homes for purchase. This is a matter for much more research in the near future.

Housing needs in the latter part of the twentieth century come from a more diverse range of people than ever before. Those needs are being met through new and often innovative approaches to housing design. The coordinated planning of housing set in private gardens, landscaped communal and public open space, roadways and associated services and amenities are features of modern public housing. Housing can be planned and sited to integrate into the surrounding environment.

It is also noted that programs aimed at assisting specific needs groups such as pensioners and Aboriginal people also figure prominently, and such groups will benefit also from the increased funding in this agreement.

I am pleased to support this Bill.

Mr STEPHAN (Gympie) (5.50 p.m.): This afternoon I join in this debate on the housing requirements for this State. There is no doubt in my mind that the requirement for extra housing causes all honourable members a great deal of concern. I was interested in what some of the Opposition members had to say. The honourable member for Pine Rivers commented that——

Opposition members: You're the Opposition; we're the Government.

Mr STEPHAN: All right. Honourable members are getting upset. They are the Government. I will refer to them as the members on the opposite side of the Chamber.

The member for Pine Rivers made the comment that there will be an enormous addition to housing funding. When one looks at the Government's friends in Canberra

and what they have done to the cost and availability of housing, one wonders just how far this additional money will go.

At the present time one finds a circus going on in Canberra with Mr Hawke being ridiculed and being called Mr Jellyback. He has not censured Senator Walsh. Also, Mr Keating has severely censured Senator Button. I am not sure who is blaming who, but the Federal Government is not getting on with the business of government. It is not doing too much now; it did not do very well in the past, either.

Honourable members should look at the policies of this Government's friends in Canberra, particularly on family taxation, and look at how that has impacted on those families trying to make ends meet and to own their own home. For example, in 1976-77, when compared with tax on a single person, a family on average weekly earnings and with two children received a 40 per cent tax reduction. In 1988-89, that figure dropped to 20 per cent. That enormous increase in taxation is going at the expense of the family into the coffers of the Government in Canberra. This has meant that a two-income family is needed just to begin to cope. I feel sure that no Government would be proud of that record.

From time to time the question of interest rates has been mentioned. In 1984 Mr Hawke pledged to bring home-ownership within the reach of ordinary Australian families, but what has he done to achieve that aim? The *Melbourne Age* of 28 January 1989 reported—

"On Thursday, Mr. Hawke, asked in Perth whether interest rates would fall this year, said: 'They'll go down this year.' Yesterday he was asked whether there was a chance rates might rise before they fell. He said, 'No, I don't believe so.' "

One month later Mr Hawke was reported in the following way—

"I say on behalf of this Government—and I say it quite clearly—that so long as it is necessary to maintain this tight monetary policy (high interest rates) . . . that is what will be done."

That is who maintained the high interest rates and that is what the Federal Government went about doing. That hardly encourages low interest rates and home-ownership.

The honourable member for Pine Rivers placed a lot of emphasis on the long waiting list. But what is our position compared with that in some of the other States, for instance, South Australia? Applications for housing in Queensland last year were 5.6 per 1 000 people whereas, in South Australia, the applications were 29.6 per 1 000 people—six times higher. Is that the sort of policy the Queensland Government wants to adopt? Is that the sort of policy it is holding up? Is it saying that the National Party Government was a failure because its figure was one sixth of the South Australia figure?

Mr Beattie: Tell us about the waiting list when you went out of office.

Mr STEPHAN: I gave the figures on the waiting list and the honourable member was not listening. I do not claim that there is no waiting list in Queensland. I do not say that everybody can walk in off the street and be provided with a Housing Commission house. I have great concern for constituents who are waiting for houses. It grieves me considerably that this type of housing is not available.

It has been stated that an area has been set aside in the Pine Rivers electorate and that the Housing Commission has not built houses on it. That applies to Gympie, too. Areas have been set aside in Gympie for the Housing Commission, and no houses have been built on them. The same applies in almost every electorate. Are Government members claiming that, because they were in Opposition at the time, this happened only to them?

Mr Beattie: Were you one of the members who instructed the department not to build houses?

Mr STEPHAN: I am not one of the members who instructed the department not to build houses in Housing Commission areas. That is a ridiculous comment. I know

that the present Minister has gone to certain areas, held up a piece of paper and said, "Look at where housing has not been built." There has been a great increase in housing in some areas. There has certainly been an increase in my area. There have been some very successful areas of Housing Commission houses.

Government members interjected.

Mr STEPHAN: Now they laugh because a member of the previous Government can say that there has been an increase in housing in his area, and a member opposite says that there has been no increase in housing in his area. Where is their consistency? What is their mentality when they ridicule other members for what they say?

Mr Beattie: How many have been built in Gympie?

Mr STEPHAN: I cannot give the numbers. During the last year, 14 were opened in the cluster housing units; five others were built just prior to that; nine town houses have been constructed and seven or eight were built in another area. That is a total of about 35. At the moment, 14 single bedroom welfare units are being constructed in another area. I could not give the total figure and I do not think it is necessary to answer that question. Certainly there has been housing development in Gympie.

Mr Booth: Isn't it correct that, every time houses were built in our electorates, they accused us of pork-barrelling?

Mr STEPHAN: That is exactly what I was saying before. They abuse us if we put something up and they abuse us if we do not. Where is their consistency? What do they really want?

From what I can gather, Government members are looking for public housing. To an extent, I go along with that. The Bill gives a good deal of encouragement to the provision of public housing but not very much to home-ownership. The previous Government's interest subsidy scheme was very successful but it has been discouraged or even withdrawn completely.

If the Government is consistent in wanting to help people obtain housing, it has to look further than the provision of public housing. It must also give encouragement to people who wish to own their own home, want to build their own home, or want to build for rental purposes. If it is prepared to do that, it should not increase only the amount of money going into the public area. Public housing is only one side of the problem; the Government must also look at providing more incentive for people who want to own their own home.

There is no doubt that, in 10 years' time, it will be very expensive for a person to buy a home, for the Housing Commission to build for rental purposes or for a private business to construct houses for any purpose.

Sitting suspended from 6 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr STEPHAN: Before the dinner recess I was speaking generally about the proud record of the previous National Party Government as compared with what has been offered in the way of available funding to this State. The National Party will not, and cannot, back away from its record and its members can hold their heads high. It has a record of sensible, progressive policies and responsible management of Queensland's housing resources.

During the recess I found on my desk a letter from the present Minister for Housing in which he referred to the housing accommodation assistance scheme and the allocation of funding under it. This is a good example of what can and is being done by giving encouragement to local groups. Churches, the Country Women's Association, the St Vincent de Paul Society and the Dalby Town Council are listed on this document and have received grants of over \$100,000 or, in some instances, over \$200,000 for the provision of accommodation mainly for the aged and disabled. This has been particularly successful in my own electorate through the work done by the Lutheran Church for old

people requiring pensioner units. This scheme enables personal contact to take place and gives encouragement to these community groups to assist people in circumstances in which it would be very difficult for them to gain a financial return from the rent of the premises.

Assistance of this nature makes it easier for the commission itself because it provides relief for the target groups and the people involved in supplying houses for these groups. In addition, housing and funding is being made available to groups wanting to make a solid contribution to the community in which they live. These go hand in hand. I hope that the Minister and this present Government will continue with this scheme and, if at all possible, enlarge upon it. I commend them for it.

I turn to the interest subsidy scheme, which has enabled many people to own their own home. If they are experiencing very difficult circumstances and their loan repayments are higher than 25 per cent of their income, they receive a subsidy on the remainder. This scheme makes it easier for them not to pay their house off, but to keep their house. The figures show that in the last few years interest rates have risen from 13 per cent up to 15, 16, 17 and then 18 per cent. This makes a difference to the repayments on a \$60,000 loan, which is not an enormous loan on a house. The increase in the interest rate from 13 per cent to 18 per cent means that the increase in monthly repayments for that loan is \$207. That is on top of the \$700, which is the monthly repayment at 13 per cent. This brings the monthly repayments to close on \$1,000. It is no wonder that people are becoming anxious, finding it difficult to live and to meet their payments. They must wonder where the next dollar is coming from. The mortgage relief scheme has been very important and necessary to enable people who find themselves in these tight situations to meet their mortgage repayments for a short time. People who find it difficult to obtain work and are on benefits of some description find it very hard.

The Government in Canberra has seen fit to cut back significantly on the First Home Owners Scheme. If ever there was a reasonably successful scheme for young first home owners, it was this one. It enabled them to buy their first home. In some cases the original allocation was almost sufficient to meet the down payment and they could carry on making repayments after that. Instead of paying rent each week they are making a contribution towards the reduction of their loan and owning their own home. We must ensure that people of that kind receive this sort of encouragement to own their own home.

Clause 30 of the Bill refers to specific housing assistance. The clause uses the following terms for grants to the States for expenditure on—

- (a) rental housing assistance for pensioners;
- (b) rental housing assistance for Aboriginals;
- (c) mortgage and rent relief;
- (d) crisis accommodation;
- (e) local government and community housing; and
- (f) any other program determined by the Minister following consultation with a State."

I urge the Minister, in conjunction with the Federal Government, to give consideration for extra funding for home ownership assistance.

Mr Burns: The agreement provides for it. The Premiers Conference allowed us to borrow money that won't affect the global borrowing so that we can go very heavily into the secondary mortgage market and things like that. There will be a big expansion of home loans.

Mr STEPHAN: That is good. Actually, there has been a reduction in the money that is available under the interest subsidy scheme, for whatever reason.

Mr Burns: We have got to the stage where we are overspending and lending more now than we have ever lent before. We can't handle it, at present.

Mr STEPHAN: That is possible. Because of the cost of houses, I have no doubt that the Minister's department is lending more than it has ever lent before.

Mr Burns: The number of people coming through and getting loans is bigger now than it was last year.

Mr STEPHAN: That is right. These aspects—not the least of which is the cost of housing—increase the demand.

People who have bought property for private rental do not get a very good return on their outlay. Someone who decides to build a block of flats or a house or purchase a property for the purpose of rental are not getting a good income on their investment.

Mr Burns: There are assistance programs available today that the Queensland Government has not taken up. We will be taking them up under the new arrangements, but there are ways of building rental trusts and helping. There's 10 million bucks available from the Federal Government that will be used to offset depreciation problems and things of that nature. You've just got to get into that market.

Mr STEPHAN: I am pleased that the Minister is doing that. Although \$10m is available, what will it buy when houses cost \$100,000?

Mr Burns: It is offset by a 2 per cent depreciation. You know, it is a lot of money.

Mr STEPHAN: It represents an increase; however, with the increase in costs and in demand, the problems will still exist.

I thank the Minister for his comments. I look forward to a continuation of the efforts that are being made to alleviate hardships associated with housing problems. I agree with other speakers who have said that the provision of housing certainly is a problem in Queensland.

I assure the House that housing problems have not been ignored. Honourable members on both sides of the House realise the problems. I take exception to comments that indicate that members of the National Party do not have any feeling, understanding or concern for those people who are unable to find a home. I can assure the House that I am greatly alarmed and enormously distressed by the number of people who come into my electorate office, because they have a problem with housing. If I can do anything at all to assist them to find a house, I do. All members of Parliament should be working towards that end.

Dr FLYNN (Toowoomba North) (7.40 p.m.): I welcome the Bill that is before the House. It provides a massive funding boost for public housing in Queensland, and I am proud to speak to this legislation. In my maiden speech, I alluded to the fact that Toowoomba is in the midst of its worst housing crisis in history. There are a number of reasons for that. The primary reason, of course, is the failure by the previous Government to allocate a sufficient funding priority to the provision of public rental housing for those people in need. Another reason for the housing crisis in Toowoomba is that a number of peculiar local factors also have contributed to the housing problem. Although I have mentioned them before, I will briefly mention them again.

Firstly, because of the publicity that Toowoomba is such a desirable place in which to live, there was a recent increase in the population caused by people coming from interstate and other parts of Queensland. Unfortunately, because of the prices for housing, some of those people's dreams have turned into a nightmare. Secondly, rapid growth has taken place in the University College of Southern Queensland without provision being made for planned student accommodation. Thirdly, Toowoomba has a very large per capita population of former psychiatric patients who are housed in the community. While this group is welcome and while the people of Toowoomba are pleased to contribute to their rehabilitation and integration back into the community, they do constitute a substantial pressure on the relatively low level of low-cost rental housing that is available in Toowoomba.

I have mentioned previously in this Parliament that every day I get more than one desperate person coming to me, making a request for urgent accommodation. People come to me because I am the local Labor member and they hope that I will be able to find them a house in which to live. Obviously, there is nothing that either I can, or I should, do to interfere with the Department of Housing's allocation priorities, but I do liaise regularly with local Housing Commission staff to keep myself constantly abreast of the problems. At times, my information is a little bit more up to date than the department's records show. On those occasions, sometimes I have been successful in getting the priority allocated to people changed to a more urgent category.

I wish to relate one brief story. I have no doubt that all honourable members could tell stories about people who come to them in search of accommodation. My story concerns a man named Michael and his family. I relate this story for two reasons. The first reason is that I think there are still a substantial number of people in the community who mistakenly believe that if a person has nowhere to live and cannot afford a house, it is because of that person's failure to work hard enough or be productive enough. My second reason for telling this story is because it illustrates that in the midst of Toowoomba's worst housing crisis in history, the action of some inconsiderate landlords is not helping the problem.

Approximately four weeks ago, Michael came to see me. Up until shortly before that time, he, his wife and four children did not have a problem. He rented a house for \$90 a week and, although he is a battler, he was able to afford to pay that. He was employed as a welder.

The first thing that happened was that he lost his job. He applied for social security payments and was waiting for his benefit to come through. A few days after he lost his job, he received an eviction notice from his landlord. In spite of the fact that he had lived in the house for two to three years, had paid the rent on time and had been a good tenant—he had not caused any trouble—and had maintained the property very well, he was given two weeks' notice to leave the premises. The landlord wished to sell the property and, of course, it was within the landlord's rights to issue the notice. Basically, Michael was then placed in the position of not having a job and not having anywhere to go.

Michael came to see me. Because of the large number of people who were already on the waiting list, the Department of Housing was unable to help him in the immediate period. Eventually, he was forced to find accommodation in a caravan at Laidley, where he is currently living. He is paying more than \$100 a week in rent. He needed financial assistance at short notice before his social security benefits came through to move both his family and his modest furniture and possessions to that new address.

I realise that all honourable members would know of similar cases in their electorates. However, I believe that discussion on this legislation and what it is designed to achieve ought to include accounts that give a human face to the housing problems of this State. It is people in a position similar to Michael's, who can be found not only in my electorate but also in other electorates throughout Queensland, who need help. They are the people who will benefit from the passing of this legislation.

I wish to place on the public record the current housing position in Toowoomba. At the end of January this year—1990—there were three applications in category A. For the benefit of any honourable member who does not already know, I point out that category A applies to absolute emergencies experienced by people who might be victims of severe domestic violence or whose house might have burned down. In ideal circumstances, the department would reallocate a house to those people within 24 hours. Category B had 214 applications. If a person is in category B, it means that the department recognises that he is living in inappropriate accommodation, because it is either overcrowded or substandard. That refers to families with three children living in a one or two-bedroom house. That category does not include people who might be struggling to meet the cost of increasing rent. Many people in that category really battle from week to week, having to cut down more and more on other items in their budgets.

Yet, if the accommodation in which they are staying is considered of adequate size and nature, those people do not even make the urgent category.

I turn now to category C, which is the most common. There are 228 applications from people who have applied for Housing Commission or Department of Housing premises and who meet the criteria. There are also 72 pensioners waiting for pensioner units and 26 applications waiting to be processed, which makes a grand total of 543. At present, the total stock of Department of Housing premises in Toowoomba and adjacent regions totals 867.

We are faced with an enormous task. Obviously, there is no quick fix in Toowoomba, unless half the people who are currently in houses move out. When they have nowhere else to go, that will not happen.

I am sure that honourable members will realise why I am so pleased to speak in support of the Bill and to see it come into the House. It represents a very constructive step in the provision of increased public housing in Queensland.

Having dealt with the bad news in Toowoomba, I will give some of the good news so far as the Department of Housing is concerned. The Minister, Tom Burns, in his second-reading speech said—

"Another important new feature is that there will be a high level of consultation with community organisations and tenants about the development of a State plan to cover programs provided under this agreement. For the first time, State Housing Commissions will have to consult the community and will be accountable for their policies and programs."

I am very pleased to report that, in Toowoomba, that process of increased consultation has already started.

In December, shortly after my election, I approached the Minister and explained to him a number of problems that were occurring in Toowoomba, especially at Harlaxton, where there is a large concentration of departmental rental housing and where there have been a number of social problems and a large number of complaints about maintenance problems and lack of community facilities. I am pleased to report that Mr Burns gave his immediate attention to those problems and has already allocated a substantial sum to the investigation of the problems and their correction.

I commend Penny Taylor, who is a community development worker at Harlaxton. In the few months that she has been there, she has carried out an enormous task in liaising with local residents and tenants. She has already made a substantial impact in reducing the number of social problems that were occurring in the locality.

As well, under the auspices of the department, and with her assistance, a Harlaxton Tenants Committee has been set up and has met a number of times. A few weeks ago, I had the privilege of chairing one of its meetings. The purpose of the committee is for the residents themselves to prioritise their needs so that they can tell the department exactly what is wrong and what needs fixing most urgently. At the meeting that I attended, most of the attention was focused on a number of maintenance problems. Over the last 5 or 10 years, the maintenance of some of the wooden houses in the area has been allowed to decline.

In that Department of Housing estate there is a real feeling of optimism. Strong cooperation exists between the residents and the department. Local departmental staff have done all in their power to cooperate and assist. It is the first time in a number of years that people there have felt so positive.

I join with the member for Yeronga in welcoming the initiative of an independent appeal process to help Department of Housing clients with a grievance. At last, the Bill recognises their rights and will provide both a more efficient and responsive administration.

I conclude by saying that the combination of increased funding and more responsive policy that this agreement provides offers hope to a large number of my constituents, both those on the waiting list and those already in departmental accommodation.

I support the Bill.

Mr PERRETT (Barambah) (7.51 p.m.): As I rise to take part in this debate on the Commonwealth and State Housing Agreement Bill, I am pleased to see the Minister in the Chamber. Recently, I was very pleased to welcome him to my electorate to open a home for some intellectually handicapped people in Wondai.

Mr Burns: Is it going well?

Mr PERRETT: It is going very well. It was financed by the Housing Commission. It was one of the first homes of its type in Queensland. I commend the idea. In Queensland, there is room for many more homes of that type.

Tonight I would like to focus on paragraph (D) of the Schedule to the Bill, which states—

" . . . primary principle of this agreement is to ensure that every person in Australia has access to secure, adequate and appropriate housing at a price within his or her capacity to pay . . ."

That paragraph raises two issues: firstly, that housing prices are out of the reach of the average Australian; and, secondly, that the vehicle by which people purchase their homes, namely home loans from financial institutions, are also too expensive for the average income earner.

We should examine why that is the case. I may make some statements that Government members do not like.

Mr Beattie: Heaven forbid!

Mr PERRETT: Mr Beattie is back in the Chamber. I noticed that he was not in the Chamber. He has probably been outside to sharpen his pencil or his knife; I am not sure which.

It is unfortunate that we live in these economic times. In 1983, it took 18 per cent of the family income to buy a house; now it takes almost 35 per cent.

This Bill is the crunch point. The agreement is trying to patch up the disaster which is the Australian housing market. This agreement is an admission that the Federal Labor Government has put Australians in this mess. It is an admission by that Government that things are bad and that it had better fix them up. It is just a shame that things have reached the stage that it has to be admitted that things are bad and they have to be fixed up.

Labor has pushed the dream of home-ownership out of the reach of average Australians. It is as simple as that. In the face of ruinous interest rates and escalating inflation, thousands of Queenslanders just cannot afford to buy a house. All over Australia the picture is the same. The vital issue is how to purchase an affordable house without going bankrupt in the process.

Because of its failure to manage the economy efficiently, the Hawke Labor Government is directly to blame for high interest rates and inflation. The Hawke Government has been led by the nose by the big money-lenders; not even the interests of the working man could break through the union-boss barriers to get this policy overturned. Instead of buying homes, people are being driven out of their homes. Just 10 years ago the average Australian family paid \$55 a week in home loan repayments, or less than 18 per cent of average income. Now repayments take more than a third which, in just 10 years, is almost double.

It is now true that Labor Party promoted high interest rates, high taxes and falling living standards for workers have destroyed the dreams of a generation of Australian families and rendered home-ownership less and less affordable. High interest rates are the prime cause of the rapidly declining affordability of housing. The Queensland Real Estate Institute has demanded that the Government get interest rates down if home-ownership is to be realised.

Home-ownership is also an issue for rural areas, where young people are under equal pressures in obtaining homes. It is a big mistake to say that home-ownership is just a city issue and that country areas do not suffer from it. Many people are moving to my electorate from Brisbane and from interstate, particularly Sydney.

Mr Beattie: It's a nice area. Why shouldn't they move there?

Mr PERRETT: The reason why they are moving there is that they cannot afford their mortgages. They are selling up and moving to a place where they can get cheaper housing.

Of course, this is increasing the waiting lists of real estate agents for rental housing and it is also creating more unemployment, which places another burden on taxpayers. In Kingaroy, which has a population of 6 000 people, there are in excess of 40 names on the Housing Commission waiting list, and real estate agents have told me that they have had on their books for more than 18 months the names of people who are seeking suitable housing. These are the difficulties being faced in country areas.

The problem is universal, and it is something that I think we are going to see more and more of in country areas as people are forced out of the cities, particularly interstate. A lot of Sydneyites are moving to the Burnett area. As Mr Beattie said, I suppose one of the reasons why people move there is that it is a nice area in which to live. But, of course, it does not ease the housing shortage.

Despite promises before the election, the Goss Labor Government has postponed the creation of a Queensland State bank. This Goss Labor Government is just not fair dinkum about home-ownership, and its failure to bring Queensland into line with the other bank-owning States is a good example of that. Mr Goss went on with a lot of froth and bubble about State banking when in Opposition but now, in Government, he has gone to water. Prospective home-owners should take that as an indication of just how concerned the Labor Government is about home-ownership.

In his election policy speech on 13 November 1984, Mr Hawke stated—

"We pledge ourselves to bring home ownership once again within the reach of ordinary Australian families."

In the face of record interest rates, that promise has failed to materialise. By October 1989 housing interest rates were at record levels. Bank home loan rates were 17 per cent and 18 per cent, with no prospect of sustained falls in the short term. In just 13 months between May 1988 and June 1989, home loan interest rates moved from 13.5 per cent to 17 per cent and 18 per cent.

Since the Hawke Government came to office it has—

- abolished from 30 June 1983 the previous Government's tax rebate for home loan interest payments;
- introduced its new capital gains tax in September 1985;
- banned negative gearing on rental properties between July 1985 and July 1987;
- cut funding for the First Home Owners Scheme by \$25m in 1985-86, by \$37m in 1988-89 and a further \$43m for 1989-90;
- imposed a 12-month residency requirement for eligibility for First Home Owners Scheme assistance from 1989-90;
- reduced the value of the maximum grant available under the First Home Owners Scheme towards the full cost of home purchase from up to 11 per cent in March 1983 to only 5 per cent in August 1989; and
- increased from April 1986 the 13.5 per cent housing interest rate ceiling to 15.5 per cent for new bank borrowers, despite promises to retain the lower ceiling.

As a result of these actions by the Hawke Government, there has been a massive increase in public housing waiting lists from 109 800 people in December 1982 to approximately 200 000 just six years later—and they keep on growing. It has caused

housing loan interest costs to skyrocket in just 13 months from 13.5 per cent right through to 18 per cent. That is an abysmal record.

According to the Housing Industry Association's September 1989 survey released on 28 October 1989, rising interest rates have meant that up to 40 per cent of the average pay-packet now has to go towards the cost of servicing a home mortgage. That is very serious. People have been forced out of the buying market into renting. Of course, the rental queues get longer and longer, as do the waiting lists. High interest rates have forced up capital city housing rentals by 20 per cent. The average weekly rental for a three-bedroom home in Brisbane is now about \$173.

In May 1989 the Real Estate Institute of Australia was warning of the serious prospect of home-buyers being unable to meet their mortgage repayments, and now we see this actually happening. I see the evidence of it in my electorate of Barambah. Because many home-owners have reached their repayment limit, even minor increases in mortgage rates have disastrous effects.

According to the Real Estate Institute of Australia, during the 12 months to February 1990, house prices in Brisbane rose by more than they did anywhere else in Australia. Despite the fact that escalating prices elsewhere were halted by interest rate increases, house prices in Brisbane climbed by 10.9 per cent, or more than five times the prices of houses in any other city.

Labor has admitted its failure to deliver. This Bill admits that prices and interest rates are too high. They are too high because of Labor's disastrous mismanagement of the economy. Australia used to be the lucky country. It is no longer. Record high interest rates have consumed a large part of the income of the Australian worker. Many people cannot afford to purchase a home because record high rents have prevented them from saving for a deposit. What interest rates or rent do not take, one can be sure that Mr Keating will grab.

Labor has taxed Australians like no other Government in our history has done. It has crippled industry and ripped out the heart of the business sector.

Mr Beattie interjected.

Mr PERRETT: I believe that there is a set of headphones somewhere in the back benches. If the honourable member does not like what I am saying because it hurts too much, he might like to tune in to FM 104.

What interest rates, rents or Mr Keating do not take away, such as the small savings that people can put away after all that, will be eaten up by inflation. This is not much of a lucky country, is it? People can forget about the new car this year or the holiday at Christmas. They work for four days a week for Mr Keating and they work for the other three days to pay their interest rates. Mr Hawke says, "Trust us, or there will be more of the same."

Who knows where Australia will be now that we have another three years of Mr Hawke. We will probably be lining up for hand-outs from the World Bank. The Federal members of the Labor Party do not trust one another, so I do not see how the members of the Labor Party in Queensland can have any faith in their Federal colleagues. I certainly do not.

The Labor cronies have admitted their failure to give Australians a better way of life, and this Bill is testimony to that failure. What is Labor's solution? It wants to spend more money and to try to get as many people as possible caught in the vicious cycle of renting all their lives. Labor wants to offer a carrot to the people it has let down. It does not want people to look for the economic reasons behind the horrendous state of the housing market. Labor does not want to try to fix the basic problems that confront people. It does not want to attempt to put the Australian economy back on track. Labor does not intend to give incentive back to business. Whatever it does, Labor does not admit that it has made a mess.

Labor is the reason why Australians cannot afford their own homes. It is also the reason why people in the lucky country need Government assistance to purchase their own homes. The Labor Government is the reason why so many Australians will never own their own homes. Labor is the reason why this Bill is necessary. However, Labor does not address the issue. It just tries to buy votes with a \$200m deal with the four big banks, which already earn annual profits of \$2.5 billion between them.

Labor thinks of every reason but its own total mismanagement of the economy for the housing crisis. It should be deplored in the strongest possible terms by all Queenslanders.

Mr BEATTIE (Brisbane Central) (8.05 p.m.): Before I speak to this Bill, I wish very briefly to make a couple of remarks about the north Queensland air disaster.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Campbell): Order! The honourable member will speak to the Bill.

Mr BEATTIE: I am happy to say simply that I acknowledge the significant contributions made this morning by Bill Eaton and Tom Gilmore. I knew many of the people involved in that disaster, including Ivan Wilkinson. I simply place that on record and pass on my condolences to the families concerned.

I turn now to the housing policy issue. This Government is seeking to establish some dignity for those people who have been living in Housing Commission accommodation, to ensure their self-esteem and that they are not treated with the contempt with which they were treated by members of the National Party Government, which, when it went out of office, left a waiting list of over 17 000. However, nothing has been said tonight that would suggest that the attitude of the National Party has changed.

Mr Stephan: How many are on the waiting list in South Australia?

Mr BEATTIE: I can understand Mr Stephan's embarrassment. If I were him, I would also be humiliated and embarrassed. If he waits a little longer, I might elucidate for him some of the ways in which this Government can change the mess that his Government left behind.

Reference to that figure of 17 000 is an understatement of the circumstances. In a number of ways, the previous National Party Government actually suppressed the demand for Housing Commission accommodation. No regional offices of the Housing Commission were established. The clerks of the court, who handled housing applications, refused or discouraged people from applying. They discriminated against single people, for which they will be condemned indefinitely. They discriminated particularly against single women, single mothers and people with disabilities.

Mr STEPHAN: I rise to a point of order. The number of applications from single mothers and single women was extraordinarily high.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hollis): Order! There is no point of order.

Mr BEATTIE: I can understand why the honourable member is embarrassed. Clerks of the court discriminated against single parents, single mothers, single people and people with disabilities. That is the track record of the National Party. The honourable member should be embarrassed. No doubt he will ramble on during this debate. If I were him, I would not have the audacity to interject; I would simply sit there, red faced and embarrassed.

That is why that waiting list figure was suppressed. The figure has now reached approximately 18 500. When a proper assessment of the real level of the Housing Commission waiting list has been made, the demand will increase further and, eventually, as a result of Labor Party policies, will decrease.

That is a legacy of the previous Government. It tried to hide from the people of Queensland the true figures and the true position. Over a period, this Government will rectify that problem and make sure that single parents, single mothers and people with disabilities are treated with the dignity—and this is important—to which they are entitled.

Let me deal with the issue of inner-city housing, which is relevant to my electorate and to many other electorates in Brisbane. I could not disagree more with the comments made by the new Leader of the Liberal Party—the temporary Leader of the Liberal Party—Denver Beanland. He suggested that the Government should not purchase in the inner city houses to be used for Housing Commission accommodation. That would be a continuation of the policy adopted by members on the other side of the House who were opposed to Housing Commission houses being built in their electorates. They are the people who blackballed Housing Commission housing when there was a clear need for it in their electorates. Denver Beanland's argument is a continuation of that policy.

If we are to maintain a decent city in which to live, there need to be in the inner city mixed developments and people with mixed incomes. I applaud the Minister for Housing and Local Government, Tom Burns, for his purchases in West End. On behalf of my electorate, I thank him for those purchases. They enable people who live in that area to stay there. We cannot afford to have continued the social dislocation that took place when Expo invaded the south side. Everyone enjoyed Expo and it was a great event for Queensland, but it did have a socially dislocating effect on the people who lived in the area. It forced up prices and it forced out of their homes many people who were average battlers. That is why it is important that there be a social mix in all areas.

As we all know, the inner city has a disproportionately high percentage of elderly pensioners, as my colleague the honourable member for Mount Coot-tha would know. In her electorate, the same circumstances prevail. Those pensioners have to be looked after. The inner city is facing commercial expansion. As inner-city houses are being taken over and used for commercial purposes, their residents are being forced out. Actions such as the Brisbane City Council's resumption of properties in Hale Street are forcing people out of the inner suburbs. Unless the Government ensures that the inner suburbs are the subject of a sensible housing policy, which has been started by Tom Burns, social dislocation will create a ghetto-type effect in the outer suburban areas.

One of the important things about the inner city, particularly on the south side, is that many of the people who live there work locally in places such as the glassworks and other factories along Montague Road. Therefore, they do not suffer the social dislocation of living in the outer suburbs and being forced to travel through the suburbs to the inner city to work. They live nearby. That is why it is important that that mixed policy that I spoke of become reality.

The SURG organisation—the Southside Urban Research Group—and people such as Gary Penfold who have been studying and working closely with the people affected by housing dislocation on the south side have done an excellent job. I publicly commend them for doing so. However, they continue to report that the social dislocation is continuing, that is, that the rising prices in the inner suburbs are forcing people out. Therefore, it will only be through a mixed housing policy followed by this Government that we will be able to maintain a quality of life and a dignity for those people who currently live in the inner suburbs.

Let me deal with the issue of homelessness. I do not want to dwell on this, but one of the sad legacies of this Government has been an appalling waiting list of 17 000—and I stress that that is a reduced waiting list; it was much higher than that—for Housing Commission homes. The previous Government did nothing to help the homeless.

The situation is so bad now that in the Hale Street area of Petrie Terrace homes that are waiting to be removed have become the refuge of the homeless. Many of them have been broken into. Even tonight, homeless kids are living in those houses and will continue to do so until they are removed by the Brisbane City Council. That is a direct legacy of the fact that the previous Government was so insensitive and uncaring that it did nothing to help those kids who are suffering. Indeed, the problem is such that it will take this Government some considerable time to resolve.

I know that it is easy to say that Housing Commission accommodation should be located in one particular area or another. However, the basic test is one of need and of

what is required to look after the interests of the community. That is the test that will be applied by this Government. I am delighted to say that that has already started.

I believe that the Government should follow what has been done in South Australia. Better-designed housing can be built. Indeed, the purchase of existing housing is an appropriate way by which to maintain standards and to diversify the areas in which Housing Commission accommodation is sited. That is a long-term aim which I am sure will prove itself satisfactory to the community.

I recommend to the House a discussion paper titled an *Inner City Regional Housing Strategy*, which was prepared by some people who are actively involved in solving the problems of inner-city housing. They are Pam Bourke, Deidre Coghlan, Gary Penfold, Tim Reddel and Harvey Walsh. That very extensive document deals with the issue of securing housing for the existing low-income population, so that the mixed development that I referred to before can in fact be maintained.

I have been very disappointed by the contributions made tonight by a number of National Party members. In particular, Jim Randell from Mirani continued to attack, as other speakers including the member for Barambah have done, the Federal Government. The reality is that when the National Party was in office it did not take full advantage of the number of schemes that were available to this State. As a result, the people who suffered were the people who are now waiting to get into Housing Commission homes.

It is simply not good enough to come into this place to play politics and to bag the Federal Government. The National Party should examine its track record and, in the future, adopt a more humane approach to those people who are waiting to get into Housing Commission houses. Tonight on television the Morgan poll was previewed. No doubt is left in my mind why the National Party on 12 per cent support across the State and—Mr Perrett would be interested in this—sitting on 6 per cent support in the city. The reason why the National Party is sitting on 6 per cent support in the city is that it has had policies such as those that Mr Perrett and his unlearned colleagues espoused to the House tonight.

Mr Perrett: Did they mention Barambah?

Mr BEATTIE: No, it did not mention Barambah, other than to say it is now a marginal seat.

As the housing debate continues, I would hope that there will be a more informed approach from the members on the other side of the House and that Queensland will not have to have a long waiting list for housing.

Mrs McCAULEY (Callide) (8.17 p.m.): The Bill before the House at present will benefit many of the Queenslanders who have been denied the chance of owning their own home by the economic policies of the Hawke Labor Government. This is obviously an issue that appeals to the ideologues, or perhaps they are just ordinary logs, of the Labor Party.

Government members interjected.

Mrs McCAULEY: It is an issue that is dear to their heart. I wonder how many of them started their married life as I did in a Housing Commission home in Mount Isa—I have very fond memories of that time. My electorate contains quite a few Housing Commission homes. The Gracemere area has a preponderance of them, and the Biloela area is in the fortunate position of having more houses than people to fill them. Boyne Island is just now getting ready and building some, but the Government has required a bit of urging to do that.

A woman from my office was fortunate enough, when she left an unhappy marriage with five children, to settle into a Housing Commission house. It is for people like her that I feel the Queensland Housing Commission is of most benefit. She is not a person who takes a handout from the Government in any way, shape or form. She pays her way, but she has the security of being able to have a house with a rent that she can

afford. However, I wonder how many Government members receive the types of complaints that I do. One from the Gladstone area particularly comes to mind. I receive many phone calls from the Gladstone area. For some reason those people do not seem to like their local member.

Mr Prest: They call you a ministerial woman! They don't know you down at Boyne Island.

Mrs McCAULEY: There he is, Sancho Panza. He is our own Parliament's Sancho Panza, and we know what a fool he was. Can't you see him with a tea-towel in one hand charging into battle to get more housing. He is a great little wiper upper for the CWA is our friend, Mr Prest.

Mr Beattie: What a vicious personal attack.

Mrs McCAULEY: He started it; I'll finish it.

A woman rang from Gladstone and said, "The terrible Housing Commission people are going to put my daughter out into the street because she hasn't paid her arrears on her house. She has just had her third child. She has a week-old baby and they are going to toss her out in two days' time if she doesn't pay her arrears. What will I do?" The Housing Commission people said to her daughter, "Tell your boyfriend to cough up." The mother said to me, "How can he do it? He is unemployed and, besides, he is only 18."

I find it very difficult to have sympathy for that particular case. "He is only 18." They are all old enough to copulate but they cannot accept the responsibilities. That is a great shame.

Government members interjected.

Mrs McCAULEY: I have obviously struck a raw nerve. Government members do not have people like that in their electorates.

Economic activity in Australia is grinding to a halt. The business sector has reached slow-down mode, and Australia needs a slow-down like it needs a hole in the head. It has a huge foreign debt and its current account is on a monthly overdraft of about \$1.8 billion.

A Government member interjected.

Mrs McCAULEY: If the honourable member would listen he might learn.

Australia should be gaining momentum. It should be working overtime to put this country back on track.

It is with this Bill and the economic climate in mind that I turn members' attention to figures recently released by the Australia Reserve Bank. The figures in question relate to the demand for credit within the economy. They cite a slower growth in the demand for credit as fresh evidence that, as a result of high interest rates, economic activity is slowing rapidly. The figures show that demand for credit increased by only 0.7 per cent in January, down from 1 per cent in December and 1.6 per cent in January 1988. Further, the annual rate of credit growth, a key indicator used by the Reserve Bank to assess the strength of the economy, fell from 15.7 per cent in December to 14.8 per cent in January, well down from the peak of 25.1 per cent in 1988.

There is the real possibility of people being caught in a debt trap; that is, people have borrowed money against assets with inflated values and, when the economy turns downward, they are snared in the debt trap. They owe the same amount of money to the bank or building society but their asset is worth far, far less. This underlines the need for significant changes in policy rather than continuing with the status quo. It is interesting to note that one of the first things that the Goss Government did when it came to power was increase the QHC housing loan interest rate from 13.75 per cent to 15 per cent.

Recently, I had a letter from a woman from Boyne Island asking me to do all I could to change this because it placed her in a very difficult position. In her letter she detailed from where she would have to find that extra money she needed: she would have to eat less and give away the purchase of a few luxury items of food and she would have to be satisfied with less in the way of clothing. At the end of her letter she said, "I have always been a Labor voter but I am having second thoughts." Of course she is having second thoughts, but I'm afraid I wrote back to her and said, "You put this Government there. You will just have to wear it."

Mr Burns interjected.

Mrs McCAULEY: Another prominent body has also painted a dim picture for Australia.

Mr Burns: You did not try to help her.

Mrs McCAULEY: I did try to help her and I will try to help her. Why does the Minister think that I am on my feet now?

Recently, the Institute for Public Affairs released a study that forecasts a big increase in bankruptcies over the next two years as a result of high interest rates and slower growth. The institute's study shows that the real cost of borrowings has gone up four percentage points since 1987-88 and that past experience suggests that this would create very difficult times for business.

Those figures reflect very badly on Labor's management of the Australian economy, yet none of those members on the Government side will admit it. The high interest rate policy of Mr Hawke and Mr Keating is eating away at families and small businesses. It has not worked, and Australia is sliding towards a recession.

The tragedy is that the prospect of home-ownership is also sliding away from Australian families. I guess my children will not find it a simple matter to own their own homes, and I expect that it will probably be several years before I am fortunate enough to be a grandmother because these days, when a young couple start out, they both have to work so that they can get some financial security. It is a sad indictment of the Labor Government that this is so.

Mr HEATH (Nundah) (8.23 p.m.): Despite an exegesis of selective statistics from the member for Somerset and other Opposition members, all on Federal issues, the fact remains that, here in Queensland, the waiting list and waiting time for Housing Commission accommodation have grown longer and longer, and they did so uninterrupted over the years of National Party Government. Instead of trying to blame solely the Federal Government, the National Party in Queensland should admit that some blame for a waiting list of over 17 000 lies within its own policies and its own attitudes and, as we heard in this House last week, with its own members or former members in city and near city electorates who refused to allow Housing Commission developments in their electorates. Those members were callously content to allow the waiting list to lengthen.

Members in city electorates will agree with me when I say that this legacy provides us with one of the largest problems that we face. We still confront an inability as yet to shorten the waiting time and to provide the assistance that we want to provide for those individuals, families and pensioners in the community who need housing assistance. But this Bill shows plainly that this Government is already moving towards easing the problem.

The level of commitment from the National Party towards these poor, or even homeless, city-dwellers can be judged by the fact that the previous Government delayed this agreement by five months while it negotiated with the Federal Government. Whilst it was bickering childishly for petty political reasons, it delayed the delivery of hundreds of millions of dollars that could already have been easing the housing problems

in Brisbane instead of their being debated tonight. That five months' delay has added much more than five months onto the time for those people on the waiting list.

Perhaps this delay—symptomatic as it is of the whole uncaring style of government which Queensland suffered under the National Party—has contributed to one beneficial outcome. At least now the people of Queensland and especially of Brisbane have voted that party out of office. There is not a National Party seat between Southport and Caloundra, and the benefit of that outcome for the people of Queensland is that this Government can now get on with the job. Just to reinforce that—tonight on the television news came the wonderful information that the National Party is now polling 6 per cent in opinion polls in Brisbane. People have woken up that the Opposition is uncaring.

The member for Toowong seems to have some philosophical problem with rental housing. He cannot have been listening to his constituents because among them he will find, for example, elderly residents who want to leave their houses and move into rental accommodation. There are also migrant families and young residents who, likewise, want to move into rental properties and, of course, wish to do so as soon as possible. That the Liberal Party's new leader shows such scant interest in those people who wish to rent illustrates only too well the kind of elitist ideals on which that party is built.

Unlike the member for Toowong, I applaud the Minister for the increase in the size of the Housing Department. The provision of extra staff, services and facilities is another avenue along which this Government is travelling towards removing the Housing Commission bottleneck.

This Bill, with its provision of massive funding and its removal of unfair legal anomalies so eloquently detailed by the member for Yeronga, will be the genesis of the remedial process in the Queensland Housing Commission.

I am pleased that the Opposition supports the Bill. On behalf of the residents of the Nundah electorate, I certainly have great pleasure in personally supporting the Bill.

Hon. T. J. BURNS (Lytton—Deputy Premier, Minister for Housing and Local Government) (8.27 p.m.), in reply: I thank honourable members for their genuine support of the Bill. The new agreement was negotiated by the previous Government with the Commonwealth Government, so there could hardly be any opposition to it tonight.

The new agreement brings a great deal of benefit to Queensland. There will be an extra \$69m over the next three years from the Federal Government and, in the following year, another \$45m. The State Government will not be allowed, as it has done in the past, to use rents and loan repayments as its commitment. Consolidated revenue will have to provide about \$23m a year for the next three years and there will be a substantial increase in the State commitments to housing each year after that. So there are some very good benefits to the State.

They were negotiated at a time when my director-general, who had a lot of criticism aimed at him by the Opposition, drew up the plan. At that time, prior to this Government coming into power, he devised a plan that would give Queensland a better deal and would disadvantage a couple of other States, because he saw that Queensland had been disadvantaged, what had happened, and the sort of things that the member for Callide said tonight. They were the sort of things that made it clear why the previous Government discriminated against ordinary people—the idea that someone at 18 years of age should be a boyfriend; that an 18-year-old should be treated as a citizen; and that people who get into trouble should be able to ask for assistance, which was foreign to the National Party and to its way of handling things.

This Bill will give those tenants the right to be citizens. They will not be treated as second-class citizens or as dirt, because they happen to be Housing Commission tenants. They will be treated as Australians and Queenslanders, and have a right to be there. When a working man goes into his home, it will be his home. Regardless of whether it happens to be owned by the Housing Commission, the Commonwealth Bank or a landlord, he will have a right to say that it is his home, who will come into it and how it will be dealt with. Those people will be dealt with decently, they will be treated

as citizens, and they will not be treated as second-rate—I will not use the word that the National Party would use.

I will make the position clear. Some of the benefits of this Bill include increased grants for Queenslanders, the replacement of loan funding with grant funding and the provision for independent appeals. Housing Commission tenants in the future will have the right to say that they are upset at the rating that they have been given and say, for example, that they are not class A, but are class B or class C. Tenants get upset when they ask for services or for maintenance to be carried out and no-one comes. They will be able to go to a tribunal and argue about the assessment of the rents and the housing that has been allocated to them. They will be able to ask for the right to be transferred and will not be told that they cannot have a transfer for some unknown reason, or because of some policy reason.

The legislation will allow community groups to have a say. Already \$36,000 has been spent to set up consultations throughout the State so that community groups involved in housing referral programs and other programs can have a say in the State plan. This plan will devise the type of housing that Queensland needs. A plan is needed because the position will not get better; it will get worse in the next 12 months. For a long time Housing Commission waiting lists have been deliberately kept down and distorted to reflect an untrue picture. For example, 40-year-old single people were discriminated against in defiance of the Commonwealth and State Housing Agreement, and anyone under 18 years of age was discriminated against in defiance of any decent principle so far as housing is concerned. On the one hand, the National Party Government talked about youth homelessness and youths in the street, but on the other hand, it did nothing about it. Housing Commission assistance could not be obtained for them. There was no help whatsoever. That was the National Party way. Housing Commission groups and community groups will have a say in developing the plan under the agreement contained in the legislation that will be passed through this House tonight.

The Labor Government is passing this legislation because the Commonwealth Government and all of the other Governments of Australia decided it was time that these people were treated decently. If the National Party had not been thrown out on its ear, as far as housing is concerned it would have had to be dragged into the 1980s and then into the 1990s. Community groups will have a say in planning. In future, housing referral workers will be funded on the basis of need and not on a submission basis as in the past.

Because they do get into trouble, people must be given assistance. Some of the things that the Housing Commission can and will do for people today are not generally known. The department provides specific funds for families which break down so that the wife or husband in desperate circumstances can save the home. I sign special arrangements on a weekly basis so that such people can obtain that funding and keep their homes and arrangements. This must be done to give these people a chance when their families are being smashed, and to ensure that the money is not used up by the money-grabbers who have provided the loans and who will make the profit at the end.

I will go through the list of things that can be done. We can provide for innovative financial changes. Members of the Opposition can stand here all night and blame the Federal Government and high interest rates, but it is the State Government that must do something about the problems. Ordinary people must be given a fair go. One way in which the State Government will do something about it is through shared equity. During the election campaign I loved it when the National Party put advertisements in the paper saying, "Your house will be half-owned by the Government. The Government is going to take your house off you." Now people are queuing up. The commission has appointments through to September with people who want to borrow money to get into a shared equity home. They are Housing Commission tenants who want to buy their home on that basis. Because they cannot afford to borrow \$80,000, they are prepared to borrow \$40,000 and my department is prepared to lend them \$40,000 so that they can buy half the house and pay it off. As they get more money or as their circumstances

improve, they can then buy 80 per cent or 100 per cent of the home. If they die in the meantime, their kids can sell it. The department is in partnership with them and the kids can take the capital gain. If the kids want to keep the home, they can stay in the partnership. These people will be given an opportunity to get out of the rental trap.

In the 32 years that the National Party was in Government never once did it try to get these people out of the rental trap. The members of the National Party beat their breasts and complained about the Commonwealth Government and everyone else, but never once in this place did they prepare a plan that would give an ordinary battler a chance to get out of that trap, get himself on his feet and start to put some of his own money that is being paid in wasted rent into a home for his kids and family in the future. The Labor Party Government will do that. This was part of our election campaign that the National Party knocked over and ridiculed in its campaign advertisements. The Labor Party will do this because it believes that these people are entitled to a fair go. There will be increased funding for special need groups.

Mrs McCauley interjected.

Mr BURNS: The honourable member made a mug of herself tonight. If ever a woman earned the name "old ironpants", the honourable member for Callide has earned it tonight. She is not interested in ordinary people. The honourable member told me about a lady who was in trouble and to whom she simply wrote and said that she should not have voted for the Labor Party. The honourable member did not write to me or otherwise take the matter up. The honourable member simply made a speech tonight in this Parliament. In her electorate the honourable member's nickname is "Lazy Di" and it is a good name for her. England has Lady Di and Callide has "Lazy Di".

There will be increased funding for special need groups. Pensioners have been badly treated. They live in lousy little bed-sitters that are so small that when the old man comes home after having a beer, he lays on the bed, which is right beside the kitchen table. It is too bad if mum is having a party in the kitchen. A small amount of money, that is, \$2m over a 12-month period, would give these people a separate bedroom. Grab rails for the disabled can be installed in bathrooms, and every ground-floor flat can be made wheelchair accessible. These are simple things and things that decent people would do for those in need, but they were not done. The reason why they were not done was because the National Party was not at all interested in those people and their problems.

Mr Stephan: It was done before you came into Government.

Mr BURNS: Yes, after a long campaign and after blokes like Dick Persson and the other people whom the National Party is now attacking were down in Canberra demanding that it be done. It was done because the people in Canberra forced the National Party to do it.

Through HACC and other campaigns such as the ones to which Mr Perrett referred, more money must be spent for people with disabilities. Something must be done for their families.

The example of Wondai raised tonight by the honourable member is a classic example of the sorts of things that Housing Commissions and State Governments can do. Previously, there were three or four families in the community who each had an intellectually disabled son or daughter aged between 25 and 30 years of age. The mothers of those intellectually disabled people said that there was nowhere for their sons or daughters to go and that all those kids could see for themselves in the future was that, after mum and dad died, they would be unable to care for themselves. The mothers wanted to bring them out of institutionalised care and give them an opportunity to fend for themselves. The Wondai Shire Council provided the land and the State Government provided \$250,000. With great community support, a house was built. I take no credit for it because all I did was provide financial assistance, but there was great support for the project from the community and from the council. The house comprised four bedrooms that were each connected to bathrooms and a big central room contained

a kitchen. Each day, one of the mothers goes down to the house and sleeps overnight. As the member for Barambah said earlier, those four young people were able to move in and the project has been a great success. In the future I envisage that similar stories will be told about a dozen projects that will encourage people to use the public housing system effectively.

There is nothing wrong with Government housing. All around the world, public housing is part of the scene. Government tenants are not second-rate tenants. Public housing is an accepted part of the scene in England and Europe. Generally, Housing Commission homes accommodate people who have little or no money. In most cases, they have come from accommodation that was substandard, with bare floors and no furniture. They move to Housing Commission accommodation in very difficult circumstances. When other people drive past Housing Commission accommodation, they look inside and say, "Have a look at that lazy so-and-so. He has not spent any money on the yard." If Housing Commission tenants have \$100 to spare, they will most certainly not want to spend it on planting a tree, buying some turf or landscaping the frontyard.

To see what can be achieved, it is my intention to have the department undertake landscaping of the frontyards of some Housing Commission dwellings. I am going to enter those housing projects into all the gardening competitions that are held by cities and persuade councils to have a Housing Commission gardens section. That will enable people who live in Housing Commission accommodation to take pride in their dwellings. They will be able to see what they can do and it may put their names and Housing Commission homes on the map.

The department will be asking private enterprise—in this context, honourable members will recall the old socialist argument that is used to criticise the Labor Party—to come in with package deals for housing projects. The packages could involve construction on private-enterprise land or on Crown land. The Government is prepared to consider all types of designs for housing projects to ensure that the old style Housing Commission ghetto is not repeated. The department does not intend to build on 500 or 600 blocks of land in one estate. In large areas of land, there will probably be one Housing Commission house for every 10 ordinary houses. The Government will sell the remainder of large Crown estates and is prepared to go into joint ventures with any reputable building organisation. Already the department is working with organisations such as the Master Builders Association on projects that will allow apprentices to be trained to provide housing for disabled people. All these projects can be undertaken under the "terrible" label of public housing—under the terrible tag that was formerly the Queensland Housing Commission but is now the Department of Housing and Local Government.

It is not the intention of my Government to continue to construct public housing ghettos on the outskirts of Brisbane. Mr Beanland continues to suggest that the Government should not purchase land in the inner-city area for housing. One of the great problems with public housing that worries me considerably is that blocks of land can be purchased on the outskirts of Brisbane for \$17,000 to \$20,000 a block whereas inner-city blocks cost \$45,000 to \$50,000. The problem is that, in most cases, people come to the Department of Housing under very difficult circumstances. In many cases they are battling after a marriage has broken up or after their family has been hit by some personal or financial disaster.

Mr Littleproud: High interest rates?

Mr BURNS: The department does not have too many of those clients because not many people who are suffering from the effects of high interest rates come back into the rental accommodation area. I do not dodge the issue of high interest rates, but that was just a smart political comment. At the moment, the Parliament is discussing what can be done for people by the Government.

People approach the Department of Housing under very difficult circumstances and the Government has to do something to help them. Placing a great number of them 40

kilometres from the inner-city area and asking them to drive their cars to their workplace situated in the heart of the city merely sentences them to endure more and more difficulties and more financial penalties.

Mr Hamill: That is if they have a car.

Mr BURNS: That is right—if they can get a car. They usually have an old bomb. It is usually the case that those people have an old bomb of a car in their yard, and it is the type of vehicle that breaks down constantly. That is the only type of vehicle they can afford. In spite of all that, the Housing Commission used to place its tenants on the outskirts of the city.

It is time that responsible Government authorities started to count the additional cost to the community of those decisions. The Government is obliged to provide schools, bus services and other urban facilities in new estates, whereas in the inner-city area land could be better utilised for the construction of low-cost accommodation. Some schools in the inner-city area, which have 17 or 18 empty classrooms, are situated adjacent to electric train services. Those areas can be regenerated, and the Government ought to be prepared to spend part of the funding allocated for State housing on redeveloping those areas for housing projects. That action would result in major savings for the Government, but those savings will never accrue to my department. At the end of the financial year, I will not be able to show that I have saved, for example, the Education Department or the Transport Department a substantial sum by utilising urban services that already exist. However, I will be able to show that people are being placed in accommodation in areas that already contain facilities so that facilities that have been provided by funds from the public purse can be used.

The member for Yeronga raised a very basic point about the way in which the National Party treated Housing Commission tenants. The outside of Housing Commission flats displayed a number, for example, DH104/85. It was similar to a number given to an inmate in a concentration camp. Any bank visited by people who live in that accommodation would recognise the number and bank officers might ask themselves, "Who else has an address 'DH104/85' at Annie Street, Woolloongabba?" Only the Housing Commission incorporates a number in an address, which means that when people put their names and addresses down to apply for a service, their applications are marked by that number which discloses that they are Housing Commission tenants. Over a period of 18 months, the department will get rid of those numbers and will change that system. It cannot be done overnight. The numbering process is one of the ways in which people are stigmatised by the system.

Accommodation should be provided for young single people. Since I became Minister, accommodation that would usually have been set aside for pensioner units has been given to kids who are aged 16 or 17 and who are in employment. This accommodation is not given to kids who are on the dole or who have run away from home. These tenants are kids who are earning a living and who want a place in which to live. Accommodation is needed not only by young people but also by old people who presently live in boarding houses. Members who represent country areas would be able to call to mind shearers who spend their working lives on properties and are provided with food and accommodation as part of their employment conditions. On the weekend, they come into town, have a bet on the races, pop into the pub and then go back to the camp. If they have no family, when they reach the age of 55 or 60 there is nowhere for them to go. At that age, they have to start looking for accommodation. They come to the city and they can be found in second-class boarding houses that spring up in inner-city areas to cater for those types of people. Surely, after years of working in those circumstances, shearers are entitled to something better than that!

In one case, the Government has entered into a joint venture with St Vincent de Paul to pay for a social worker, one day a week, to inspect church properties on which accommodation may be built.

The Government can do much. Government members must say to themselves, "They are all entitled to a home, and we are no better than they are. They are not to be treated any differently to us."

The Bill provides for tenant organisations to be heard. I hope that, as a result of their input, the standard of housing will improve. I believe that those organisations can save the Government money. After examining some of the schemes that have operated over the years, I am certain that the Government can save money.

I have not addressed all the problems raised by honourable members. However, I have tried to detail what I believe can be achieved under the new agreement. It will not be easy. I reiterate that the Housing Commission waiting list will get bigger; it will not get smaller.

I have instructed my director-general to write to the clerks of the court throughout the State and say, "If someone comes into your counter and wants to go on to a Housing Commission waiting list, you are not to say, 'We don't build here.' You are to put them on the list." That is part of decentralisation. In a small country town, it is simpler for me to build two or three pensioner units or one or two single houses and keep families there who want to stay there than to build those units or houses in the city and tell those families that they must go to Rockhampton, Brisbane or elsewhere. That system will increase the numbers on the waiting list immediately, but it will give small country towns a chance to survive. A scheme such as the one implemented in Wondai gives country towns a chance to use the money to keep the people in those towns. As I said earlier to Mr Perrett, if the kids had to go to Brisbane to obtain the facilities that they now have in Wondai, their mums and dads would have followed them. In that case, the town would have lost the family. What is more, the city would be worse off, because it would be more crowded and rental prices would increase.

The Government must address problems such as the shortage of student accommodation. Every time the university year opens, hundreds of kids who come from the bush—they are represented by Opposition members—are forced to enter the private rental market and pay huge rents for accommodation so that they can attend university.

Under this Bill, many things can be achieved. However, I assure honourable members that the Government is not building an empire in the Department of Housing. Departmental officers are overworked and understaffed. Staffing arrangements have been rearranged. Six new departmental heads will be appointed, without my interference. Those appointments will be made through the Public Service Management Commission and the departmental merit system. When the experts in that field are appointed, I hope to set up a Housing Commission that everyone in this State can say is the best in Australia.

Motion agreed to.

Committee

Clauses 1 to 3 and Schedule, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

Third Reading

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

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Illegal Real Estate Transactions of Mr M. Tenni and Raoul and Associates

Hon. G. R. MILLINER (Everton—Minister for Justice and Corrective Services) (8.52 p.m.), by leave: I would like to advise the House that former National Party Minister, Martin Tenni, will be investigated by the Justice Department for illegally selling real estate in Cairns without a licence. As well, the Justice Department will investigate

the real estate company that Mr Tenni works for, a company called Raoul and Associates. Mr Tenni has been selling real estate for the last two weeks, despite the fact that he does not have a salesman's licence or a real estate agent's licence.

Mr Tenni has been reported in the *Cairns Post* as claiming that he has already made several sales for his company. That is despite the fact that he does not have a licence to do so. Mr Tenni applied to the Registrar of Auctioneers and Agents for a licence only on Tuesday, and I am informed that the application will not reach the auctioneers and agents committee for at least a month.

Departmental checks have also revealed that Raoul and Associates do not have a corporate real estate agent's licence. There will also be investigations into Raoul and Associates to ensure that its operations are being overseen by the licensed working director nominated on its documentation that is lodged with the department. If that is not the case, that firm will also have questions to answer.

Any individual who sells real estate in Queensland without a licence faces a maximum fine of \$2,400, and a corporation which operates without proper certification faces a maximum fine of \$6,000.

MOTOR VEHICLES SAFETY ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Hon. D. J. HAMILL (Ipswich—Minister for Transport and Minister Assisting the Premier on Economic and Trade Development) (8.53 p.m), by leave, without notice: I move—

"That leave be granted to bring in a Bill to amend the Motor Vehicles Safety Act 1980-1989 in certain particulars."

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

Bill and Explanatory Notes presented and Bill, on motion of Mr Hamill, read a first time.

Second Reading

Hon. D. J. HAMILL (Ipswich—Minister for Transport and Minister Assisting the Premier on Economic and Trade Development) (8.54 p.m.): I move—

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

The Motor Vehicles Safety Act, among other things, provides for the approval of premises as approved inspection stations and the licensing of approved examiners to undertake motor vehicle inspections for the issue of certificates of roadworthiness. Since the amendment of the Act in 1985, there have been changes in motor industry employment practices and it has become apparent that certain provisions within the Act do not cater for these emerging practices.

The purpose of this Bill is to rectify problems being experienced by personnel within the industry by ensuring that the criteria for licensing of approved examiners and for the approval of premises as inspection stations reflect current acceptable industry employment practices.

Presently the Act requires that for a person to be licensed as an approved examiner he must be employed directly by the proprietor of the premises at which he is to undertake his motor vehicle inspection activities. There are, however, a number of qualified and suitable motor mechanics who, whilst physically working at an inspection site, are not employed by the proprietor. Rather, they are engaged at the site on a hire/service contract and are technically employed by an employment/personnel service agency.

Unfortunately, anyone engaged on this type of employment basis therefore is ineligible for licensing as an approved examiner because he is not employed by the

proprietor. Furthermore, I am concerned that there may already be motor mechanics who have been licensed as approved examiners on the mistaken belief that they were employed by the proprietor of the station. As such, their licences would not be valid, nor would any certificates of roadworthiness they may have issued.

Clearly, the intention of the Act when it was introduced was not to restrict the licensing of persons employed under such arrangements but rather to ensure that the approved examiner did not inspect motor vehicles at other than the premises where he was employed. I am sure honourable members will agree that the current situation is unacceptable in that it is discriminatory and fails to recognise emerging industry practices.

In this regard, the Bill before honourable members seeks to repeal the existing employment criteria for licensing as an approved examiner and approval of an inspection station and to introduce more flexible and responsive criteria in respect of an approved examiner's employment arrangements.

Importantly, this Bill provides for retrospectivity of the proposed licensing and approval criteria. Retrospectivity is not proposed lightly. Indeed, it should be considered only in extraordinary circumstances.

I consider the circumstances surrounding this Bill to warrant the inclusion of a retrospectivity provision. It is in the interests of not only members of the public but also any person who may have been approved or licensed on the mistaken belief that he satisfied the employment criteria. Should any action be brought against those persons in respect of the issue of a certificate of roadworthiness, they require, and indeed deserve, the full protection of the law.

Evidence exists that since December 1986 hire/contract services have been providing motor mechanics to proprietors of inspection stations. Accordingly, it is proposed that this legislation be retrospective to 1 December 1986.

Whilst this Bill does not directly affect the motoring public, it is nonetheless important in that it seeks to redress unfair and discriminatory arrangements which were never intended by the legislators.

I commend this Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Lingard, adjourned.

COMMERCIAL ARBITRATION BILL

Hon. D. M. WELLS (Murrumba—Attorney-General) (8.58 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

"That leave be granted to bring in a Bill to make provision with respect to the arbitration of certain disputes and to repeal the Arbitration Act 1973, and for other purposes."

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

Bill and Explanatory Notes presented and Bill, on motion of Mr Wells, read a first time.

Second Reading

Hon. D. M. WELLS (Murrumba—Attorney-General) (8.59 p.m.): I move—

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

The increasing complexity within the building and construction industry and in commercial and trading arrangements and the necessity to deal promptly with disputes which may arise out of contracts in these fields has given increasing prominence to arbitration as a means of resolving conflict in recent years.

Arbitration is a method by which parties to an agreement may resolve a dispute, which arises out of the agreement, outside the court system. It allows the parties to choose the arbitrator, who may be an expert in the particular area of the agreement, as the adjudicator. The arbitrator's decision or award is final and binding on the parties.

Arbitration may be cheaper and quicker than litigation. For example, where the dispute is a technical one, the fact that the parties may appoint an arbitrator who is technically qualified in that area may enable the dispute to be settled far more effectively and without the need for lawyers to be involved. As there is greater flexibility in the procedures, this can result in a faster and less expensive resolution of conflict. This is extremely important where it is essential to avoid a complete break-down in the relationship between the parties concerned, such as where a harmonious relationship is essential for the viable continuation of the businesses of the respective parties.

This legislation is the product of a national approach to rewrite the law relating to commercial arbitration to achieve uniform legislation for Australia.

Queensland has many advantages as a location for the conduct of arbitration proceedings. The obvious appeal of its climate, its tourist attractions, plus the hospitality of its people provide an opportunity to link business with recreational opportunities. Where a standard set of laws dealing with commercial arbitration apply nationally, why would not parties to both domestic and international disputes choose Queensland as a venue for the conduct of these proceedings?

By adopting this legislation, these advantages I have mentioned will provide an opportunity for Queensland to benefit economically. Arbitration reduces the burden on the costs to the State and thereby to its citizens by removing disputes from the courts. The costs of arbitration are borne by the parties to the dispute.

In addition, there exists the potential to improve the economy of the State by creating a climate for the development of an infrastructure which will support the conduct of domestic and international arbitration proceedings in the provision of suitable office buildings and hearing rooms, convenient accommodation, linguistic and reporting services and sophisticated communication systems.

Queensland is the last of the Australian jurisdictions to adopt the uniform commercial arbitration legislation. While this delay is regrettable, at least Queensland will at last be in step with all other Australian jurisdictions in respect of commercial arbitration.

In pursuance of the provisions of Standing Order 241(c) of the Standing Rules and Orders of this House, I seek leave to have incorporated in Hansard additional information which sets out the history of the development of this legislation and which will assist in the understanding of the Bill.

Leave granted.

Additional Information Commercial Arbitration Bill

Until 1973 arbitration legislation in Australia was based upon the Arbitration Act 1889 (U.K.). This legislation was amended from time to time but it was not until 1973 that any major reform of arbitration legislation occurred in Australia. In that year Queensland enacted its Arbitration Act (No. 34 of 1973).

Based upon a 1970 report of the Queensland Law Reform Commission, this enactment was modelled largely upon the provisions of the U.K. Arbitration Act 1950.

The enactment of the 1973 Act was the first attempt to modernise arbitration law in Australia and placed Queensland in the forefront of arbitration legislation in this country.

The reform of the English arbitration law and growing dissatisfaction with the existing arbitral framework led a number of state law reform commissions to recommend the revision of Australian arbitration legislation. In 1974, after the introduction of the Queensland Act, the Standing Committee of Attorneys-General resolved "to consider the existing legislation and report on commercial arbitration with a view to preparing a model Bill to form the basis of uniform legislation".

In 1984 the Standing Committee of Attorneys-General, drawing on the work of the various law reform commissions and, after extensive discussions and consultation, adopted a uniform Bill on commercial arbitration.

The Bill took into account a number of substantial developments which were taking place in commercial perceptions of the role of arbitration in dispute settlement. An example is the trend in favour of less court supervision, a philosophy which runs throughout the uniform legislation but which is not reflected to the same extent in the current Queensland Act.

In late 1984 the settled Commercial Arbitration Bill was introduced into the Victorian Parliament followed shortly thereafter by the introduction of the Bill in the New South Wales Parliament. Since that time all Australian states, the A.C.T. and the N.T. have adopted the uniform commercial arbitration legislation.

In January 1986, a Working Group was established by the Commonwealth Attorney-General, the Honourable Lionel Bowen, M.P. to examine Australian commercial arbitration laws in the light of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL) Model Law on International Commercial Arbitration.

The Working Group's report, completed in December 1986, primarily dealt with the implementation in Australia of the UNCITRAL Model Law, but it also raised certain issues concerning the operation of the uniform commercial arbitration legislation.

The Standing Committee of Attorneys-General, noting the report's comments on the domestic arbitration laws, requested the Working Group to review the operation of the uniform commercial arbitration legislation, including the consolidation of arbitral proceedings, the limitation of the right to legal representation, the holding of compulsory conferences. The Working Group was also requested to consider options to overcome the possible inconsistency between the existing provisions of Part VII of the uniform legislation and the Commonwealth Arbitration (Foreign Awards and Agreements) Act 1974.

The Working Group also reviewed the provisions governing judicial review of an award, the impact of the proposed enactment of the UNCITRAL Model Law on the uniform Bill, whether arbitrators' notes should be protected from disclosure in subsequent proceedings and the degree to which the objective of national uniformity had been achieved by implementation of the uniform Bill. That Report was submitted to the Standing Committee of Attorneys-General in 1988.

Based on that Report, the Parliamentary Counsel's Committee prepared a draft Bill to amend the New South Wales Commercial Arbitration Act which the Standing Committee of Attorneys-General eventually adopted. The draft also implemented suggestions contained in the report on the amendments required to be made to the legislation of the respective jurisdictions to ensure uniformity except where minor local variations are unavoidable.

Although Queensland was represented on the Working Group, it initially resisted adoption of the uniform legislation preferring to amend the Arbitration Act 1973 to substantially comply with the uniform legislation taking into account the recommendations of the Working Group.

It was argued by some that the failure of Queensland to adopt the uniform legislation was not conducive to a domestic arbitration being conducted in this state. The views of the Queensland Law Reform Commission were sought on the uniform commercial arbitration legislation and the recommendation contained in the Working Group's Report. The Law Reform Commission said:

"In the interest of attracting such arbitrations there may be advantage in Queensland adopting legislation which substantially accords with the uniform legislation. There is a body of opinion that the failure of Queensland to adopt the uniform legislation has had the consequence that disputes between Queensland companies and interstate companies are not heard in Queensland."

The former Government abandoned its intention to amend but retain the Arbitration Act 1973 and announced that it would adopt the uniform commercial arbitration legislation. We believe this Bill would have been introduced earlier by the previous Government but it wisely delayed the introduction of the legislation pending the consideration of the Working Group's report and the acceptance of the Parliamentary Counsels' draft amendments by the Standing Committee of Attorneys-General.

This Bill repeals the Arbitration Act 1973 and adopts the uniform legislation incorporating the amendments referred to which have been accepted by the Standing Committee of Attorneys-General as well as recommendations to make the legislation uniform in all jurisdictions except where minor local variations are unavoidable.

Since the presentation of the Working Group's Report, agreement has been reached to resolve the inconsistency between Part VII of the uniform legislation and the Commonwealth legislation regarding foreign awards and agreements. Last year the Commonwealth introduced the International Arbitration Amendment Act 1989 which now governs international awards and agreements and the enforcement thereof. Each of the states will delete Part VII from their uniform commercial arbitration legislation.

The trend is that modern commercial relations are conducted over long distances and across state and international borders. This demands a system of dispute resolution which is convenient, consistent and coherent. This has been achieved through the adoption of uniform commercial arbitration legislation removing the differences and inconsistencies from the legislation of the respective states thereby facilitating and promoting arbitration as an appropriate means of resolving commercial disputes, large and small.

The enactment of this legislation will bring Queensland into line with all other Australian jurisdictions in respect of commercial arbitration legislation.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Lingard, adjourned.

DRUGS MISUSE ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Committee

Hon. T. M. Mackenroth (Chatsworth—Minister for Police and Emergency Services) in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 4, as read, agreed to.

Clause 5—

Mr LINGARD (9.03 p.m.): By dividing the House on the second reading of this Bill, the Opposition has demonstrated that it disagrees basically with the philosophy of the Government's intent.

Clauses 5, 6, 7 and 8 also refer to that basic philosophy, but I certainly do not intend that the Opposition should divide the Committee on them or refer continually to them. The Opposition obviously disagrees with clause 5, which relates to the 25-year term.

The National Party has stated that it has no qualms about, and makes no apologies for, any previous decisions that it made to say to the courts, "We believe that drug-trafficking and drug-supplying are very serious offences. We believe that mandatory life sentences are certainly the sentences that must be imposed."

I notice that the Liberal Party has foreshadowed amendments to the legislation. I would be interested to see whether it continues with those amendments, which I believe are a very poor, last-minute attempt to put a little bit of gloss on the whole situation and to try to show that it is interested in both a maximum sentence and a minimum sentence.

I realise that the Labor Party will continue to claim that a 25-year sentence is tougher and stronger than life imprisonment. The Opposition believes that offenders will receive softer sentences and that drug-traffickers and drug-suppliers will receive very short sentences of one year or two years. That is certainly against the basic philosophy of the National Party.

Clause 5, as read, agreed to.

Clause 6—

Mr BEANLAND (9.05 p.m.): I move the following amendment—

"At page 3, line 4, delete—

'for 25 years'

and substitute—

'with hard labour for life'.

On the last occasion when this legislation was debated, the then Leader of the Liberal Party, Mr Innes, outlined the reasons for that amendment.

I move the following further amendment—

"At page 3, after line 28, insert—

(3) (a) Notwithstanding the provisions of any other Act any sentence of imprisonment imposed under this section shall be served in its entirety, save where the sentence is for a term of years when remissions for good behaviour can be granted on the basis of one month of each year of the sentence.

(b) A person sentenced under this section shall not be eligible for parole or release from custody save to the extent of any remission awarded under this section.'

These amendments, which were foreshadowed by Mr Innes, are in keeping with the policy of the ALP that was outlined prior to the last State election. At that time the Goss Government said that it would abolish all existing schemes of remission and early release and ensure that the only grounds on which an offender can be returned to the community prior to the expiry of his sentence will be that the offender has reformed or has changed in such a way as to be unlikely to repeat the offence.

The Liberal Party believes that its amendments bring truth to sentencing. That means that people who are sentenced to terms of imprisonment will be required to serve those sentences and will receive remissions only for good behaviour, as set out in the amendment.

When this matter was debated previously, Mr Innes outlined fully some of the existing situations. In recent times a number of people have been released quite wrongly. In fact, some of them served very short periods of their sentences. Honourable members would be aware of the case of Henry John Bartczak, who was released under a prisoner release scheme. I understand that the Government is experiencing a great deal of difficulty in getting him back. Many similar cases have been reported in the past in the media.

These amendments represent a start on the truth-in-sentencing procedure to bring some truth to sentencing. There is no better place to start that procedure than with the issue of drugs misuse. My amendments do just that.

Mr MACKENROTH: Last Thursday when this legislation was being debated, it was foreshadowed by the then Leader of the Liberal Party, Mr Innes, that these two amendments would be moved in Committee. I said that I would adjourn the debate and consider them. I guess that Mr Innes got such a shock over the fact that I said I would consider them that he went out and resigned. I have considered them. I am not prepared to accept the amendments now moved by the new Leader of the Liberal Party.

Mr Milliner: They are the same amendments.

Mr MACKENROTH: They are the same amendments; different leader.

In Opposition, the Labor Party argued continually for the imposition of maximum gaol terms of 25 years, which is in line with the provisions of the Federal Customs Act. I believe that all States in Australia will eventually move towards uniform sentencing.

The Liberal Party's proposition for the imposition of hard labour for life still leaves the discretion with the court. That is no different from the proposed 25-year gaol term. Hard labour for life is generally seen as being a maximum term of some 13 years and not one of 25 years, when the judge could rule that parole not be given until after a set period of, say, 20 or 22 years had been served.

I am not prepared to accept the second proposal because I do not believe it is appropriate that we should start putting into legislation provisions relating to sentencing

that in fact should be in the Criminal Code. All members would be aware that the Criminal Justice Commission will consider the whole of the Criminal Code and make recommendations for change to the Parliament.

If the Criminal Justice Commission recommends that there should be minimum set terms for which people should be imprisoned or a period during which people are not eligible to be considered for parole, as is outlined in this proposed amendment, then that would in fact be put into the Criminal Code and would apply to all sentences, not simply one sentence as is proposed will apply under the Drugs Misuse Act. I believe that that should be handled on a general basis and not on an individual basis as proposed by the Leader of the Liberal Party.

Mr LINGARD: The Opposition is in sympathy with the first part of the proposed amendment which relates to "with hard labour for life". However, those who have any understanding of the Criminal Code or the Drugs Misuse Act know that by section 44 of the Acts Interpretation Act and section 19 of the Criminal Code, although a judge may intend to imprison a person "with hard labour for life", section 19 (1) of the Criminal Code states that it can be any part of a life term with hard labour or even a term without hard labour. That is obviously why the Liberal Party seeks to add a further clause, proposed clause (3) (b). However, the Opposition believes that that proposed clause is really only a gloss, an attempt to try to insert a reference to a minimum term. Although the Opposition is in sympathy with the first part of the amendment relating to "with hard labour for life", it is not in agreement with the proposed clause (3) (b) and will not support the amendment.

Question—That the words proposed to be omitted (Mr Beanland's first amendment) stand part of the clause—put; and the Committee divided—

AYES, 73

NOES, 8

DIVISION

Resolved in the affirmative.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! For any further division, the bells will be rung for only two minutes.

Question—That the words proposed to be inserted (Mr Beanland's second amendment) be so inserted—negatived.

Clause 6, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 7 to 15, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

Third Reading

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

YOUNG OFFENDERS (INTERSTATE TRANSFER) ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 20 March (see p. 475).

Mr SLACK (Burnett) (9.24 p.m.): The Opposition supports this Bill which facilitates the transfer to Queensland of young offenders, who have committed offences interstate, to serve the balance of their sentences. The technical problem overcome by the Bill is that Queensland courts cannot order the detention of a young offender; rather, offenders are placed in the care and control of the Director-General of the Department of Family Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs. This situation is at odds with that in all other States except Tasmania and was therefore a complication in the national workings of uniform legislation across the country. It is a welcome, humane development in the area of juvenile justice, and I urge the Minister to continue on the path.

As the Minister is aware, the Bill deals with other major issues, particularly in the area of community service orders and in the overall framework of juvenile justice. The previous Government was well advanced in adopting a fresh approach in these areas, including a strong commitment to community service orders.

During question-time last week, the Minister made the point that, because of budgetary constraints, those community service orders are not yet operational, and she was critical of the then National Party Government for, to quote her, "allowing a mere \$60,000 for the full financial year for the operation of community service orders". This is a complete misrepresentation of the situation, as it should be remembered that the legislation was introduced after the 1989-90 Budget, that it was to apply only to the latter end of the 1989-90 financial year and that the then Minister, Mrs Nelson, assured the House that increased funding would be provided in the 1990-91 Budget. However, the allocation was to provide for the development of the infrastructure for these orders. This is, in itself, a major task.

Even with a large allocation of money, we cannot simply say that we will have community service orders and pull them out of a hat. First, we must develop the programs and then we must develop the infrastructure to support those programs. Much work has been undertaken in the Department of Family Services on the appropriate forms of orders and who can properly administer them.

As the experience of the Corrective Services Commission has shown, this is a major undertaking and it will be a major and very positive development in juvenile justice when it is achieved. I wish the Minister well in this task, and I also urge her to press ahead with the rewriting of the juvenile justice legislation, which was also well advanced under the previous administration. One of the key elements of the drafting of that legislation, as it was being undertaken by the previous Government, was to provide courts with wider sentencing options, including the option of community service orders.

I would also like to respond to the recent comments of the Minister that the curfew proposal last year of the then Family Services Minister, Craig Sherrin, was in some way

an alternative to community service orders, pending their introduction, or an attempt by the National Party to draw attention away from the funding issue. She is wrong. The issue was raised by Mr Sherrin in much the same spirit as prominent members of the Labor Party have now raised it; that is, concern for the number of young people wandering about the city like stray animals. This is a tragic phenomenon which reflects sadly on modern standards of family care in a growing number of households and probably also on the emotional relationships in families, which are hard pressed in tough economic times. Children and teenagers who are loved and who are receiving proper guidance from their families would not be roaming the streets late at night causing problems and slipping into bad behaviour. Craig Sherrin's sponsorship of a discussion on the issue of curfews was very valuable.

One intent of it was to draw to the attention of parents their responsibilities to their children. It was certainly not put forward as an alternative to community service orders. It caused many people to think about these issues and was therefore valuable. The fact that it has again surfaced as a topic of discussion is, at the very least, a welcome sign that the problem of homeless and stray youths remains on society's agenda. We must keep it there because it is one of the great problems of our age which will get worse rather than better if we do not address its fundamental causes, which have their roots in family responsibility. I suspect that to a very large degree I am at odds with the Minister on this point because she sees a much larger role for the State as a greater part of the answer than is perhaps appropriate.

In summary, I point out that most young people are good. However, there are increasing problems with those who are not good. The reasons for this can be put down to a combination of social and economic pressures. Many feel neglected, unloved and unwanted. In many cases, both parents are working to make ends meet, or there is only one parent in the household. In such circumstances, there is often a lack of communication and discipline within the household. On top of that, modern young people appear to get bored easily and need entertainment. Another unusual, but not often considered, reason that is put forward is the mixing of Year 8 children with older children in the high school environment. That reason was put to me in discussions I had recently with a person who has been dealing with young people in similar circumstances.

The end result is that there appears to be an increasing number of children on the streets, together with an increase in anti-social behaviour; drinking, drugs, vandalism, car thefts, stealing and so on. Unfortunately, many police are reluctant to pursue and charge young offenders because of the paperwork involved and the leniency of some magistrates in the Children's Court. Obviously the prime responsibility for children's behaviour rests with their parents. Gaol for young offenders should be the absolute last resort. Consequently, magistrates should have as wide a range of sentencing options as possible.

I wish to make two further points in relation to curfews. At the present time, some judges are imposing a curfew as a condition of bail for young offenders. That has merit as a sentencing option. In cases in which a judge has applied a curfew as a condition of bail, my information is that it has worked successfully. It places a responsibility on the parent and also on the young offender. If the young offender is repentant for the offence that he has committed and observes the curfew, this is an indication of his willingness to accept some responsibility and the fact that in the end the judge has the power to enforce his order. When the judge comes to sentence that young person, he regards the young offender's observance of the curfew as evidence of his good faith and good behaviour. On the other hand, if the young offender breaks that curfew, he or she is indicating to the judge at the time of sentencing that he or she is not responsive to orders from the court. The judge looks upon this less favourably and is inclined to pass a harsher sentence. The imposition of a curfew on young people could be regarded as a sentencing option. Curfews enhance the power of parents in relation to the peer pressure exerted by the people with whom their son or daughter mix. If a curfew is applied a parent is able to tell his son or daughter that he or she must be home by a certain time,

for example, 11 p.m., and if all parents are saying the same thing, that enhances the disciplinary power of parents within the family.

The Opposition supports this proposed amendment. It is a step forward in the very problematical and challenging area of juvenile justice. I commend the Minister for its introduction.

Ms SPENCE (Mount Gravatt) (9.36 p.m.): It gives me great pleasure to speak in support of the Young Offenders (Interstate Transfer) Act Amendment Bill.

Despite its size, this Bill is important for two reasons. Firstly, it will enable the Young Offenders (Interstate Transfer) Act to be proclaimed, which will allow the Minister for Family Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs to commence the processes for the interstate transfer of young people who are subject to detention or community correction orders. Secondly, it is the start of a broader review of juvenile justice legislation in Queensland.

The system as it now exists is confusing both to young people and to their parents. It is inflexible in that courts are restrained by the sentencing options available to them and in their capacity to recognise parents. In the last few years there has been considerable public interest in juvenile crime and many Governments have introduced new legislation to deal with perceived increases in delinquency. In the past, Australia has been recognised as one of the most progressive countries in the world in dealing with young offenders. In addition, the Children's Services Act in Queensland is now almost 25 years old.

Whilst I do not believe that we can blame the 32 years of National Party mismanagement for our unfortunate level of juvenile offences, it is time for the entire juvenile justice system in Queensland to be moved into the 1990s. This amendment Bill is only the start. A huge responsibility rests on the shoulders of this Government to take up this challenge for reform.

Strategies for responding to young offenders remain in flux. Whilst some members of our society have an inherent faith in and optimism about our youth, for others the young are convenient scapegoats for societal unease about perceived reductions in levels of individual safety or the integrity of personal property and living space. Sadly, many political representatives are among the latter group. There is a view amongst some political leaders that the public demands harsher and more punitive measures to be taken against youthful offenders. Whilst it may be true that pockets of the community demand tougher policies, evidence suggests that this is not the view of the majority. Recent studies on this subject reveal that Australians feel that it is important to emphasise rehabilitation for juveniles and that it is futile to lock up young people in institutions.

Despite this public feeling, institutions such as the Wilson, John Oxley and Westbrook detention centres still exist in Queensland. Those centres are a very expensive way of dealing with juvenile offenders. One could argue that they do little to deter young people from committing further offences.

In the past, I have taught students who have served time in those institutions. They have gained status among their peers as a result of their incarceration. Moreover, many of those young offenders have honed their criminal skills in those institutions. Their spell in "prison" clearly has not worked. In contrast to that, some practices for which no statutory basis exists have proven to be effective. I refer particularly to the practice of many police officers who firstly caution minor offenders and successfully divert many of them from court processes.

Obviously, as a Government we have a great responsibility not only to treat juvenile crime seriously and set young offenders straight while they are still young so that they do not become future criminals but also to protect the property and welfare of the rest of society. In addition, we have a responsibility to eliminate the discriminatory system that now gives no recognition to the special needs of particular groups such as young Aborigines and Islanders.

As a Government, we should strive to provide courts with a wide range of effective sentencing options to enable young offenders to be dealt with in such a way that they are held accountable for their actions and are assisted to positively integrate into their own communities. Community-based orders are emphasised because this Government's thinking is in line with the thinking of most Australians who believe that young offenders are not best rehabilitated by being locked away from society.

Detention orders will always be available to courts for serious or recidivistic offenders, but this Government stands for social justice for all and will be concerned to ensure that such measures are used only as a last resort—and I am pleased to note that the member for Callide agrees with that—and only in conjunction with the young offender's rehabilitation. The Government also recognises that parents, too, have a responsibility and can play an important role in a young offender's rehabilitation. Cooperation among police, social workers, other professionals and parents might be the best way of dealing with young offenders.

This Government will be seeking ways of preventing young people from drifting into crime rather than later having to reform criminals. Strategies such as keeping young people away from abuse of alcohol and other drugs, providing activities for their leisure-time, keeping them at school or in employment and providing housing for homeless youth will be explored in order to halt teenage crime. I believe that the community must accept some responsibility for the behaviour of its members.

Because it is now recognised nationally that problems may exist whenever variations in sentencing orders occur between States and Territories, this legislation—which is based on similar legislation in other States—is necessary to provide reciprocal arrangements for the interstate transfer of young offenders. I am sure that all honourable members agree that in the best interests of all concerned young people should be returned to their own communities. This legislation has been drafted in consultation with interstate welfare departments. When it is passed, it will be able to be proclaimed without delay. I support the Bill.

Mr SANTORO (Merthyr) (9.42 p.m.): The Liberal Party supports the amendments contained in the Bill. As I understand it, basically this amending legislation will allow Queensland to enter into reciprocal arrangements with other States and Territories for the transfer of young offenders to Queensland. It will also enable the legislation to be proclaimed. I thank the Minister for bringing forward this legislation at such an early stage in the Government's agenda.

In rising to speak briefly in support of this Bill, I wish to remind the Minister and the Government of commitments that have been made publicly in relation to this issue. I refer the Minister to a meeting which was held in early February at the Wavell State High School and which was attended by two of her colleagues, the Honourable the Minister for Police and the Honourable the Minister for Corrective Services, and approximately 600 people. The issues of juvenile justice legislation and juvenile crime penalties that are presently available within the system were discussed.

At that meeting, the incidents described were certainly well known to the residents who had turned out in vast numbers. It became very clear to me that the people in attendance had genuine reasons for attending and had very real concerns. They described the northern suburbs of Brisbane as being overrun by gangs of young individuals who take the law into their own hands. Apparently, they display utter and total contempt for the people who live in those suburbs and for their property.

Residents told the meeting of their anguish when, time after time, they returned home to find that their houses had been broken into. The meeting was told about people—particularly elderly people—who have been forced every night to barricade themselves in their houses. It is fair to say that because of the actions of the young people who perpetrate wrong-doings, those people live in fear and are enormously concerned about this problem. I do not wish to describe the actions of those gangs in

great detail because I do not wish to appear to be sensationalising these issues, but the offences are a cause of concern to the people who live in those areas.

I wish to relate some of the suggestions that were made at the meeting. The Ministers who were present made some sympathetic noises but, towards the end of the meeting, the mood of the meeting crystallised. Some people made suggestions of the manner in which the problem should be handled. Although I would be the first to admit that some suggestions were very emotional, basically they contained two strands. The first strand suggested that the people who are responsible for juvenile crime should be made to bear the costs associated with the crime.

In attempting to represent the views expressed at that meeting by the vast majority of the people in attendance, I must inform the House that the other strand suggested that offenders should not merely be committed or sentenced to perform community service orders—and just turn up for one day and then walk away—but should be made to complete the terms of the order. That sentiment came through loud and clear.

The other sentiment—it is related to that predicament—that came through loud and clear was that the parents should be made to be financially responsible for damage that is caused by the actions of their children. Again, I hasten to add that members on this side of the House appreciate that not all the kids who perpetrate juvenile crimes have parents to whom we can refer and say, "Look, you should have been keeping an eye on them. You should have been maintaining some sort of curfew on them. You are responsible." We realise that some children who roam the streets and indulge in the actions that I have described do not have the luxury or the benefit of parental guidance. We appreciate that parents, custodians or guardians cannot always be pinned down. Nevertheless, a feeling exists that somehow or other the people who perpetrate juvenile crime on society must be made more responsible.

At the meeting to which I referred, the community representatives wanted the laws to be toughened up. I have a considerable amount of sympathy for the suggestion that is being put forward by Alderman Hinchliffe about curfews. I would like to see that debate proceed with a minimum of hindrance from people in Government who have an influence over whether or not curfews are introduced so that the community can have its say. On the weekend, for reasons totally different to those that we are discussing tonight, I was doorknocking in the Hamilton and Ascot areas in my electorate. Three or four people mentioned that juvenile crime was a very big issue in their locality. They supported unanimously—as good as a sample of three or four can be—the idea of a curfew. The idea of a curfew merits discussion and more community consideration.

I do not wish to sound overcritical of the Minister for Corrective Services, but on one occasion several months ago he said that he was in the process of preparing a Green Paper on the issue of juvenile delinquency and that that paper would be released for community discussion a couple of weeks after that time. I have had a question ready to ask the Minister about what has happened to that paper. However, in the interests of having a balanced debate, I will ask that question tonight. Has that Green Paper been released? I have not seen the Green Paper that the Minister for Corrective Services indicated would be released.

Mr Welford: I will let you know about it.

Mr SANTORO: I would be grateful for that. It certainly has not been circularised widely. I have not seen a copy, but I would welcome receiving one.

Mr Welford was one of the people who was instrumental in organising the meeting to which I have referred. I imagine that he would go along with the commitment that was made by his Minister on the release of a paper in the near future. I do not want to sound as if I am point-scoring, but the commitment was made. I was going to ask a subtle, non-offensive question of the Minister and would have hoped to receive an answer. I look forward to the Minister's answer. He made a commitment to 600 or 700 people, and I am sure that they are still waiting.

Mr Heath: Two hundred.

Mr SANTORO: If the honourable member checked the records that people signed—I am not good at counting numbers—I am sure that he would ascertain that there were more than 200 people. We will have to agree to disagree.

In supporting this Bill, I take the opportunity to remind the Government that it has a responsibility to deal with a problem in the community that is causing a great deal of concern to people; particularly the elderly and people who do not have menfolk within their homes to help lend a degree of security and protection. I hope that that comment is not taken as being sexist and that it is taken in the spirit in which it is meant.

At the meeting that I attended, I was heartened by the commitment given by the Minister. I look forward to what the honourable member for Stafford has to say about that commitment which, to the best of my knowledge, has not been fulfilled.

I take great reassurance from the knowledge that the Criminal Justice Commission is investigating the issue. I am sure that much light will be shed on the issue through the research that is being carried out by the full-time commission and by the deliberations that members of the committee, including yourself, Madam Deputy Speaker, will undertake as a result of the report that the commission hands down in the future.

The legislation makes easy the transfer of young offenders. When I attended the meeting, I picked up a point that I doubt the other two members and the two Ministers who attended would have picked up. I do not want to sound facile when I say this, but transfers of juvenile offenders from the southern States to Queensland are already occurring. Unfortunately, they are not of the right type. The word around the constabulary and the community is that the gangs that are going around the suburbs are highly organised. Apparently they are highly organised by experts and hardened criminals from down south. I was reported in the media recently as calling them modern-day Fagins. That is a role that can be rightly ascribed to them. That is another area that the relevant Minister should investigate. Apparently, people come up from the south and train young kids in Brisbane and other parts of Queensland who have been led astray. They organise the kids to conduct themselves professionally and to thumb their noses at the law. They also teach the kids how to escape the consequences of the law. I am reminded of another alleged interstate transfer that is occurring. It is not a good one. It is hardening our young kids and leading them to commit even more serious crimes in a far more professional manner. That is certainly of great concern.

In conclusion, the Liberal Party asks the Government to take seriously its responsibilities to the community in relation to this particular matter of concern. The Liberal Party asks the Government to encourage debate, particularly in the area suggested by Alderman Hinchliffe, that is in relation to curfews, particularly in city locations. I am certainly looking forward to the research that will be forthcoming from the Criminal Justice Commission and the light that will be shed on my question by the honourable member for Stafford.

It is with pleasure that the Liberal Party supports this amending Bill.

Mr HOLLIS (Redcliffe) (9.54 p.m.): It is with pleasure that I join in supporting the Young Offenders (Interstate Transfer) Act Amendment Bill.

This Bill seeks to make only minor changes to the Act. However, once this Bill is passed, the amended Young Offenders (Interstate Transfer) Act can be proclaimed without delay. This will allow Queensland to fulfil its obligations undertaken at the Council of Social Welfare Ministers to facilitate the interstate transfer of young offenders.

All the other States in Australia and the Territories are introducing or have introduced similar legislation. South Australia and the Northern Territory have proclaimed legislation, while Victoria and New South Wales should have their legislation proclaimed by mid-year. Western Australia, Tasmania and the Australian Capital Territory have not yet introduced similar legislation but are planning to do so shortly.

This humanitarian provision currently exists for adult prisoners. I am proud to be able to support its extension to juvenile offenders. When we talk of humanitarian conditions, we have to look at the family structure which causes a lot of these problems. Honourable members heard some emotive comments from the Liberal side about children coming up here from down south and raising hell, about Fagins and so on.

Mr Santoro: Be fair. It wasn't emotive.

Mr HOLLIS: It was emotive.

Recently, the Mayor of Redcliffe was quoted in the newspapers as saying that in Redcliffe crime is the biggest industry. That is the sort of tory comment that members of the Government are getting used to hearing. Members on the other side of the House should have a bit more compassion. Instead of talking about people copulating and paying for it, instead of talking about Fagins from the south, they should be saying, "We have to have more care and compassion for these kids. If they do offend we are going to help them to repay their debt to society in the correct manner." That is the right thing to do. We will not get anywhere with these types of comments, which make people think——

Mr SANTORO: I rise to a point of order. The honourable member for Redcliffe has suggested that members on this side of the House—his exact words escape me—accused people of copulating and asking to be paid for it. No member of the Liberal Party has ever made that comment, and I ask the honourable member for Redcliffe to withdraw it. No member of the Liberal Party has ever said that people copulate and ask to be paid for it.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mrs Woodgate): Order! There is no point of order. The member will resume his seat.

Mr HOLLIS: Madam Deputy Speaker, I did say "members on the other side of the House". In fact, the honourable member for Callide said that.

A lot of these problems with young people are the result of the crisis of a family break-up. This is a very serious problem. Earlier, during the debate on the Commonwealth and State Housing Agreement Bill, the member for Brisbane Central spoke about homeless kids. This is a direct result not just of today's society but of a State that for 30 years has not had sufficient housing and a State in which the care and compassion has not been there. That is what this Government now has to redress. I am very pleased to be able to support the Bill. It is a step forward in redressing the wrongs of the past.

One aim of the juvenile justice system must be to enable young offenders to reintegrate into the community following detention. Maintenance of the young person's contact with family and social networks is recognised as a key element in successful reintegration. The legislation enables young offenders to serve their detention or community correction sentences in the State or Territory in which their family live. In other words, if a young person runs away from home for whatever reason and commits an offence, the Government is not going to compound the sentence by leaving that young person in Western Australia or Victoria. The Government is going to do something to get that young person back to his or her home State and get the family difficulties sorted out.

As I have already said, in many instances care and compassion are the answers to these young offenders. Although this probably will not impact on many young offenders, it is vitally important to those young people living away from home who are arrested for committing criminal offences. This amendment will enable this important legislation to be proclaimed and made operable.

I support the Bill.

Hon. A. M. WARNER (South Brisbane—Minister for Family Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs) (10 p.m.), in reply: I want to take up some of the points that have been raised during the debate. A number of the points raised did not have any

specific relevance to the Bill; nevertheless, they are a matter for public debate. Therefore I re-enter that public debate.

I will not take up all the points raised by all honourable members. However, I will speak briefly about the matter of a curfew. It is very entertaining that there is a large amount of heat on the subject of curfews but very little light. In fact, the former Minister for Family Services, Craig Sherrin, raised the possibility of a curfew, and there was much public debate at that time. Although he raised it and said that he was going to introduce a curfew, during the entire time that he was the responsible Minister and during the entire time that Mrs Nelson was the responsible Minister for the rest of that year, on no occasion did any National Party Minister take any regulatory or legislative steps to impose a curfew, and for a very valid reason, that is, that they could not do it. Although the National Party suggested that there should be a curfew, a curfew was not in fact in operation.

A curfew was not introduced because it would be almost impossible to police. The police force was very critical of the proposal, because it was suggested that police would be taking to police stations young children who had committed no crime but were simply on the streets after a particular time at night. Therefore, late at night police would have children in their custody and would then be responsible for taking those children to their homes. The police simply did not have adequate staffing resources to do that job and felt very uncomfortable about that role.

Because their civil liberties are not able to be protected adequately in that environment, there has been a long history of considerable difficulties with having juveniles in police stations or watchhouses. In spite of their rhetoric, former National Party Ministers never tackled the practical problem by putting their money where their mouths were and introducing a curfew. A curfew sounded like a good idea and a quick-fix solution to the problem—just get all the children off the streets and impose a curfew similar to that imposed during war-time. For so many years the National Party Government pretended to preside over a democratic, open society. Fortunately, such a society now exists in Queensland. There was no way that, under those circumstances, that level of totalitarian response could be enforced upon the children of this State. That is simply not possible.

Mr Slack: I understand they work in American States.

Ms WARNER: I am sure that is the case. However, some American States put parents in stocks. I am sure that neither side of the House would be very comfortable with such a provision. Let us not consider the American example as the answer to the world's criminal problems, because it is not a very good example. The statistics relating to juvenile and adult crime in America are probably far worse than those of Australia. I do not believe that the Americans have much to teach us about an adequate social response to juvenile crime.

I am pleased to take this opportunity to answer some of the questions that were raised by honourable members. Although a curfew sounds like a good idea, it is almost impossible to implement without offending a whole range of very treasured, democratic rights for ourselves and our children. It just will not work. On the last occasion when this matter was raised seriously by the former Minister and member for Mansfield, Mr Sherrin, rumours were circulating about gangs of youths in Logan City and Woodridge, which were pin-pointed by the former Minister as difficult areas. Those gangs were asking, "When are the police going to come and get us?" Those gangs were reported to be arming themselves for a set-to with police.

If the community and particularly the police want to develop good relationships with youths, policemen should not be allowed to arrest children for no reason other than that those children happen to be present in an area at a particular time. If children are seen to be in moral danger or in danger of physical harm, police do not need a curfew to be in place before they are able to approach those children, talk to them and ascertain their circumstances. If necessary, in the interests of the safety of those children,

if they are in moral danger or physical harm, police can then escort them to their homes. The police need no further powers to be able to do that.

In terms of maintaining the current situation, police numbers are quite taxed at the moment. To give them additional duties would be onerous and impractical. The former National Party Government pretended that it had an answer to a problem, but a curfew would provide no answer. The situation changed not one wit from the time that the former Minister suggested a curfew until this Government came to office. I was asked a question by the media about whether I had cancelled Mr Sherrin's idea of a curfew, but there was nothing to cancel. There was no ministerial directive, no legislation and no regulation. Nothing! I suggest a very good reason for that exists, namely, that it is virtually impossible for any Government to implement a curfew.

On the one hand the honourable member for Burnett said that there should be less Government intervention and that the Labor Party stands for massive Government intervention into people's lives. However, on the other hand he is proposing methods and measures which require intervention. What more interventionist measure could be imposed than a restriction on the times when people can be on the streets? That represents gross State interference in the basic civil liberties and democracies of Queensland. A certain degree of inconsistency exists in the honourable member's arguments. However, I appreciate his support for the Bill. He obviously recognises it as the first step in a whole range of legislation in respect of juvenile justice.

The situation in respect of community service orders still stands. The sum of \$60,000 for the remainder of the financial year was inadequate to provide a sentencing option for the courts. If the legislation had been proclaimed, the courts would have been misinformed because it would have been suggested to them that they could have the option of imposing community service orders on children. However, there would have been no adequate way of paying for that option. Although I support that option, it should be adequately resourced. That \$60,000 was in no way an adequate response to the necessary level of resources.

Mr Slack: The argument that you made was that there would be \$60,000 for the whole year.

Ms WARNER: I believe that was an error. Ironically, the National Party did not proclaim the legislation, either, probably for the same reasons. The legislation was introduced into this House in a fairly cynical, political manner to pretend that the National Party was doing something just prior to the election—but it was doing nothing.

When the Labor Party gained Government, I had the option of whether or not to proclaim that legislation. I was advised by the department that it would be impossible for us to resource properly that option for the courts and that therefore it would be totally irresponsible to proclaim that legislation until there were sufficient funds to make that option a reality.

The member for Mount Gravatt has given me an onerous challenge, which I hope we will be responding to with some speed, that is, to make the whole juvenile justice system fairer, more accountable and flexible. That is a tall order, but we hope to be able to at least start the process of addressing that problem. People have to understand that this amending legislation is only part of the process and that the new juvenile justice legislation, which will be introduced into this Parliament towards the end of this year, will increase the upper age limit at which a person may be dealt with as a child from 16 to 17, as recommended in the Kennedy report. It will provide a statutory basis for certain police procedures such as the questioning, fingerprinting and photographing of children; provide a statutory basis for the administrative police practice of cautioning first and minor young offenders and keeping them out of the courts; and streamline Children's Courts procedures to make them more understandable to children and their parents.

I am sure that there is certainly a huge degree of confusion in this House about the provisions. The legislation will also ensure that children's legal rights are protected. That is very important, because there is no point in providing cures which are worse

than the disease. It will also provide courts with a range of effective sentencing options to enable them to make young offenders accountable for their actions but also to promote their positive integration within the community. Although community-based orders will be emphasised, detention orders will be available to the courts as a last resort for serious or recidivist offenders. The Bill will also recognise parental responsibility and the important role of family and friends in the rehabilitation of young offenders; provide a basis for the role of the Department of Family Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs in the administration and enforcement of court orders; provide for the administration of community-based offender programs and detention centres; and recognise the special requirements of young Aborigines and Islanders and of young people living in rural areas. This program of reform is socially and administratively responsible. Much of what has been said in the House by members opposite has not been along that line of responsible comment.

I turn now to the comments made by the member for Merthyr. Although I congratulate him on his attempt to look at the issue with some responsibility and, as he said, to avoid sensationalism, unfortunately, towards the end of the debate he did sink to a certain level of sensationalism as he started talking about the Fagins from south of the border—yet more southerners coming up and corrupting Queensland youth. That is the suggestion that he was making. That is sensationalist. It is not contributing to a level of debate that will provoke or elicit a proper response to the issue of juvenile justice.

I refer to the comments that he made in respect of the meeting at Wavell Heights. As to the two issues that he raised—I have been very well briefed about the meeting by officers of my department who actually attended the meeting. I assure the honourable member that for some time a considerable amount of departmental work has been done on bringing together a number of sentencing options and changes to the juvenile justice system which I have just outlined.

That legislation can be expected to be introduced into the House fairly shortly. All those measures are being taken into account. Of course, it has to be recognised that it is pointless our saying that we will do those things until we are assured that we have adequate resources to be able to properly conduct those changes and that it is just sheer Governmental irresponsibility to pretend that we have solutions if we cannot resource those solutions properly. I have no intention of doing that. I do not care how sensationalist the debate becomes, I will not fall into the trap of the quick-fix populist suggestions just because it sounds politically expedient to make them at the time. Political expediency has no part in sound administration.

Our kids deserve a sound juvenile justice system, and that is what we hope to provide over a period of time. It is not an easy problem to solve; it has not been solved in any of the other societies or in any of the models. In some places attitudes are more progressive and the descent from juvenile crime into adult crime is less of a problem than it is if overly punitive suggestions are adopted.

In respect of the whole question of parental responsibility for juvenile crime—that is an option that has been available in Queensland for the last 25 years. It is not an option that the courts exercise with any kind of regularity, because there are some very serious judgmental difficulties with the idea of punishing someone else for a particular individual's crime. Judges and courts are very reluctant to enforce that provision, even though that option is there, and has been there for 25 years. So the legislation does not need to be changed in order for that to occur. The only other way would be to direct the courts, and I have no intention of doing that because I think they are in a position to make those decisions.

The other question, of course, is that, if that is done, because the children's parents then become hostile in respect of the activities of their children, one runs the risk of further worsening the family relationships between the children and their parents. One of the regrettable things about the prevalence of juvenile crime is that it quite often emerges from amongst those children who for one reason or another have already been

rejected by their parents. The Government does not want to exacerbate the already difficult social relationship between those children and their parents. The department's job is to keep those families together and to try to work for reform of those relationships, with assistance from the department. One does not come in and impose on the parents penalties that make the parents resentful not only of the department but also of their own children. It is that kind of strategy that just rubs salt into an already gaping and very irritating wound.

I ask that when they go before the media that members on both sides be very careful about proposing glib populist solutions to the very deep and complex problem of juvenile crime, and that all honourable members, collectively and responsibly as a Parliament, do not suggest solutions that are going to fan the flames of hostility and that blame the victim or the people nearest to the victim, who are their parents. This House should get on with trying to find solutions that work with humanity and compassion for all people concerned, without the ridiculous measures that are being adopted at the moment in the United States which, I suggest, is hardly an example of a healthy society, and certainly not one which I would like to see Queensland emulate.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Motion agreed to.

Committee

Clauses 1 and 2, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

Third Reading

Bill, on motion of Ms Warner, by leave, read a third time.

NATIONAL CRIME AUTHORITY (STATE PROVISIONS) ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 1 March (see p. 83).

Mr GILMORE (Tablelands) (10.20 p.m.): The Opposition is pleased to support this Bill, the purpose of which is to ensure conformity with the Commonwealth National Crime Authority Act so that the National Crime Authority will have the power to act effectively across each State in this nation.

The amendments before the House mirror the recent amendments to that Commonwealth Act. During this debate, I will attempt to elaborate on a few points concerning the National Crime Authority.

Some problems have existed within the National Crime Authority and recently there has been a drift away from the original purpose of that authority. The primary aim of the National Crime Authority is to take effective action to combat crime in Australia. A major part of that work is to investigate matters with a view to assembling admissible evidence for the prosecution of offenders and for the recovery of the proceeds of crime. The authority is supposed to work in cooperation with law enforcement agencies and to establish and coordinate task forces for the investigation of criminal activities. It is also empowered to make recommendations to various Governments for law reform and for the reform of administrative practices in the courts.

I remind this House that the National Crime Authority was established on the recommendation of Frank Costigan, QC, after his Royal Commission into the Federated Ship Painters and Dockers Union in 1984. The original legislation setting up the National Crime Authority contained a sunset clause that would have seen the authority wound up in 1988. However, the Federal Opposition managed to ensure that the Government

of the day did not allow the National Crime Authority to disappear by way of the operation of the sunset clause.

I believe that it is very clear indeed that the Federal Government would have been very pleased to see the National Crime Authority wound up. The Federal Government was in circumstances similar to those facing the present Queensland Government in respect of the Cooke inquiry.

Recently, the Queensland Government made heavy going of a problem with the proposed Australian Securities Commission and the changeover from the National Companies and Securities Commission, and it took that fight to Canberra with great vigour. It is a shame that, in the case of the National Crime Authority, the Government is not prepared to take the fight to Canberra with the same vigour. I will return to the reasons for that statement in just a moment.

Although the Opposition in this place supports the National Crime Authority and its work, serious problems do exist with policy and with management. The authority began this decade with serious problems with a couple of differing reports on police corruption in South Australia. The first report of 140 pages was produced under the stewardship of the original authority chairman, Mr Justice Stewart. He chose to retire at the end of his term and was replaced by Mr Peter Faris, QC, who produced a second report of only 11 pages and had apparently heavily culled the original report.

It is apparent that there was a considerable clash of wills between Mr Justice Stewart and Mr Peter Faris, QC, in respect of the police corruption in South Australia. It has tarnished the National Crime Authority considerably and it is one of the reasons, we believe, that there should be some structural change made to the National Crime Authority so that it is switched back to its original intent of investigating the business of organised crime and drugs in this country.

A number of other matters caused the National Crime Authority some concern, not the least of which was the failed prosecution against Al Grassby, which everybody will remember. The National Crime Authority came under considerable pressure for having proceeded with what was a vexatious prosecution against Mr Grassby. It failed, and so it should have.

For a few moments I should like to discuss Mr Peter Faris, his role in the National Crime Authority and the change of direction that the National Crime Authority took under his stewardship. First of all, I look at the reasons given for his resignation. He was chairman of that authority for some eight months and resigned in February 1990, claiming that he suffered from ill health. Of course, nobody accepted his excuse for his resignation and rumours have persisted about other reasons for his departure.

Mr Beattie: Some people did accept that reason for his resignation.

Mr GILMORE: We accept that some people did; others did not. There have been persistent rumours about, for instance, his clash with Mr Justice Stewart. I will not proceed with other rumours that were rife at the time.

In any case, Mr Faris' period as chairman saw a dramatic shift in policy. He sought and obtained a new reference for the National Crime Authority to investigate white-collar crime and he was apparently intent on recruiting to the National Crime Authority a heap of accountants rather than policemen. It is my view that this was a drastic move away from the National Crime Authority's stated policy into the region considered to be the area of responsibility of the National Companies and Securities Commission.

There has been a serious clash, particularly a clash of wills, between those two organisations and, instead of having a cooperative view, we have had some confrontation. I believe that the National Crime Authority should move back towards the study of organised crime and drug problems in this country, as were Mr Costigan's opinions in the first instance, and the reasons for the establishment of the National Crime Authority in the first place. Indeed, so deep were the problems that Mr Costigan himself was

moved to publicly criticise the National Crime Authority recently because of its failure, in his view, to fill the role for which it was created.

I must also raise the subject of some bitterness between the National Crime Authority as an investigative body and other investigative bodies and policemen in particular around the country. The Australian Federal Police Association took up its cudgels against the National Crime Authority in 1988 and it said, by way of a submission, that the police in Australia were becoming most reluctant indeed to cooperate with the National Crime Authority because they considered that officers of the National Crime Authority were brief bandits—stealing information given to them by other police forces and claiming credit for the prosecutions. That is most regrettable and I believe that a cooperative effort would have been far better in the long term.

The Queensland Government should be asking a number of questions of the Federal Government and the National Crime Authority on our behalf in respect of our doubts about jurisdiction, about the truth behind the resignation of Mr Faris—that should be clearly investigated and the reasons made public—and about why the National Crime Authority has been allowed to drift in respect of its original strategy from organised crime and drugs. Surely to goodness the problems of crime and drugs in this community and society have not been resolved satisfactorily from anybody's point of view. The National Crime Authority team seems now to be intent on white-collar crime rather than those areas which are deeply entrenched in our community. I believe also that we should ask why the Federal Government is not listening to people such as Mr Costigan and Mr Justice Stewart in respect of these matters because they have been vocal in those areas.

The Opposition is happy to support the Bill. I hope that the Government will take on board the criticisms that I have raised. I have not raised them as vitriol but as what we consider to be reasonable arguments against the direction that the National Crime Authority is taking. We believe that the National Crime Authority should be redirected back to its original theme and that the National Companies and Securities Commission—or the Australian Securities Commission as it may be in the future—should be intent on white-collar crime and misuse in the corporate area. Then, and only then, can the National Crime Authority become the effective body that it was designed to be in the first place. With those few words, I offer the Opposition's support for the Bill.

Mr BEATTIE (Brisbane Central) (10.31 p.m.): Tonight, I will not speak at length on this National Crime Authority (State Provisions) Bill, but a number of things need to be said from the point of view of the Criminal Justice Commission. I do not have any strong disagreement with my colleague the honourable member for Tablelands, but I do disagree with some of the things he said, and I will come back to them in a minute.

The first thing that must be understood is that crimes, particularly drug crimes, do not stop at the border. The relationship between the Criminal Justice Commission and the National Crime Authority is a fundamentally important one in the cleaning up of organised crime and drugs. One of the things that the parliamentary committee must monitor and review is the relationship between the Criminal Justice Commission and the National Crime Authority. This relationship must be good and sound-working and one that is in fact delivering when it comes to cleaning up organised crime and drugs. I will return to that point in a moment.

Recently, some criticism has come from certain quarters about interstate appointments to the police force and the Criminal Justice Commission, in particular in relation to a number of people from Victoria. I reiterate that this criticism has come only from certain quarters. It must be acknowledged that one of the strengths of the Criminal Justice Commission and its organisation here—and indeed the police force—is that it has been able to draw on the considerable experience of people from interstate. I single out in particular Sir Max Bingham and Messrs Le Grand and Irwin of the Criminal Justice Commission, all of whom had experience with the National Crime Authority. Indeed, Sir Max Bingham was with the National Crime Authority in its early stages

when it went through its establishment problems. When any organisation as large as the NCA—and indeed the CJC—is being established, there are organisational problems. It is important to have the benefit of Sir Max Bingham's experience.

In recent times there have been problems, as the honourable member for Tablelands pointed out. A very careful balance must be struck between the role of the NCA in the public arena and its private role. I draw no conclusions one way or the other about that, but there is no doubt that the public controversy over the investigation into John Elliott prior to the last Federal election did not enhance the reputation of the National Crime Authority either nationally or in Queensland. The way in which the matter was handled by all political parties was unfortunate, and that must not happen again in the future. We must make certain that the CJC does not become a political whipping horse for any political party. I am pleased that the parliamentary committee has worked in a non-political way. I thank the members of that committee for reaching that point, because it is fundamentally important to the future of that organisation. Circumstances similar to those that arose in respect of John Elliott must not be allowed to arise in Queensland.

In January of this year, I had lunch with Peter Faris, and he appeared to me to be a person who was very committed to what he was doing. Whether the circumstances that were publicly discussed were true or not, I do not know. I had never met him before and I have never spoken to him since. I hope that Queensland and the CJC can avoid the sort of controversy that surrounded that issue. At the first public hearing held by the parliamentary committee with the CJC, I asked Sir Max Bingham whether recent controversy involving the NCA had been damaging to the CJC. It is worth putting his response on the record. He said—

"It obviously has damaged the NCA. The unfortunate occurrences of the last few months have clearly weakened the credibility of the NCA in the eyes of other law enforcement agencies and that is unfortunate because a lot of effort was put into building up the kind of relationships that previously existed.

I think we are fortunate insofar as the CJC is concerned, from the Queensland point of view, that we do in fact, quite apart from the formal nature of the NCA and our relationships with it, have very close personal relationships with key personnel in the NCA still. Mr Le Grand came from the NCA; Mr Irwin came from the NCA; and I have some connections there too.

I think I can totally rebut any suggestion that any problems that the NCA is currently having have adversely affected our relationship with it or its effectiveness as far as we are concerned."

That is an important circumstance of which this House ought to be aware. Sir Max Bingham's words are encouraging, to say the least.

Before I conclude, I wish to address one other area. It concerns the proceeds of crime. Honourable members would be aware that one of the recommendations of the Fitzgerald report dealt with making those people who had profited from crime pay. Again at the public hearing between the Criminal Justice Commission and the parliamentary committee, Sir Max Bingham said the following, and I will simply quote the relevant parts—

"I think that the facts of life are that there will continue to be a number of areas of investigation in the world of organised crime that can only be done with the sort of agency that the NCA is, and it will, I suspect, continue to cost money."

That money includes a Government contribution. Sir Max Bingham continued—

"It was certainly part of the Fitzgerald philosophy, and it is certainly part of the commission's philosophy, that every endeavour possible ought to be made to recover the proceeds of crime, and I would hope that as expertise develops, we will see something like the NCA has achieved in that quite a large amount of their expenditure is now recovered in one form or another. They have the advantage"—

an advantage that we do not have—

"that a lot of their recovery is tax money, which goes to the Commonwealth Treasury anyway. We are not quite in that position, but I am thinking in terms of realisation

of assets that are linked to the proceeds of crime. It is an area that we are very keen to see developed, and we have people working on that now."

That is a matter of some importance to this House.

There is a continuing and permanent role for both the NCA and the CJC, although this role may change in form or be reconsidered over a period of time. They may want to change the structure as it now exists, but there is no doubt that there needs to be an independent crime-fighting force dealing with organised crime. I hope that the NCA re-establishes its credibility in the public arena and we can get on with the job of pursuing the world of organised crime and drugs. I am happy to report that the Parliamentary Committee for Criminal Justice will leave on Sunday for a four-day visit to Canberra and Sydney where we will have discussions with the NCA. Indeed, the NCA has been very cooperative and helpful in establishing contact with us during our trip. I have no doubt that it will continue to be of assistance to the CJC. We wish the new director—whoever that may be—all the best when his time comes.

I support the Bill before the House.

Mr BEANLAND (Toowong—Leader of the Liberal Party) (10.39 p.m.): The Liberal Party supports the amendments. The Minister has already pointed out that its provisions mirror those contained in Commonwealth legislation.

A number of matters that I wished to raise have already been mentioned by previous speakers, so I will not canvass them. I merely say that it is very important for Australia's major crime-fighting organisation to regain its credibility very quickly.

I do not believe that the NCA can afford to have raised doubts about its ability to perform its role. Unfortunately, in recent times its reputation has become a little tarnished. I trust that it will not be long before it regains its credibility. I believe it is tremendously important that the community is confident in the NCA's ability to perform its role.

Mr D'ARCY (Woodridge) (10.40 p.m.): I also rise to speak in support of the amendments. At the outset, I observe that, for once, the previous speaker has hit the nail on the head. This legislation is all about the credibility of the National Crime Authority and bodies associated with it, such as the National Companies and Securities Commission. Australia has not previously had the benefit of national companies legislation, which is proposed to be introduced. When that happens, it will enhance Australia's credibility and allow those bodies to fight crime without being constrained by effectively having their hands tied behind their backs. More investigations into crime should be carried out by bodies such as the NCA and NCSC.

A matter that came to my notice recently and that should be investigated by the NCA and the NCSC, is the OST deal with Dreamworld. At present, all aspects of that deal are under scrutiny. It was obvious that, when the settlement date arrived, the equity partners got cold feet and OST was forced to accept a large single debt exposure. If OST is as sound as its officers say it is, I wonder why major banks—including the Commonwealth Bank of Australia—recently failed to accept its guarantees. Available figures indicate that OST is exposed to the extent of approximately \$1.2 billion in friendly society transactions. OST claims that, of that total amount, \$800m is in cash and only \$400m relates to mortgage exposure. However, OST has failed totally to disclose the extent of its guarantees.

The need for national companies legislation has been emphasised by the OST/Dreamworld example and by other incidents involving lenders. The National Crime Authority has been eagerly awaiting the uniform national companies code and legislation which will both make its job easier and restore some semblance of confidence in Australian commercial laws.

The Corporate Affairs Commission's laws and regulations in Queensland do not require guarantees to be given in favour of subsidiaries or for guarantees to be disclosed when returns are lodged, which means that the total exposure of lending organisations is not disclosed to share-holders or unit-holders. The question that must be asked of

OST officers is: what is that company's total exposure to guarantees? Legislation should provide for total disclosure so that the NCA and other investigatory authorities can also find out the extent of all commissions paid on loans arranged by these organisations. Currently, major investment advisers are alerting investors to the exposure of OST. I am conscious of the fact that members of Parliament also have a tremendous responsibility to alert the public to unstable commercial positions. I have done so before in incidents involving Telford, Bartlett and others facing impending failure. Parliamentarians have a responsibility to inform the public, particularly in cases that involve public societies. Although it is possible to initiate self-fulfilling prophecies and perhaps cause a run to occur on a public commercial enterprise, it is important that the interests of the public should be protected. Bearing both those factors in mind, I have watered down my remarks on OST. However, I believe that, if unit-holders are to be protected both now and in the future, a full-scale inquiry will be needed to clear the air of speculation and accusations that are disturbing the confidence of the general public.

I am sure that these amendments and amendments to other legislation will assist organisations such as the NCA and the NCSC to restore Australia's corporate reputation to world-standard so that the general public and international investors can have confidence in the way in which business in this country is conducted.

Mr LINGARD (Fassifern) (10.45 p.m.): It is my pleasure to speak in support of the National Crime Authority (State Provisions) Bill. This legislation obviously relates to the State provisions of the Commonwealth Act, and the Minister has already pointed out that the Bill is necessary only to complement legislation known as the National Crime Authority Act 1984. The NCA Bill was originally initiated in 1982 by the Fraser Government as the National Crimes Commission Bill. When the Hawke Government came to power, the National Crimes Commission had not been implemented. The Bill was submitted to Federal Parliament in a much weaker form as the National Crime Authority Bill.

Fortunately, a Senate Standing Committee on Constitutional and Legal Affairs suggested several amendments, which have given that legislation some teeth. The most important aspect of the Bill has always been that, in order to provide effective means of pursuing major organised crime in Australia, the legislation must be given teeth.

Ever since 1984 when the Bill was introduced, the Federal coalition Opposition has endeavoured to introduce amendments to ensure that veto provisions of the States were removed. The other amendment that was necessary arose from the need to fight for the right of the NCA to pursue whatever investigation it saw fit.

The amendments reflect this State's desire to mirror current Commonwealth legislation, which has been its attitude since 1984. The Opposition supports that desire, as it did in Government last year.

As the Minister said in his second-reading speech, the Bill only mirrors the Federal Act where it contains the provision that the NCA can apprehend an offender in Queensland and prevent that person from absconding.

The Opposition has much pleasure in supporting the Bill.

Hon. T. M. MACKENROTH (Chatsworth—Minister for Police and Emergency Services) (10.46 p.m.), in reply: I thank all members who spoke in the debate to support a minor amendment to the legislation.

Motion agreed to.

Committee

Clauses 1 and 2, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

Third Reading

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

STATE TRANSPORT ACT AND ANOTHER ACT AMENDMENT BILL**Second Reading**

Debate resumed from 20 March (see p. 470).

Mr ELLIOTT (Cunningham) (10.49 p.m.): It is my pleasure to speak in the debate on the State Transport Act and Another Act Amendment Bill. Honourable members need to understand basically what the legislation is all about. The Bill remains unchanged from last year when it was introduced by the Honourable Peter McKechnie. The principal amendment to the Act transfers the responsibility for the administration of school transport services from the Education Department to the Transport Department. The Opposition supports that transfer. The provision is basically the same as the proposal that went before the committee set up by the former Government.

The Bill contains other good provisions that were being worked on last year and that we should dwell on and understand fully. The old Transport Act contained many anomalies that caused considerable difficulty. I will examine some of them. The Bill contains a sensible provision concerning rental vehicles. The Deputy Leader of the National Party would have encountered many problems with rental vehicles in his electorate.

The old Act provided that each vehicle had to carry a licence. Previously, a licence was not granted to the franchisee who operated rental vehicles; each vehicle had to carry a licence. That was a cumbersome, difficult and costly administrative exercise for the Government. This Bill provides for the issue of a rental vehicle fleet operator's licence in place of the existing system of issuing a licence to hire a rental vehicle for each vehicle available for rent.

The Opposition welcomes the proposed amendment. It will create less of an administrative nightmare for people in today's difficult business climate who are trying to make a profit as well as provide a service to the public. The previous provision led to an unnecessary clogging-up of business. The Government should be working towards reducing business regulation and Government interference in business. Because it is very much in the interests of business and the consumer, I applaud this proposed amendment.

Some people might say, "Hang on. Where do we go to ensure that the vehicles are inspected regularly and are safe?" Those important issues are not affected by the legislation. Most rental companies that obtain a broad-based fleet-operator's licence have an agreement with the motor companies to replace their vehicles every year. Generally, the rental companies supply new cars.

The smaller car rental companies use slightly older vehicles. Their operation is similar to the licence-to-hire type operation where there is a requirement under the Transport Act that a certificate be held for each of the vehicles. The position is the same as it is with a privately registered new or second-hand vehicle. There has to be a certificate stating that the vehicle is roadworthy. I think that that adequately protects the public and ensures that there will not be a lot of vehicles on the road that are potential accidents looking for somewhere to happen.

I think that proposed section 56 really does the same thing as section 60 of the old Act, only in a much more efficient way. The old Act provided a virtual cover-all. It arose during the old days in relation to bus operation. The wording was not changed to allow the legislation to cover air transport. I will cite an example of where it was quite impractical. When new helipads were built in some of the tourist areas and airstrips were built enabling aircraft to operate and take passengers for hire, those helipads and airstrips had to be specially gazetted in the *Queensland Government Gazette* each time. Proposed section 56 provides blanket cover. It simply says, "from any place within the

State to any other place within the State". That is obviously a step in the right direction. I think that the public of Queensland will be well served by that provision.

Queensland has a lot of bus-operators. On the tablelands, in the Cairns area, down on the Gold Coast and even in my area, for that matter, there are many small bus-operators who operate minibuses. I remind honourable members of the tragic accident involving a schoolbus that ran off the Gillies Highway. That sort of incident should galvanise the Government into taking action to ensure that the safety of those buses is beyond question. It is very important to ensure that these vehicles are inspected regularly. This Bill provides for a head of power, which allows the Government to ensure that those vehicles are suitable for the purpose for which they are intended, that they are comfortable and that tourists are not being transported in buses that are absolutely out of date, uncomfortable and hot. Of course, we must ensure that these vehicles are safe. That is a good provision in the Bill.

I have examined the Bill closely. I could not find any area in which any additional fees are being charged. That is certainly important. Obviously, as in other areas, there will be annual increases in line with inflation. That was how the previous Government operated, so I do not have any argument with that.

I turn now to schoolbuses, which were previously dealt with under the Education Act and which now come under this legislation. There is, however, a need to be able to regulate the powers so that the conveyance committees can be organised under this legislation. I am sure that you, Mr Deputy Speaker, like all honourable members, have constituents approach you asking you to make exceptions, to alter the rules, so that more children can be picked up by schoolbuses and so on. It is very important that we take into account the problems faced by conveyance committees. Problems in regard to schoolbuses are probably more numerous than just about any other problem with schooling. It is important that the Government ensures that the conveyance committees have the ability to carry out their work and that it is regulated, as it has been in the past.

I do not think there is much else to say other than that Queensland is probably the most popular State for tourists. Transport around this State involves travelling long distances. Buses run up and down the coast and inland to such tourist attractions as the Stockman's Hall of Fame, right through into the Northern Territory and out to Ayers Rock and so on. The Government has to be very much aware of the changing circumstances.

I understand this Bill to have the ability to be flexible and to be able to allow for change when and if it becomes necessary. It is very important that the legislation has the ability to move with the times and to be changed without the need for a great deal of legislating in this Chamber. Obviously, that is expensive. If the basic philosophy of the various Bills that come before this House is not being changed, then I do not have any argument with the idea that it is more efficient to regulate to make changes which are really just common sense and allow for altered circumstances.

The Opposition has pleasure in supporting the Bill, which is really nothing more than a copy of previous legislation with some slight modifications.

Debate, on motion of Mr Sullivan, adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. D. J. HAMILL (Ipswich—Minister for Transport and Minister Assisting the Premier on Economic and Trade Development) (11.01 p.m.): I move—

"That the House do now adjourn."

Effect of World Heritage Listing on Ravenshoe

Mr GILMORE (Tablelands) (11.02 p.m.): I take this opportunity to bring to the notice of the House the plight of the town of Ravenshoe in far-north Queensland. It has been brought to my attention by the citizens of Ravenshoe that serious concerns have

been expressed about the ongoing viability of the town. The honourable member for Mourilyan is fully aware of the situation and, to his credit, he is doing his absolute utmost to have the matter rectified.

Honourable members will remember that, a couple of years ago, the issue of the World Heritage listing of the rainforests of far-north Queensland was debated. During that somewhat vitriolic debate, the people of Ravenshoe and far-north Queensland were assured that no person or business would be disadvantaged by World Heritage listing. However, some businesses in Ravenshoe are experiencing serious difficulties. Recently, the problem has been exacerbated because the sawmilling company Associated Plywood Sales has gone into receivership under the stewardship of Price Waterhouse.

This matter has raised some serious concerns for local businesses that took for granted the Federal Government's word that no business would be disadvantaged. Local businesspeople believed that Associated Plywood Sales, which was granted assistance to retool by way of loans and grants, was virtually Government guaranteed. Therefore, businesses in the local community of Ravenshoe allowed credit to that company. Having studied the matter, it is my understanding and the understanding of businesspeople that approximately half a million dollars of credit is outstanding to local businesses in Ravenshoe and that at least another \$100,000 is expected to be outstanding to coastal businesses.

It is obvious that those small businesses that have already been disadvantaged cannot stand a further loss of half a million dollars. Last Monday evening in Ravenshoe, a meeting was attended by a number of people who are important in this matter, namely, representatives of Mr Warburton, Mr Comben and Price Waterhouse. I understand that those people, particularly the ministerial representatives, had very little understanding of the situation and were able to offer no assurance to the people of Ravenshoe that anything would be done for their benefit. The representative from Price Waterhouse was coy, to say the very least. All that he could say was that he could not tell them anything other than that because the businesses of Ravenshoe were unsecured creditors, they would be treated down the line after all the secured creditors had been taken care of. Whether those people would receive anything at all, or when that would happen, could not be determined.

Letters have been written from within the community group of Ravenshoe to Ministers of this Government, including the Premier, Mr Goss, and the Prime Minister. To date, their replies have been few and far between. Indeed, it would appear that the State Government and the Federal Government have abandoned Ravenshoe to its plight. There seems to be no ongoing support for that town, which has indeed borne the brunt of the difficulties that were created by World Heritage listing.

This Government has made no attempt to commence the Tully/Millstream hydroelectric scheme, which might provide 700 jobs in the town of Ravenshoe within three or four years.

Mr Elliott: They are not terribly interested in jobs any more.

Mr GILMORE: This Government is not in the least bit interested in jobs or the future of small business in Ravenshoe.

If that sawmill closes down, there will be no sawmilling operation to take care of the pine plantation resource that is owned by the State Government and from which the Government expects to gain royalties from the cutting of timber. In fact, the Government needs those royalties to cover the outstanding debt on the plantations that it has planted in Queensland during the past 30 or 40 years.

I abhor the situation in which Ravenshoe finds itself. I call upon the Government to do whatever it can in support of Ravenshoe.

Handihome

Mrs WOODGATE (Pine Rivers) (11.07 p.m.): I pay tribute to an association in my electorate known as Handihome. Put simply, Handihome means homes for handicapped people handy to home.

Some years ago, three people, namely, a lady pharmacist and the parents of a severely handicapped daughter, were most disturbed by the lack of acceptable accommodation for severely handicapped persons in Queensland. They noted the difficult life of a family with severely handicapped children. Honourable members should remember that a family with a handicapped child is a handicapped family.

Those three people looked closely at a struggling handicapped family and found that its problems were continuing and increasing. Thus, the answer to the problem had to be continuing and realistic and needed to be implemented right from the birth of the child. They found that when parents accepted the responsibility of those children, it made them slaves and prisoners in their own homes. By so doing, they saved taxpayers a packet. It costs between \$30,000 and \$34,000 a year to keep a person in an institution. They found holidays to be almost non-existent, and crisis times were a nightmare. They found, though, that the greatest problem of all was when the parents became too old to cope—only to find there was no acceptable accommodation.

These three people argued that, if parents sacrificed their lives in service and saved taxpayers so much—that is, that 30 years' caring would save approximately three-quarters of a million dollars—there just had to be acceptable accommodation when the parents could cope no longer. So Handihome was born. The concept is quite simple. It is that in each community the caring, the workers, the givers, etc., come together and provide in that community a suitable building in which to provide accommodation and dispense care to the handicapped families in that area. It gives an opportunity for any interested persons, young or old, to be part of Handihome and thus enrich their lives.

One Handihome was built at Kallangur and has been operating for over five years. Another Handihome at Sunnybank is operated by the community there. They are about to start their second home. As a matter of fact, they may well have done so by now. Two years ago, our community in Pine Rivers built, equipped and is now operating a Handihome at Strathpine. We are unfunded and we need to raise about \$40,000 each year. Other communities are showing interest in our concept. We are grateful to everyone who helps the handicapped persons in our community.

I first learned about Handihome in 1981 when Mr Jim Tweedale, one of the parents mentioned before, came to visit Mrs Elaine Darling, the Federal member for Lilley. At that time, I was employed as electorate secretary to Mrs Darling. Jimmy Tweedale was lobbying all members of both Federal and State Parliaments, advising them of his plans and dreams for the formation of Handihome. About this time, an incorporated association was formed and a committee chosen not to talk but to do. It is the community endeavouring to do all it can in every way it can to help the disabled persons of the community, allowing for contact to be made with the disabled family right from the birth, endeavouring to encourage, counsel and support, and giving respite accommodation in times of need, crisis, emergency, holidays, etc. This would keep the disabled family functioning, keep the family together and make them feel they belong. Thus, when the parents could cope no longer, the disabled person would move permanently into the home that has helped the family over the years—into a home handy to home.

Handihome has successfully tapped and involved every section of the community, insisting that the responsibility of our disabled persons is as much theirs as that of the parents. Churches, schools, service clubs, youth organisations—in fact, every section of the community—have had tremendous input in an effort to do something positive for the disabled families in our community. Handihome says that the best place for disabled persons is in their own home, supported by care and love. But parents pay a price, often becoming slaves and prisoners in their own homes while slowly wearing themselves out. They have to have support.

The Minister for Family Services, Ms Anne Warner, has been invited to visit Handihome at Strathpine, and has agreed to do so in June. Funding is desperately needed for extensions. I am sure that the Minister's visit will bring home to her at first hand what a great job the association is doing, and she in turn may be able to advise the association where assistance can be obtained for the task in hand—a never-ending task, I might add, but one which I am sure all honourable members would agree is worthy of our gratitude, appreciation, encouragement and assistance.

Environment

Mr SPRINGBORG (Carnarvon) (11.12 p.m.): I rise to speak on a topic that is very, very dear to my heart, and which has been extremely dear to my heart for a great many years, because I have been, I think, imbued with the realisation that what I am about to talk about is something that will affect our society and our generation. In fact, it has in the past affected what has happened in Queensland, in Australia and in the world. I refer to the environment.

One thing that really concerns me is the moral high horse on which the people on the other side of the House and the Democrats in Australia have put themselves over the last few years and from which they have pontificated to the rest of Australia. I must say that, to their credit, they have done a very, very good job. However, they are not the font of everything that is good for the environment in Australia. As Queensland and Australia move into the future, they will find that that is so.

I think all members opposite recognise the good work that has been done by the Opposition's environment team through its very good shadow Minister and member for Cunningham, Tony Elliott.

Mr Elder: Where is he?

Mr SPRINGBORG: He is probably in his room watching this debate.

I believe that, with regard to the environment, all of us have something to account for. Let us face it, years ago Labor Party people would have been just as quick as National Party people to jump on bulldozers. That is an unfortunate fact of life. I believe that people in the general community are now adopting the attitude that the environment is too important an issue for the involvement and concern of just one party. I would like to work with members opposite collectively as best as I possibly can to offer, perhaps, the best environmental strategies for the future. I offer the olive branch to the ALP Government. I wish it all the very best on matters relating to the environment in Queensland and on the national scene.

Mr Fenlon: It's a pity about your party.

Mr SPRINGBORG: It is a pity about the past of all parties and of all people in Australia.

I have some statistics here, Mr Acting Speaker, that I find alarming.

Mr Mackenroth: Mr Deputy Speaker.

Mr SPRINGBORG: I said "Mr Deputy Speaker".

Mr Mackenroth: No, you said "acting".

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Campbell): Order!

Mr SPRINGBORG: I accept the correction.

As I was saying, I find these statistics very, very alarming. Since white man settled Australia in 1788, there has been the extinction of 18 species of mammals and 100 species of flowering plants. At present, 40 species of mammals are endangered, 209 plants are threatened with extinction and another 784 species of plants are vulnerable. I hope that it can be seen and appreciated why this matter is so extremely important.

Amongst that list are also species of fish, reptiles and birds that have not been counted. The source for that information is an article in *An Australian National Strategy for the Conservation of Species and Habitats Threatened with Extinction* prepared by the Federal—

Mr Fenlon: Who wanted to cut down the Daintree forest?

Mr SPRINGBORG: I have said to Government members that I was not involved in that episode. I do not condone anything that happened in this State or in Australia that may have been detrimental to the environment. Through history, members of the Labor Party have been just as guilty of that offence as the members of the National Party, and once those members start to realise that, this House may very well set an appropriate environmental path for the future.

Mr De Lacy: This House has not seen a species like the honourable member.

Mr SPRINGBORG: And I say that that it is extremely unfortunate for this House. The Treasurer might be endangered. He might find himself in the Walt Disney studio taking over from Donald Duck.

Unfortunately, my time is running out. This nation must utilise its vast resources, but it is extremely important that that be done under appropriate environmental guidelines. I believe that the previous Government was acting along those lines, and I believe that this Government will continue to do so. I sincerely hope that it does.

Mr Ardill: You are a bit astray there.

Mr SPRINGBORG: Not really. That is the honourable member for Salisbury's opinion.

In conclusion, I say that for the future of this State and this nation and for the future of our children, it is necessary that this Government embark on a strategy for the environment that will stand Queensland in extremely good stead for the future.

Letter Circulated by Mr P. MacDonald, Regional Director of Education

Mr SCHWARTEN (Rockhampton North) (11.18 p.m.): Tonight I rise to bring to the attention of the House a letter that has been circulated by the Regional Director of Education (Central) Mr Peter MacDonald.

The letter basically sets out an appropriate procedure that he believes ought to be followed when people want to make complaints to the Department of Education. I do not intend to read the document, but I will table it so that any honourable member who wishes to read it may do so.

The procedure that he sets out is that the first port of call ought to be to the school or to the regional office. In other words, the stake-holders in the education process ought to be able to take their complaints to the regional office or to the school, and at least give them an opportunity to respond through internal channels. To me that is a sensible, a proper and an appropriate way to go about achieving a solution.

However, that is not the view of the member for Callide. She has a different view about the way that the Department of Education ought to operate. I refer members to a news release that was published in the Rockhampton *Morning Bulletin* on 6 April of this year. The honourable member for Callide claimed melodramatically—

"One teacher told me about the letter. She said: 'I am not supposed to be talking to you.' "

Mrs Mccauley is reported as having said—

"If the teachers don't tell me about the problems, how can I help? I think the letter is very high-handed."

I am not surprised that the member for Callide thinks that the letter is very high-handed because what Mrs McCauley is saying is, "Come and see me first", because, it should be remembered, that is the way the previous Government did its business.

Mr Littleproud interjected.

Mr SCHWARTEN: No, we went straight to the politicians. We did not worry about going through the correct channels because we knew it was no use. We knew that in fact the pork-barrel was in operation. I take the interjection of the member for Condamine, because there was no greater perpetrator of the pork-barrel than he and Mrs McCauley and all his other cronies on that side of the House. They should be condemned for that.

Last week in this House, honourable members saw the Minister for Administrative Services hold up a sheet displaying evidence of where the pork-barrel was rolled out, and that was a shocking indictment on members of the Opposition, who ought to be blessed-well ashamed of themselves.

Mr Neal interjected.

Mr SCHWARTEN: Especially Mr Neal, because he did all right out of it, thank you very much.

Returning to the original issue, the business of the Labor Party in Government will be to ensure that those days of cronyism are gone. They are finished. There is no doubt in my mind that this Government will proceed on a proper and appropriate course, and the stand of people like Peter MacDonald, the Regional Director of Education (Central), will be vindicated by this Government. It will ensure that people have their proper say. This Government will not need to have politicians interfering in the due process. It will not have the Hintons of this world interfering in the transfer system by going into regional offices with lists of people and saying, "Get these people transferred." That will not happen again, and if Mrs McCauley wants to acquaint herself with the true situation in her electorate, she should get off her backside and get around the electorate to find out what the real problems are instead of relying on a mix and match of National Party cronies to come to tell her that the school down the road needs painting or that a transfer is needed for this or that teacher because they are members of the Labor Party.

The fact of the matter is that in this instance the overbearing remarks by Mrs McCauley do her no credit whatsoever. She has in fact overstepped the mark. She has indicated that she does not want the system of cronyism to end. She wants the political process still to intervene to ensure that the people that she wants to look after can be looked after in a political way with the departmental channels being ignored. This Government is not going to do that at all. As far as I am concerned, those days are over and done with.

Finally, I say that there are a few other things that are going to be over and done with too, and one of those is going to be Mrs McCauley because, as the Honourable Deputy Premier said earlier tonight, she is known as "lazy Di" and that is exactly what she is.

Board of Teacher Registration

Mr LITTLEPROUD (Condamine) (11.21 p.m.): Tonight, I want to propose that the Board of Teacher Registration should extend its powers and in fact set up a disciplinary committee to adjudicate on allegations against teachers of professional misconduct.

As members of Parliament, we are aware that from time to time complaints of misconduct are raised. In fact, the previous speaker spoke about complaints being made in the first instance to the principal of a school and then to the regional directors. In most cases, complaints arise out of general classroom management or sometimes from

the professional behaviour of teachers in subject areas like economics, history, the study of society, government and human relationships education.

Either quite unintentionally and quite innocently, or sometimes quite intentionally, teachers are abusive or highly critical of the values and opinions held by a child's family, and the family finds this very offensive. They go along to see the principal or the regional director and in most cases in the State schools the matter is resolved satisfactorily. However, that is not always the case. From time to time, as a member of Parliament and particularly when I was the Minister, I found that I was contacted by people who felt that they needed to take some other course of action in order to question the actions of people in the profession.

I also discussed the matter widely with members of the profession and, being a former teacher, I readily agree that from time to time some people abuse their unique position as teachers, which is one of dominance and of setting an example, and it behoves the profession to look at the matter and set up a mechanism by which parents can say, "We believe that schools and the teachers at the schools should complement our values and opinions and certainly not be critical of them to the extent that we find it offensive."

Currently, the provisions of the Education Act provide that only registered teachers can teach in Queensland, so the Board of Teacher Registration is the ideal body to set up this disciplinary committee. The profession needs a professional watchdog to look over what should be done and to uphold and enhance the teaching profession. As the board registers teachers and as only registered teachers can be employed, if the board, as a professional body, finds against a teacher in a case of misconduct, this House should ensure that the board is given power to deregister that teacher, or to either dismiss or discipline him or her for unprofessional behaviour.

Senior departmental officers act on complaints from individual parents or p. and c. associations. Teachers automatically look to the Queensland Teachers Union, which is quite a responsible body, to act on their behalf. The union, in its course of action, looks into all the legalities of the complaints. Sometimes the department knows full well that the complaints are well founded but is frustrated by the industrial laws of Queensland. There is merit in the suggestion that, if complaints are looked at in a professional manner and not according to industrial laws, the professional bodies themselves will be able to take the necessary action, which would be somewhere between a mild reprimand and deregistration so that the profession could in fact get rid of anybody who brings it into discredit.

To date, I have written to about 30 people in the education community seeking their comments. I take this opportunity tonight to put them on the public record. I have written to the Director-General of the Education Department; the Christian Schools Association; the Association of Independent Schools of Queensland; the Catholic Education Commission (Queensland); the p. and c. associations of State schools, private schools and Catholic schools; Professor Paige Porter of the University of Queensland; the secretary of the Secondary Principals Association; the secretary of the Primary Principals Association and various other people who hold the same sorts of ideals that we have about the standing of the profession. I await with interest the response from those people, and I hope that we can make this an issue for public debate. Honourable members on the other side of the House might like to take part in the debate. I hope that the Minister is listening, because my ideal is altruistic, and I believe that something along those lines is needed in the profession.

Latrobe and Given Terraces Development Plan

Mrs EDMOND (Mount Coot-tha) (11.26 p.m.): The long-suffering residents of Paddington are still waiting for the Brisbane City Council to make a statement regarding the controversial commercial development of Latrobe Terrace and Given Terrace, Paddington.

Honourable members may recall that the proposed Paddington plan—it is officially known as the Latrobe and Given Terraces Development Plan— was launched last

year with a great deal of huff and puff but very little genuine community consultation. The final proposal was rejected by the Department of Local Government on the advice of the Crown law department because it had not complied with official procedures and could, therefore, set unwarranted legal precedents.

The concept of cottage retail, of course, conjures up the cosy image of mum spinning in the corner while dad sells the homespun up front, or, in these liberated times, vice versa. This vision is pure Liberal propaganda and a fiction. The cottages are largely owned by non-resident investors who live well outside the area, and the cottages are rented as purely commercial premises to whatever business ventures approach them.

Mr Beattie: Angus Innes' wife runs one of them.

Mrs EDMOND: I take the honourable member's point.

The inner-city study was another large, expensive, much-vaunted study, which was carried out contiguously with the Paddington plan. While the Paddington plan was designed to shove local residents out, the inner-city study was an attempt to lure them back. These two contrary studies are leading to significant confusion in the area. The residents literally do not know whether they are coming or going or whether the Lord Mayor wants them to come or go. They are now in the middle of a tug of war between opposing council aims and they are getting a bit stretched out by the process. I fully realise that the Lord Mayor has not been in Brisbane very much lately——

Mr Beattie: She was in Canberra today.

Mrs EDMOND: I thank the honourable member for that information. I find difficulty in keeping up with the Lord Mayor's movements. I gather that her frequent absences are fully endorsed by both sides of the council.

However, the residents of Paddington deserve to be informed of the next stage of this debate. They have asked, and have a right to be informed, as to whether their very real concerns about increased traffic, loss of housing, loss of residential amenity and isolation will be addressed. They also want to know whether the town plan will ever be enforced. Will the findings and recommendations of the inner-city study be released or are they too much in line with residents' wishes and contrary to the council's plans? Will the Liberal members oppose—if there are any left in the Chamber——

Mr Beattie: There is one—from the Gold Coast.

Mrs EDMOND: That is not much help, I am afraid. Will he advise his colleagues to urge members of the Liberal council to re-examine the Paddington development plan in conjunction with its own recommendations to be found in the inner-city study?

May I take this opportunity to raise my concern at the rather cavalier regard for the law as shown by the Liberal Party. It would appear that, where a legal opinion is contrary to Liberal policy, it is dismissed as non-enforceable, and I instance the illegal use of non-commercial premises in Paddington, which is declared as a minor legal technicality, as in the Crown law decision in regard to the Paddington plan, or changeable by legislation to suit, as we have witnessed with the Christ Church cemetery horror story. It is of grave concern that the Liberal Party only accepts the law when it seems to suit it.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 11.31 p.m.